

Roma and Magyars in Contemporary Transylvania. Case Studies on Inter-Ethnic relations

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Abstract

The paper contributes to better understanding of the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma community's relationship in today's Transylvania. The key moments for this paper and its study of the relations between the two communities are at the end of the communism, Târgu Mureș March 1990 and today. The work builds on interviews, KAM's anthology' research of Szeklerland Roma communities, Viorel Achim's and Csaba Dupcsik's and others' Roma research. The contribution lies in the analysis from a different angle of the relationship between the two communities: looking from both sides, comparing in time and region. The research indicates that this relationship has deteriorated over time in some regions more than others due to social changes in society.

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Introduction

The ethnic relationships in Central-East Europe are always a hot topic and in my paper I analyze one of this kind of relation ,the relation between Hungarians and the Hungarian speaking Roma community in modern Transylvania in the end of communism, during the ethnic clash in 1990 March and today. The dates are very important in my paper because all of them symbolize a change or a very important event in the evolution of the Hungarian and Roma relationship. First of all, I will analyze if the Hungarian and Roma relationship it was mostly in harmony in the end of communism and 1990 March. Secondly, I will investigate why this relationship is more complex today.¹ I will also examine this relationship from regional point of view because in my opinion has significant regional characteristics. It is different in Szeklerland,²Târgu Mureş ³ and Oradea (Nagyvárad in Hungarian)⁴ . My claim before I started the research that the relationship between Roma and Hungarian population is different in regions where ethnic Hungarians are in the majority and in the region where ethnic Hungarian are in the minority because in the second one the Hungarian population needs more the help of the Hungarian speaking Roma population. I will investigate if I have right or not.

I will focus only on the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship because the closeness of relationship among them and also because it based on a long term relationship. These Roma people share common language, school, sometimes have the same

¹ The poverty of population increased and this affected especially the Roma population. The Hungarian and Romanian relationship changed also become much better.

² Szeklerland (Harghita, Covasna and part of Mureş county) is an are in Transylvania where the Hungarians are in majority.

³ Târgu Mureş has 48% of ethnic Hungarian and 50% of ethnic Romanian population, Encyclopaedia Romaniæ, Târgu Mureş , http://enciclopediaromaniæ.ro/wiki/Targu_Mureş , (accessed May 29, 2011).

⁴ Oradea has 28% of ethnic Hungarian and 70% of ethnic Romanian population, Recensământ 2002 , *Oradea municipiul/ Nagyvarad municipium* (Oradea town), <http://Recensământ.referinte.transindex.ro/?pg=3&id=338>,(accessed May 29, 2011).

religion, read the same newspapers and they have lot of social contacts with Hungarians. The KAM researchers even claim that nearly two thirds of the Roma in Szeklerland not only speak the Hungarian Language but they are considering themselves part of Hungarian community.⁵ KAM researchers also stated that the majority of Roma people everywhere speak the local majority language and in case of Târgu Mureş the Hungarians used to have majority and had Hungarian mayor till early 2000's. In Oradea and the North West part of the country the Hungarian are in significant numbers or majority and their relationship especially strong with the Hungarian speaking Roma communities. The Roma communities are especially in high number in county Mureş and in county Bihor (Oradea) .Those Roma people who do not speak Hungarian usually had just limited interactions with Hungarians because of this I will not focus on the Hungarians' relations with them.

I will also investigate the bilingual or trilingual Roma communities contact with Hungarians and also the effect of the Roma identities on Hungarian Roma relationship. KAM researchers also believe that we can not talk about a single Roma identity instead of them we can talk about Roma identities.⁶ I will examine how Roma people call themselves Hungarians, Hungarian Roma or just Roma.

In order to support my hypothesis about the importance of the events of 1990 March Târgu Mureş for the two community relationship, I will analyze why the Roma community helped the Hungarians in 1990, in Târgu Mureş and what happened afterwards. Here I concentrate only on the relationship between the Hungarians and Roma community with only a brief mention of Hungarian Romanian relationship. I will identify what kinds of relationship are between the Roma and Hungarian Community in the actual territory of Transylvania. I will examine those common elements which bound together or separate

⁵ KAM-Regional and Anthropology Centre, Helyzetkeresők? Roma lakosság Székelyföldön (Looking for a place? The Roma community in Szeklerland),(Miercurea Ciuc:Pro-Print,2002), pp. 15-16.

⁶ Ibid.

Hungarians and Romany people. What kinds of elements bond the two communities? Here I will focus on education and religious life as elements which can unite the two communities. In my opinion these are the areas where are frequent contact between the two communities. What kind of elements divides the two communities? Here I concentrate on social status (poverty, lifestyle, social crimes). Most of the problems which appear in the two community relationship are related to poverty (segregation, social crimes, unemployment). I also focus on the role of Media which can unite or separate the two communities.

To answer to the question which elements bond together and which separate the Hungarian and Roma community, I look at a variety of primary and secondary sources. Because these events are relatively recent I use as primary sources empirical research, retrospective interviews, articles of people who were present in those events. These primary sources I investigate in Târgu Mureş, in some places in Szeklerland and in Oradea. The primary sources will be the opinions either the members of the Roma community (leaders, priests, intellectuals or participants in the events) or members of the Hungarian community (who participated at 1990 March events, priests, teachers who have frequent contact with Romany people).

Regarding the secondary literature I will use different authors who analyzed the Roma population in Hungary or Romania and their contribution led to better understanding of the relationship between the two communities, Hungarian and Roma, and the evolution of this in Transylvania. The researches in this topic present either the Roma's perspective or the Hungarian perspective. There are studies which focus on the Hungarian Roma perspective but this is usually only done by anthropologies analyzing this relationship from a certain point of view (religion, education) or concentrating on a certain region or a particular Roma group. Here I would like to mention the KAM group from Szeklerland (Anthropologists),

Michael Stewart, Foszto János and Virág Tünde whose work I will use. My paper analyzes the evolution of this relationship and identifies the differences between the different regions. Also I find an answer to whether Hungarian speaking Roma population consider themselves as an ethnic community, certain social group or as a future trans-national nation or nationality in Europe. The other secondary sources which I use are a couple of authors who analyze the nationality question in Central or Southeastern Europe such as Rogers Brubaker, Gáll Ernő and or authors' books or articles who focus on the Roma question such as Viorel Achim's *Țigani in Istoria României* (Gypsies in Romanian History), Csaba Dupcsik's *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története* (The Hungarian Gypsies History) and Angus Fraser's in *The Gypsies*. I use books or relevant articles which appeared in Hungarian and Romanian newspapers or magazines which help me put the Hungarian Roma relationship in a larger picture or recount the events of the 1990 March Târgu Mureș. Here I would like to concentrate on the collaboration of these two communities only.

I would like to highlight the importance of a couple of authors to my thesis. Roger Brubaker's *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* -helps me to understand the problems related to identity and nationalism and also the importance of institutions such as schools and church in the life of ethnic communities. Michael Stewart's *The Time of the Gypsies*, helps to understand the Roma community complex relationship with non Roma people. His research also helps in educational, social issues and religious life. Another important author is Laszlo Foszto's *Ritual revitalization after Socialism. Community, Personhood, and Conversion among Roma in a Transylvanian Village*-his research is essential in my religious chapter. Tünde Virág, *Slumrising areas, slum- rising schools* -which helps on education chapter and finally Csaba Dupcsik's *The Hungarian Gypsies History*, and the KAM groups' research on segregation issues.

My thesis is built in five chapters. The first chapter will present the theoretical frameworks in which I will analyze first of all what ethnic identity, nationality and poverty means. It is not clear whether the Roma community is an ethnic group, social group or future nation. This will be very important for my paper because we can analyze the Roma Hungarian relationship from different angles and we can receive different answers. In order to analyze this I will use authors like Coopers, Brubaker's work about identity questions and Gellner's work about how an ethnic community can develop into a nation. The subchapter about nation, which will include the Hungarians from Transylvania, I will define through Anderson, Gellner's, Hobsbawm's, Anthony D. Smith's, Gáll's work about the nation and also present why it is important to analyze the Roma community from this perspective, too. In the end of the Theoretical framework the Roma community will be presented from the social group perspective (poverty) using Szalai's and Dupcsik's work.

My Second Chapter will focus on the history of Romany people in general using Ian Hancock, Angus Fraser's book. Their history, concentrates on the history of Romania and Hungary (Transylvania was part of Hungary as well). Here I will use Viorel Achim's, George Potra's, Mariana Sandu's and Csaba Dupcsik's work and eyewitnesses accounts of the 1990 March events and articles from Hungarian newspapers.

In my third and fourth chapter will focus on the relationship between the two communities –Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma today. Each chapter will be divided in two subchapters. Every subchapter will examine the relationship from a certain aspect: In the third chapter will be analyzed the education, where I will use Roger Brubaker's, Michael Stewart's research and also information received from primary sources and also the religious life, where I will use Michael Stewart's, Fosztó research and also information received by primary sources. The fourth chapter will focus on social issues (poverty, segregation etc) and

Media. The sub-subchapter about the poverty will be based on Michael Stewart and KAM groups' anthropologies work and also primary sources. The last sub-subchapter I will discuss the importance of media in the two ethnic community's relationship.

Finally in my last chapter I will write my conclusions about how the relationship in 1989, 1990 was and how the relationship changed between Roma and Hungarians in Transylvania today.

1. Theoretical framework

In certain parts of Europe, most precisely in Central or Southeast Europe sometimes it is really difficult to categorize ethnic, religious groups or nations. Historians sometimes argue what is the most characteristic for them: their ethnic identity, nationality or social status. If we would like to examine Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma communities relationships we have to find out what they are and what they want. KAM researchers when they talk about the Hungarian speaking Roma use the world Roma identities because the difficulty of to definition of Roma identity.⁷ In order to ease the problem I will present here the different characterizations.

1.1 Ethnic identity

Brubaker and Cooper mention that constructivists considers that "identity dispose us to think in term of bounded groupness".⁸ In the case of many European ethnic groups there are certain elements (common memory, language, lifestyle, etc) which bound these groups together. However, Brubaker and Cooper claim that these elements which bound the

⁷ KAM-Regional and Anthropology Centre, Helyzetkeresők? Roma lakosság Székelyföldön (Looking for a place? The Roma community in Széklerland),(Miercurea Ciuc:Pro-Print,2002), pp.33-34.

⁸ Rogers Brubaker and Frederic Cooper, *Beyond Identity*, Theory and Society, Vol. 29, No. 1. (Feb.2000), p.2.

members of different groups together are either” too ‘hard’ or too ‘soft’, or symbolize too much or simply nothing at all”⁹

The strong understandings of “identity” emphasis are the “sameness over time and across persons”.¹⁰ In the mean time, Brubaker and Cooper believe that weak identity is fluid, changeable and needs a different approach of research. In the case of East European nationalism, Brubaker and Cooper consider that we are dealing with” deeply rooted national identities”¹¹. In most of the cases the wars, ethnic conflicts and ethnic movements which ask for more rights demonstrate that they are right. However, they also mention the sometimes weak form of ethnic identity: bilingualism, assimilation, mixed marriages, etc. These affect to some extent the Roma community’s cohesion as well. Especially the strong assimilation policies determined certain people with “weak” ethnic identity to become part of the dominant nations.¹²

In most of the cases the commonly used institutions, or common workplace created possibilities for people to cross these rigid ethnic lines. This fluidity of ethnic identity makes the generalizations more difficult. In order to understand the ethnic communities’ identity better, we need to analyze their approach to education, their religiosity, the language which they speak and their poverty, which are the key elements of their identity.

Some ethnic communities assimilate others and then develop further in nations. This is true in the case of Roma people too. The key to understanding how ethnic identity is helping the nation formation is addressed by Gellner’s theory about a fictive nation called Ruritania, in which he described that people from the periphery of a fictive state called

⁹ Ibid.,p.9.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.10.

¹¹ Ibid p.2.

¹² Roger Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Princeton: University Press, , 2006), p.314.

Megalomania became a nation.¹³ Gellner describes that they felt alienated in the centre of this fictive country and they created their own organization and their intellectuals created their own myth. He also points out that the Ruritarians instead of a peaceful integration decided to separate and create own state. This happened in the case of most multiethnic Empires and probably it is happening with many ethnic communities today.

1.2 The national issue

Today Europe's biggest problems are the national issues. Even in the Western part of the continent the national awakening is in full progress.¹⁴ These communities, ethnic groups, who never had their own freedom, claim their right to their own statehood. The problem of national awakening is even more a thorny issue in the Eastern part of the continent. Eastern Europe's map always was a jigsaw from the ethnic point of view where the nationalism invented in the Western part of the continent contributed to ethnic war and conflict from the nineteenth century onwards.

If we want to understand the problem caused by nationalism, we should understand first what nationalism means and the evolution of this understanding. The concept of nationalism appeared at the end of the XVIII century. Today there is a consensus among the scholars about the birth date of nationalism.¹⁵ However, the concept of nationalism is still formulated in different ways. Benedict Anderson considers it as an imagined community because not even in the smallest nation do people know each other, or meet each other, but still in their mind there is present the image in their communion. He also underlines that the nation is limited because it has boundaries between itself and other nations. It is sovereign

¹³ Gáll Ernő, *A Nacionalizmus színeváltozásai* (The true colours of nationalism, (Oradea:Literator, 1994), p.197.

¹⁴ The Basque, Irish, Catalan, Corsican, Scottish and the national movements from Belgium.

¹⁵ Most consider the French Revolution, American and English Revolution. However, Anderson believes that the Spanish Independence War as a starting point. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.*, (London: Verso, 1983), p.7.

and also “imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”¹⁶ He also considers this comradeship the key element of holding the nation together. Ernest Gellner, another scholar, believes that nationalism is “a theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones.”¹⁷ He also considers the nationalist principle –as ethical and universalistic. Another interesting definition comes from Eric Hobsbawm, who considered it a secular religion and Anthony D. Smith, who described it as an ideological movement. Finally, we have to mention Eugen Lemberg who considered nationalism as an ideology which holds together large groups of people and claims from its members not only total dedication but fanatics as well. ¹⁸All of the theories give an important role in a positive sense of the solidarity to the people.

Another interesting problem is the division of nationalism in “Western-civic” and Eastern-ethnic.” Eric Hobsbawm considered the existence of a difference between two kinds of nationalism, the first civic and the second ethnic, linguistic and cultural. The earlier kind of nationalism which flourished in Europe in the period 1830-1870, tended to unify and homogenize population. The ethno-linguistic types of nationalism, on the other hand, flourished in the period 1870-1914, and tended to split larger political units along cultural lines.¹⁹

However, other historians such as Nunez or Anthony D. Smith claim that such a pure division between “civic” and “ethnic” forms did not exist. They believe that nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms. Nunez claims that

¹⁶ Benedict Anderson , *Imagined Communities. Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* , (London: Verso, 1983) , p.7.

¹⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations And Nationalism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, , 1983), p.1.

¹⁸ Ernő, Gáll, *A Nacionalizmus színeváltozásai* (The true colours of nationalism) , (Oradea:Literator, 1994), p.14

¹⁹ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, (Oxford:Oxford University Press , 1999), p. 204.

“Ethno-civic nationalisms can be found everywhere in Europe. What make them different are the conditions within which nationalism and territorial identities have emerged and developed.”²⁰

Nationalism was a relatively peaceful movement in the West, where the liberation and unification wars tightened the bond between people. However, in the multiethnic and multi religious Empires from the East (Hapsburg, Russian and Ottoman Empire) nationalism became a destructive force. The Versailles’s Peace conference, after the 1st World War, tried to create more homogenous states but the new states remained as much multiethnic as the big Eastern European Empires before. Hobsbawm considered this was the moment when the nineteenth century ‘principle of nation ‘triumphed.’²¹ He also points out that “the main change was that states were now on average rather smaller and the ‘oppressed peoples’ within them were now called oppressed minorities.”²²

This dissatisfaction of many nations led to the 2nd World War. However, Nazi Germany (who started) created another problem. The ideology which they promoted alienated otherwise well integrated ethnic subgroups of the different national states. These subgroups were well assimilated people such as the Jews or the people who were on the road of peaceful integration in the different societies such as the Romany people.²³. All these

²⁰ Xose´-Manoel Nu´nez, *Nations and Territorial Identities in Europe:Transnational Reflections*, European History Quarterly 40, no. 4 (September 9, 2010):670. <http://ehq.sagepub.com/content/40/4/669.full.pdf+html> (accessed April 5, 2011).

²¹ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.131.

²² Ibid., pp.133-134.

²³ The Roma population was considered as a part of the village in Romania and when the sociologist Dimitrie Gusti made his social investigation of village life. He mentioned not as a different ethnic group just as a very poor social category in the village. From Viorel Achim, *“The Roma in Romanian History”*, (Budapest: Ceu Press, 2004) ,p.4.

actions coming from the so called civilized Germany had long time effects which we can feel even today.

All these events contributed of the increased nationalism of the Eastern European states. Ethnic-nationalism tries:” to single out and categorize minorities within as ‘alien’ to the historic culture-community. Since the latter is seen as pure and authentic, non-members within are inevitably cast as counter –types and become targets of suspicion and hostility...they may be discriminated against, harassed, segregated and finally expelled, or even exterminated.”²⁴ The 2nd World War’s experience also contributed that ethnic subgroups who tried to integrate in different Eastern European nations chose a different way of integration after these events: total assimilation, integration as an ethnic group or they started their own awakening process.²⁵

After the trauma of the 2nd World War came another trauma in the life of these people, the experience of socialism. Eric Hobsbawm points out that “Hitler and decolonization appeared to have restored the alliance of nationalism with the left which have seemed so natural before 1848”²⁶ He also mentions that the socialist states became nationalist not only in their form, but in their substrate as well.²⁷ However, the communist period in the case of the Roma population was one period of integration because the communist countries try to sort out many of their problems or to reduce the level of it (poverty, education, and work related problems).

The collapse of this socialism instead of decreasing nationalist feelings increased there even more. Ethnic subgroups, who benefited so much from socialism and whose

²⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.198.

²⁵ Roger Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), p.18.

²⁶ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.151.

²⁷ Ibid.147.

situation considerably improved, became the target of racist nationalist groups and some of them also lost their relative economic wellbeing. Entire regions entered in the economic collapse and nationalism in the negative sense rose to an unimaginable level. All these social problems led to alienation among communities (especially Roma and non Roma).

It is very important in my view to find out if the Romany people would like to transform into a nation. Viorel Achim points out that a couple of Roma intellectuals from Romania are acting as awakeners for the Roma community and they “propose the reactivation of the traditional organization of the Gypsies.”²⁸ However, he also mentions the difficulty to predict how successful will be. Delia Grigore also points out, in *History and traditions of the minority*, that a couple of Roma leaders express the need to transform the Roma communities into a trans-national nation. However, the biggest obstacles in this process are the diversity of the Roma communities. Moreover, KAM researchers mention, in *Looking for a place? The Roma people in Szeklerland* that, for example, certain Roma groups are very individualistic and reject other Roma groups, such as the Gabor Roma and non Gabor Roma people. These rejections are in the case of many Roma communities towards the ‘others’ because, as Mr Lakatos a Roma leader points out, they have different language, traditions and occupations.

Another author, Engebrigsten also analyze this possibility of nation formation in the Roma community. She even compares their struggle with the Romanians movements for emancipation in Transylvania “Like the educated Vlachs of eighteenth and nineteenth century Transylvania, the educated Roma of twentieth century Romania demand to be regarded as one nation with own language and equal rights with other ethnic minorities.”²⁹ If they

²⁸ Viorel Achim , *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest:Central European University Press, , 1998),pp. 216-217.

²⁹ Ada I. Engebringsten , *Exploring Gypsiness, Power, Exchange and interdependence in a Transylvanian village*,(Oxford: Bergham books, , 2007), pp.200-201.

transform into a nation, this will affect their relations with other communities. In the past this process created a lot of sufferings for people all around the world. Engebrigsten also analyzes this question and highlights the Romanian population fear of this kind of evolution but she also mentions that is very hard to predict anything. In order to answer if they want to integrate or not and how this effects their relation with other ethnic communities we have to analyze the Roma community's religious life, education and language.

The other problem strongly connected with the national issues the social issues and poverty. If we consider the nation in a positive sense, that means solidarity between its members. Leaving some part of society in poverty means lack of solidarity. Because of this we can not ignore the role of poverty as a key characteristic in the Roma and non Roma relationship.

1.3 The social issues

Marx considered poverty and exploitation the moving force behind historical events. Socialist historians considers as the most important moving force behind social events still today. In Central and Eastern Europe one of the achievements of the socialist regimes was the “security of livelihood through compulsory work” and “the termination of class differences” –these were the historical legitimating of these communist countries.³⁰

Even if this was not true, the system did create a better life for many of poor people. In Szalai's opinion, this was only an “illusion of successful integration”³¹ and is exaggerated somehow. The general health care available for everyone, the possibility to free education from kindergarten to schools, generous pension schemes and many other facilities were available to anybody all around the socialist world. Even social groups who previously did

³⁰ Julia Szalai, “*Power and Poverty*” in “*The Social History of poverty in Central Europe*” (Budapest: Max Weber Foundation for the Study of Social Initiatives, 1995), p.203.

³¹ Ibid.,p.203.

not have regular jobs were part of the systems.³² The communist system did manage to reduce the poverty level significantly, but after 1990 society fell in two parts.

Numerous people –the elderly former agricultural co-operative workers, unskilled labours and above all the Gypsies were directly affected by the new era.³³ The state as an employer did not exist anymore. “The poor are the victims of this tacit new compromise...they have been eliminated from the competition ...being excluded by legal means from all the benefits to which the slowly emerging propertied strata are entitled”.³⁴ Worst of all was that entire regions fell in huge poverty where they rely entirely on social benefits. Also in some regions generations are growing up whose father never worked and they have no hope of employment either. For many people the quality of life is worse than their fathers and grandfathers had in the 1960’s.³⁵

Lots of ethnic groups are nowadays characterized by their social condition. Further more if we consider the nation as a comradeship –basically this is lack of this comradeship. This is happening with ethnic communities like Roma as well. .

2.The history of Roma people

In this chapter I will present the very short history of the Roma population but I will focus mainly on the impact of those historical events which influenced the evolution of Hungarian Roma relationship in Transylvania. In the first part I will write how Roma

³² Michael Stewart, *The Time of the Gypsies*, (Oxford: WestviewPress, 1997), pp. 127-128.

³³ Csaba Dupcsik , *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története (The Life of Hungarian Gypsies)*,(Budapest : Osiris, 2009), p.205.

³⁴ Julia Szalai, “ *Power and Poverty*” in “*The Social History of poverty in Central Europe*”,(Budapest: Max Weber Foundation for the Study of Social Initiatives, 1995), p.215.

³⁵ Csaba Dupcsik , *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története (The Life of Hungarian Gypsies)*,(Budapest: Osiris , 2009), pp.290.

population arrived in Europe and their history in Hungary (Transylvania was part of Hungary till the 1st World War) and Romanian Principate. Secondly, I will discuss why the atrocities from the 2nd World War which had a long term impact on Roma population. Finally, I will focus on the history of Roma in the socialist Romania, why I consider 1990 March Târgu Mureş as a symbol of the solidarity between Roma and Hungarians in Transylvania and how the relationship is today.

2.1The arrival of Roma population

The Roma did not have a written history because of this historians tried to reconstruct their history using linguistic arguments. The Romany language belongs to Indo-European history and is related with Sanskrit. There is also consensus over their Indian origin. However, there is a disagreement among historian when and why they left India. The vast majority of historians such as Angus Fraser, Viorel Achim, and Mariana Sandu believe that they left in numerous waves till the 11th centuries BC and they belonged to the lower cast. However, Ian Hancock claims that they left India only in the 10th or 11th century because of a Muslim attack against India and they were war prisoners. They spent centuries in Persia which is demonstrated of the large number of words taken in Romany language from Persian. The majority of historians such as Fraser, Gellner mentioned the legend related in Shah-Nahme by Firdawsi. The legend tells how people called Zott arrived as musicians in the court of Bahram Gur in the 5th Century. Viorel Achim told that the Roma divided in three groups in Armenia and one of them went to the Byzantine Empire in the 13th Century. Most probably they got in the Byzantine Empire their name on which they are known in Eastern Europe Tsigane from the name of Athinganos or Atsinganos “after a name of the heretical sect”.³⁶ They appeared in Romanian Principates and Hungarian Kingdom in the 14th and 15th Century.

³⁶ Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), pp.8-9.

The history of Roma people in Hungary and Romania are strongly interconnected. Numerous events in the history of Roma such as various migrations of Roma from Romanian Principates, had an impact on the history of Roma in Hungary. Gheorghe Sarău mentions that there are three Hungarian speaking groups in Transylvania today: Romungros, the mainly Hungarian speaking Roma deeply influenced by Hungarian culture (for example the Hazi “house” and the Kosaras “basketeer” Roma from Szeklerland), Lovaris (horse trader Hungarian speaking Roma) and Gabors (trilingual tin men and merchants).³⁷ The historical relation between Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma goes back to the XIII-XIV centuries. The first written appearance in Romania is a deed issued by Dan I for the Tismana monastery in the 14th Century.

The Roma treatment was totally different in Hungarian Kingdom then in the Romanian Principates. They will be used as robes, slaves for the next four and half century in the two Romanian Princepates. In Hungary and Transylvania they became royal serfs and they had to pay a certain tax annually but they were free to move.³⁸ In Szeklerland they were mentioned by Giovanandrea Gromo in 1564: “*among the Szeklers live a large number of Gypsies, whom they use to work the land*”.³⁹ However, the introduction of enlightened centralist state after the liberation of Ottoman rule changed their situation. Maria Teresa and Joseph the 2nd wanted to transform them into law abiding citizens and because they forced them to settle, forced their children to attend school, banned their traditional activities.⁴⁰ Csaba Dupcsik believes that this centralized and enforced “modernization” program of Joseph the II created a role model for autocrat regimes in the XX. Century.⁴¹

³⁷ Gheorghe Sarau and Delia Grigore; *Istorie si tradiție rrome* (Roma's history and traditions), (Phare program 2003. Consolidarea Societatii Civile in Romania: Organizatia Salvati Copii,2006), pp. 92-93.

³⁸ Angus Fraser, *The Gypsies*, (Oxford: Blackwell,1992), pp.68.-69.

³⁹ David Prodan, *Boieri si vecini in Tara Făgărașului in sec. XVI-XVII* (Nobles and serves in Fagaras land in XVI-XVII centuries) (Bucharest:Editura Enciclopedica, Vol. Istoria Transilvaniei. Studii si evocari , 1991), pp.22-27.

⁴⁰ Csaba Dupcsik , *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története* (The History of Roma in Hungary) ,(Budapest: Osiris,2009), pg.70-78.

⁴¹ Ibid., pg.52-54.

In the Romanian Principates the Romany people's slavery will be abolished step by step as Mariana Sandu, Delia Grigore and Petre Petcuț mention, in their schoolbook "*The history and tradition of the Roma minority*", between 1843 and 1855-1856. Most intellectuals from Romania of that time, such as Vasile Alecsandri compared their history with the black people from USA. The liberation of Roma started a new wave of Roma immigration in Hungary. 30% of the all Roma population from Hungary came from Romania in the XIX Century and they became "a component of the human tableau of Transylvanian settlements" in that time.⁴²

Here it is important to mention the great contribution of Roma people to both Hungarian and Romanian culture. Roma musicians such as János Bihari, Cinka Panna became inseparable names of the regeneration movements from the XIX Century. It happened even that Roma musicians married aristocrats such as Jancsi Rigó married a princess, Rudi Nyári a countess. Francis Liszt, pianist of the XIX Century was a big fan of Gypsy music.⁴³ Numerous Roma musicians from the Romanian Principates had great success too for example Barbu Lăutaru who impressed even Liszt.⁴⁴

2.2. The Roma people history during the 2nd World War in Romania

Transylvania became part of Romania after the 1st World War and this was the province with the highest number of Roma population. Viorel Achim mentions that in province of Crișana 15,895 and in proper Transylvania 75,342 Roma (2.3% of the total population) lived during the census from 1930. He also mentions that the Romany people

⁴² Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004) pp. 133-134.

⁴³ Angus Fraser, *The Gypsies*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 200-203.

⁴⁴ Costin Tuchilă, *Barbu Lăutarul-vocea lumii desfatată* (Barbu Lăutarul-famous voice of the world), http://www.bucurestiivechisinoi.ro/2011/01/barbu-lautarul-%E2%80%93-%C2%ABvocea-lumii-desfatata%C2%BB_ (accessed June 2, 2011)

were not a “particular preoccupation of Romanian society”⁴⁵ and nationalist rhetoric did not mention them before the 2nd World War.

The situation changed to the worse in Hungary and Romania after the 1930s and 1940s. Germany had always a huge political, economic and cultural influence in Central and Central East Europe and German fascism was copied by these societies too. German fascist ideology created the ground for change in the “relatively” tolerant or indifferentist Roma policy of these countries as Viorel Achim and Csaba Dupcsik mentions.

Dupcsik mentions in *The History of Hungarian Roma* that in the Hungarian Medical Journals those publications increased which presented the Roma population as a threat to Hungarians after 1932. Dupcsik tells us that copying the German fascists there was a lot of pogroms and deportation of Roma people in Hungary 1944.⁴⁶ However, this happened mostly in today’s Hungary because Transylvania was under Soviet occupation in the end of 1944. There are different number of statistics how many Roma died in Hungary Dupcsik points out that the number is not important ,the very fact this kind of thing could happen in Hungary is.⁴⁷

In Romania there was even more radical change in the very tolerant policy towards Roma people. Viorel Achim pointed out that in 1940’s the Antonescu regime decided on the transportation of Romany people to Transnistria. He considered that Transnistria it was a “dumping ground” for Antonescu regime where he wanted to move all undesirable ethnic groups (part of Roma people) too. Achim highlighted that because the bad condition and the brutality of the Romanian authorities many Roma people died. He also mentions that Roma people, who fled Northern Transylvania, when the Hungarians came, were not persecuted.

⁴⁵ Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*,(Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), pp. 166-167.

⁴⁶ Csaba Dupcsik , *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története (The History of Roma in Hungary)* , (Budapest:Osiris, , 2009), pg.120-121.

⁴⁷ The different statistics show a number from 5000 to 30000. Ibid., pp.134-138.

The very fact that this kind of thing could happen in Hungary and Romania left a long lasting effect on Roma and non Roma relationship.

2.3. The Roma people in the communist time, end of communism, 1990 March and today

Many Roma managed to be part of the Police force, Army, administration and even become mayor immediately after communism came to power.⁴⁸ One thing is certain the Roma population's living condition improved and their slow and sometimes painful integration started: regular income, safe employment, free healthcare and free and obligatory education. Despite the improving living condition lot of Roma leader complain today that their demands to be considered an individual ethnic group was not fulfilled by the socialist Romanian governments and the governments enforced their assimilation.

The fall of the socialist regime also considerably changed the Roma people's life. On the other hand fulfilled their ethnic, cultural demands-they became an individual ethnic group with booming cultural life and many Roma organizations appeared. They elected even three Roma deputies to the Romanian Parliament.⁴⁹ On the other hand, a massive unemployment, segregation and the rejection from the non Roma side created a disappointment among Roma people.

The three Hungarian speaking Roma communities⁵⁰ reacted in different ways to the change that took place in Romanian society after 1989. The KAM anthropologists believe that the Gabor Roma people are the winners in this change.⁵¹ These Gabor Roma live in county Bihor and Mureş. Rupi, Pentecostal priest connected both to county Bihor and Mureş,

⁴⁸ Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest :Central European University Press, 2004), pp.180-200.

⁴⁹ Mariana Sandu; *Romii din România-Repere prin Istorie* (Roma from Romania –History sources), (Bucuresti:Vanemonde,2005), pp. 42-43.

⁵⁰ Gheorghe Sarau and Delia Grigore; *Istorie si traditie rrome* (Roma's history and traditions), (Phare program 2003. Consolidarea Societatii Civile in Romania: Organizatia Salvati Copii,2006), pp. 92-93.

⁵¹ KAM-Regional and Anthropology Centre, *Helyzetkeresők? Roma lakosság Székelyföldön* (Looking for a place? The Roma community in Szeklerland),(Miercurea Ciuc:Pro-Print,2002),pp.49-67

told me they became trilingual, neo-Protestants and they are basically traders. They changed their lifestyle and their children go clean, well prepared to school. Despite of this transformation they have strict dress codes which separate them from non Gabor Roma and Hungarians. This is also a manifestation of their strong self-identity. The other two communities do less well. Especially the Romungros, those Roma people who speak only Hungarian, are the biggest losers in the change. They live mostly in Szeklerland and in the predominantly Hungarian villages from county Bihor and Mureş. Sometimes they are monolanguag and they do not speak in Romanian at all. They are divided in Szeklerland into two groups, the so-called house “hazi” Roma, who help peasants in the villages or basket makers “kosaras” Roma, who sell their baskets and brooms. They do not have a strict dress code and they are better integrated in the Hungarian community. However, as a KAM researcher mentions, they are the victims both of the disappearance of the big social factories, cooperatives and because of the recession the peasants do not need their help or their trade is dying. The lovari Roma are usually bilingual and they use both Romany and Hungarian in communication and they maintain Roma traditions.⁵² They are usually businessmen and tradesman. The Romungros, and to lesser extent, the lovary Roma people are the losers in the change in the economic and social change in the society.

Despite huge optimism in a free and democratic world, the people soon observed the bad side of the new era. The weakness of democracy made it possible the manipulation of ethnic differences by the former security forces to regain their authority in Romania after the Revolution in 1989.⁵³ This happened using the scapegoat the Hungarian community. After the revolution the Hungarian community reorganized itself very quickly. The Hungarian community also formulated quickly their demands: Hungarian schools, more freedom. Many

⁵² Michael Stewart, *The time of Gypsies*, (London :Westview Press ,1997), pp.10-11.

⁵³ András Sütő, *Napló-jegyzetek (Memoirs)*, (Bukarest: Romániai Magyar Szó, 1990), pp. 142-147.

Romanians accused Hungarians that this is the first step to reclaim Transylvania.⁵⁴ Brubaker mentions the reason why this manipulation was successful in Târgu Mureş and no anywhere else because the ethnic balance of the city was equal and this increased the suspicion on both sides.⁵⁵

The conservative former Security forces used the suspicion of simple villagers to manipulate the situation. In Târgu Mureş the Hungarians reclaimed their former college, the Bolyai, placed a bilingual inscription on the institutions and started to commemorate openly the 1848 Revolution which is watched even today with suspicion by Romanians. This commemoration from the 15th March 1990 was the last straw, for the Romanian community, which led to interethnic clashes in Târgu Mureş in 1990. András Sütő, a writer and victim of the events, mentioned the Hungarian community was shocked by the violent reaction of some violent anti-Hungarian manifestation of the misled Romanian peasants from the neighboring villages.⁵⁶ In Bihari Napló newspaper in Oradea, appeared an article in 21st March 1990 that claimed that the local village mayors, police officer and postmen persuaded people from the neighboring Romanian villages to make order. The role of authorities, Police and Army in initiating this event and their failure to help the Hungarian community when they requested it is not very clear even today.⁵⁷ The Centre of the Hungarian Party was attacked and the Hungarians tried to defend on 19th and 20th of March 1990. As two eyewitness to the events, Mr. Karácsonyi and Mrs. Enache, explained, the Hungarians won the clash with the help of the Szeklers and the Hungarian speaking Roma population supported the Hungarian and it is a legend about their shout “Do not be threatened Hungarians, the Gypsies are coming”. As Mrs. Enache mentioned around 50-200 Roma (Romungros and Lovari Roma) from the so-

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 142-147

⁵⁵ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), p.134.

⁵⁶ András Sütő, *Napló-jegyzetek (Memoirs)*, (Bukarest: Romániai Magyar Szó, 1990), pp. 142-147.

⁵⁷ Helsinki Watch, *Romania Human Rights development*, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1990/WR90/HELSINKI.BOU-02.htm>, (accessed May1, 2011).

called borough “Hidegvölgy” helped the Hungarians in their self-defense. The Army intervention came just after the Hungarians and Roma managed to regain control.⁵⁸ The very fact that Roma people helped the Hungarians when they were in need created a base for a feeling of camaraderie among Hungarians. The Parliament’s reports about the events never have been made public and only Hungarians and especially Hungarian Roma were persecuted.⁵⁹

After 1990 a couple of events started which on the one side increased the poverty of Roma , social crimes of Roma and also the over reaction of this social crimes from the non Roma side, on the other hand the emancipation of Roma population and the focus of national and international organization on Roma problem. Unfortunately, in many cases happened that the crimes of few Roma created an over reaction of non Roma (Hungarians too) people against Roma. This kind of events happened even in county Mureş and Szeklerland too. This kind of events happened in Hădăreni(county Mureş) in 1993, Lunga(county Covasna) in 1990, Casinul Nou (county Harghita in 1990) etc.⁶⁰ However, it started a couple of educational or medical program for Roma people supported by Phare or MEdC programs, increased the number of Roma children who want to study Roma language (25000 in 2005), created a number of places in Universities and Police Academy for minorities (Roma especially). The wish for emancipation of Roma and for the transformation for a trans-European nationality is higher than in Hungary due to higher number of Roma people in Romania-Bruxelles Declaration.⁶¹ This emancipation also could effect the non Roma and

⁵⁸ Daniel Bihari, ” Cigányok verekedtek Magyarokért “(Roma fought for Hungarians, Figyelő Net, 11th March 2010,

http://www.fn.hu/tudomany/20100310/ciganyok_verekedtek_magyarokert/, (accessed May1, 2011).

⁵⁹ Helsinki Watch, Romania Human Rights development ,

<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1990/WR90/HELSINKI.BOU-02.htm>, (accessed May1, 2011).

⁶⁰ Centre of Documentation and information of Minorities in Europe –SouthEast Europe (CEDIME-CE), Minorities in SouthEast Europe: Roma from Romania , (November 2001),

http://www.edrc.ro/resurse/rapoarte/Roma_of_Romania.pdf, Accessed May 1, 2011)

⁶¹ Delia Grigore, Petre Petcut and Mariana Sandu, *Istoria si traditiile minoritatii Rromani* (History and tradition of the Roma Minority), (Bucuresti:Published by Sigma, 2005), pg. 102-103.

Roma relationship because probably will weaken the relationship between Roma and Hungarian too.

3.Education and Religiosity as forces which bond Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma

In this chapter I will focus on education and religiosity which bond the two ethnic communities together. I will analyze through school inspectors, Roma leaders, priests and human rights activists' view the impact of these fields on Hungarians and Roma relationship.

3.1. Education

The aim in this subchapter is to analyze the role of education as a key element of the Hungarian Roma relationship. Education is a key issue for the modern world and it is one of the sensitive elements in interethnic relationships. Education, from the very beginning, also had a huge role in awakening the nations and nationalities and contributed either in the integration or the disintegration of different ethnic groups.⁶² Moreover, education can also help in increasing the atmosphere of tolerance and in creating the social network between different parts of the society, in this case the Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma today. In my subchapter firstly I will present different historians' views about education in forming the modern nation. The reason why I would like to analyze from this angle is that there is a debate between historians as to what are Romany people are—an ethnic group, nation in formation (Viorel Achim) or just a social group. If they are a nation in formation their approach to education in Hungarian school will be a rejective one. Secondly, I examine the importance of education for the Hungarian community and Hungarian speaking Roma communities. Finally I will compare the role of education in the Hungarian Roma relationship in three regions where Hungarians are in significant numbers –Oradea, Târgu

⁶² Ernő Gáll. *A Nacionalizmus színeváltozásai* (The true colours of nationalism , Oradea: Literator, 1994), p.197-198

Mureş and Szeklerland . Also I analyze the importance of education in bonding together the Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma in the end of communism, in 1990 and the evolution of this afterwards.

Scholars, such as Gellner and Weber, were aware from the very beginning of the importance of education for ethnic identity and nation building. Gellner highlights in his book the connection between nationalism and the role of intellectuals and education.⁶³ He points out the contribution of scholars in the spread of nationalism. Basically, he demonstrates in his book that the new society in the modern world is an impersonal, anonymous society with easily interchangeable members who are interconnected through language and culture.⁶⁴ Weber highlights also in his book how peasants were transformed into Frenchmen through “propagating national culture, inculcating national attitudes, and promoting linguistic standardization and assimilation”.⁶⁵

Brubacker points out that the education is the key element in holding the Hungarian community together in modern Transylvania. He investigated the importance of Hungarian education for the Hungarian Minority in Transylvania and he highlights that the production and reproduction of the Hungarian social world is happening through schools. Brubacker underlines that even more important are the “school based networks and high school friendship groups in particular, which remain important later in life.”⁶⁶ He goes even further that those Hungarians who did not attend Hungarian schools are lost members of the Hungarian community.

⁶³ Ernő Gáll, *A Nacionalizmus színeváltozásai (The true colour of nationalism)*, Literator, Oradea, 1994, pg. 197-198

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Rogers Brubacker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, Princeton University Press, Oxford, 2006, p. 270

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 275

In Transylvania the Hungarian Roma relationship to the school has the same importance. The percentages of Hungarian Roma in the Hungarian schools are around 20%.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, the tendency of segregation, separation is visible in the slumarising part of Szeklerland in the same way as is presented in Virág Tünde's article on Hungary.⁶⁸ Moreover the segregation, separation also appeared in all three regions-Oradea, Târgu Mureş and Szeklerland. I use here segregation and separations together because it is not very clear whether this is the wish of Roma families to reserve their one identity or a rejection of the Hungarian families. The segregation, separation has the same negative effect as in Hungary for the Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma in Transylvania. However, it is also true that because of the decreasing numbers of the Hungarian children in most regions, the Roma children are usually welcomed in Hungarian schools. The salvation of the teacher's job is only possible through more students because of this teachers are interested in integrating Roma children in the schools. Pető Csilla, former school inspector and MP in the Romanian Parliament, told me that in Oradea and in county Bihor most Hungarian school survive just because of Hungarian speaking Roma children. She mentioned this is a situation all around Transylvania today. Her statement was confirmed by all Hungarian school inspectors from the three regions. Pető also praised the Hungarian teacher's dedication to help Hungarian speaking Roma integration. She told me that this sometimes needs extra work from the teacher's part.

An interesting issue, which is highly debated, was the learning difficulties of Roma children which was true but also it is true that the school system is very inflexible and not

⁶⁷ Balázs Kapitány and Tamás Kiss, "Erdélyi Magyarság : csökkenő arány változatlan létszám" (Transylvanian Hungarians: percentage in decrease but same number), Kronika (31. May 2011), <http://www.kronika.ro/index.php?action=open&res=45938>, (accessed April 5, 2011)

⁶⁸ Virág Tünde, *Gettósódó térség, Gettósódó iskolarendszer* (Slumrising areas, slum- rising schools?) in *The Roma population in Hungary at the beginning of XXI century – Quick research reports*, Published by MTA, Budapest, 2003), pp.127-139.

very well adapted to the special needs of Roma children in former communist countries.⁶⁹

Smaranda Enache, human right's fighter from Târgu Mureş , believes the main cause of the Roma children learning difficulties is that Roma culture is mainly an oral culture; because their mother tongue is different and occasionally the school language present a difficulty for part of them and also that some Roma parents do not believe in the usefulness of schools.

This inflexible system is characteristic for every former socialist country. Another issue highlighted by Virág Tünde is that a lot of Roma do not speak properly in the school the Hungarian (or the Romanian) language and because of this they can not have the same achievement than their luckier school fellows and because of this they feel discriminated. The same opinion is shared by Mrs Smaranda Enache human rights fighter from Pro Europa Liga Târgu Mureş , she is also concerned that Roma children meet in non Roma schools with a world which is strange to them and this is the reason behind their poor achievements.

It is worth mentioning the survey of the Roma people's situation in Romania (and another four former socialist countries) organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2001. They analyzed the health condition, education and employment of Roma people. After the survey, they considered the Roma population a loser of the transition from socialism to capitalism.⁷⁰ UNDP believes that these countries are just "completing their nation building process"⁷¹ and this process is the cause of ethnic tensions and rejection of Roma in Romania, too. Especially, as the UDNP highlights, in the education there is visible a huge decline which seriously effects Roma employment.

3.1.1. Roma the education during the socialism and in 1989-1990

⁶⁹ Csaba Dupcsik, 333he History of Hungarian Gypsies), (Budapest:Osiris,2009),p.216.

⁷⁰ United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, *Avoiding the Dependency Trap*, (Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2002), pp.16-17.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp.16-17.

In spite of the inflexible school system, socialist Romania's biggest achievement was the integration of the Roma community in the education system. This system made some improvements in Roma education. In 1971 50% of Roma children finished elementary eight classes but only 0.5% graduated and 0.1% had a Bachelor degree.⁷²

During socialism, there was in the whole of Romania a centralized education, it rejected the segregation of the Roma on ideological grounds and employment was obligatory. This entire social network managed to integrate the Roma population better than nowadays. This was similar in all the three areas Oradea, Târgu Mureş and Szeklerland. Furthermore in 1990, Mr Karácsonyi, a journalist from Târgu Mureş's *Népujság*, and participant of the events from 1990 March Târgu Mureş, believes that the good relationship between Roma and Hungarians was based on the social net formed in school. In Târgu Mureş and in Szeklerland this social net formed in the socialist era was especially strong due to the high number of Hungarian in those areas. The only exception is Oradea; because of the smaller percentage of Hungarian population in Oradea it was also important but not as important as in the other two regions where Hungarians were the majority.

Another similar aspect of the centralized system was the lack of possibility to create separate Roma classes. Mr. Florin Hajnal Roma advisor of the Târgu Mureş Council believes that the biggest weakness of the social school system was the rejection of Roma as a nationality and their need for Roma classes and Roma language.

However, everybody recognize the social condition was better during the socialism. Daniela Tutos from the Ruhama Foundation Oradea, pointed out that there was no unemployment and the school was obligatory and segregation in school was not allowed during the communism. The same positive opinion is showed by the Roma Party's leader from Miercurea Ciuc Mr Alexander Joni.

⁷²United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, *Avoiding the Dependency Trap*, (Bratislava : United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, , 2002), pp .210-211.

The education as an integration factor of the Hungarian speaking Roma and Hungarian was stronger in communism because there was no possibility of Roma classes due to the Romanian regimes rejection, there was no segregation due to the communist ideology which refused segregation and the children shared the same benches in schools which made the contact between Hungarians and Roma easier and stronger. Probably, the common school was one of the bonding elements, claimed Mr Karácsonyi a journalist from Népujság Târgu Mureş, between Hungarians and Roma in 1990 March Târgu Mureş.

3.1.2 The education of Hungarian speaking Roma today

There are a couple of changes in the education of Roma in general which affect Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship. First of all it is the poverty which affects seriously the Roma children and in many cases the segregation present in school. Secondly, the Roma's emancipation has an impact on the education too. Thirdly, the Phare and other programs which try to help the integration of Roma children in society. Finally, Church involvement and help to educate social workers and their kindergarten and schools as well. These changes are present in all regions but their impact on the relationship is different.

Poverty it is the worst and affects most seriously the relationship and contributes to the segregation from both parts from Hungarian and Roma sides as well in all three regions. Szeklerland is the poorest of the three regions and has the highest number in unemployment. The way how poverty affects the socialization between Roma and Hungarian children and led to segregation it is explained by Eva Porsche the school inspector from Miercurea Ciuc. She believes that the poverty of Roma children is very shocking and really affects their school achievements. The county Harghita had plenty of Phare projects (2003-2005) which put an accent on the socialization of Roma children to help them to integrate and to combat segregation. In many cases these children came stinky and with lice to the schools. They were rejected because of this by Hungarian children. The School inspectors and the also the Project

wanted to avoid segregation of these children and they bought for the schools washing machines and set up bathrooms to avoid complains of Hungarian families. Roma children received hot food and clothes as well and in this way they came happily to school. She pointed out that because of this the education was really popular among them. She told me that one little girl came to her and said: “Imagine Auntie Eva I ate real chicken”.

However, she told me also after this program ended the Roma children stopped coming to the school. She believes that in many cases the Roma children do not have proper clothes to come to school. She also told a story about a young Roma girl who had only a shirt and one of the neighboring boys gave her a pair of trousers to come to school.

Mrs. Eva Porsche explained to me also that these Roma children do not frequent kindergarten and their knowledge is behind the Hungarian children. Unfortunately, this creates difficulties in their integration. The lack of integration of the Hungarian speaking Roma children seriously affects the relationship between Roma and Hungarians in Szeklerland today.

Oradea and county of Bihor it is a richer place than Szeklerland. Unfortunately, poverty is present in the case of Roma children too. Mrs Elisabeth Ilea, school inspector from Oradea, described their situation as “medieval” in places such as, Székelyhid, Érkeserű and Monospetri. She was shocked by the poverty and their social vulnerability. Mrs. Ilea told me that it was a survey in which they asked the Roma children what is their biggest problem and they told in these places the lack of information due to their isolation from the surrounding world. They feel that the (Hungarian) world around them ignores them

A tragic case of a little Roma girl illustrates the problem which the school inspectors face and why segregation is viewed in different way by the European Roma Rights Centre and by school inspectors. The school inspector from Oradea mentioned the story of a little Roma girl from Lazareni. Overthere two classes, Roma and non Roma, was mixed from

outside. The Roma children who had some achievements previously felt marginalized in the new environment. One of them, who was more sensitive than the others, was ashamed of her social condition and because her mother did not take care of her she committed suicide. The school inspector believes that it is better to not touch a community from outside. She reflected to a survey of ERRC in school no. 1 (Ion Slavici) in Oradea from 2001.

The ERRC organized a survey about Roma children situation in 2001. It was identified that in the School no. 1 existed a segregation of Hungarian speaking Roma children.⁷³ A remedial section was organized for them. The ERRC also reported that the director of the school mentioned that Hungarian parents did not accept sending their children to study with Roma. The director also told that the children are in a separate building and the turnover of staff is very high because nobody wanted to be “buried there professionally”.⁷⁴ The school inspector from Oradea argued with the ERRC claims. She told me that the Roma children from school no 1 have programs together (visiting the Zoo), have a Roma psychologist who teaches the Hungarian language for them and they play together. She considered that any enforced involvement from outside can lead cases such as the little Roma girl above. Mrs Csilla Pető, a member of the Education Department of the Romanian Parliament, pointed out that it was offered for the Roma children’s parents and grandparents that they can be moved somewhere else but they rejected because this is close for them and they also studied there.

This case from county of Bihor illustrates that it became very hard for school inspectors to interfere from outside. The separation in many cases is wanted from both sides. However, the separation, segregation reduces the contact between Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma and weakens the solidarity between these two communities in Oradea and in Bihor County.

⁷³European Roma Rights Center, *Stigmata. Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Budapest:European Roma Rights Center, 2004), pp.62-63.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

The situation from Târgu Mureş is slightly different because the Roma population high number and their most advanced individualization as a different ethnic group. On one side poverty is also present in their case. On the other side the wish for separation is the highest here. The Roma community, as Mr Florin Hajnal explained, is almost 30% of the total population of the county Mureş and Roma parents, as the school inspectors from Târgu Mureş presented, wish to have separate Roma classes in many cases. The school inspector from here, Mrs Hajnal Kiss also explained, only that school program can be successful which helps socially the children as well. One example for good Hungarian and Roma collaboration is the “Szivárvány” (Rainbow) Foundation, where as Mrs Réka Fejes, a school inspector from Târgu Mureş, mentioned Hungarian speaking Roma children from the so called “Hidegvölgy” are learning. There are 33 in the kindergarten and 55 in the first class. There is even bigger demand from the Roma families’ part for more places but there are financial problems.

Despite of the wish of separation from Roma side In Târgu Mureş there is also lots of collaboration with Hungarians. The school inspectors from Târgu Mureş told me that without the Roma community they could close many of the Hungarian schools. The Hazi “House” Roma saved the school from Ogra and another school in the valley of Niraj. In Crăciuneşti without the Gabor community support they would be not able to save the Hungarian schools.

The reaction of the Roma leaders to Hungarian schools is very different. The above mentioned Gabor Roma community did not consider that they are losing their identity in Hungarian schools.⁷⁵ As Mr Rupî, a Pentecostal Roma Priest from Oradea mentioned me they believe that Gabor Roma children should learn Hungarian because they can use in many countries from Slovakia to Serbia. A previous report done by the KAM-Regional and

⁷⁵ KAM-Regional and Anthropology Centre, Helyzetkeresők? Roma lakosság Székelyföldön (Looking for a place? The Roma community in Szeklerland),(Miercurea Ciuc:Pro-Print,2002). 60-61.

Anthropological Centre with the Roma leader from Miercurea Ciuc in 2002 showed a similar approach. The Roma leader had no problem with learning in Hungarian because even their grandparents talked in this language and they did not lose their identity because of this.⁷⁶ The same opinion was expressed by Mr Alexander Joni the Roma Party leader brother from Miercurea Ciuc, he declared that he has no problem that the Roma children are learning in Hungarian or visiting Hungarian schools . Furthermore a Roma Party ex-leader from Miercurea Ciuc declared:” I’m still Gypsy, even if I don’t use the language”.⁷⁷ Mr. Joni also mentioned this helps the Roma community integration in Szeklerland and they, as a Hungarian speaking Roma are part of the Hungarian community. The Roma Baptist priest from Oradea, Mr. Kajca, did not consider the Hungarian language as a denationalization factor and his service are in Hungarian.

However, the approach of the Roma advisor of Târgu Mureş council, Mr. Florin Hajnal, is different. He speaks only Romanian and Romany language and Mr. Hajnal expressed his concern regarding the aid which the Hungarian state provides after Hungarian children. He believes this and other measures encourage the Roma to enroll their children in Hungarian classes. He believes that Roma children will lose their Roma identity there; they will learn the Hungarian traditions and become Hungarians. Mrs. Smaranda Enache, human right activist from Târgu Mureş , also expressed her suspicion of a couple of traditional Churches’ orphanages. She has the feeling that the Roma children will lose their identity there.

Probably, in the case of only Romany language speaking Roma case it is true that the language helps their development. However, lot of Roma community is a multilingual community and the language is just one part of their identity. On the other hand, if they

⁷⁶ KAM-Regional and Anthropology Centre, Helyzetkeresők? Roma lakosság Székelyföldön (Looking for a place? The Roma community in Szeklerland),(Miercurea Ciuc:Pro-Print,2002), pp. 298-299.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

would like to develop as a nation in the future the Romany language will be a key element of their future identity and the Roma community has a high number in county Mureş.

The development of the Roma children and their special needs are taken into consideration by numerous European projects. Most of the projects even if they are planned in Romania need financial support from the European Union or the West because of the lack of financial force of Romanian Institutions. The Roma part leader from Oradea, Mr Lakatos, mentioned the importance of school mediator position realized through a Phare project from 2007 with the help of the Hungarian MP in the Romanian Parliament, Mrs. Pető Csilla, as one of the biggest help for the Roma in Oradea. Mrs. Daniela Tutos, from Ruhama foundation, highlighted their own “Școala dupa școală” (School after school) program where they helped Roma children from the first classes and the “Toți in grădiniță, toți în clasa întâi” (Everybody in the kindergarten, everybody in the first class) which is going on in all the 42 counties of the country with the help of EU. This program was praised by all school inspectors from all three regions and this program was the Ruhama foundation work.

These programs also created the feeling of solidarity among Roma people. In this way they contribute to a better Hungarian Roma relationship in Oradea and Miercurea Ciuc. However, it is important to mention the different situation from Târgu Mureş where despite the huge number of Hungarian speaking Roma, as Mrs. Hajnal Kiss, mentioned there is no Hungarian speaking school mediator or Romany language teachers who speak Hungarian. Unfortunately, the positive effect of these projects is not felt in the Hungarian Roma relationship.

The education is still an important and mainly positive element in Hungarian and the Hungarian speaking Roma relationship. Despite the more accentuated wish for a manifestation of Roma identity the education still creates a feeling of solidarity between Hungarians and Roma. There are visible wishes from the Roma side to have their own

kindergarten and school where they can express their own identity more freely. However, in Oradea and Miercurea Ciuc the dedications of Hungarian teachers and school inspectors' side in integration of Roma children create a positive feeling in Roma people. The Phare and other educational projects, the Church's involvements help in this. However, generally speaking the education still bonds together Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma in all three regions.

3.2. Religiosity

In this subchapter I would like to analyze the importance of religion for the Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship. Some people in former communist countries consider that the key success for Roma integration is through religion.⁷⁸ In Transylvania the religious feeling is particularly strong. Since 1990 more than 3000 new Churches have been built only by the dominant religion, the Romanian Orthodox Church, as Fosztó mentions in his book.⁷⁹ In Europe Romania is one of the most religious countries.⁸⁰ The religiosity of Hungarians⁸¹ and Roma populations is incomparably higher in the whole segment of population than in 'secular' Hungary, and because of this religiosity is the second most important key element, as Brubaker mentions, for the Hungarian identity. In this subchapter I will examine if it has the same importance for Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relations in Transylvania. In the first part of my subchapter I investigate different scholars' views about the importance of religion and the importance of religion for Hungarian and Roma communities. Also I will evaluate the similarities and differences how

⁷⁸ György Rostás-Farkas, "Ütköző: Roma stratégia: Egyházi állásfoglalás" (Roma strategy: Churches' statement), Kethano Drom Kozos Ut, 17th February 2011, http://www.kethanodrom.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=891:roma-strategia-egyhazi-allasfoglalas&catid=97:romastrategia&Itemid=106, (accessed May 30, 2011)

⁷⁹ László Fosztó, *Ritual Revitalisation after Socialism. Community, Personhood and Conversion among Roma in a Transylvanian Village*, (Berlin : LIT , 2009), p.2.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.2.

⁸¹ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Oxford:Princeton University Press, 2006),p.279.

key religious events in people's life are viewed by Hungarians and Roma. Here I will also analyze the different view of religion, whether it is or it is not a manifestation of the Roma community's self-identity. In the second part I will examine the importance of the religion as a bonding of the two communities together in 1990 and I will analyze how the changes affected the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship afterwards.

Religion has a huge role in modern Transylvania. Fosztó mentions that: "some aspects of this religious revival are less visible to an outsider ...Religious activities, particularly participation in the rituals, create and maintain communities, social networks, and public spheres. Religion is a field for the construction of social relations and shared vision of the world, as well as a delimitation of groups."⁸² Another scholar, Smith, considers "where religious and ethnic boundaries have coincided, religion has helped ensure the survival of minority ethnic communities in poly-ethnic states."⁸³ Brubaker in his work highlights that churches help reproduce the Hungarian world "in Transylvania first of all in ethno-national socialization", providing space where Hungarian is spoken and finally with social, charitable and educational activities.⁸⁴

Religion is also important for the Roma community as a whole and for the Hungarian speaking Roma community, too. For Hungarians from Transylvania the Churches help to save their national identity. If we look at the Hungarian speaking Roma population, the situation is more complicated. For the part of the Roma population integrated well or considered part of the Hungarian minority the answer is mostly the same. Fosztó highlights in his work that in Romania "religious choices are rarely individual"⁸⁵ and they are linked to the

⁸² László Fosztó, *Ritual Revitalisation after Socialism. Community, Personhood and Conversion among Roma in a Transylvanian Village*, (Berlin :LIT , 2009), p.2.

⁸³ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p.123 in Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006),p.279.

⁸⁴ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, Oxford, 2006),p.280-281.

⁸⁵ László Fosztó, *Ritual Revitalisation after Socialism. Community, Personhood and Conversion among Roma in a Transylvanian Village*, (Berlin: LIT, , 2009),pp. 56-57.

community where people are” subject of social control”.⁸⁶ There is a growing community of Romany people who became “new born” Christians and take one of the neo-protestant⁸⁷ faiths. Their choice to become new born Christians is also a wish to be together in a Roma way and to have a priest from their own community who are more sensitive to issues important for Roma community.⁸⁸

If we take look at the religious map of Transylvania we can see that Hungarians are mostly Roman-Catholic, Calvinist or Unitarian even nowadays.⁸⁹ The Pentecostal religion is the most numerous between the neo-Protestant religions and had a huge influence on the Roma Community. In Romania 1.5% of the population belong to this religion - in county Bihor conforming to the 2002 census there are 34,314 Pentecostal in County Bihor (5% of the total population) , 6,995 (4,6 % of the total population) in County Mureş and only 355 in County Harghita and a slightly higher 3,131 in County Covasna.⁹⁰ This could be very important because their numbers are growing and also because they had many Roma believers. For the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship the most important issue they keep their service in Hungarian too. Brubacker mentions in his book that Baptist and Adventist organizations usually organize their services both in Hungarian, Romanian and in Roma language while Pentecostal, Jehovah’s Witnesses only in Romanian and Roma. Universal Churches, such as Roman-Catholic and some neo-protestants are more receptive to organizing their services in Romany language.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.56-57.

⁸⁷ Baptist, Evangelical Christian, Pentecostal and Orthodox Christian ‘Lord’s Army’

⁸⁸ The Penticostal Roma communities from Mureş county in Romania want to form a Roma branch of the Penticostal church in Mureş . They have around 20 penticostal Church overthere. Also it is a Hungarian Baptist Roma congregation in Oradea. All these actions prove the wish of Roma community to have their own leaders.

⁸⁹ Radu Cerghizan, *Religiile din Romania* (Romanian religion), <http://www.ducu.de/rel43.htm>, (accessed April 5, 2011)

⁹⁰ Recensământ 2002 , *Penticostalii din Romania la Recensământul din 2002* (Pentecostal at the Romanian Census 2002), <http://Recensământ2002.wordpress.com/penticostalii-din-romania-la-Recensământul-din-2002>, (accessed May 1, 2011)

⁹¹ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Oxford:Princeton University Press, 2006), p.18.

In the regions where Hungarians and Romany people belong to the same religions – the collaboration is very intense between people. This is usually the case of villages where Hungarians are a significant number or majority. The Roma community through religion also wants to be part of the community of the village and they are participating in village religious events too.⁹² Moreover, the inclusion of Roma people in these ceremonies suggests a full acceptance of the members as an important member of the local village.

However, even in these cases we have to note a couple of aspects. The Roma community wants to create their own space creating their own interpretation of a couple of religious events important for their people. Foszto, based on his research in Calvinist Ganas, illustrates that his own interpretation of religious events of the Roma community becomes a form of manifestation of the self identity of Roma people.⁹³ Michael Stewart had the same experience in mostly Roman Catholic Harangos as well.⁹⁴

There is a different view of the religion. Foszto highlights that in the Hungarian case there is a “*symbolic subordination of individuals to the community*”⁹⁵, in the case of Romungros the “*individualism is more competitive*”⁹⁶. Part of the Roma population is very receptive to the Pentecostal religion because of this. As Foszto mentions “*Pentecostal rituals ...symbolically separate the individual from his or her previous social identity and relationships and diminish the significance of ethnicity and social status. Pentecostal revitalization creates and emphasizes a direct and intimate connection between the open heart of the person and God.*”⁹⁷ However, the conversion to a different religion means also that you want to loose your contact to your former local community as well. Many cases even

⁹² László Foszto, *Ritual Revitalisation after Socialism. Community, Personhood and Conversion among Roma in a Transylvanian Village*, (Berlin:LIT, 2009),p.105-106

⁹³ *Ibid.*,p.81.

⁹⁴ Michael Stewart , *The time of the Gypsies*, (Oxford WestviewPress, 1997), pg.217-221.

⁹⁵ László Foszto, *Ritual Revitalisation after Socialism. Community, Personhood and Conversion among Roma in a Transylvanian Village*,(Berlin: LIT, Berlin, 2009), p.105.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.163.

among Hungarians belonging to neo-protestant religions provoke tensions. However, in case of Roma people could be life style changes which maybe help the ethnic community integration in the surrounding society better. Despite of this, most of the cases the Common Church unites and ethnically divided Churches separate.⁹⁸

3.2.1. Roma Religious life in the communism and the role of religion in 1990

The situation before 1989 it is not very well documented because Romania was an atheist country where the religious activity was limited. Especially, the neo-protestant faiths (Pentecostal, Baptist, Jehovah witnesses) felt in many ways the rejection of the communist Romanian government.⁹⁹ There was a same a rejection for a different reason towards the traditional Hungarian Churches (Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Unitarian).¹⁰⁰

There is no clear data about the religiosity of the Roma population of communist time. Roma do not appear even in statistics as Viorel Achim mentions they belonged in the statistics to the other category. Probably, a huge number of them belonged to the traditional Churches because the neo-Protestant faiths' activity was restricted. This and also the Calvinist priest, Tokes, role in the 1989 Revolution probably also contributed to a better relationship between Hungarian speaking Roma and Hungarians.

There are important to mention the importance of the religion of Roma in the events from 1990 March Târgu Mureş . In March 1990 the Hungarian speaking Roma and Hungarians were not separated religiously in Oradea, Târgu Mureş and Szeklerland. A journalist from Târgu Mureş, Mr Zsigmond Karácsonyi, and also a Roman Catholic priest

⁹⁸Ibid., p.164.

⁹⁹ It was banned the acquire their own houses for worship, it was also limited their evangelistic activity ,it was denied their freedom. The communist regime favoured the Roman Orthodox Church to some extent. The equality of religion will be re-established in 1990 and the discriminatory legislation towards the non Orthodox (neo-Protestant and the ethnic minority Churches will be lifted only after. in Earl A. Pope, Religion in Eastern Europe: The Role of Religion in Romanian Revolution, http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/Pope_The%20Role.html, (accessed May 1, 2011)

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

from Târgu Mureş, Father Bakó, believes that the common religion and education of Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma bond the two communities together in 1990 March Târgu Mureş .

On the other hand, as a Pentecostal Roma priest, Mr. Rupi, mentions even if they had different religion they had good relationship and felt closer to Hungarians in 1990. He pointed out that his “Gabor” Roma community helped the Hungarians in 1990 when Hungarians got in trouble in county of Mureş because the Hungarian inscription.

He also explained that the conversion of the so called “Gabor” Roma started in the late seventies. Mr Rupi explained that the first Gabor who converted to neo-Protestant faith was one of his relative in 1971. His father converted in 1975 to Baptism and he converted to Pentecostal religion in 1980. The conversion to neo-Protestant faith had a huge influence on the “Gabor” Roma community lifestyle and increased their self confidence: they started to wear clean clothes; they stopped to collect and eat the villager’s dead animals, their children started to go to school, the number of child marriages decreased etc. However their Pentecostal community was small in that time and the real religious revitalization started just after 1990.

3.2.2 The Religious life after 1990

The situation changed after the restrictions which held back the non Roman Orthodox believers were lifted and the religious revitalization process started in Romania in 1990.¹⁰¹ The Roman Catholic Church, Reformat Church and especially the neo-Protestant Churches have today a much larger activity than in communist times. They built schools or

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

got back schools from the state (Roman Catholic, Reformat), they gave humanitarian aid and they also opened a lot of Churches.

From the beginning the Hungarian traditional Churches tried to be involved in missionary work between Roma as well. However, the story of the Reformat Church Roma Mission (Nagyvárad Cigánymissziós Központ) is very characteristic for the traditional Churches' failure to integrate Roma people. Farkas Antal Reformat priest told me the story of this Roma Mission from Oradea. In 27th July 1996 it was the first attempt of the Reformat Church to organize a Roma Mission in Oradea. A young half Roma social worker, Mathias Horvath, was selected as the leader for this Mission. Despite the good intention of the Reformat Church the Reformat Mission managed to open only in 2002. Today the Reformat Church Roma Mission organizes lot of conferences and gives daily for 20 children and their family food. Despite of this, the Roma Baptist Church managed to capture the Roma population in the meantime.

Another example of failed involvement in the Roma people's religious life had Roman Catholic Church also in Bihor County. Father Rajna, the head of Caritas Catholic from Oradea, told me that in Rontau they gave clothes, regularly food for children and they set up a social mission where Mrs. Andrea Nagy (the social worker who was also present at the discussion) worked. However, when the Baptist Mission built a Church overthere and declared that from now on they want to do this activity they withdrew. The Roman Catholic Church did not want to get involved in confessional fighting.

In Miercurea Ciuc as Father Gergely told me the Roman Catholic Church has no adversary and in Szeklerland the traditional Churches are stronger. This means that the majority of Roma still belong to one of the traditional Hungarian Churches, which strengthens the Hungarian and Roma relationship in Szeklerland. However, the situation in Târgu Mureş is similar with Oradea. Here was also a Roma Mission organized this time by

the Roma Catholic Church. The father speaks fluently in Romany and he told me it took him 3 years that to be accepted by the local Romany people from the so called “Hidegvölgy”. The father did all the baptism and funerals for the Roma community till recently. Today the father is replaced and his Roma Mission is not continued. The father mentioned that he managed to get closer to the Roma community through their children. Despite of this it started a mass conversion among Roma people in “Hidegvölgy” recently. Many Hungarian speaking Roma were persecuted in 1990 and they did not receive any help from the Hungarian community and traditional Hungarian Churches. This could be one of the reasons of the reconversion to the Pentecostal Religion. They saw the success of the Romanian speaking Pentecostal Roma people which had an impact on them and also they became increasingly disappointed by the lack of help from the Hungarians. The father told me that he is surprised that how this Pentecostal church manages to attract them with Gypsy Music and Roma priests from other Roma communities.

The other reason could be what Snaranda Enache, the human rights activist, told me. She believes that in neo-Protestant Churches Roma people feel much freer, between their own people and listening to Gypsy music and priests from their own. She believes that the Roma community sometimes feels marginalized and rejected in the traditional Churches (Orthodox but in our case Roman Catholic or Reformat) and also feel an assimilation pressure. Mrs. Enache also told me that she praises these neo-Protestant Churches for changes in the mentality of the Romany people. She pointed out that a couple of highly contested tradition such as child marriages reduced between them thanks to the Church influence.

The Roma neo-protestant priests highlight the important changes which occurred with the Romany people touched by religion. Mr. Alexander Kajca, the priest of the Roma Baptist Congregation from Oradea, mentioned that he had a very different life before God

chose him to be priest. In his personal life he managed to become a better husband and father after he receive the holly scripture. He believes the only way to change the Roma population is through religion. He wants to change them and socialize them to become better family men and better citizens. Mr. Kajca wants to offer a better start of Roma youngsters that which he and his wife had when they married at 17 and respective 14 years old. The service in the Church is in Hungarian and they have Hungarian members too. He also prays and does missionary work in the neighboring Hungarian villages. The Roma Baptist Church was founded in 22nd of December 1991 in a slum house. Today they have a beautiful Church which was built with the help of the Hungarian Baptist community in 2002-2006.

The situation in the Pentecostal Church is slightly different. The main difference that, as Brubacker mentions, there are no service in Hungarian only in Romanian and Romany language. Mr. Gabor Rupi, the priest of the local Gabor community from Oradea, told me a couple of interesting information about the “Gabor “Roma community religious life. This Gabor community is a trilingual community and they belong to the Pentecostal Church which managed to completely change their lifestyle after 1990. They stopped their antisocial activities, they gave importance for education and they respect the law. Today they separate themselves from the Hungarians and Romanians but also from other Roma communities as well. They have a good relationship and collaboration with Hungarians, who help their intentions to build their own Church in Oradea. Despite of this, in the Pentecostal Church they keep their service in Romanian.

The other Pentecostal leader, Mr. Gabor Bandi, from Crăciunești (Karácsonyfalva-county Mureș) also told me that they have good relationship with Hungarians who help them there. This village is important because it was place of research of the local Gabor community by anthropologists. As Gagyí, an anthropologist stated about them in his study they are the winners of the social transformation after 1990. They are even richer than the

local Hungarians and in this transformation is because their Adventist (or in our case the Pentecostal) confession.¹⁰²

The neo-protestants are strong in both Oradea and Târgu Mureş where they play a huge role in the Roma community life and social transformation. In Miercurea Ciuc and Szeklerland in general they are not present or are present in insignificant numbers. The conversion of Roma to neo-protestant religion is an expression for a wish for stronger manifestation of self-identity. Despite this, this transformation is not necessarily destroying or weakening the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship. However, in the case of the Pentecostal Church there is a difference. They do not keep any of their services in Hungarian, which weakens the relationship between the Hungarian speaking Roma and Hungarians.

The traditional and neo-Protestant Churches, like all Churches in Romania, have started to play a significant role in education and also in reducing poverty since 1990. They have a very important role in the society today. In a way the aid which the Churches offer in this sense contributes to their popularity among Roma people. Mr. Hajnal, the Roma advisor of the Târgu Mureş Counsel mentioned that usually the poor and big local Roma communities turn to the neo-protestant religions. The rich communities from the communities remain in their faith.

In Miercurea Ciuc (Csikszereda) as Mr Antal Gergely Roman Catholic priest mentioned, was not any neo-Protestant believers before 1990 and there are not in significant number even today. The biggest help for Roma communities are coming from the Roman Catholic Church. The father created the so called “Csibész (Urchin) Foundation.” Today the foundation runs around 40 houses and has around 200-250 children –half of them Roma. The

¹⁰² József Gagyí ; *A kicsi cigány és társai*(The little Gypsy and his company); in KAM –Regionalis es Antropológiai Kutatások ; Helyzetkeresők? Roma lakosság Székelyföldön (People who are looking for their place. The Roma in Szeklerland), (Miercurea Ciuc: Pro-print, 2002), p. 63.

Foundation was started in 1987 and the father wants to give hope and help to children who are abandoned by the society. They have already 16 students in various University of the country. He mentioned that the local Roma wanted to appoint him their leader for the help which they received by him.

In Târgu Mureş Father Bakó Roman Catholic priest told me, the neo-protestant Churches have a growing influence and they have a financial potential which the Roman Catholic Church does not have. He believes that one of the reasons behind the reconversion of the Roma population to neo-Protestant religion is the aid which they receive from neo-Protestant churches. Despite of this the Roman Catholic Church also has a huge role here. Father Bakó started his Saint Elisabeth Association in 1991 and he is also proud that the so called “Szivárvány” (Rainbow) kindergarten and school was started from their local chapel. The Rainbow kindergarten and primary school has 33 little children in the kindergarten and 55 youngsters in the school. His Saint Elisabeth Association is helping 37 children who live, learn and grow up in the Association 2 house. The father wants to create a family for them.

In Oradea similar as in Târgu Mureş the traditional Churches are challenged by the neo-protestants one that means that their influence among Roma decreasing. Here both traditional Hungarian Churches are very active. The Nagyvárad Cigánymissziós Központ (Hungarian Reformat Roma Mission) organize conferences, trainings such as the so called South East European Foundation’s Education Centre Healing Memory’s training which trained six Roma and six Hungarian social worker how to deal with Roma children. They also give on daily bases food for twenty Roma children and their family.

The other traditional Hungarian Church, the Roman Catholic one helps through the Caritas Catholic. Mr. Rajna, the director of Caritas Catholic, told me that Roman Catholic Church tries to help all the poor people indifferent of their ethnic origin or religious beliefs. They give regularly food for 130 people; they drilled 2 wells in Kec and also build a local

footbridge for the safety of the Roma children. All these activities increase the popularity of Roman Catholic Church among Roma people.

In Oradea the neo-Protestant Churches are also involved. Mr. Kajca told me the involvement of the Baptist Church. The Church also has multifunction because it is the place of the local kindergarten. The dedicated local teachers educate and gave food and other aid for 2 groups of young children. They organize also trips and visits to the Zoo. This is very important for the local community which is very poor and they survive from one day to another. The community also has Hungarian people who come to the service and receive aid from the Roma Baptist community.

I have to mention here a couple of problems in the perfect collaboration of the Roman Catholic Church in Târgu Mureş. Smaranda Enache , criticized both the Roman Orthodox Church for the forced baptism of Hungarian Roma in a couple of Mureş county's villages but she also expressed her concerns that the orphanages organized by many traditional confessions contributing in denationalization for Romany people. Father Bakó reflected on this accusation and said he wants to create a family for them through his Saint Elisabeth Association and he did not want to change their ethnicity or traditions. He wants to integrate them in the society and grow them up as healthy children. The other criticism was that the Roman Catholic priest from Târgu Mureş was not that carefully enough when he offered the Deus Prodiverbit Catholic Centre for the Hungarian Jobbik Party's meeting. She mentioned that many Roma intellectuals such as Rudy Moca, ethnic Roma actor from Târgu Mureş criticized the local Roman Catholic priest's decision but she was also happy that the priest revoked and apologized for his decision.

My conclusion after my research is that on a religious level it is hard to compete for traditional Roman Catholic and Reformat Church with the neo-protestant Churches. These traditional Churches are representing in many case just non-Roma people in the eyes of

Roma. They do not manage to touch the heart of Roma people. The reason behind is that the Roma population wants more today. They feel abandoned by society and traditional Churches (which represent in our case Hungarians) in general. Some Roma community becomes increasingly independent, for example the Gabor community who want to separate from other ethnic groups and even from their fellow Roma as well. The Roman Catholic Church and the traditional Church strength in is an exception of a general rule. The Roman Catholic Church many places reduced its activity because financial reasons and replaced people who did quite a lot for the society (Roma). In the case of Kiralyhágómelléki Reformat Church the delay in starting the Roma Mission was the problem. The traditional Churches weakened position contributes occasionally to a weakening Hungarian Roma relationship.

In the case of the neo-Protestant faiths it is worth to mention that they are fast and have a lot of money. The Pentecostal Church, which is touching the heart of Roma especially, is doing a revitalization of the Roma community. They have Romany priest, music and give aid as it was mentioned above .However, because their members coming mostly from Romanian speaking Roma communities or Romanian communities they weaken the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relationships The Roma Baptist Roma Community from Oradea is also revitalize the Roma community but without weakening the Hungarian Roma relationship. My conclusion is that the reconversion to neo-Protestant faith did not necessarily mean a weakened Hungarian Roma relationship if the service would be held.

4.Poverty as a factor of disintegration and the Media as a tool which present and influence also the relationship between Roma and Hungarians

Poverty contributed to disintegration of communities or had other negative impact on them all around history. This affects seriously the Hungarian and Roma relationship today. I will examine first what poverty meant in the XIX century, the role of communism in improving the social condition of people and finally I will analyze through priests, school

inspectors, Roma leaders and administrative officials' view what poverty means for Hungarian Roma relationship today. Regarding the Media I will present why it is important and how it affects and influences the Roma Hungarian relationship. How it appears the Roma Hungarian relationship in the Media in 1989, 1990 and today.

4.1. Poverty as an element of segregation as dividing element in Hungarian Roma relationship in contemporary Transylvania

In this subchapter I will focus on one of the major problems which divide the Hungarian and Roma population in Transylvania, the social issues (poverty as an element of segregation). In order to do this I will compare the current situation with the previous communist period. One of the biggest achievements of socialism was the elimination or reducing of the poverty and the integration of the Roma community in the modernization process. The good relationship between Roma and Hungarians was based on this integration from the communist period in 1990. However, today an opposite development is visible which affects the Hungarian and Roma relationship in general. A significant number of Roma are living in huge poverty, most of them are uneducated and unskilled which makes it difficult for them to find employment.¹⁰³ It is also important to mention here that their traditional lifestyle and approach to work as well also makes it difficult to find employment.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand non Roma population who are also affected by the same economic crises and unemployment to some extent becomes increasingly impatient with the ineffectiveness of actions to help Roma communities because they feel that they are abandoned and they did not receive enough help.¹⁰⁵ I have to mention here also that poverty,

¹⁰³ Cătălin Zamfir and Marin Preda, *Romii în România*, (București :Expert, 1992), p.24-25.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Stewart, *The Time of Gypsies*, (London Westview Press, 1997), pg.104-111.

¹⁰⁵ Csaba Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányosság Története* (The History of Hungarian Gypsies), (Budapest: Osiris, 2009), p.292.

Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest:CEU Press, 2004), p.210.

unemployment and segregation are strongly interconnected in the Roma case and one of the major division elements in the interethnic relationship.

In this subchapter I will present the role of poverty in segregation using historical description and also a description of the socialist period. In the second part I will analyze the poverty as a disintegration element in the Hungarian Roma relationship in the three major regions where Hungarians are in significant numbers and can have a major contribution in changing this.

To emphasize what poverty means it is worth mentioning a couple of descriptions from the pre-modern period where in this moment the Roma populations from socialist countries are returning. This comparison is necessary to show that Roma people live in the same condition than the people from the slums in the XIX Century. Sometimes they are living in even worse conditions. I would like to outline here the rejection of the middle class then because the same rejection is alive towards to Roma population today:” *the suburb as a site of sickness, infirmity , and prostitution ; the suburb as a site of criminality and vagabondage; the suburb as a site of ethnic-cultural disorder...and finally the suburb as a social-pathological wound, which seems to threaten the ostensibly healthy urban body*”¹⁰⁶What it is really shocking here that people of the middle class were talking about us and them highlighting the alienation of them from the people from the slums. It is important to highlight that the ethnic and the class character of the poverty overlap today is the same as in the XIX century: “*It is commonplace that modern cities become segregated on the basis of social, ethnic or religious affinities into homogenous neighborhoods ...as exacerbating social injustices.*”¹⁰⁷As we can see the situation of the poor suburban working class from that time are very similar with the situation of the Transylvanian Roma today. However, we have to

¹⁰⁶ Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner , *Unruly Masses. The other Side of Fin-de-Siecle Vienna*, (Oxford:Bergham Books, 2008), p.60.

¹⁰⁷ Donald J. Olsen: *The City as a Work of Art. London, Paris, Vienna*. (London :Yale University Press, 1986),p. 132.

underline that the situation which was acceptable or tolerated then is an anachronism in XXI century Europe.

Dupcsik describes in his book an example of this case of anachronism which tried to change the communist's regimes and where the Roma people are returning back:

The council digs a well but because the intrushes of groundwater the local Health Institution banned the use of it ...The Roma population carried the water from 1 mile because the local plan's storeman did not allow them to carry the water from the plant... The electricity was cut of because there was a disagreement in the community how to divide the bill... The other part of the street , just opposite with the barracks are an overflowed field which is filled up with litter...The rats ,who are coming from this area, are infesting the whole area (barracks) ...They can not put poison down because of the children.¹⁰⁸

4.1.1. The situation of Roma in communist times and in 1990

The socialist period of the Central Eastern European countries and Balkans meant the creation of the badly functioning welfare state and also a huge effort to eliminate poverty. The base of the social ideology was that they saw the problem of the world not as an ethnic but as a class problem. All former communist countries tried, to a certain level at least, to integrate the Roma population as well through: obligatory education, improved health system, employment and prohibiting the segregation. Despite the fact that they did not manage to achieve everything, as Michael Stewart mentions in his book in Harangos (Hungarian states) nearly everybody of the Vlach Roma community went to work and their life considerably improved in the 1980's. Today, as Michael Stewart mentions in his book, in the same town only one Roma man from the whole Roma community are working.¹⁰⁹ The situation is similar in Romania too.

¹⁰⁸ Csaba Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története (The Life of Hungarian Gypsies)*,(Budapest:Osiris) , 2009, p.205.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Stewart, *The time of Gypsies*,(London :Westview Press ,1997), pp. 244-245.

In Romania the situation of the Roma population improved considerably in communist time. Viorel Achim mentioned the measures taken to improve their social ascension and employment situation of the Roma population in the state administration, in the army and in the police. He claimed that Roma could even become mayors in some Romanian towns (without mentioning their or the town names). He highlights the effect of the economic and social transformation: the state provided accommodation for them.¹¹⁰

There is a general opinion that the majority of the Roma lived better under communism. People highlighted, despite the rules of general employment being enforced on Roma people, this general employment improved their standard of living and also had an affect on their family's living conditions. Mrs. Tutos, from Ruhama Foundation Oradea, pointed out that in the socialism everybody had a minimal wage, the health care was free and the school, on paper at least, was obligatory. She told me that the agricultural cooperatives, textile factories and confection industry gave workplaces for a significant number of Roma which today are unemployed. In that time, as she told me, the people who did not work were sentenced (6 month's prison).

In Târgu Mureş and Miercurea Ciuc the Roma people's living standard were also better in communist times. Smaranda Enache from Pro Europa Liga Foundation Târgu Mureş told me also that the agricultural cooperatives and the socialist heavy industry offered work places for many Roma in Mureş County during the socialist era. She also told me that the health care was free and the education was obligatory. Despite some of these achievements were only on paper Mrs. Smaranda believes that lot of Roma people profited from the improved social conditions. Mr. Florin Hajnal a young and energetic Roma Counselor from the Târgu Mureş and Mr. Julius Joni, the oldest brother of the Roma leader from Miercurea Ciuc, shared Mrs. Enache's opinion. Mr. Joni told me that whoever wanted to work could

¹¹⁰ Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest :CEU Press, 2004), pp.190-191.

work in that time and he was respected by all his colleagues at the work place. The situation of the Roma was better in every aspect.

The better social status, the possibility of improving living condition reduced the number of social crimes of Roma against non Roma's (Hungarian's) property. This helped that many of the tensions which put a strain on Hungarian Roma relationship were inexistent in communist times. This led to a much better Hungarian Roma relationship. The social and economic changes, which occurred, did not affect that hard the Hungarian speaking Roma in 1990 and also their relationship with Hungarians. This good relationship as Mr. Sigismund Karacsony journalist from Nepujsag Târgu Mureş and a witness of the events from 1990 March, told me this eased the Hungarian speaking Roma community decision to help the Hungarians in Târgu Mureş . He pointed out that many decisions of the local authorities annoyed both Hungarian and the Roma community in 1990. He also mentioned that a lot of aid came in early 1990 from Hungary which also managed to increase the level of solidarity among Roma and Hungarians.

4.1.2. The Roma people social and economic situation today

The collapses of communism's biggest losers were the Roma communities. Nearly all professors, teachers, social workers and Roma leaders told me that the biggest social problem is the huge unemployment and poverty which affects everybody but the Roma population especially. This poverty affects the wellbeing, health condition of the Roma families and especially the elderly and children. They also agreed that the criminality connected to poverty appear.

Viorel Achim mentions that because Roma did mostly unskilled and semi-skilled professions they lost their jobs in the new economic and social structures .He also analyzes the type of work the Roma had or did not have but also all this data on ethnic grounds as well in 1992.He highlighted that 79% of the Roma were without profession and only 16% of them

had modern professions in 1992.¹¹¹ The following table based on data from his book compares the situation of Romanian, Romany and Hungarian speaking Roma on the job market. When I talk about Romanian, Hungarian speaking Roma, I am referring to those Roma people who do not speak the Romany language or in an everyday situation use mainly other languages

1. The difference in the situation of Romanian, Romany and Hungarian Roma

	Roma without profession %	Roma with modern type profession %
Romanian Roma	44%?	56%
Roma	61,9%	25,6%
Hungarian Roma	71,8%	25,4%

As we can see in Table 1, the Hungarian speaking Roma condition is the worst. Viorel Achim also analyzes the income of General Roma Household in urban, rural area and of non Roma population as well in 1992. He underlines that the rural Roma population's income (18,635 ROL) was half of the general income of a non Roma family (33,735 ROL around 250 USD) in 1992.¹¹²

Viorel Achim also mentions if we take into account the average number of the Roma family, 6, 6 people, that means that 80,9 % of the Roma population lived below the minimum level necessary of decent living in 1992. Here we also have to take into account that some Hungarian areas such as Szeklerland are generally poor areas which could explain the highest unemployment of Hungarian speaking Roma.

4.1.3. The poverty impact on education. The appearance of segregation

¹¹¹ Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest :Central European Press, 1998), pp.203-204.

¹¹² Viorel Achim, *The Roma in Romanian History*, (Budapest:Central European Press, 1998), pp. 196-197.

The poverty affects direct the wellbeing of Roma children in all three regions. The school inspectors from all three regions, who knew well the situation of the Roma children, were shocked sometimes by their conditions. The school inspector from Oradea , Mrs. Elisabeth Ilea, mentioned a couple of Hungarian villages where the Roma live in medieval conditions such as in Cheşereu where “it is a community which live in a very humiliated and vulnerable poverty”. The school inspector from Miercurea Ciuc, Mrs. Eva Porsche, pointed out that you can not ask the same achievement from a Roma child who lives in a 4 m² room and he/she is sharing this room with 10-11 other family members. She also underlined that the health condition of these Roma children is very bad; there is just a stove and a room and occasionally there is only a dinner of five potatoes for ten children. Mrs. Porsche also told me a story when they visited Csikszentdomonkos’s Roma family at noon they found the Roma children sleeping. When they asked the father how these children can sleep in daylight, he told them that they gave them tea from poppies to sleep till their mother will return from begging and will give them some food. Another story which she told me, that when they went with clothes aid to Roma families and they told them that they could come to school because they resolved social aid for them, a girl who remained without any clothes aid could not come because she did not have proper clothes. A neighboring young Roma boy ran at home and brought her a pair of trousers to come. The boy was rich and had two. The school inspector from Târgu Mureş, Mrs. Hajnal Kiss, who led the Roma department last year, believes that only that educational program can be successful which takes into account the Roma families social situation.

Roma children’s living condition, hungriness and also their hygiene affect not only their achievements in school but their relationship with other children. The school inspectors sometimes have to decide to live Roma children together taking in account the human factor or to mix them with non Roma children to eliminate separation. The school inspector from

Oradea, Mrs. Ilea, told me a story of a young Roma girl from Lazareni, who committed suicide, to highlight how difficult of the decision. When they mixed a Roma and non Roma class this Roma girl was so ashamed by her family poverty and she felt powerless to change this that she rather died than to live in this condition. She told me as an example that because of this kind of results school inspectors were afraid of the impact on Roma children when they want to mix Roma and non Roma classes. She considers that sometimes it was better for a group of children who had similar social conditions to socialize together.

The school inspector from Miercurea Ciuc, Mrs. Porsche, told me how with the help of Phare project they eliminated the rejection of Hungarian children in county Harghita. The Phare project from 2003-2005 gave an importance for socialization of Roma children as well. The Hungarian children and their family complained that Roma children came were dirty and smelly at school. The school inspector explained to me that they bought washing machines and set up bathrooms for the Roma children to help them overcome these problems. She also mentioned that these programs were stopped afterwards and because of this they had only limited effects. Mrs. Porsche told me that only in the case of a consistent program and long term can they help the Roma population.

The school inspector from Târgu Mureș, Mrs. Kiss, pointed out that when the Roma children come clean to the school there is no rejection from Hungarian side. She described as an example the situation in Crăciunești where is a rich Gabor Roma community whose children come clean to the school is no wish for separation from both Hungarian and Roma side. Mrs. Kiss told me another case when a Foundation school helps Roma children taking in account their special needs and because of this keeps them together such as the “Szivárvány” Foundation.

As we can see the poverty related problems (hungriness, hygiene problems) affects Roma children’s achievements and their relationship with Hungarian children. However, a

couple of programs such as Phare, Foundation schools try to help but there are too many problems and their help like a drop in the ocean. The Roma children are happy for any help and helping them through different programs improve Hungarian Roma relationship too.

4.1.4. The impact of poverty in physical segregation of Roma

The poverty generated segregation unfortunately affects the Hungarian Roma relationship for some extent everywhere nowadays. In Oradea Mrs. Daniela Tutos described the living condition of a significant number of Roma in this way: They usually live in the suburbs of the settlement, some kind of physical barrier between them and non Roma is always present (a train line, a canal etc). Their houses are built from mud or sometimes just they dig one in the Earth. The roof and the windows are polyester and there is no electricity and water in them. Mrs. Tuto highlighted that this kind of physical separation is leading to deviant behaviors on their part which further alienates non Roma.

The segregation is sometimes enforced by local authorities for example in case of Miercurea Ciuc. In Miercurea Ciuc appeared an article in Hargita Népe in 19th of April, that a lot of Roma families were moved out from the city centre because they had some antisocial behaviors—did not play the bill, created scandals. The Harghita Népe also mentioned that they were moved into barracks near a landfill site which annoyed them and the activist of the Amnesty International activists too. Mr. Alexander Joni, the Roma Party leader's brother in Miercurea Ciuc, was aware of the Roma family's problems but he also mentioned that these families did not play their bills for years and this annoyed local authorities who want to get rid of them.

The Roman Catholic Church intervention in helping Roma people was also condemned by locals who wanted to separate themselves from Roma people in Miercurea Ciuc. Father Gergely the Roman Catholic priest also told me that when he helped the Roma

community with food and firewood, this annoyed lot of Hungarian who wanted this community to be moved out from the area.

Father Bakó, from Târgu Mureș, also told me that in many cases elder Hungarian people suffer from poverty related crimes coming from the Roma part because of why they want a physical separation from Roma people in county Mureș.

As we can see the poverty creates a barrier between Roma and Hungarians. Lot of times this wish coming from both sides but in the majority of the cases from those Hungarians side who suffer from social crimes or attitudes which annoys Hungarian people. Even the Councils did not have a solution for this and in many cases they accept their Hungarian voters wish for separation.

4.1.5 The poverty related social crimes caused problems

The KAM –Regional and Anthropological Research Centre did research in Szeklerland where they divided the relation between Roma and Hungarians in three groups: one which lives totally separated from Hungarians such as Gabors in Crăciunești –they have their separate jobs, church and associations and they reject mixed marriages –but there are no conflicts at all, second where there are conflicts because the poverty of Roma and there are social crimes especially between Hungarians and Romanians, the third where they live in symbiosis and they rely on each other even if they do not recognize it. The researcher of KAM found conflicts could occur among Hungarians and Romany people in the last two cases. The reason why these can occur even in the last case, they explained because there are less jobs and lot of Hungarians do jobs which they did not do before and they do not need Romany people's help. The Romany people commit more social crimes for survival than before and they are much more visible today than before and certain behaviors of them such

as loud talking, their protest in groups to claim something and also a couple of Roma more aggressive attitudes when they are claiming something than before 1989.¹¹³

The effects of social crimes are viewed from total different angle from Roma side and Hungarian side. The Roma advisor in Târgu Mureş, Mr. Florin Hajnal, believes that when a man is pushed to the limit of survival he has to do everything to help his family survival. He condemns every crime but stealing a chicken is not as serious a crime as deceiving with pyramid games (white collar crime) thousands of people. Mr. Hajnal believes that the Roma people social crimes are over reacted from non Roma side.

From Hungarian side these social crimes are considered the biggest strain on Hungarian Roma relationship. Father Bakó, told me that in his local village most elderly citizens felt abandoned by the police when they are looted every night by the local Roma community. He pointed out that they are local Hungarian speaking Roma who did not behave previously in this way. The elderly people are afraid to go out from their house during the night because they fear that they will be beaten and even killed. He mentions his mother's case. After his father's death his workshop where his father kept some very expensive tools was looted. They reported to the police and nothing happened. The elderly people are reluctant to cultivate anything in their gardens or to keep animals because of these lootings and thefts from the part of Roma nowadays. He told me that these social crimes affect some vulnerable parts of the society who are also very poor and survive from one day to another. The people feel these crimes on their skin and this is the main cause why they are more upset on these crimes than the white collar ones.

In Miercurea Ciuc in particular, but also in Szeklerland in general Hungarians are tolerating social crimes less and less. Numerous articles in different Szeklerland newspapers relate the increasing impatience of Hungarian people. One such article such from 26th

¹¹³ KAM-Regional and Anthropological Research Centre, *Helykeresok? A Romak Szekelyfoldon* (Looking for place? The Roma people in Szeklerland), (Miercurea Ciuc:Pro-Print, , 2002), pg. 38-39.

October 2010 relates the clash between Roma and Hungarians over the theft of a cow from Hungarian family and the family burned down the house of the Roma family. Another article from 16th May relates the clash between local Police Forces and Roma people over abandoned horses.

In Oradea Father Rajna, head of Caritas Catholic, also mentions that they found it very difficult to deal with an angry Roma mob that came from the province to their office and claimed certain aid which they did not receive. He told me also that they receive less than before and they found it very difficult to help everybody. He was really happy that they managed to do the aid program in organized way through the Oradea Council who divides between the Romany people.

4.1.6. The foreign aid and the Churches help

Mrs Zita Koncsek, the head of ASCO (Social Department of the Council in ORADEA) told me that the pauperization of the society started after the revolution and this especially affects the most vulnerable part of society, elders, children and Roma too. Gati Gizella her assistant, told me that they receive less money and the numbers of people in need are increasing. She mentioned that 88% of their clientele are Roma. She enumerated a couple of legal impediments which blocked the Roma People's access to the service: to receive child benefits you have to have a legal workplace for a year, the kindergartens are not free, you can remain only three days in the hospital free of charge, many poor people did not have a GP. She pointed out that conforming to the statistics the Roma burn young and dies young. It appeared a couple of sicknesses characteristic of poverty, such as TB and their numbers are growing.

The European Union tries to help with numerous programs and help for the Roma which also aims to improve the relationship among Roma and non Roma. Education is one of the areas where quite a lot of projects try to improve the Roma children's situation. In all

three regions I found that the school mediator program, Phare projects - such as programs for integrating Roma children in kindergarten, primary schools also help social integration of the Roma.

However, in many cases even if aid is coming from the EU, the success of the project depends on the local authority's attitude too. Mr. Florin Hajnal, Roma advisor of Târgu Mureş Council, mentioned the case of village Glidari. The village received 150,000 Euros from the EU to modernize the Roma area. The Mayor told him he would accept only in the case the Roma would do voluntarily work in this modernization. Mr. Hajnal considered the mayor's objection to be racist. He also mentioned a positive case in Glodeni, where there is a young and energetic mayor who tries to help the Roma.

The Church also plays an important role in the Roma people's life. Father Gergely, Roman Catholic priest from Miercurea Ciuc, built his Urchin Foundation, which has improved the situation of 250 children in Miercurea Ciuc and Szeklerland. He mentioned that he set up his foundation because he was shocked by the poverty of Roma children in the region.

The Roman Catholic Church is also involved in helping the Roma families in Târgu Mureş and Oradea. The Saint Elisabeth Association from Târgu Mureş gives shelter, food and education for poor children. Half of them are Roma. They offer help to everybody and their head, father Bakó, wants to raise every child from his institution healthy and a law abiding successful citizen. The head of the Roman Catholic Caritas from Oradea, Father Rajna, helps a lot and this affects poor people and in many cases Roma as well. Moreover, the Roma Baptist Church from Oradea and the Reformat Roma Mission from Oradea also help poor Roma families.

My conclusion is the pauperization of the population created social tensions which can be sorted out only in the long term. In many cases the local leaders are powerless to help

everybody. However, sometimes, even if they receive EU aid, they act in a politically incorrect way. The social crimes create a lot of anger in Hungarians. Unfortunately, at the moment these are the biggest impediments in a good Hungarian and Roma relation.

4.2. The Media role in the Hungarian Roma relationship

The Media is a key element of receiving information and also creating an opinion about the important events surrounding us and in this is also true for the Hungarian Roma relationship. The Hungarian media in Transylvania is also important in bonding the society together and informing about successes and problems important for the community. The media plays also a key role in transmitting information, expressing the opinion of Hungarians and sometimes the Hungarian speaking Roma about mutual relationship. In the first part of my subchapter I will present the role of media in general and for the Hungarian community in Transylvania and in the second part I will focus how this media is contributing to the changing relationship between Hungarian and Roma in Transylvania.

I will focus mainly on Hungarian newspapers from Romania especially the local ones for two reasons. First of all they were present from the very beginning at all major events from 1989 till nowadays and represent the Hungarian's view about Hungarians, Hungarian speaking Roma and Roma in general. Moreover, they are read by local Hungarian speaking Roma leaders and they focus more on the regional problems. I did not find any Roma newspaper in the three regions. Probably, they are not that widespread or they did not exist.

The media has an important role in nation building and some authors consider it the most important or a very important element of it. Benedict Anderson believes that the imagined community of nation could not be realized if the printing press had not been discovered and the national sufferings and wishes had not been spread through the newspapers. Another author, Brubaker, highlights the importance of the media: "*the media*

*can help create and sustain imagined communities that cut cross as well as reinforce nation-state boundaries.”*¹¹⁴ He also highlights the mission which the media plays for the Hungarian community. This media provides news, as Brubaker points out, “*not only in Hungarian, but about, for, and by Hungarians*”.¹¹⁵ However, this also provides information and it has an essential role in creating opinion for Hungarian Roma as well.

The Media had a very important role in 1990 as well. The highly mediatised event of the 1989 revolution and the role of the Hungarian Calvinist priest, Tőkés, in it but also the 1990 events in Târgu Mureş created strong feelings in Hungarians and Roma as well. I can say these events, which were widespread through the media, set up the base of a better relationship between Hungarian and Roma in Romania in general. Lots of people were informed through the media and especially through the Hungarian Media from Romania about these events.

The Hungarian Media in Romania also had a serious contribution in highlighting the negative effects of the development of society as well. However, recently it also shows the very serious challenges which the Hungarian Roma and Hungarian community has. The social crimes, poverty related problems and also the appearance of Jobbik in Târgu Mureş put a strain on the Hungarian Roma relationship.

4.2.1 The Hungarian local Media at the end of communism and in the nineties

The Media did not exist in the way it is today; because of this it did not influence the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship in the end of communism. However, the Media affected the Hungarian and Roma relationship as Sigismund Karácsony, journalist

¹¹⁴ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 291.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.292.

at Népujság from Târgu Mureş, told me in a positive way after the fall of communism in the nineties.

The Romanian mass media in Romania was very nationalistic, as mentioned in the Helsinki Watch report, in 1991. The Helsinki Watch complained that: “The Romanian media, reflecting a general public attitude among Romanians, often depict Gypsies as thieves, beggars, and black marketers, or as a people who do nothing but cast spells, make curses, and foretell the future.”¹¹⁶

Smaranda Enache, from the Pro Europa Liga, believes that the Media on Romanian side was really intolerant in the 1990’s but the situation improved considerably today. She also expresses her concern that the Media on the Hungarian Side was very tolerant at the beginning because the help which Roma gave Hungarians. However, she also mentioned that it appeared in Szeklerland a couple of newspapers which are not that tolerant recently.

The three major newspapers of the regions which I analyzed –the Bihari Napló from county Bihor, the Hargita Népe from Miercurea Ciuc and Népujság from Târgu Mureş also had a positive attitude towards Roma in the early nineties. There were no regional difference between them and the way it viewed the Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma relation in the nineties. They showed as Mrs Smaranda Enache human right activist highlighted that because the support given by Roma people to Hungarians during the ethnic clash between Hungarian and Romanians there was a good relation between Hungarians and Roma people in the nineties.

The good relationship among Hungarians and Roma it was also mentioned by Zsigmond Karácsonyi the journalist of the local Hungarian Newspaper “Népujság” from Târgu Mureş (The paper of the people). He was one of the reporters present at the events in 1990 March Târgu Mureş and contributed also in the legend of the Roma people help in that

¹¹⁶ Helsinki Watch; *Destroying ethnic identity. The persecution of Gypsies in Romania*, Published by Human Rights Watch, 991,pg.86-87, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1990/WR90/HELSINKI.BOU-02.htm>, (accessed May1, 2011)

time. Mr Karácsonyi pointed out that their help was crucial for Hungarians then. His newspaper was that one which told the first time the story of this 100-200 Roma and mentioned the famous shout: “Do not be threatened Hungarians, the Gypsies are coming”.

The same event was presented in the Hargita Népe from Miercurea Ciuc and Bihari Napló from Oradea too. Here the help of Roma appeared a little bit later but it also mentioned their solidarity with Hungarians. The main news from 21st and 22nd March 1990 in the Bihari Napló Newspaper was the shock because the ethnic from Târgu Mureş and also the solidarity with the victims as well. The same solidarity and help was visible in the reports in Hargita Népe on 21st March 1990.

As is visible from these papers there was generally a very good relation between Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma in the nineties. The tolerances of the Hungarian newspaper of that time were praised even from ethnic Romanian human activist such as Mrs. Enache. There were no significant differences in the three regions at that time.

4.2.2. The Roma in the local Hungarian Media today

The situation became different because of a couple of changes today. First of all there is more than one local Hungarian newspaper in every region, which sometimes expresses different opinions in many areas. This change is especially visible in Szeklerland. Mrs. Smaranda Enache, human right's activist expressed her concern the radicalism of a couple of newspaper from Szeklerland. She disliked especially a couple of attitudes towards Roma. She believes that the Hungarian radicalism affects especially Szeklerland where Hungarians are the majority rather than the newspaper from Oradea or Târgu Mureş . Hungary had an influence on the attitude of Hungarians how they view the Hungarian and Roma relationship especially in Szeklerland. There is less tolerance today than in the early nineties. This approach is visible in Szeklerland

The Roma leaders are usually satisfied with the Hungarian local newspapers and with the Media in general. The Roma Party leader from Oradea, Mr. Lakatos, did not criticize the local Hungarian Media or Hungarian Media. He believes that they are objective. However, the Roma Part leader from Oradea, Mr Lakatos, was really upset at the Romanian Mass Media. He was especially upset with the big Romanian TV channels who present the news about Romany people in a distortional way. He questioned their objectivity and solidarity with Roma people. He put the question why they can not inform their viewers and readers of the achievements of Romany people too. He mentioned when from 138 children only 8 abandoning the school why the media highlights that 8 cases and not the other 130 who is going to school.

The Roma Roma adviser from Târgu Mureş, Mr. Hajnal, did not bother about the Roma situation in Hungary and even the Jobbik presence in Târgu Mureş did not concerns him. He told me that this is Hungary's problem and here even the nationalist Hungarian parties such as Jobbik behave carefully. He is much more concerned about the Romanian Mass Media and the news from the internet. He opened randomly the internet and when he was looking news about Roma nearly in every page found one or two negative information about Roma. He showed a couple of news which bothered him. One was about the places offered for Roma in the Police Academy. The news appeared under the title of "Roma disinterest for Police Academy" and the article presented that for five places, offered for Roma, there were only nine candidates. He did not understand if there were more candidates than places how can be there disinterest. The other news told about a clash between two Roma clans. He was aware about the importance of the Media and because of this wants a politically correct presentation of the events.

Mr. Alexander Joni's, the Roma Party leader from Miercurea Ciuc and also employee of the Miercurea Ciuc City Council, situation was the most delicate one. He had to

interfere in the argument between the Roma people moved out from City Centre to a landing field, protected from Amnesty International and his employer the Miercurea Ciuc's Counsel. He supported the council in this dispute. He was mentioned as a reference in Hargita Népe, a newspaper with close connection with the City Council, on 19th April 2011.

The Roma leaders do not have a negative attitude towards the local Hungarian newspapers. All of them considered their attitude are mainly correct. However, in case of the Roma Party leader from Miercures Ciuc, Mr. Joni it was a clash of interest as it mentioned above.

Today in every region there is more than one Hungarian newspaper which sometimes reflects different approaches to different events. Despite this, in Oradea and Târgu Mureş the local Hungarian newspapers had a politically correct approach towards Roma problems and Hungarian Roma relationship.

These politically correct attitudes are appearing in the local Hungarian newspaper from Oradea the Bihari Naplo and the relatively new, six years old Reggeli Ujság (Morning Newspaper). One example of this politically correct attitude is the article about the celebration of the International Roma day. The Ruhama Foundation organized a celebration in the local toy theatre with Roma dance, Miss Roma Contest. This article appeared in 9th of April in Bihari Napló. Another article related about the charity action of Tokes, the vice-president of the EU and the Roma Mission in the so called "Cinka Panna" area of Oradea before Easter. This article appeared on 23rd on April 2011 in Bihari Napló.

The local Hungarian newspapers from Targu Mure the Népujság and Vásárhelyi Ujság did not receive any critics from Roma side. I would like to mention here two articles of the Népujság .Two of them relates the Calvary of Roma people participated in the events from 1990 March. One of them was about Paul Cseresnyés. Mr. Cseresnyés told the Népujság reporter that he received six years prison for participating in this event. He told also

to the reporter that the whole fight was useless because it had not achieved anything and he mentioned also that he is deeply disappointed with the help that he received from Hungarians. This appeared in *Népujság* 18th March 2000. The second article was about Béla Puczi. He was the Roma who was present at the events in 1990 March and he was the one who shouted the famous: “Do not be threatened Hungarians, the Gypsies are coming”. The article tells us that in the last 15 years he was refugee in Hungary and the Hungarian authorities did not offer the refugee status to him. He was constantly on the move because he was afraid of the Romanian authorities and as the author underlined he became a poor, homeless person without money and friends in Hungary of that time. The short article about his life appeared in *Népujság* in 20th October 2005.

Another Hungarian newspaper is the *Vásárhelyi Ujsag*, which is present in Târgu Mureş from 2006 and also contributing in making a better Hungarian and Roma relationship. Here I will present two articles of the newspaper. The first article was “A Hely ahol szivesen látják a romákat” (A place where Roma are welcomed) tells that Maria Korek from the Divers Foundation together with Hajnal Florin the Roma Counselor from the local Council opened a new office for Roma to help their social integration and employment. This article is important because present that it is a couple of positive events between Hungarians, Romanians and Roma. This article appeared in 12th of April 2011. The last article tells us that the so called “Szivárvány” (Rainbow) Foundation School, which educates 33 Roma children and other 55 young Roma children in the first classes, stopped its activity because the Counsel did not pay their January-November’s gas, water and electricity bills. The author of the article criticized bitterly the inactivity of local authorities this article appeared in *Népujság* 10th May 2011.

It is interesting how negative news which can disturb the Roma or Hungarian, or both communities is presented in the local Hungarian media. The tolerances or intolerance of

the newspapers are appearing in these cases. I found this kind of case in Vásárhelyi ujság. The Vásárhelyi ujság is a very tolerant, liberal newspaper that is reflected by the article which is presented here. This article presents a report with Smaranda Enache from the Pro Europa Liga Foundation, who expresses her concern because the Jobbik want to open a European MP's office in Târgu Mureş. This Party is not very popular among Roma who expressed their concerns regarding this Party's presence in Târgu Mureş. Mrs Smaranda Enache presents in the article her view that Jobbik same as the Romanian Noua Dreaptă (New Right) is also a nationalist organization. She is really concerned about their activity in Târgu Mureş, their Roma policy and their influence on Hungarian public because the city can become easily a fighting place between Hungarians and Romanians again. This article is from 10th March 2011.

As we can see the journalists from Târgu Mureş emphasize their solidarity with the Roma and work hard for a better relationship between the two communities. They present that events which they consider threaten a friendly relationship between Hungarians and Roma in Târgu Mureş. The situation is mostly same as in Oradea where both Hungarian newspapers have the common politically correct attitude towards Roma people.

The situation is different in Miercurea Ciuc. First of all the Hungarians are the majority here and lately the social crimes has been viewed with concerns by Hungarians. This had on impact on the Hungarian and Hungarian Roma relationship. There are two regional Hungarian Newspapers, the Hargita Népe (People from Hargita) and the Csiki Hirlap in Miercurea Ciuc nowadays. The first one Harghita Népe is closed to local authorities and it expresses quite frequently Hungarians concerns and actions against Roma from authorities' view today. Usually, these conflicts are related to poverty of the Roma population and their social crimes which is not very well tolerated by the Hungarians from Szeklerland.

I would like to mention here an article regarding a socially motivated crime and how it appeared in the Harghita Népe. The article appeared with the title “A helyi csendőrökre támadtak a romák” (The Roma attacked local Police Forces). The article tells the police tried to collect Gypsy horses which were on private properties and disturbed the owners of this property in Gheorghieni. When they did their duty they were insulted by the owners of these horses who threw stones at the police and attacked them with forks. The article mentions that the people who did this were prosecuted. This article appeared in 16th May in Hargita Népe. As we can see the article accused the whole Roma community instead accusing a couple of Roma people with antisocial behaviors.

Sometimes the anger of social crimes appears in Hungarian newspapers in Szeklerland too and creates a negative feeling towards the Roma people in Szeklerland. Unfortunately these kind of social crimes related disagreements between Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma are increasing. Therefore is necessary the political correct presentation of the event. The articles from the newspapers can increase the misunderstanding between Hungarian and Roma people because of this kind of article will not do any good.

Unfortunately, there was another article which could be interpreted as a lack of solidarity to Roma people problems and also gave an impression that certain action of the authorities is viewed with bias and maybe is not presented in a politically correct way. This article relates about the Amnesty International action in Miercurea Ciuc. The action was organized because the authorities moved the Roma population from the City Centre near a settling pant in 2004. Amnesty International objected to this action because they considered the area inhabitant. Their other grievances were that the authorities did not do anything to change the situation. The article appeared in Harghita Népe on 19th of April 2011.

Fortunately, in the other newspaper the Csiki Hirlap (established six years ago) appeared the same situation presented in a total different way. This was important because this showed the Roma people view as well and avoided the unilateral presentation of the events. Therefore, the Roma people did not feel abandoned by the local Hungarian Press. The newspaper presents the letter of Emese Csiki the local representant of Amnesty International who asked the city citizens help and support for the Roma children and families. She presented why is necessary to be moved these Roma families to better conditions. The very fact that this newspaper presented the letter of the Amnesty International local leader as well created an impartiality and objective approach to the whole question among its readers. The article appeared in 15th of April 2011.

Certain articles from Szeklerland's newspapers show an increasing impatience with the socially motivated crimes in Szeklerland. Fortunately, even in the case of Miercurea Ciuc there was a Hungarian newspaper which showed that there is a need for deeper analyses of the problem. This create a feeling among the Hungarian speaking Roma people that they are not alone and also create a possibility of dialog between the very poor Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma to sort out the problems which creates tensions.

I can say that the local newspapers presented correctly the height of the newspapers created the legend of the Roma help from 1990 which was later widespread in the Hungarian media and created the base of a better relationship. They also present us how this is deteriorating this relationship and try to push Hungarian leaders to be more involved in improving this. They relate objectively and correctly the about Hungarian and Roma relationship in all three regions, Oradea, Târgu Mureş and Miercurea Ciuc (Szeklerland) in the nineties. In Oradea the relationship between Hungarian and Roma is not that bad even today. The newspapers show how Hungarian politician from different political platforms are

trying to improve the relationship. In Târgu Mureş the Hungarian local Media is also politically correct.

As Smaranda Enache mentioned already the biggest problems appeared in Szeklerland's Hungarian press recently. Mrs. Enache also criticized a couple of newspaper in Szeklerland which are not very tolerant in Roma question. Occasionally, even the big local newspapers are not always politically correct too. They overreact in a couple of cases of social crimes. This reflects Smaranda Enache believes that the national intolerance increased in Romanian and Hungarian society too. However, even in Szeklerland there are newspapers which are interested in politically correct presentation which reduce the effects of the negative approach towards the Roma situation in Szeklerland.

Conclusion

The relation between Roma and Hungarians it was good in the end of communism. On the one hand common schools, religion increased the feeling of solidarity. On the other hand the improved social situation did not push the Roma people to commit that many social crimes as today. Furthermore the segregation existed but also it was much reduced scale because the communist ideology wanted to eliminate it. The common fate and oppression, schools and workplaces made the two communities to feel much closer to each other in all three regions.

The Hungarians' positive role in the revolution increased even more the feeling of solidarity among Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma in 1990 March Târgu Mureş. When Roma had to decide who to help they decided partly because of these reasons to take a side of Hungarians then. This unfortunate event was also the highpoint of the relation.

The Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma relationship changed for today. The biggest strain on relationship are the poverty related segregation and social crimes. The situation is the worst in Szeklerland where Hungarians sometimes overreacted crimes of a

couple of Roma people and punished the whole Roma community. The other reason of the changing relationship is the emancipation of Roma people in whole Romania. The most successful Romanian Roma people try to attract the less successful Hungarian speaking Roma on their side. Pentecostal Roma priests coming mostly from Romanian or Romany speaking Roma communities had a huge success in many cases among Hungarian speaking Roma people in Târgu Mureş and Oradea. The traditional Churches' influences are also strong and they help maintaining a good Hungarian Roma relations but their influence on Roma decreasing. The relationship among the two communities weakens especially when the service language is exclusively in Romanian even for just Hungarian speaking Roma. When the service language in Hungarian too this negative effect does not happen.

The education near the religion is the element which bonds still together Hungarians and Roma. The Phare projects, other educational projects which help the Roma children socially as well bond Roma people with non Roma (Hungarians) more than anything else. The dedication of teachers, school inspectors also help in this sense. The segregation, separation is present and wanted sometimes from both sides but these projects, schools of religious foundation and dedicated educational staff heal the separation caused problems. The effects of these programs were visible in Oradea, Szeklerland and less in Târgu Mureş. Overthere even these programs had limited effects because the teachers, social mediators who occupy with Roma coming from the Romanian speaking Roma community with no Hungarian knowledge.

The Hungarian local media plays usually a positive role. They reflect on the problems which can affect the Roma community and create a feeling of solidarity among the Hungarian speaking Roma community. In Oradea there are no conflicts and there is solidarity among the two communities. In Târgu Mureş show a weakened relation but they play also a positive role when they raise their voice against disturbing problems in the two community

relationship. In Miercurea Ciuc and Szeklerland certain newspapers presents ocasionaly events unilaterally and this can reduce the feeling of solidarity among Hungarians and Hungarian speaking Roma.

My final conclusion is that Hungarian and Hungarian speaking Roma are not that bad but still needs an improvement and much involvement from both communities especially in Târgu Mureş.

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