

DOCTORAL THESIS

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**Studies in the history of given names and socioonomastics in the
Swabian communities in the region of Carei (Nagykároly),
Romania**

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I. The aims, methods and sources of the study

1. This paper examines the changes in modern Hungarian naming customs and the underlying socio-cultural framework in Swabian municipalities near Nagykároly (Carei), Szatmár (Satu-Mare) county. The considered villages are Csanálos (Urziceni), Kálmánd (Cămin), Mezőfény (Foieni) and Csomaköz (Ciumești). In the 18th century, Catholic Swabians were encouraged to settle in these four villages depopulated during previous wars. Even though the population had already gone through a language shift (their native tongue is Hungarian), the Swabian origin has even to this day an influence over the choice of given names. According to the most recent census in 2011, 20% of the community identifies as German/Swabian. In the 20th century, naming customs were affected by the region becoming part of Romania, which entailed becoming a minority group and Romanian becoming the official language, and, since the end of the 20th century, increasingly by international influences and globalization as well.

The aim of this study is not merely to list the names, but to analyze and present the data while examining the root causes of certain phenomena. Through presenting the historical and current given name stock and naming practices of the villages near Nagykároly and by applying the research approaches used in this paper, the characteristics and temporal changes of this minority group's naming strategy will become more tangible. The consistent application of onomastic methodology and the further development of these procedures to better suit the attributes of the given community make up an integral part of my research. Alongside the principles of traditional onomastic analysis, I use state-of-the-art research approaches such as examining the connection between naming and identity, concerning names' function in marking identity, and organizing the name stock according to linguistic and cultural identity. I sought to deploy the findings and methodology of international research in surveying the motivational background of present-day naming practices. Therefore, the study aims to enrich research concerning the naming conventions and name usage of the Hungarian diaspora with its etymological and socio-onomastic findings as well as its methodological approaches.

2. For a historical analysis of the name stock, I used the Roman Catholic church records dated between 1826 and 2013. The corpus contains the names of 28 755 individuals.

I conducted interviews and surveys and invited external subjects to complement the written sources. The survey consisted of two parts: section A concerning the demographic

data of the subjects, and the importance of name choice in the context of identity-marking factors; and section B about the names given to children and the motivation behind naming. 199 survey entries were analyzed during the research.

Due to its scope, I subdivided the historical period in question, thus facilitating the monitoring of temporal changes in the name stock and enabling synchronic analyses of the subdivisions. Similarly to other researchers in the field, I used approximately 20-year periods, in a way that they reflect the social and political changes occurring at the time. The following eight periods were determined during the analysis of name stock: I. 1826–1848, II. 1849–1871, III. 1872–1894, IV. 1895–1918, V. 1919–1944, VI. 1945–1964, VII. 1965–1989, VIII. 1990–2013.

II. Structure of the study

1. The first chapter summarizes the subject and the aims of the study and describes the approaches used in the research process.

2. The second chapter describes the area in concern, the history of the four municipalities, the occupations and lifestyle of the settlers, and elaborates on the changes in Swabian demographics since the 1880s up to this day. Beyond presenting the data, I strive to uncover the underlying social and political causes. My aim is to introduce the factors which affected the everyday lives, language use and identity of Swabian people, and to display the various stages of language shift.

3. The third chapter is about the sources and the data collection methods used in the study. Apart from describing the characteristics of written sources certain methodological approaches are considered, such as the relationship between a name and its variants, the organization of written variants and the deciphering of Latinized names. Data collection from the living language, in the form of surveys and interviews, complements the corpus consisting of birth certificates.

4. The fourth chapter unveils the changes in given name choices between 1826 and 2013. Initially, I used conventional onomastic approaches in presenting the data gathered from church records, with regard to the methods and findings of international and Hungarian research in the field. The temporal dimensions of the data enabled the monitoring of changes in naming trends over time, and attempts were made to uncover the factors behind these changes. Motivational research was conducted based on the data found in birth certificates, concerning name inheritance from parents and godparents, and the temporal changes in calendar-based name giving. While examining the names given to twins, I elaborate on the

characteristics of common name pairs and the phenomenon of name pairing, and contrast the differences between name choices in the case of twin and single births.

The last major section of the fourth chapter deals with the linguistic and cultural analysis of the name stock. Various approaches exist concerning the etymological research of names, which conveys to us how complex the field is. Given names can be categorized using standard etymological methods, but organization by affiliation with a community and according to linguistic identity had proven to be more fruitful. In this paper I organized the names using both methods; while attempting to develop and apply a typology, which can be suitable for a community with multiple linguistic and onomastic affiliations (Hungarian, German and Romanian in this case).

5. The fifth chapter presents a synchronic motivational analysis based on the surveys' results, concerning the previously neglected notion of parents' education in relation to their name choices. After describing the survey, I briefly discuss the opportunities of examining this particular subfield. Through the surveys' results, I aim to present the different motivational factors of naming for parents with different educational backgrounds, and the variance of naming strategies among these subjects. The temporal characteristics of the data allowed me to conduct change analysis by separating the period into two sections: 1965–1989, 1990–2013. Apart from the motivational factors, we can gain insight into the circumstances of name choice and naming as well.

6. The last chapter of this paper provides a sociolinguistic analysis of a small portion of the data found in church records; the most recent period, data from Mezőfény between 1965 and 2013. In the section named *The connection between education and name choices*, I describe how education influences name choice; what types of names are preferred among parents with different academic background. I also present the cultural influences (German, Romanian and international) on groups with different education, and the status of traditional Hungarian names and double names.

This chapter explores the connection between identity and naming choices. In minority groups, given names can be seen as expressions of the individual's ethnic and/or cultural identity. With this analysis, I attempted to discover the connection between name choices and the identity of parents and children in a minority context, and to determine the role of naming among a linguistically and ethnically almost exclusively Hungarian minority group's elements of identity. Through analyzing the surveys' results, I examined the place of surnames and given names in a system of criteria concerning identity. I present the correlation between

certain identity criteria by using factor analysis, while highlighting the differences between Hungarian and Swabian identity-marking factors.

Through name orders we can map the extent to which members with a minority identity attempt to conform to the majority of society through their name usage. I will briefly delineate the difference between official and everyday name usage. The analysis of historical name stock can occasionally help to explore the connection between name and identity; the organization of names according to cultural affiliation can sometimes express the identity of the person who gave and the person who bears the name.

III. Findings

1. An examination of the corpus regarding the temporal changes in naming trends suggests that traditional names are more popular during the first half of a period. The frequency of names is high, especially in the case of the ten most popular given names. In the second half of a period, the frequency of names is gradually decreasing. This change is quite moderate, and we can identify the common stock of names which is constantly supplemented with given names embraced by newer trends. During the second half of a period, especially in the case of the last two periods, traditional and conventionally accepted Christian names are eclipsed, and the number of names of foreign origin rapidly increases. This tendency is in relation with certain sociological changes; similarly to other countries, name choices are affected by international influences as a result of globalization.

1.1. According to the motivational analysis based upon church records, there is a perpetual increase in the inheritance of parents' names up until the last three periods (1945–2013). The tendency peaks between 1919 and 1944. Therefore, name inheritance plays a smaller role in the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century than at the mid-20th century. The trend starts to decline during the second third of the century; inheritance is at its lowest point at the turn of the millennium, in accordance with changes in naming, the descent of traditional naming conventions. A difference can be observed between the sexes: boys are more likely to inherit their father's name than girls are to inherit their mother's. The inheritance of godparents' names is gradually fading (the only slight increase can be observed during the V. period [1919-1944]); the practice is seldom implemented during the last period. Throughout the periods, girls are more likely to inherit their godparent's name. Parental name inheritance peaks during the Period V, while the decline in godparental name

inheritance stops; the popularity of these traditional naming conventions increases in the particular interval. This tendency is possibly related to the political changes affecting the community. After the onset of the domination by Romania, the community was subject to different influences in the context of Romanian politics, such as the newly attained minority status and the German lobby propagated by the state. The latter encouraged the community, which was already in a further stage of language shift, to use their Swabian/German native tongue and to revitalize their traditions. Godparental name inheritance is a conventional naming motive among German communities; its re-emergence during this particular period seems completely reasonable.

As for calendar-based naming, it is not completely sure if the underlying cause is the adjacency of the birthday and the name day; it can only be assumed that it influenced the parents' name choice. The analysis of the name stock suggests that naming based on the calendar is most prominent during the first half of the 19th century. The downturn in conventional naming practices is an observable trend in 20th century data; the decline is accelerating during this period, and there are larger proportional differences between the subdivisions. The findings concerning the effect of calendar-based naming can be seen as natural consequences of the aforementioned tendencies and changes; the first half of a period involves an adherence to tradition with more rigid naming choices, while during the second half name inheritance, naming based on the calendar, and traditional names are subject to a decline. These patterns are analogous to tendencies well-documented in scientific literature in the field.

1.2. Double forenames bear a rather unique role, simultaneously facilitating innovation and the preservation of traditions. Double names can be sorted into different groups based on their conventionality: traditional + traditional, traditional + new, new + traditional, new + new. The most popular form throughout the corpus is traditional + traditional. Except for the last two periods, parents tend to combine traditional names with other well-known names. From the 1940s, and increasingly since the 1960s, there is a trend of complementing traditional names with new ones previously unprecedented in the community. Along with changes in trends, name inheritance – which is far more common among people with two forenames – is an important motivational factor behind the increase in the popularity of double names, since the name of parents, godparents and grandparents is a popular choice for second names; that might be the reason for the popularity of traditional names among double names. However, the popularity of giving two forenames might be connected to the Swabian/German origin and

identity of the community. Similarly to other German communities in Hungary, there is an increase in the number of names with German origin (and names with German being the intermediary language) when the popularity of double forenames peaks. Furthermore, research concerning Romanian naming customs shows that double names are increasingly popular (which is also the case in Hungary). Thus, minority tradition, and patterns from the mainland and Romanian majority society strengthen the practice of giving double forenames.

1.3. Name pairing (névvonatkoztatás) is one of the most fascinating characteristics of twin names: *Ádám – Éva, Péter – Pál, Gáspár – Menyhért – Boldizsár*. Alliterating name pairs are also common: *Erzsébet – Emma, Márton – Mihály*. The motive for name pairing and alliterating names might be an urge to express togetherness.

1.4. The structure and temporal changes of the name stock can be examined through organizing based on linguistic and cultural background, group affiliation and different name types. Regarding the aforementioned findings in scientific research, seven major groups were created; these groups were further divided based on the naming customs of the local community. The following table presents the statistical findings of the analysis.

	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.
	1826– 1848	1849– 1871	1872– 1894	1895– 1918	1919– 1944	1945– 1964	1965– 1989	1990– 2013
Hungarian 1.	96,0	94,4	93,6	90,2	87,0	81,8	58,7	38,5
<i>Hungarian 1a</i>	86,3	86,8	88,5	88,0	84,4	77,0	45,9	17,2
<i>Hungarian 1b</i>	7,6	7,0	4,6	1,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
<i>Hungarian 1c</i>	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,0	3,5	6,3	9,7
<i>Hungarian 1d</i>	2,1	0,6	0,5	0,3	0,6	1,3	6,5	11,6
Hungarian 2.	0,1	0,1	1,2	3,7	8,1	12,1	18,6	13,4
German 1.	3,9	5,5	5,2	6,0	4,8	5,0	13,0	12,4
<i>German 1a</i>	3,4	4,6	4,6	5,5	4,0	3,0	1,3	1,0
<i>German 1b</i>	0,3	0,6	0,5	0,4	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
<i>German 1c</i>	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,5	1,6	9,4	7,8
<i>German 1d</i>	0,2	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,3	0,4	2,3	3,6
German 2.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,9	2,2
Romanian	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,4	0,6
International 1.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,9	6,1	22,0
International 2.	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,3	10,9

Table 1.: Distribution of given names by linguistic groups, regarding the number of name bearers

The group Hungarian 1. comprises names of Christian origin, adopted to Hungarian through historical contact languages such as Latin and Greek. Their cognates can be found in other languages due to linguistic interchangeability. These phonetically assimilated names emerged primarily during the Old Hungarian period, some of them however were transferred during the Middle Hungarian Period.

Based on the number of name bearers, names belonging to the group Hungarian 1. have been popular over long periods of time; they are the most representative to date. More than 90% of name bearers in our sample bear such names during the first half of an examined period. Decline in their use is characteristic of the second half of the period, especially after 1965. Concerning Hungarian 1. names, we must remark that the dominance of names of Christian origin and the scarcity of German names during the first half of the period does not directly indicate a shift in the identity and language of the name bearers. As the earliest data (from the 19th century and the second half of the 18th century) show, Christian names with Latin and Greek origins are just as characteristic of Swabian/German naming conventions as names with German origin. Names borrowed through ecclesiastical Latin intermediation are fairly popular in the 19th century German name stock of Germany, particularly the names of saints and names taken from the New Testament.

Names in the group Hungarian 2. are not of ecclesiastic origin; they are either Hungarian names or names borrowed from Turkic and Slavic languages. Some cognates can be found through semantic and conventional comparability, others cannot. Certain names were subject to morphological and phonetic assimilation. A portion of these names was transferred to the Hungarian name stock during the Proto-Hungarian period, but the majority was revived or even created in the Modern Hungarian era. Members of this group are usually more recent names of the Nagykároly region's onomastic corpus; older and established names are uncommon in Hungarian 2. Their frequency is average or rare, while their spelling is predominantly Hungarian.

During the 1920s we see an increase in the popularity of names in the group Hungarian 2., but this tendency can be seen as the continuation of the growth occurring in the last third of the 19th century. This trend might indicate changes in the identity of the Swabian community, or it might be related to the newly attained minority status; possibly a reaction to the attempts implemented by Romanian registry offices to assimilate Hungarian given names by translating them to the official language.

The group German 1. contains ecclesiastical names with German origin or names adopted with German being the bridge language. Cognates of these names can be found due to linguistic interchangeability, and they phonetically assimilated to the Hungarian language. The majority dates back to the Old Hungarian period, although there are borrowings from the Middle and Modern Hungarian eras as well.

There is a continuous increase in the number of German 1. names up to the end of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century, followed by a gradual decline. The low number of German names among the Swabian community, which was already subject to language shift in the second half of the 19th century, does not necessarily mean that name bearers no longer try to preserve their Swabian/German identity. Registration in Hungarian or Latin can mask real name use; a person registered as *Josephus* or *József* might use their name as *Joseph* in daily life. Methodologically it is impossible to identify real name use based on parish registers; consequently, the name bearer's ethnic identity is not at all indicated by their registered name.

The group Romanian comprises secular names borrowed from the Romanian official language, for which no cognates can be found. Only slight phonetic assimilation occurred in these cases. The majority was adopted to the name stock of the Nagykároly region during the Modern Hungarian period; they are among the recent and most recent names. These names are quite infrequent, the spelling conforms to the Romanian standard. The names belonging to this group, with one exception, emerged in the last three periods, with very few name bearers only. Romanian names are usually given to the children of parents with mixed ethnic (Hungarian and Romanian) background. The results of the surveys suggest that members of the community do not choose Romanian names intentionally, the name stock of the Romanian majority therefore doesn't influence the predominantly Hungarian community's name stock.

Names of the group International are mainly secular, sometimes ecclesiastical names; they were transferred from English, Romance languages and other contact languages. The distinction between the subdivisions International 1. and International 2. is based on spelling and comparability. International 1. comprises of names with identifiable cognates due to linguistic interchangeability; names in International 2. are not comparable. Members of this group were borrowed during the Modern Hungarian era, and they were subject to phonetic assimilation. They represent the recent and most recent names in the given name stock of the Nagykároly region; their frequency is either average or rare. The spelling can be Hungarian or neutral (International 1.), and foreign (International 2.). International names appeared during the most recent periods, with increasing numbers. The emergence and rapid propagation of

such names is evident in many countries' name stock; the tendency is connected to social transformations and globalization.

The grouping system implemented by this study could be universally accepted for the analysis of a Hungarian minority group's name stock in the Modern Hungarian period, with regards to the circumstances of a given group. The use of a single analytical template could facilitate the comparison of various corpuses of names and a more consistent examination of their similarities and differences.

2. The motivational analysis of the last fifty years suggests that parents tend to choose names for their children more mindfully and with consideration to more motives in the last quarter-century (1990–2014), than during the previous one (1965–1989). The main motivations between 1965 and 1989 are the frequency and religious affiliation of a name; name inheritance and naming after a specific person are more prominent here than in the last quarter-century. As for the later period, sound, character, length, possible nicknames, origin, and meaning are the main considerations, along with the name's occurrence in the calendar.

The analysis of parents' educational background shows that frequency, fashionableness, and religious affiliation are more important considerations among the less-educated. It is crucial for the members of each group that the name sounds pleasant. The well-educated tend to focus more on character, length, origin, and possibilities for nicknames. Overall, parents with more education consider more aspects in their choice.

3. The last chapter of the study analyzes the synchronic name stock based on certain sociolinguistic considerations: the connection between parents' educational background and name choices, and the connection between name and identity.

3.1. Only the name stock of Mezőfény (Foieni) was examined regarding education and name choice. Based on the findings, a dual tendency seems to emerge among less educated parents: there is an openness towards the new, while traditions are equally important. More educated parents tend to be more innovative with their name choice; accordingly, survey findings show that the well-educated prefer fashionable names. Three cultural groups can be identified to have influence on name choices in Mezőfény: German and international influences mostly affect the name choices of people with a high school diploma, while Romanian influences are more prominent among people with primary education.

3.2. Names can serve identity marking in various ways among the community in the Nagykároly region. Results of the survey suggest that the origin (linguistic character) of a name is more important than its translatability to Romanian and the corresponding origin of given name and surname.

The importance of various components among Hungarian and Swabian/German identity criteria differs from one component to another. The most important elements of Hungarian identity are self-identification and the Hungarian native tongue, followed by criteria concerning cultural-national belonging. Self-identification and ethnic pride are core values of Swabian identity, along with criteria regarding origin. Given names and surnames are lesser means of identity-marking.

According to the analysis of the name order, and the subchapter exploring the differences between official and everyday name use, the dominance of Hungarian form and order is an observable trend in daily name usage; most subjects use the Hungarian name order (given name followed by surname) even in Romanian conversations. Surveys show that most of the time official name use follows everyday name use; the rate of discrepancies is only about 13%. In these cases, the original name is usually replaced by a cognate from the official language.

The perseverance of surnames with German origin, the increase in German forenames during the last two periods, and the available census data suggests that Swabian communities near Nagykároly are far from undergoing a shift in identity; the emergence of dual ethnic identity is a more appropriate way of describing the phenomenon.

4. Unfortunately, certain notions could not be incorporated in this study. An extensive analysis of the region's name stock would require the examination of the surname stock, which would necessitate the involvement of other analytical considerations, but it could also complement data concerning the forename stock with its findings.

Exploring the various phenomena of contact in the name stock could present a fascinating new angle, but it would lead to a demand for an even more extensive analytic undertaking, and the examination of more resources.

The geographical and temporal range of the study could be extended further. The involvement of additional resources would enlarge the pool of available data on naming customs, thus making the conclusions more accurate and exploring new connections. The range of this study does not allow for such possibilities, but its finding can hopefully facilitate these approaches, along with further research on a similar note.

The list of my other works in the field

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