



Zmiešané manželstvá (manželstvá s cudzincami) ako sociokultúrny fenomén [Mixed Marriages as a Social and Cultural Phenomenon]

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Silvia Letavajová is an ethnologist and culturologist who focuses on the research of traditional culture in Slovakia as well as on family and family customary traditions. She also focuses on migrants, especially refugees, and so-called new minorities.

In her publication *Mixed marriages (marriages with foreigners) as a socio-cultural phenomenon* she deals with the increasingly widespread phenomenon of mixed marriages, i.e., marriages of partners who come from religiously, ethnically, racially, socially, linguistically or politico-economically different groups. The theme of marriages of Slovak citizens with residents of other countries has so far only been marginally studied by social science disciplines, which, according to Letavajová, needs to be changed due to the increasingly intensive migration and contacts with people from other cultures and countries. In her publication, she, therefore, attempts to "give a picture of mixed marriages as a broad-spectrum and multilayered social phenomenon, as well as a specific social category" (LETAVAJOVÁ 2018:10).

The publication thus consists of a theoretical part - the processing of the issue from different angles (traditional culture, legislation and so on) and author's research. The research itself consists of two parts. The first part of the research is to find out the public's reflection on

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mixed marriages. The second part consists of field research focused on marriages with foreigners of the Muslim religion. The author focuses on research of the reflection of mixed marriages of partners who are in such a relationship, as well as research of strategies of their family, social and partner life.

The first chapter presents the methods and techniques of the research. The public opinion on mixed marriages was examined by a questionnaire method, and the research sample consisted of 221 respondents - 109 men and 112 women in 3 age categories. She carried out this part of her research in 2016 and 2017 in Prievidza.

She conducted field research on marriages with foreigners of Muslim religion through interviews, but also through participating and non-participating non-standardized observation techniques, which were used to verify the respondents' statements. In this case, the research sample consisted of 29 respondents who gave a picture of 22 mixed marriages. In each of these marriages, the woman has Slovak citizenship, while the man is a citizen of another country. Respondents in this marriage are either still together or divorced (the average duration of both marriages and divorces is 8 years); the research criterion was that they had to live at least part of their marital life in Slovakia.

The respondents came from Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt. The author justifies her choice because the proportion of migrants from these countries and mixed marriages with them is statistically significant. As far as women are concerned, respondents come from several Slovak cities, so there is no spatial limitation.

The author also added 12 respondents, who know or are friends with Slovak and foreign partners, and with whom she also conducted interviews on the topic of mixed marriages. The field research was carried out in 2014, 2015, and 2017.

In the second chapter, the author presents the theoretical background and historical aspects of the study of mixed marriages. It focuses on marriage as such, marital preferences, separately mixed marriages as a separate social category and migration processes, thanks to which such unions occur.

The third chapter is devoted to mixed marriages in Slovakia. In the first part, the author deals with the choice of a partner in a traditional rural environment. She explains the perception of what is "ours" and what is "foreign", as well as how the individual groups differ visually and thus separate (e.g., Evangelicals and Catholics). She also deals directly with mixed marriages - i.e., marriages of locally, religiously and ethnically different partners, and the selection of a spouse in connection with migration processes. The author concludes this part with the

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reflection on the above-mentioned mixed marriages in customary and folk traditions in Slovakia.

The second part of this chapter deals with the legislative conditions that determine the establishment and functioning of marriages with foreigners in Slovakia.

The third part is devoted to statistical data of marriages of Slovaks with foreigners, focusing on data concerning foreigners in marriage markets in our territory (it also independently deals with Muslims) and marriages of Slovaks with foreigners in Slovakia; the author also pays attention to divorce rate and illegal migration in the form of smuggling carried out for the purpose of marriage of convenience.

The fourth chapter is the empirical part, i.e. the results of the author's research. The first part of this chapter discusses public opinion. It focuses specifically on what the respondents mean by the term "mixed marriage" and what their preferences are for a partner from a similar group. Subsequently, it deals with their preferences regarding ethnicity, religiosity, nationality, continent, language, or race. The author also studied whether the respondents had any personal experience with mixed marriages and what their recommendations were regarding the marital preferences of their offspring.

The second part of this chapter deals with mixed marriages themselves. The author discusses several aspects of marital or family life. She deals with the introduction of partners and the subsequent marriage, partner, family life and the related upbringing of children.

As can be seen from the present summary, the publication is thematically extensive, and the same applies to separate chapters. However, each chapter is divided into many subchapters, which make the publication very clear and easy to navigate.

The broad thematic scope of the theoretical part offers the reader a comprehensive picture of mixed marriages in Slovakia. The reader is acquainted with the issue in several ways and consequently, its better understanding. Letavajová's book is thus an excellent primary source for any work that deals with mixed marriages, regardless of the specific type of mixed marriage.

The author believes that due to the increasingly widespread globalization and migration, the number of mixed marriages in our territory will also increase, which will also give rise to new challenges and issues that society will face. I myself can tell that approximately half of my friends are in a family relationship with foreigners. This topic is actual and needs attention. However, other types of mixed marriages could also be processed or investigated.

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Cultural diversity is enormous, and there are significant differences among people from different countries and cultures, which brings numerous other challenges.

Reviewed Literature

LETAVAJOVÁ, Silvia (2018). *Zmiešané manželstvá (manželstvá s cudzincami) ako sociokultúrny fenomén*. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa. 287 p.