

## **Lendák-Kabók Karolina: A gendered perspective on adjusting to cultural and religious differences in ethnic intermarriages**

### ***Abstract***

The paper explores the dynamics of cultural and religious adjustment in intermarriages among women from national minority and majority groups in Vojvodina, the multicultural northern province of Serbia. Based on twenty interviews with women from the Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian minority communities, and the Serbian majority, the study investigates the complex process of navigating intercultural unions. It highlights how these women, influenced by patriarchal values, adapt to their partners' cultural and religious backgrounds. Adopting intersectionality as a theoretical background, this research analyzes how different aspects of a woman's identity (gender, ethnicity, culture) intersect and affect their experiences in intermarriages. Additionally, Acculturation Theory is utilized to explore how individuals from different cultural backgrounds adjust and adapt when they come into contact with another culture, providing insights into how minority and majority women adjust to their partners' ethnic and religious background. Findings show a varying degrees of adjustment observed between minority and majority women. Minority women tend to fully immerse themselves in their partners' culture and religion, often adopting new practices and customs and leaving behind their own. In contrast, majority women generally assimilate to a lesser extent, notably preferring to use the majority language at home, despite being in culturally mixed marriages. The study also reveals that these intermarriages are perceived as a means of cultural and community bridging. Women from both minority and majority groups view their unions as opportunities to foster understanding and connection between their respective communities. This perspective not only highlights the personal adjustments they make but also emphasizes the broader social implications of their marriages. By examining the experiences of these women, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of cultural and religious adjustments in intermarriages from a gender perspective. It sheds light on the role of gender and power dynamics in such relationships and offers insights into the potential of these unions in promoting intercultural harmony, but also assimilation patterns in a diverse society like Vojvodina.