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## MATRIMONIAL RIGHTS AND THE EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO MARRIAGE IN NEWSPAPER ADS BY THE END OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES IN CROATIA

**Abstract:** *The authors explore the social and legal status of unmarried women and social rules and customs affecting their behavior related to marriage and the relationship between men and women in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Croatia, which was then a part of the Austrian Empire i.e. Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The research is founded on two different corpora. The first encompasses relevant legal acts regulating marriage at that time, including special rules for royal soldiers regarding their rights to get married. The second part of the research is founded on newspaper announcements, specifically: matrimonial and contact ads, in which men and women express their wish to meet a potential spouse or lover. The corpus of ads is excerpted from the local newspapers of Osijek Die Drau and Slavonische Presse, published in the German language in the explored historical period. The issues of both newspapers published between 1870 and 1938 are available in digitalized versions. Matrimonial and contact ads by men and women as potential spouses or love couples represent a valuable source of information about social rules and customs related to marriage and the relationship between men and women when social communication and social media were very limited. The paper aims to present legal rules regulating men's*

*and women's rights and duties relating to marriage but also to shed light on how communication between potential love partners or spouses through printed media influenced the social position and identity of women by analyzing relevant newspaper ads from legal, socio-psychological, and socio-linguistic points of view.*

**Keywords:** *legal aspect of marriage; social rules; love and marriage; newspaper ads; Croatia.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION: CORPUS, GOAL AND METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the authors explore the legal and social position of women by analyzing matrimonial and contact ads published by men and women in local newspapers in the Croatian city of Osijek from a historical perspective. The main goal of the paper is to explore the social and legal status of unmarried women and present social rules and customs related to the relationship between men and women seeking for love and/or marriage by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was the time when the communication between men and women as potential love couples or spouses was very limited. Contacts were established through the mediation of family, friends, and relatives, by exchanging letters, or by ads in local newspapers. The latter was available to higher or middle-class members who were literate at that time and could afford to publish their ads in the newspapers. In that sense, the number and contents of examples explored provide insight into the social status and behavior models of (young) women from the urban middle-class as influenced by their social and cultural settings. Due to the legal background it offers, and its research corpus that encompasses different types of ads published in the German language, this study is of interdisciplinary character, connecting the domains of law, social psychology, and socio-linguistics.

In the theoretical part of the paper, the authors present the social environment and matrimonial rights of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Croatia. The social milieu of the city of Osijek is shortly presented as well as a typical representative of Croatian urban settings of that time. The main part presents the research into matrimonial and contact ads published by men and women in the newspapers *Die Drau* and *Slavonische Presse* between 1870 and 1938. The two newspapers are available today in the digitalized version as result of the international GIP project<sup>1</sup> conducted by the University Josip Juraj Strossmayer of Osijek, the University of Gießen, and DAAD. *Die Drau* was printed daily from 1872 to 1938 and *Slavonische Presse* from 1885 to 1920s but with interruptions. All the

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<sup>1</sup> *Spuren deutscher Sprache, Literatur und Kultur in Kroatien* (project No. 57338369) of the University Josip Juraj Strossmayer of Osijek, the University of Gießen, and DAAD; the newspapers are available on the platform <https://essekiana.eindigo.net/?dd=l&q>.

issues were scanned page by page, so it was not possible to excerpt one specific ad from advertisement pages by using IT methodology. It was necessary to look for matrimonial and contact ads on every page, to create data basis of all relevant ads, organize them into groups, analyze them, and finally draw conclusions.

## 2. SOCIAL AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

Osijek is a multilingual and multicultural city inhabited mostly by domicile Croatians and the settlers from German-speaking countries, while the Serbian and Hungarian population inhabited the suburbs of the city. From the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, in three historical settlement waves organized by the Royal Court of Vienna, military forces, craftsmen, farmers, and industrials from Baden-Württemberg, Hessen, Bavaria, and some other German-speaking parts of the Austrian Empire inhabited Osijek and the surrounding area. These settlements shaped the economic and industrial development of the city and determined its multicultural and multilingual character. No wonder that German became a language of public communication. According to the census of 1902, 53.88 % of citizens were speaking that language<sup>2</sup>.

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the period of the Enlightenment that was marked by the development of science and appreciation of culture and arts in social life and by the industrial revolution in the economy. This influenced positively the social position of women due to better education possibilities and increased employment opportunities for women. Women from middle and lower social classes got the opportunity for financial independence, which increased their autonomy in private and public life<sup>3</sup>. The literacy rate in the female population grew as well, which contributed to increased freedom of public communication. As a result, different job ads, job offers, and business advertisements by women could be found in the newspapers published in Osijek and other cities at that time. Although the job of a teacher was the first public occupation open to women, female teachers were paid less than their male colleagues<sup>4</sup>. The liberal laws passed under the Croatian Ban Ivan Mažuranić equalized the monthly wages of men and women in 1874, but in 1888, under the amendments to the same law, female teachers were not allowed to marry<sup>5</sup>. The royal decision of 1901

<sup>2</sup> Agneza Szabo, „Socijalni sastav stanovništva“, *Od turskog do suvremenog Osijeka* (eds. Ive Mažuran et. al.), Osijek 1996, 158.

<sup>3</sup> Jelena Červenjak, Zlata Živaković-Kerže, „Modernizacijska kretanja i položaj žena u gradu Osijeku na prijelazu 19. u 20. stoljeće“, *Scrinia Slavonica*, 2014, Vol. 14., No. 1., 134.

<sup>4</sup> Elise Krasnohorska, „Bohemia“, *The Woman question in Europe: a series of original essays* (ed. Theodore Stanton), New York 1884, 452.

<sup>5</sup> Antun Cuvaj, *Grada za povijest školstva Kraljevina Hrvatske i Slavonije – Svezak VI.*, Zagreb 1911, 373.

enabled girls to enroll the studies at the University of Zagreb<sup>6</sup>, which led to an increased number of educated women at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2.1. Laws on marriage in Croatia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

From a legal-historical point of view, marriage as a social institution was very important for both the state and the Church as it was seen as the foundation of society. In the Middle Ages, the Church had jurisdiction in matrimonial matters, while the state dealt with the civil legal consequences of marriage. According to the Catechism of Catholic Matrimonial Law of 1886, marriage is “a complete and indivisible union of life between husband and wife, created according to the will of God. Christian marriage is a sacrament by which two free persons, male and female, are married, and receive grace from God to faithfully fulfill their marital duties until death”<sup>7</sup>. It was in the Enlightenment Era that the state began to enact rules on marriage (matrimonial law). Consequently, in the observed period, marriage was regulated by both the state and the church law, i.e. by the provisions of the Civil Law and the Ecclesiastical Law<sup>8</sup>.

The first major change in matrimonial law in the Habsburg Monarchy occurred when Joseph II (1765–1790) brought new regulations on marriage that were different from church laws. The two most important laws concerning marriage were The Imperial Act of August 30, 1782, and The Imperial Act of January 16, 1783. Under those acts, marriage was considered a civil contract under the state jurisdiction, i.e. under the Civil Law regulation and jurisdiction<sup>9</sup>. These provisions and ideas of the Josephine laws were later adopted into the General Civil Code (GCC). GCC was introduced in the Kingdom of Dalmatia on January 1, 1816, while in the Kingdoms of Hungary, Croatia and Slavonia and the Voivodeship of Serbia and of Temeschwar it was implemented in later years, after the Act of November 29, 1852, entered into force. The Art. 3 of the Imperial Act related to the valid conclusion of marriage, legality of marriage, separation from the table and bed, and the termination of the marriage. Those rules did not apply to the members of the Roman Catholic, the Greek-United (Greek Catholics), and Greek-Non-United (Orthodox) religions with residence in Croatia and Slavonia. For the members of those religions, their denominational matrimonial laws were applied.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, special provisions on marriage from the GCC applied to Pro-

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<sup>6</sup> Dinko Župan, *Mentalni korzet: spolna politika obrazovanja žena u Bansknoj Hrvatskoj (1868- 1918)*, Osijek 2013, 107-110.

<sup>7</sup> Jael Weber, *Katekizam katoličkog ženidbenog prava*, Sarajevo 1886, 10-11.

<sup>8</sup> Ljiljana Dobrovšak, „Ženidbeno (bračno) pravo u 19. stoljeću u Hrvatskoj“, *Croatica Christiana Periodica*, 2005, Vol. 29., No. 56., 77.

<sup>9</sup> Edo Lovrić, *Studije iz ženidbenoga prava ili Ženidba i njezini bitni momenti*, Zagreb 1900, 1-9.

<sup>10</sup> Adolf Rušnov, *Tumač Obćemu austrijskomu gradjanskomu zakoniku*, Zagreb 1910, 98.

testants and Jews, with special provisions relating to matrimonial rights and duties of the Jewish population (Articles 124-136 GCC).<sup>11, 12</sup>

The improvement of relations between the Church and the Monarchy led to the conclusion of the Imperial Act between Pope Pius IX and the Emperor Francis Joseph I (1848–1916). Article X of the said Act stipulates that Catholic marriage cases will be judged by church courts according to church laws, while secular courts only decide in the civil consequences of marriage<sup>13</sup>. After that, the Imperial Act of October 8, 1856, introduced *The Law on Catholic Marriages in the Austrian Empire* and *The Instruction for Spiritual Courts in Matrimonial Cases in the Austrian Empire* that related to Catholic marriage cases<sup>14, 15</sup>. On May 25, 1868, *The Law on Marriages for Catholics* and *the Instruction* of 1856 were repealed, and the provisions of the second chapter of the GCC were reinstated for all citizens, regardless of their religion. In December 1868, a law was passed that regulated marriages between members of different Christian religions, and another law that changed the way of resolving divorce cases, i.e. an attempt at reconciliation was introduced before starting a judicial divorce<sup>16</sup>.

In 1895, a new law was passed in Hungary that regulated civil marriage as compulsory, following legislation models introduced in other modern countries.<sup>17</sup> In Croatia and Slavonia as constituent countries of the Hungarian part of the Monarchy, the mentioned law, according to which civil marriage was mandatory, was not in force. This indicates that in the territory of Croatia and Slavonia nothing has changed in the marriage legislation related to Catholics, i.e. the legal situation remained the same until the end of World War II. This means that the matrimonial law of 1856 with a few amendments was still applied to Catholics, while the second chapter of the GCC was implemented only for Protestants and Jews.<sup>18</sup> According to GCC, there were three main bars to valid marriage: a) the lack of consent to marriage; b) the impossibility to fulfill marital duty and c) the lack of the marriage ceremony as regulated by the law.<sup>19</sup> According to ecclesiastical (church) law, marriage impediments were divided into natural (*divini iuris*) and positive ones (*humani iuris*), depending on whether they arise from the nature of

<sup>11</sup> Eugen Sladović, *Ženidbeno pravo*, Zagreb 1925, 23.

<sup>12</sup> A. Rušnov, 99.

<sup>13</sup> Marijan Derenčin, *Tumač k obćemu austrijskomu gradjanskomu zakoniku – (Knjiga I)*, Zagreb 1880, 228.

<sup>14</sup> A. Rušnov, 98.

<sup>15</sup> More on that in : Zvonimir Žepić, *Zakoni i propisi o ženidbi*, Zagreb 1893.

<sup>16</sup> M. Derenčin, 230.

<sup>17</sup> Ferdinando Belaj, *Katoličko crkveno pravo*, Zagreb 1901, 350-351.

<sup>18</sup> Mira Alinčić, „Građanski brak sklopljen prema državnim propisima i vjerskom obredu“, *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu*, 47/1997, 661–662.

<sup>19</sup> Vilim Graber, *Prava zakonske, nezakonske i pozakonjene te pod svoje uzete djetce*, Zagreb 1888., 396-404

marriage or are determined by positive law (Article 46 GCC). Regarding their legal effect, they are further divided into terminating impediments (*impedimenta dirimentia, irritantia*) that render the marriage invalid, and prohibitive (*impedimenta impedientia*) that make it inadmissible. The former prevented the formation of a valid marriage, while the latter did not influence the validity of the marriage but only could produce harmful consequences for spouses and the official who performed the wedding ceremony<sup>20</sup>. The comparison of Catholic ecclesiastical law with the relevant provisions of the GCC indicates that most bars to marriage defined in GCC are identical to those in ecclesiastical law. Catholic ecclesiastical law lists the following severing bars to marriage: personal incapacity to enter into marriage, coercion, kidnapping, fornication, sexual impotence, the existing marriage, consecration, and spouses' different religions. GCC included some other severing obstacles not stipulated under Catholic ecclesiastical law: immaturity, the lack of consent of a presumed military person, the sentence to prison, adultery, and the lack of solemn declaration of consent. In contrast, the GCC did not adopt the following obstacles from the Catholic matrimonial law: fornication in quality, kinship, the in-law relationship, and the requirement of public decency (*publica honestas*).<sup>21, 22</sup> The following bars were determined in the GCC as "other obstacles to valid marriage": immaturity, minority, military status<sup>23</sup> and military duty, lack of political license, criminal liability, adultery, and widowhood period (Articles 120-121 GCC).<sup>24</sup> They were defined as preventive measures against voidable marriages.

## 2.2. Right to marriage under military laws

For centuries, military forces were situated in the central part of the city of Osijek (The Fortress). This fact strongly influenced the social and cultural life of its citizens. Behavior, rights, and duties, as well as the social and financial status of soldiers of all ranks were precisely determined by military laws, which also regulated the right to conclude marriage. Under military laws, the marriage con-

<sup>20</sup> Ivan Čepulić, *Sistem općeg privatnog prava*, Zagreb 1925., 531-532, 533.

<sup>21</sup> Julij Liebold Ljubojević, *Katoličko ženidbeno pravo s obzirom na građanske zakone u Austriji*, Osijek 1867, 73.

<sup>22</sup> A. Rušnov, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Military personnel could not marry without prescribed permission, i.e. until they reached a certain level and income in their service. The above was valid with the passing of the law of December 5, 1868. More about it: in Jael Weber, *Katekizam katoličkog ženidbenog prava*, Sarajevo 1886.

<sup>24</sup> Par. 120-121. GCC regulates the prohibition of premature remarriage of a woman, after her first marriage was declared null or dissolved, or ended with the death of the spouse. These provisions did not apply to Catholics in Croatia and Slavonia because a woman could enter into a second marriage only as a widow or by declaring the first marriage invalid. Therefore, these provisions replace §§ 76 and 77 of the Law on Catholic Marriages of 1856, in: A. Rušnov, 219.

cluded with a soldier of a specific rank under specific circumstances could have been proclaimed invalid. However, the new military law passed in 1889 (The Law on the Defense Forces) changed this, and a marriage concluded by military personnel without the permission of the competent commanding area was no longer defined as invalid. In compliance with the provisions of the Military Penal Code (Art. 780), the law introduced punishments for those who did not comply with military regulations in this regard and did not obtain a marriage license.<sup>25</sup> The provision stipulating the marriage of military personnel was Art. VI of the *Law on the Defense Forces* of 1889, passed by the joint Hungarian-Croatian Parliament. Soldiers up to the age of 23 and those who did not enter the “third age group” were not allowed to marry. Conscripts (“unlisted soldiers” who passed the third age group) were allowed to get married but only with a special permit from the competent district conscription or home defense regimental command. Only “unlisted” subsequent reserve soldiers and inactive reserve soldiers of all age groups (including those declared permanently incompetent and generally exempted from military duty for various reasons) could marry arbitrarily, that is, without special permission from the relevant commands. If a person entered into marriage contrary to the said provision, he was guilty of committing a misdemeanor for which a fine of 30 to 300 forint was foreseen. The same fine was proscribed for an official (authority) who was an accomplice in the conclusion of marriage without a license, under the condition that motion was taken against that person for violation of regulations. The granting of marriage licenses for military officers depended on certain conditions. Military officers who wanted to get married had to earn a guaranteed income up to a minimum amount determined by special military regulations. This guarantee about minimum income had to be issued by the Joint War Ministry for the Joint Austro-Hungarian army, or by the Minister of National Defense. This referred to the officers of the active Home Guard and armed officers, clerks, and other monthly wage earners not included in the military rank class. A marriage license could be issued to them only if the relevant guarantee was secured in the prescribed manner and at least with 4% interest. Specifically, for a lieutenant, it was 60,000 crowns, a clerk of the XI. rank 30,000 crowns; the first lieutenant 50,000 crowns, a clerk of the X rank 25,000 crowns, captain of the main staff corps 60,000 crowns, captain 40,000, the major of the main corps 50,000 crowns, etc. The officers younger than 30 had to provide for a 50 % increased marital bond principal.<sup>26</sup> Hungarian government debentures and government debt bonds were suitable for securing the bail principal as well as different types of securities, like the possession of appropriate real estate. Vilma Vukelich (1880-1956),

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<sup>25</sup> Militar Criminal Code 1855 (*Militärstrafgesetz über Verbrechen und Vergehen vom 15. Jänner 1855 für das Kaiserthum Oesterreich*), Vienna 1855.

<sup>26</sup> A. Rušnov, 117.

a Croatian writer from Osijek, married in 1902 a Royal Army officer Milivoj (Milko) Vukelić after they had bought a house as his marital security deposit. In her novel *Traces of the Past (Tragovi prošlosti)*, she describes the conclusion of their marriage by the rules of the Military Law of that time:

*It was necessary to collect a bail. We actually bought the house and registered the title to it. The question of religion arose because my mother insisted that I did not convert to Christianity, and there were no civil marriages in Croatia at that time. That is why we had to, at least fictitiously, make our permanent place of residence the nearby village Darda (in Baranja under Hungarian jurisdiction), which again took several months. Then it turned out that the Hungarian Military Ministry, to which Milko belonged by his status, recognized only church weddings. We therefore had to find a priest who, after our wedding in the local registrar's office, would give us a church blessing and confirm it with an official marriage certificate despite our different confessions. It had to be announced in the church and a dispensation (exemption from church regulations in special circumstances) of the Pecs bishop had to be requested.”<sup>27</sup>*

Related to marital rights, it is important to mention married woman's inheritance rights, too. After the husbands' death, many widows were left without any inheritance and were forced to look for jobs (Kordić & Lachner, 2021)<sup>28</sup>, or for wealthy single men to employ them or to marry them. The GCC regulated those rights in the chapter “On the legal inheritance of husband and wife” (Articles 757-759 GCC). According to legal succession, the spouse exercised his/her inheritance rights together with the deceased's relatives up to the sixth line of succession. After one spouse died, the other spouse acquired the right of lifelong enjoyment or ownership over a smaller part of the estate, while his relatives acquired the right of ownership over a larger part of the estate. There was a difference if the surviving spouse had children (art. 757), and if there were other relatives (art. 758 and 759). In cases when the rights from the estate were claimed by the decedent's children and the spouse, the right that belonged to the widow was the exclusive right to enjoy part of the estate, while the right to ownership of the estate always remained with the decedent's children<sup>29</sup>. The right to enjoy part of the property was proportional to the number of children, and only testamentary disposal could change the amount of the inheritance of the surviving spouse. Often when their husbands died without leaving a testament, women were in financially unbearable positions.

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<sup>27</sup> Vilma Vukelić, *Tragovi prošlosti (Memoari)*, Zagreb 1994, 243.

<sup>28</sup> Ljubica Kordić, Višnja Lachner, „Multilingualism and the Social Status of Women in the City of Osijek in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries“, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 24/2021, 1-14.

<sup>29</sup> A. Rušnov, 156.

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research corpus encompasses 61 matrimonial and contact ads published by men and women in the explored period: 55 in *Die Drau*, and 6 in *Slavonische Presse*. Men authored 41 ads, women 20. Additionally, we included in the analysis a couple of ads by widows that were officially placed into job offerings but their style and wording indicated the authors' intention to find a life partner or potential husband living in financially secure conditions.

#### 3.1. Matrimonial and contact ads by women

In their ads, young women were mostly looking for future spouses or just for acquaintance with men for fun. Exceptionally, they were looking for a specific young man from the city who they wanted to meet in person and did not find any other way to contact him but through the local newspaper. Interestingly, the first contact ad in the history of Osijek was published by a woman in *Die Drau* on June 23, 1872. "A lady who owns considerable property" wanted to meet "a young man of pleasant appearance who does not have to be wealthy". She also determined the time and place of the date and the signs to recognize each other. She would wear "a straw hat with a wide brim, a white ribbon and a rose bud", while "interested candidates with serious intentions should put a green leaf in jacket lapel" ("als Erkennungszeichen (wird sie) einen breiten Strohhut mit weißem Bande und einer Rosenknospe tragen. Diejenigen, die ernstlich auf Anknüpfung einer Bekanntschaft reflectieren, wollen dagegen ein grünes Blatt ins Knopfloch stecken").

In their matrimonial ads, girls usually list the dowry they possess, their religion, and their personal qualities. So, on January 7, 1900, "an orphan girl from respectable family, Christian, 22 years, well-behaved, a homely type, with a cash dowry of 300,000 forints" was looking for "a financially secured man of integrity for the purpose of marriage" ("Waise aus sehr achtbarer deutscher Familie, christl. Religion, 22 Jahre alt, wohlgezogen und häuslich, mit einer Barmitgift von 300,000 Ft, wünscht man an biederem Herrn in guter und sicheren Lebensstellung zu verheiraten"). Similarly, on November 11, 1908, "a young, beautiful, and intelligent girl with some dowry" wanted to get to know a civil servant in secured post for the purpose of marriage ("junges, hübsches und intelligentes Mädchen mit etwas Mitgift sucht behufs Ehe die Bekanntschaft eines Beamten in gesicherter Stellung"). The code she used was "Chrisanteme". Often, the wording they used and the type of partner they were looking for reveal a subordinate social position of a woman and her lack of self-esteem, which was in accordance with the social status of women belonging to lower and middle social classes of that time. It was the consequence of strict Catholic laws relating to marriage and the relationship between men and women, which shaped the attitudes to and stereotypes about women and their

roles in the family that were formed under the influence of the conservative social settings they lived in. It seems that, according to those rules, the lower income (dowry) a woman possessed and the older she was, the lower her criteria for the appropriate partner. An illustrative example is the ad of September 7, 1918, in which a young woman possessing 3,000 crowns dowry, her housing and furnishing, would like to have acquaintance with an elderly man (“*einem älteren Herrn*”) for the purpose of marriage. A similar wish was expressed by “an intelligent, beautiful virgin (*“Jungfrau”!*), who arrived in Osijek from abroad” and wanted “the acquaintance of a likable, well-off elderly man” (“*wünscht Bekanntschaft eines sympathischen gut situierten älteren Herrn*”). This is discernible from five matrimonial ads published in *Slavonische Presse* from 1882 to 1920. For example, on January 4, 1910, an elderly girl, orphan, with a few thousand crowns (“*Älteres Fräulein, Waise, mit einigen tausend Kronen*”) wanted to marry an elderly man or a widower (“*möchte sich mit einem älteren Herrn oder Witwer verheiraten*”).

Although dowry played an important role in finding an appropriate partner, some women pointed out that estate or money were not essential requirements. In the ad of January 1910, “a beautiful, slim brunette, 21, with a dowry of 50,000 crowns in cash, later more” was looking for a suitable partner (“*passende Partei*”) to marry. In the other published in March 1910, an 18-year-old girl, baker’s daughter, with an estate of 400,000 crowns, also wanted a suitable marriage but would accept a partner without any estate. Similarly, on 12. June 1910, “a 24-year-old orphan girl, blond, attractive, beautiful, with 100,000 crowns cash” was looking for partner for “a suitable marriage”. She added that she was living at her aunt’s and only the candidates who were decisive enough and applied quickly, even without any estate, would have priority (“*Nur rasch entschlossene Herren, ev. auch ohne Vermögen, wollen sich melden*”). In two ads of November 1 and 9, 1910, for the first time, a marriage of love was mentioned. The candidate was “a 20-year old Vienna lady with 50,000 dowry and substantive inheritance, the only child of an industrial, blond, attractive and beautiful” (“*20-jährige blonde Wienerin mit 50000 Mitgift, später bedeutendes Erbe, einzige Tochter eines Großindustriellen, fesch und schön*”). She wanted to enter into a marriage for love (*Neigungsheirath*) with a serious candidate, even without any estate (“*Nur ernste Bewerber, wenn auch ohne Vermögen*”). An interesting example is the ad of May 21, 1910, by a 27-year-old Christian woman with a huge property who wanted to marry “a serious man willing to adopt her 6-year-old-child”, her code being “Independent”.

An unusual matrimonial offering was published on May 10, 1910, in which a father was looking for an intelligent Jewish man of integrity with a financially secure existence for his daughter. The girl was described as beautiful, intelligent, attractive and flawless, and equipped with 6,000 crowns dowry and 60 crowns monthly apauage (“*Suche für meine schöne, fesch, makellose und intelligente*

Tochter, mit 6000 Kronen Einrichtung und 60 Kronen monatlicher Apanage, intelligenten, charaktervollen Isrealitischen Herrn in gesicherter Existenz”).

There are a few ads by girls or married women looking for male partners just for fun, or looking for a male pen friend. The first of such ads was published back in 1873 (May 8, 1873) under the code “Fides”, in which “a young independent lady, who intends to spend the summer in the city, is looking for a witty man from Osijek to exchange letters”. An interesting ad of a similar kind is the one published 42 years later on January 21, 1915, under the code “If you are bored” by a “30-year-old lady who wanted correspondence with a young officer” (“30-jährige Dame sucht Korrespondenz mit jungem Offizier. Chifre: Wenn man sich langweilt”). Two interesting examples of this type stem from 1918. The first one of June 6, 1918, was titled “Young, and intelligent 30-year-old widow” (Junge intelligente 30-jährige Witwe) who wanted correspondence with men employed as higher civil servants, not excluding a possible closer relationship. The second was from December 31, 1918, by two “outstanding girls”, who were looking for male acquaintances. They chose the codes “Blondie” and “Brunette”.

There were several ads published by widows who wanted to “be placed” as housemistresses in a household of a single man or officer with or without children. Although their wish to get married or to find a life partner was not expressly declared, it can be deduced from the wording of their ads. Regarding inheritance laws that were applied at the explored time, when most widows remained penniless if they (or their husbands) had children or close relatives, we can claim with great certainty that those ads can be considered as veiled matrimonial ads (Kordić & Lachner, 2021). Illustrative examples can be three ads of that kind. In the first of August 8, 1888, “a woman in her prime” (eine Frau im schönsten Alter stehend) wanted to “be placed” as housemistress in the household of “a very reliable man” (“...wünscht sich bei einem sehr soliden Herrn als Wirtschafterin placiert zu werden”). In the second one of Mai 28, 1915, “a young widow in her prime without children” was looking for a post of a housemistress in the home of “an independent man” (“Junge kinderlose Wittwe in den besten Jahren sucht Posten als Hausmeisterin”). In the third one, which was published five times in February 1918, “an intelligent 38-year-old widow who is good at cooking and all types of housework” was looking for a post of housemistress in the home of “a single and independent man”. There is only one matrimonial ad, in which “a young widow” was looking for the acquaintance of “an elderly man possessing some property, for the purpose of marriage” (“wünscht Bekanntschaft mit einem älteren Herrn behufs Ehe.”). She used the code “Happy marriage” (“glückliche Ehe”). How difficult the social position of widows, single women with a child, or women older than 22 was in the explored period can be recognized in their readiness to marry “an elderly man” or “a widower”, and that the widows were often hiding their intention to find a financially secured partner behind their job offerings.

### 3.2. Matrimonial and contact ads by men

Men's matrimonial and contact ads can be organized into more categories than those by women. Men were mostly looking for suitable matches to marry, while in many ads they wanted to find female acquaintances and pen friends, or just female company for fun. They also used newspaper ads as a medium to exchange love messages with secret lovers or a way to contact unknown girls they met in the city and fell in love with. Some ads were very witty and funny, while others were shocking because they can be seen as business proposals rather than matrimonial ads. There are 22 ads of this kind, which makes 53.66 % of all ads authored by men. Other types of ads are represented by three or four examples each. Five matrimonial ads in these 22 of business character were addressing girls or widows without specifying their personal characteristics, their social status, or confessional affiliation. Apart from quoting the expected dowry, potential grooms describe precisely what kind of girl they want as regards their appearances and behavior. For example, on May 28, 1893, a notary public and a magistrate from a small city with an "appropriate possession and good monthly income" (no information about his age or appearance) wanted to marry "a girl or a young widow who is skilled in running a household and has a property of 1,000-2,000 guildens". On July 5, 1900, a young forest ranger (24) was looking for a girl or a widow, not older than 30 for the purpose of marriage. He clearly defined the condition ("Bedingung!") that she must possess a big or a small rural estate and added the possibility of moving into her house ("Junger Forstmann, 24 Jahre, möchte sich mit einem Mädchen oder Witwe nicht über 30 verheiraten. Bedingung: ein größerer oder kleiner Grundbesitz. Möchte auch einheiraten"). In some ads, only the property was highlighted without any other preference concerning the future bride. So, on November 9, 1905, an "ambitious manager of agricultural property, 29, academic, Catholic, with a year income of 2,800 crowns" was looking for a female partner with 30,000 to 40,000 crowns property ("Strebsamer Ökonomeverwalter, 29, Akademiker, katholisch, Jahreseinkommen 2800 Kronen, sucht Lebensgefährtin mit 30-40000 Kronen Vermögen"). Similarly, in June 1905, a 28-year-old man of the Christian religion, "who is considered handsome by other people" ("man sagt zu mir hübscher Mann"), possessing a grocery shop assessed at 15,000 crowns, wanted to marry "a girl from a good family with 8,000 to 10,000 crowns dowry", without mentioning any other preferences. Three years later, two friends published an ad together: a 30-year-old shop assistant and a civil servant aged 36 were looking for girls or widows aged 20-30 years, with 6,000 to 10,000 crowns dowry, for the purpose of marriage. On December 22, 1910, offering a bit more information about himself, an educated industrialist possessing a successful firm in Bosnia was looking for "a young woman who is skilled in housework and stems from a good urban family". He added, literally, "40,000 crowns dowry and a pho-

to demanded” (“Beansprucht Mitgift von min. 40 000 Kronen und Lichtbild”). Similarly, on March 4, 1915, a 28-year-old production manager in an alcoholic drinks factory, wanted to marry “a well-off young lady, not excluding widows with one child” (“...wünscht Bekanntschaft eines vermögenden Fräuleins behufs Heirat, Witwe mit Kind nicht ausgeschlossen”).

In several ads of 1918, widowers were looking for widows of their age or younger, with or without some dowry, good at cooking and housework. Accordingly, in an ad published on March 9, 1918, a widower in his 50-ies, with a possession of 3,000 crowns, was looking for “a modest lady, not under 45, possessing a dowry of 51,000 in cash for the purpose of marriage and takeover of a good and prosperous shop”. (“Witwer in der 50-er Jahren mit 3000 Kronen Vermögen sucht bescheidene Frau behufs Ehe nicht unter 45 Jahren, mit 51000 Bargeld behufs Übernahme eines guten soliden Geschäfts”). Another widower aged 57, in his ad of October 1925, was looking for “a better woman between 40 and 45, with her own business or house” (“Witwer, 57 Jahre, sucht bessere Frau im Alter 40-45 Jahren mit Geschäft oder Wohnung”).

In some cases, ads were given by a potential groom’s friend or brother. On November 26, 1918, a man was looking for a girl or widow who would marry his 40-year-old friend, a businessman of pleasant appearance, who possessed his own house. A candidate should be “an older girl or widow with 30-40,000 crowns” (“... ein älteres Mädchen oder Witwe mit 30-40000 Kronen”). In the ad of February 21, 1925, on behalf of his 20-year-old brother, a man was looking for “a lady from the best family with appropriate possession” (“eine Dame aus bester Familie mit zeitgemässen Vermögen”). He describes his brother as an educated manager of a small factory, healthy and diligent, and a person of reliable character and pleasant appearance.

Exceptionally, men were looking for intelligent women or those with personal qualities other than fortune. The first of that kind was published on August 1, 1900, by “an intelligent young man of financially secured existence, with some property and a year income of 4,800 crowns, who wanted to marry a beautiful, well-raised and modest girl of Jewish religion” (“...wünscht sich mit hübschem, wohlherzogenem, bescheidenem Mädchen, Israelitin, zu verehlichen”). He also added a condition: “kind and cheerful character. Dowry does not matter” („Bedingung: liebenswürdiger heiteres Temperament; Mitgift – Nebensache”). In later ads, a potential bride’s personal qualities were highlighted, while her fortune was mentioned discretely. Two examples of this kind can be found in *Die Frau* on the same day – February 20, 1929. In the first, “a young Jewish man in secured financial circumstances” was looking for “a beautiful intelligent girl with appropriate property” (“mit entsprechendem Vermögen”), while in the second a Jewish hotel-and-inn-owner wanted “to marry an intelligent, well-off girl” (“wünscht Heirat mit einem intelligenten wohlhabenden Mädchen”).

### 3.2.1. *Business or matrimonial ads?*

In our corpus of matrimonial and contact ads, four ads could be classified as business offerings to women rather than matrimonial ads. The first of them was published several times in July 1902 (on 8, 10, and 13. of July). The authors were “two diligent metal-turners” who wanted “acquaintance for the purpose of marriage with two girls ready to move to America”. On March 26, 1910, “a 27-year-old man of Jewish religion, familiar with all religious customs”, wanted to marry “a young, beautiful, and modest girl with a dowry of 20,000 crowns minimum IN ADVANCE (in capital letters!), for the purpose of establishing a lucrative manufacture”. (“27-jähriger Israelit mit Brauchenkenntnissen, in leitender Stellung, wünscht zwecks einer lukrativen Fabrikation ein junges, hübsches und bescheidenes Mädchen mit Mitgift von min. 20 000 Kronen AUFWÄRTS zu veheiraten”). In January 1910, “an expert in his prime, possessing an appropriate capital, for which he offers a guarantee by a tabular statement” was looking for the acquaintance of “an independent woman in her thirties with 35-45,000 crowns in cash, for the purpose of joint purchase of a modern, well-established hotel, who was ready and skilled to run the same”. The last business-and-matrimonial ad was published on December 31, 1925. A Vienna entrepreneur, 30 years old, who owns a food factory estimated at 2,000,000 Schilling wanted to marry a young and beautiful girl from the best family who owns at least 500,000 Schilling that should be secured on the first mortgage to expand the business. (“Besitzer eines gutgehenden Lebensmittelbetriebs im nachweisbaren Werte von 2000000 Schilling” sucht behufs Heirat hübsche junge Dame aus bester Familie mit mindestens 500000 Schilling, die auf erste Hypothek sichergestellt werden zur Vergrößerung des Betriebs”).

### 3.2.2. *Contact ads for fun*

The first ad of this kind was published back in 1900, on 28. August, by a young man who wanted “a stimulating correspondence with a witty single lady or widow” (“Junger Mann wünscht mit einer geistesreichen ledigen Dame, auch Witwe, in anregende Korrespondenz zu treten”). The ad ends with “Discretion guaranteed and expected”. The next two ads of this kind occurred 15 years later. In the first one, a reserve officer wanted “the acquaintance of an educated young lady for the purpose of having fun”. The second one, published on March 6, 1915, titled “Secret”, was very open-minded regarding the conservative community of Osijek. The author, signed as “A dreamer”, was a reserve officer, “who suffers because he lives far away from his beloved wife”. He wanted to “establish (platonic) contact with a really beautiful married young lady in similar position and attitude” (“Reservoffizier, dem das getrennte Leben von geliebter Gattin schwer fällt, sucht ehrbaren (platonischen) Verkehr mit wirklich schöner verheirateten jungen Dame

in ähnlicher Lage und Gesinnung.”). Obviously, there were several interested candidates, as on March 18, under the same code (Secret) the Dreamer published the following ad: “Dreamer was absent and is kindly asking for lady’s address; a hand-kiss to Blondie”. Again, on March 23, Dreamer was “asking Amanda v. T. to show the signs of life”, and in the same message, he addressed “a Dashing Widow with red straw-hat”, asking her to leave her address in the editor’s office.

The last ad of this type, published in May 1918, was in Croatian language by “two sailors serving their regular military services in a faraway city on the Adriatic Sea”. They were looking for “girls of cheerful character”, asking them “not to forget their fellow landmen at least while they live in these circumstances”. In the end, they quoted the saying “That will be good for your soul”, and added: “Beauty and other little things are not important”.

### 3.2.3. *Love declarations and messages in the form of ads*

There are three ads of this type in the corpus. The first can be found in the issue of August 6, 1896, addressed to a certain Miss Margit by a man signed as Max, who informed her that he could not accept her invitation unless she revealed her identity. Most interesting ads are those addressed to unknown women who ad providers fell in love with and tried to contact via newspaper ads. One of those ads was published on September 18, 1902, addressing “a dashing young lady who on 19<sup>th</sup> of this month in Adolf Chwoika’s flower shop was buying Haarlem hyacinth and tulip bulbs”. The anonymous ad provider, who defined himself as “conscious gentleman”, was asking the lady “for honorable meeting” (“Reizendes Fräulein, welches am 19. d. M. in der Blumenhandlung des Herrn Adolf Chwoika Haarlemer Hyazintenzwiebeln und Tulpen kaufte, wird vom bewusten Herrn um ehrbares Wiedersehen gebeten”). Another interesting example appeared on April 16, 1915, addressing “a Brunette, young blushing lady, who rides the tram to Lower Town between 7 and 8 every morning, and in the evening at the same time to Upper Town, wearing mostly dark clothes”. She was kindly asked to leave the message in the editorial office “if a respectful acquaintance is allowed”. The code of the ad was “Beautiful mouth” (“Jene Brünette, rosige junge Dame, die seit einer Zeit zwischen 7 u. 8 Uhr morgens nach die Unterstadt und Abend um die gleiche Zeit in die Oberstadt fährt, meistens dunkel gekleidet ist, wird sub Chiffre ‚schöner Mund‘ an die Expedition dieses Blattes um Mitteilung gebeten, ob ehrbare Bekanntschaft erstattet“).

## 4. DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to shed light on the social position of women related to marriage and the relationship between men and women in the 19<sup>th</sup> and

early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the city of Osijek, Croatia, by analyzing matrimonial and contact ads published in two local newspapers. At the explored time, the communication between men and women from the middle class as potential love partners was limited to writing letters or publishing personal ads in local newspapers, usually by using secret codes. We explored 61 ads, 41 being published by men and 20 by women. Matrimonial rules, and primarily the position of a woman in the family and the society as a whole, were dictated by the ecclesiastical law that regulated the right to marry and marriage rules in Croatia longer than in other parts of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. Rules of entering into marriage, the behavior and the virtues appreciated in brides and grooms were influenced by the church, as well as by the stereotypes of the then conservative society, which placed a woman as mother, wife, and housemistress in the family, without appreciation of her feelings, attitudes, and personal preferences. In the explored time, when the girl was expected to marry (not older than 20!), the amount of her dowry, and her possessions in cash or real estate were of utmost importance for the future groom and his family. This humiliating criterion for a “successful marriage” of a girl living in the men’s world of that time was the reason why girls and young women in their ads as a rule mention the dowry they possess or the estate they will inherit in due time. Opposite to men’s ads, in most cases women describe their appearances and pleasant character. Interestingly, in several women’s ads, we can find the statements that “estate does not matter” or that they wanted “a marriage for love” while the same statement could be found only in two ads by male providers. In men’s ads, the amount of dowry is always emphasized. Until 1900, appearances and other qualities in future partner were hardly mentioned. After 1900, matrimonial ads by men contain desirable physical and spiritual qualities in future brides as well. Appreciated qualities in woman were that she was beautiful or at least attractive, well raised, modest, and “homely type”. Sad examples of the social position of girls and women represent the ads by single women without dowry and older than 20, or widows looking for elderly men or officers to support or to marry them, trying to ensure financially secure existence for themselves and their children. Humiliating for young women were ads published by their fathers looking for future spouses for their daughters, describing them as “beautiful, intelligent, attractive and flawless”, and quoting their dowry in cash.

Ads published by men often sound like business offerings rather than matrimonial ads. There were 22 ads of this type out of 41, plus four additional ads with precisely described business proposals. As a rule, ad providers give a short description of their age and religion, and then clearly list their requirements related to dowry. Some even use capital letters to stress their condition that the dowry is paid in advance, or that the purpose of marriage is investing in a lucrative industry. Only two ads after 1900 were published with the statement “Dowry does not matter”. Considering the conservative society of that time, the most interesting

an surprising contact ads were those published for fun, in which men (exceptionally, women as well) were looking for love affairs or adventures with girls or married women for fun.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Nowadays we live in the world of virtual social networks, and finding a love partner or spouse in the virtual space has become easier than ever. Matrimonial rules related to entering into marriage in the history of Croatia were in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries regulated by the ecclesiastical law, which stayed longer in application in Croatia than in other constituent parts of the Monarchy. Special provisions were in force for military forces, whose members were obliged to obtain their marriage license from their superiors and/or to earn the specific monthly income determined by the law depending on their military ranks. A marriage license could be issued to them only if the relevant guarantee in money or estate was secured with at least 4% interest. The Church Law rules, the Civil Law provisions, as well as military rules and the conservative society of that time influenced the values appreciated in future partners and determined the conditions that had to be respected when entering into marriage. Those social conditions and the traditionally subordinated role of the woman in the Croatian conservative society of that time influenced the social position and the self-image of women in the explored period. The models of behavior and established social standards affected the behavior and self-esteem of young girls (and widows) living in the men's world, in which the amount of dowry and the possessions in cash or real estate were highly appreciated qualities in future brides. Progressive trends of the Enlightenment Era and women's emancipation can be recognized in the fact that women themselves published their own ads looking for appropriate partner, some of them being very liberal for their time and looking for young men just for fun. The analysis of matrimonial and contact ads in our research has also shown that some virtues appreciated by young people in their potential partners always matter, like physical appearance, kind and cheerful character, and intelligence. Open-minded and very liberal ads for that time, in which married men and women were looking for love-affairs, hiding their true identities behind imaginative secret codes like "If you are bored", "A Dreamer", "Brunette and Blondie", "Dashing Widow", etc., represent a surprising part of the research. This historical example of communication by using newspaper ads as public media can be seen as a link with contemporary social networks users who are often hiding their real identity behind secret codes. As the findings of this research have shown, this type of communication can reveal social and interpersonal relations as well as the social positions of men and women in given social and cultural settings. The comparison

of communication purposes and methods used in old newspaper ads with contemporary communication on social network could be an interesting topic of some future research.

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### **Брачна права и очекивања у вези са браком у новинским огласима до краја 19. и почетка 20. века у Хрватској**

**Сажетак:** Аутори истражују друштвени и правни ситуације неугодних жена и друштвена правила и обичаје који су утицали на њихово понашање у вези са браком и односом мушкарца и жене у 19. и почетком 20. века у Хрватској, која је тада била део Аустријског царства, односно Аустро-Угарске. Истраживање је засновано на два различита корпуса. Први обухвата релевантне законске акте који су регулисали брак у то време, укључујући и посебна правила за краљевске војнике у погледу њиховог права на склапање брака. Други део истраживања заснива се на новинским објавама, односно: брачним и огласима за личне контакте, у којима мушкарци и жене изражавају жељу да упознају потенцијалног сујужника/цу или љубавника/цу. Корпус огласа је извод из осјечких локалних новина Дие Драу и Славонице пресе које су излазиле на њемачком језику у истраживаном историјском периоду. Бројеви оба листа који су излазили између 1870. и 1938. доступни су у дигитализованим верзијама. Брачни и контактни огласи мушкарца и жена као потенцијалних сујужника или љубавних партнера представљају драгоцен извор информација о друштвеним правилима и обичајима везаним за брак и однос између мушкарца и жена када су друштвена комуникација и друштвени медији били веома ограничени. Рада има за циљ да представи законска правила која регулишу мушка и женска права и обавезе у вези са браком, али и да расветли како је комуникација између потенцијалних љубавних партнера или сујужника путем штаманих медија утицала на друштвени положај и

*идентифицирајући релевантне новинске оласе из њравних, соџио-психолошких и соџио-линџивисџичких џледиџа.*

**Кључне речи:** џравни асџекџ браџа; груџџџвџ џравила; џубав и браџ; новински оласи; Хрџаџсџа.

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