

HUNGARY AND ITS LINGUISTIC STRUCTURE BETWEEN 1880 AND 1910

S. ŘEHÁK, L. VAŠKOVÁ

Department of Geography, Masaryk University, Kotlářská 2,
611 37 Brno, Czech Republic

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SUMMARY

The authors analyse the linguistic structure of Hungary (without Croatia and Slavonia) between 1880 and 1910. The cartograms (based from censuses and territorial units - counties/megyeék) are presented. The large context of linguistic assimilation in Hungary is more complicated and its interpretations are still different. In spite of that the old Hungarian territory has a great geopolitical importance for the whole Central Europe, inclusively for the Czech Lands.

KEY WORDS

Central Europe - geopolitics - Hungary before Trianon - linguistic structure

After the division of Czechoslovakia, Hungarian historical issues may seem of little interest for the new Czech Republic, because they now only concern Slovakia.

We beg to differ on several counts. The old Hungarian (Panonian) territory, exceptionally stable prior to 1918 in its geographic definition, was always of an exceptional geopolitical importance. In this respect, we wish to refer to Korčák (1938) with perhaps one provision, namely that we identified the confluence of the Danube and the Morava Rivers near Belgrade in Serbia as an equally sensitive region as that localized by Korčák at the confluence of the Danube and the Morava Rivers near Vienna and Bratislava. It is certainly interesting to note that, as a rule, nobody was able same time over those two key locations (although attempts were made by Matthias Corvinus, the Turks, Hapsburgs, and even the Third Reich and the post-war Soviet Union). In spite of that, the Hungary, whose territorial integrity was undoubtedly further enhanced by their specific orography (in this respect Hungary is similar to Bohemia), did not succeed in

constituting a classical and homogeneous "état-nation" of the West European type at the time when modern European states were being born. The absence of thus constituted nation and, moreover, insufficient appreciation of the situation and its consequences contributed towards later fateful fragmentation. It was, of course, actively assisted (at least in the first decisive years of World War I. and then after the defeat of B. Kun's government) by the Czech policy of those days. Following the Austro-Hungarian Aussigleich (1867), however, the decisive forces of the Hungarian political scene adopted a hitherto unheard-of activistic orientation towards Vienna, which brought such tragic results to Magyars after World War I. Slovaks, Rumanians, Croats and Serbians, on the other hand, view the disintegration of Hungary (Fig. 1b) from a different point of view. In addition to this collision point of many misunderstandings, old Hungarian history (and also modern Hungarian history) has many features in common with particularly the Czech and Polish history, which reflects similar consequences of similar geopolitical position in Europe, similar position towards the German speaking part of Europe, towards the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Russia and Turkey. Szucs (1985) and Bibó (1986) argue that, in spite of cases of major discord in historical developments (some of which were already mentioned), there are very many fundamental features in their historical experience that the nations from the so-called Visegrad Group have in common.

Just as elsewhere in central Europe that was under the influence of the post-Napoleonic development of nationalistic feelings (the focal point of this new diffusion was in the German milieu), language became the main criterion of a nation, sometimes combined with a romantic notion of "common blood". Many examples of that type in Hungary (as a part of Austro-Hungarian empire) were outside the main field of vision of the modern Czech society, which was busy competing with the Germans at that time.

We are happy to offer a cartographically comprehensive presentation of some data on the linguistic structure in Hungary at the very end of its existence as an undivided entity, that it to say also in relation to historical events that were responsible for the fateful reorganization of the entire region, albeit at a price of new rivalries and new instability.

From the factographical point of view, we have an access to the entire language structure of Hungary from that time on the basis of the 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910 censuses (referring to Hungary proper, without Croatia and Slavonia). We have both total results (see Table 1) and data from individual counties (comitats, in Hungarian: megyék) and selected towns (those data, however, were not used).

A more detailed view of the counties may, however shed some light on a number of interesting regional aspects. For that reason, our article includes a set of cartograms of Hungarian counties while referring the reader to the literary source (1990.évi népszámlálás, 1992) for figures 2-6. The cartograms were prepared using the PASCART 4 cartographic programme by C. Grasland (Equipe P.A.R.I.S., France).

We were most interested in the Slovak situation. Relative losses of Slovaks were concentrated mainly in the counties along the borderline between the Slovak and the Hungarian language areas. A decrease in the number of Slovaks in the county of Orava (Árva in Hungarian) in 1900-1910 in a conspicuous exception to the rule (they were, however, also included under "Other languages" entry, not only among Magyars). It can be

explained by a specific classification of the local highland (goral) dialect in the Upper Orava region, i.e. not by a changed ethnic composition. We did not, however, adjust the data to compensate for that.

We need not limited ourselves to the Slovak-Hungarian relationship and that we are able to study others as well. Germans, for instance, were a quite varied group which included German-speaking communities from the western edge of Hungary (now an Austrian province of Burgenland), Swabians from Banat, Saxons from Transylvania, and Jews from towns and the north-eastern part of Hungary. The rapid assimilation of German speakers in Hungary between 1890 and 1900 seems to have concerned mainly the Jews and maybe the Swabians.

	Census			
	1880	1890	1900	1910
Hungarians (Magyars)	44.9%	48.6%	51.5%	54.6%
Rumanians	16.9%	17.1%	16.7%	16.2%
Germans	13.1%	15.1%	11.9%	10.4%
Slovaks	13.0%	12.5%	11.9%	10.7%
Croats and Serbs	4.4%	4.5%§	3.7%§	3.5%§
Ruthenians	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Slovinians	.	0.5%	.	.
Communities using other domestic languages +	1.2%	.	.	.
Communities using foreign languages ++	0.3%	.	.	.
Language is unknown +++	3.6%	.	.	.
Communities using other languages ++++	.	1.1%	1.8%	2.1%
Total population (in 000s)	13728.6	15133.5	16799.3	18214.7

Table 1. Linguistic structure in Hungary (without Croatia and Slavonia). Source: 1990.évi népszámlálás, Budapest, 1992, own relative account

Explanation: § from separately data for Croats and Serbs
+ in Hungarian: egyéb hazai nyelvű
++ in Hungarian: külföldi nyelvű
+++ in Hungarian: beszélni nem tudó
++++ in Hungarian: egyéb

During the entire period studied, the Rumanians were the second largest language group in old Hungary (without Croatia and Slavonia) after the Hungarians (Magyars).

While the overall ratio of Rumanians remained constant, a more detailed look at individual counties revealed some major changes. The stability of the overall ratio can be attributed to a higher demographic dynamics of the Rumanians, which helped to compensate for language assimilation. The same dynamics might explain the stable of the Ruthenians.



Fig. 1a. Hungarian counties (megyék)



Fig. 1b. Fragmentation on Hungary

List of historical Hungarian counties:

1 Abaúj-Torna	33 Maros-Torda
2 Alsó-Fehér	34 Máramaros
3 Arad	35 Moson
4 Árva (Orava)	36 Nagy Küüllő
5 Baranya	37 Nógrád (Novohrad)
6 Bars (Tekov)	38 Nyitra (Nitra)
7 Bács-Bodrog	39 Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun
8 Bereg	40 Pozsony (Bratislava)
9 Beszterce-Naszód	41 Sáros (Šariš)
10 Békés	42 Somogy
11 Bihar	43 Sopron
12 Borsod	44 Szabolcs
13 Brassó	45 Szatmár
14 Csanad	46 Szeben
15 Csík	47 Szepes (Spiš)
16 Csongrád	48 Szilággy
17 Esztergom	49 Szolnok-Doboka
18 Fejér	50 Temes
19 Fogaras	51 Tolna
20 Gömör (Gemer)	52 Torda-Arányos
21 Győr	53 Torontál
22 Hajdú	54 Trencsén (Trenčín)
23 Háromszek	55 Túróc (Turiec)
24 Heves	56 Udvarhely
25 Hont	57 Ugocsa
26 Hunyad	58 Ung
27 Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	59 Vas
28 Kis Küüllő	60 Veszprém
29 Kolozs	61 Zala
30 Komárom (Komárno)	62 Zemplén (Zemplín)
31 Krassó-Szerény	63 Zólyom (Zvolen)
32 Liptó (Liptov)	

(Slovak synonyms in parentheses)

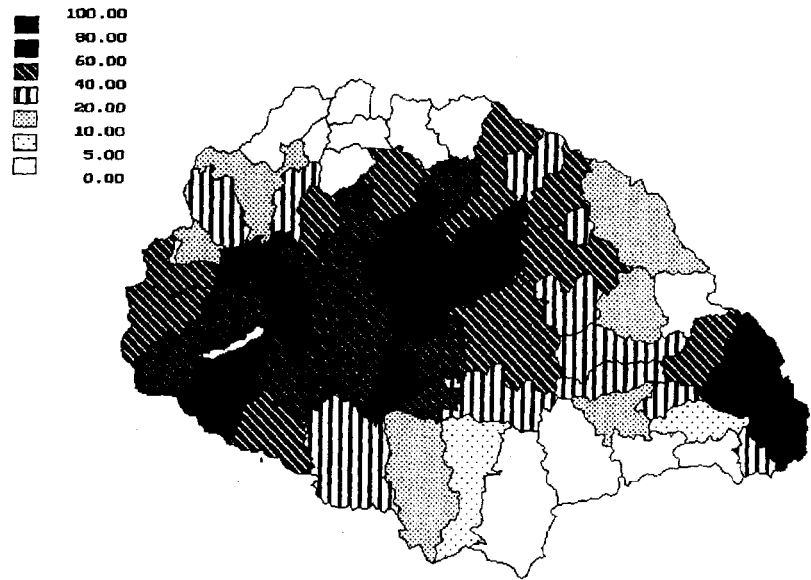


Fig. 2a. Hungary 1880
ratio of Hungarians (Magyars) in counties (%)

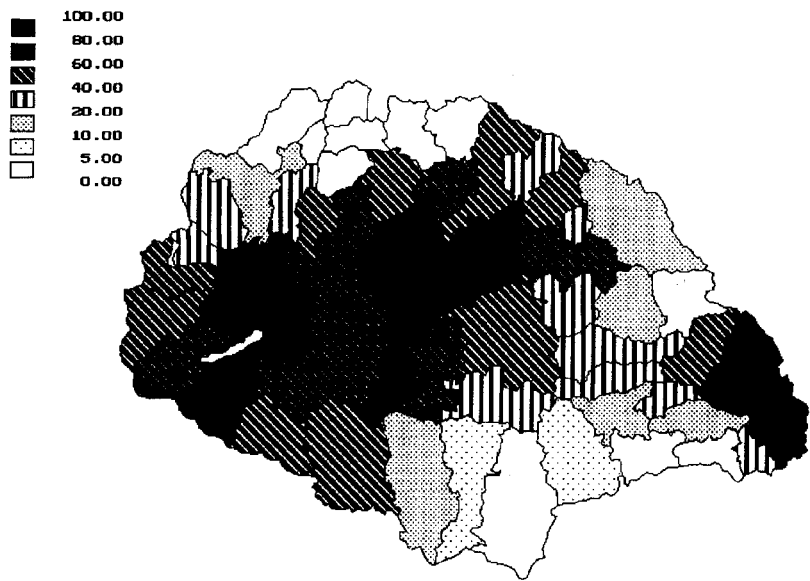


Fig. 2b. Hungary 1890
ratio of Hungarians (Magyars) in counties (%)



Fig. 2c. Hungary 1900
ratio of Hungarians (Magyars) in counties (%)

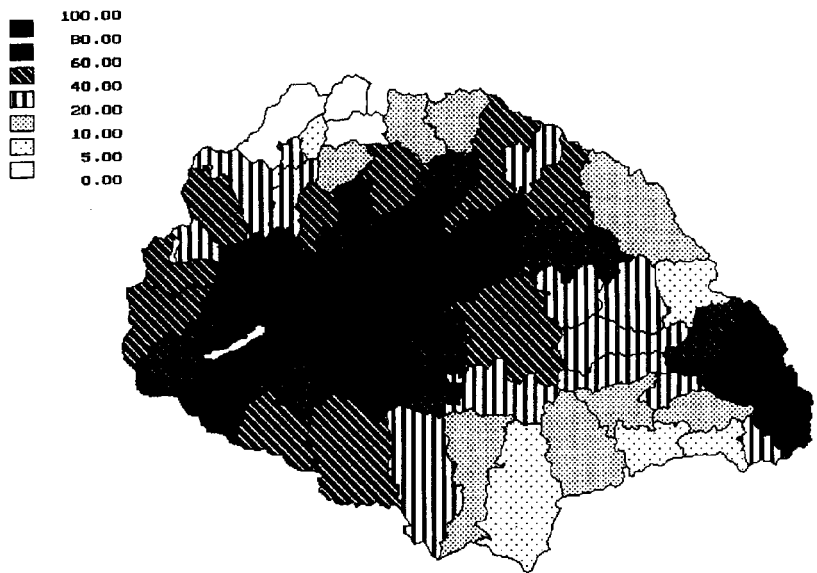


Fig. 2d. Hungary 1910
ratio of Hungarians (Magyars) in counties (%)

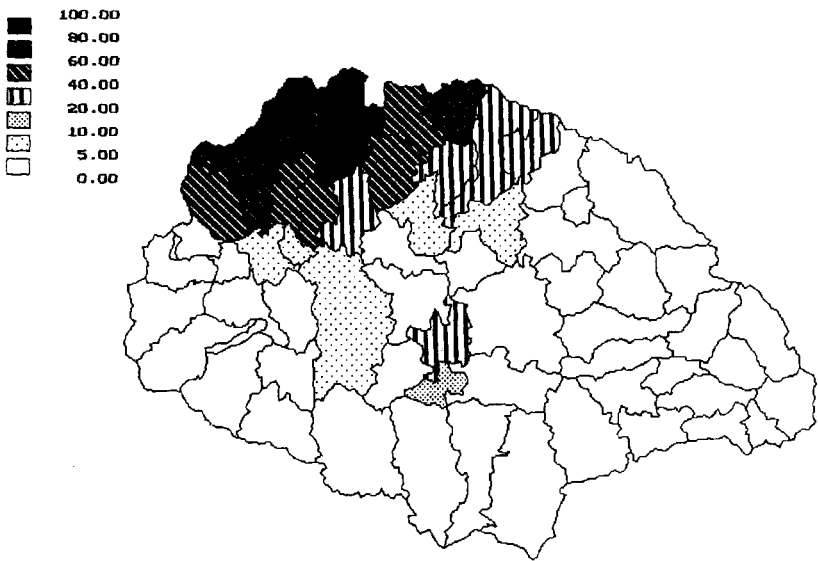


Fig. 3a. Hungary 1880
ratio of Slovaks in counties (%)

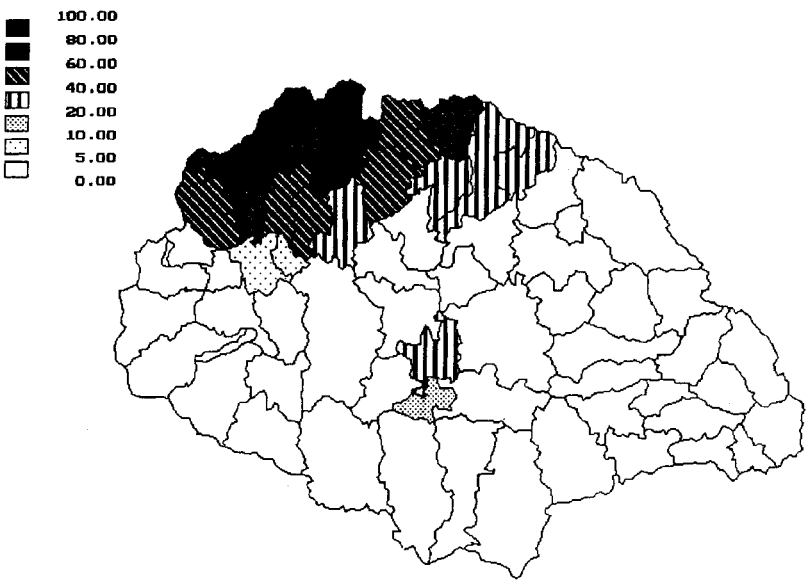


Fig. 3b. Hungary 1890
ratio of Slovaks in counties (%)

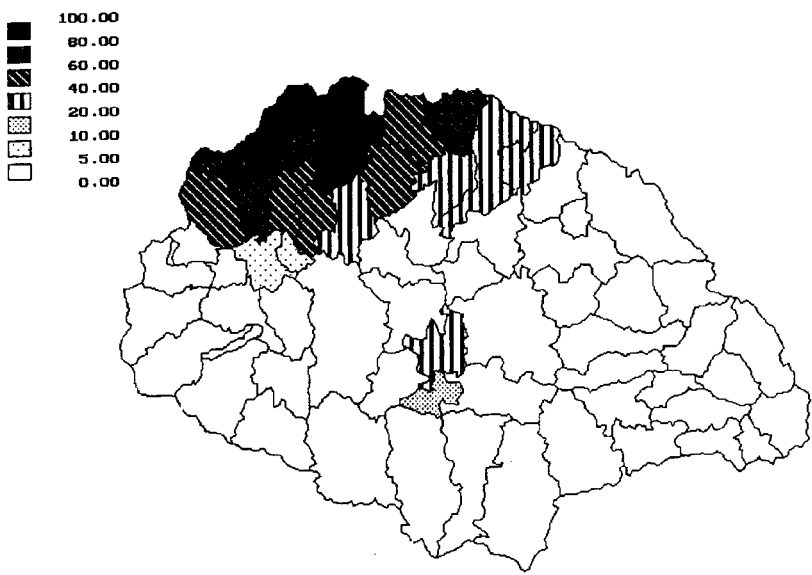


Fig. 3c. Hungary 1900
ratio of Slovaks in counties (%)

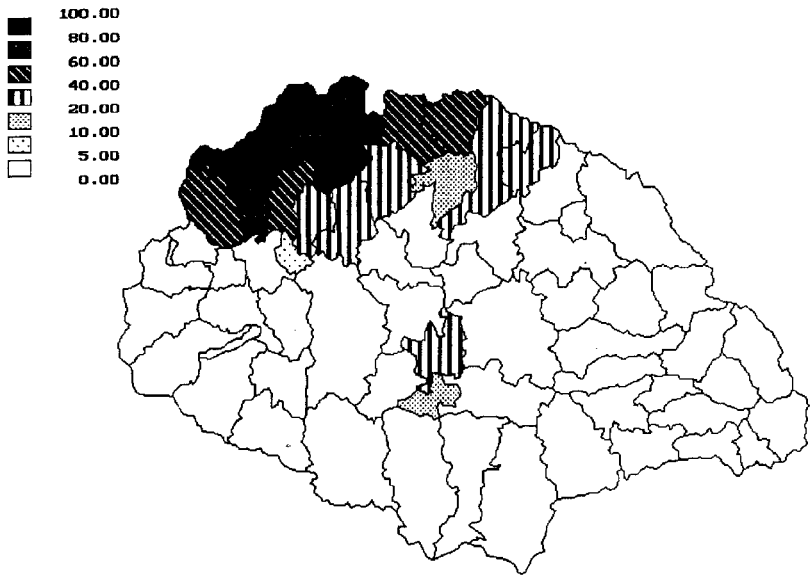


Fig. 3d. Hungary 1910
ratio of Slovaks in counties (%)

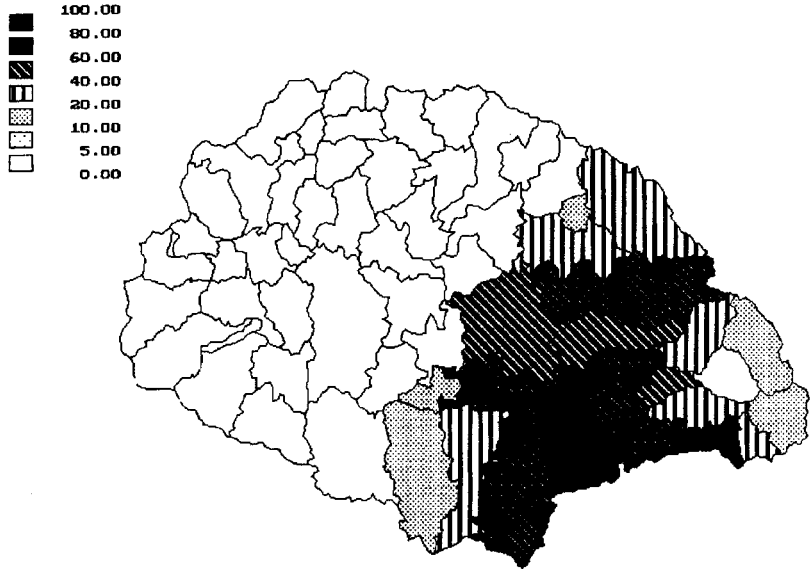


Fig. 4a. Hungary 1880
ratio of Rumanians in counties (%)

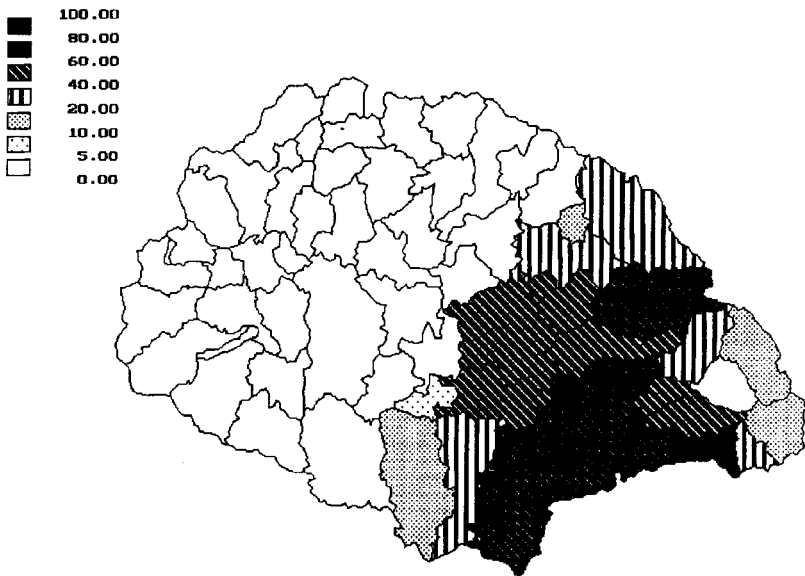


Fig. 4b. Hungary 1910
ratio of Rumanians in counties (%)

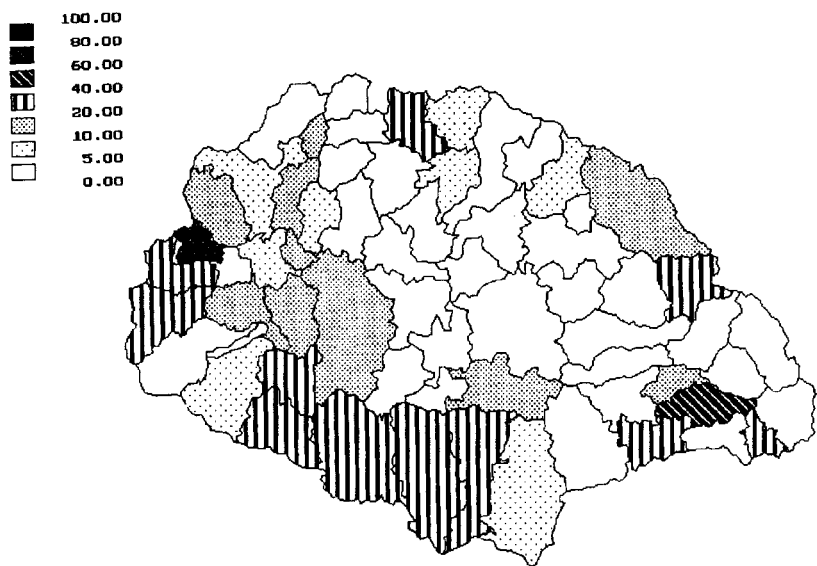


Fig. 5a. Hungary 1880
ratio of Germans in counties (%)

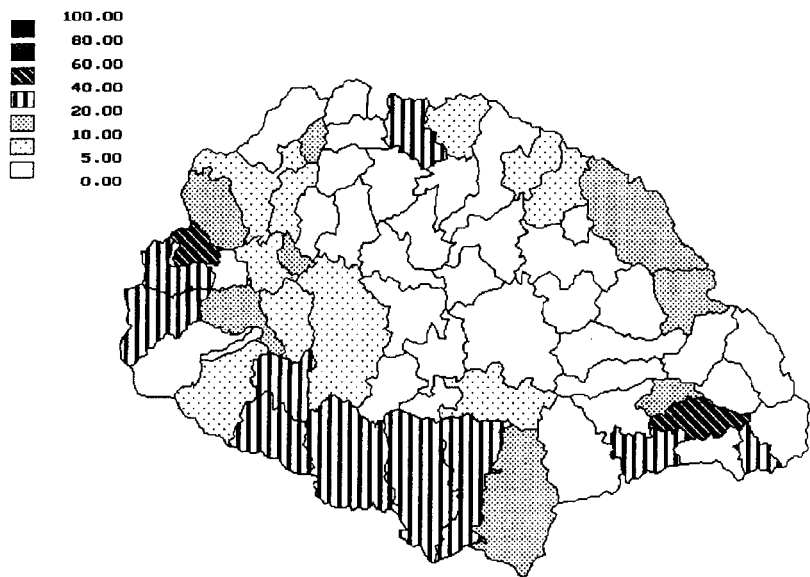


Fig. 5b. Hungary 1910
ratio of Germans in counties (%)

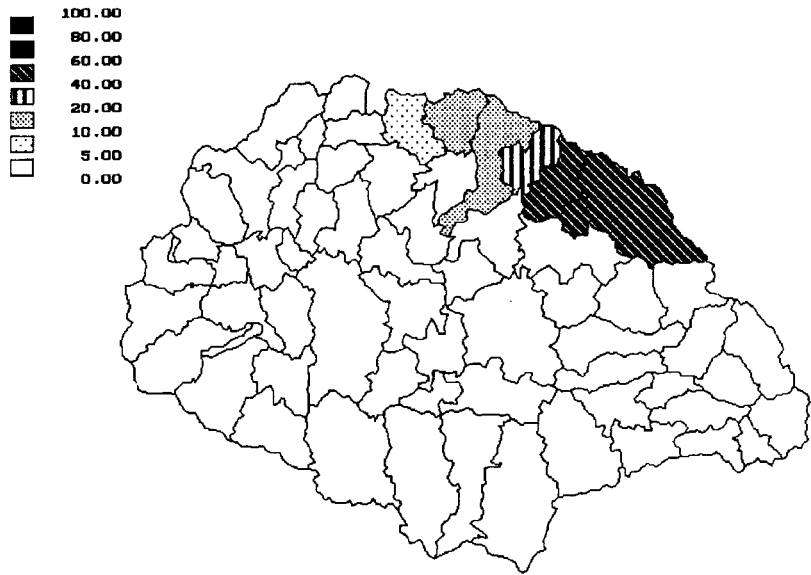


Fig. 6a. Hungary 1880
ratio of Ruthenians in counties (%)

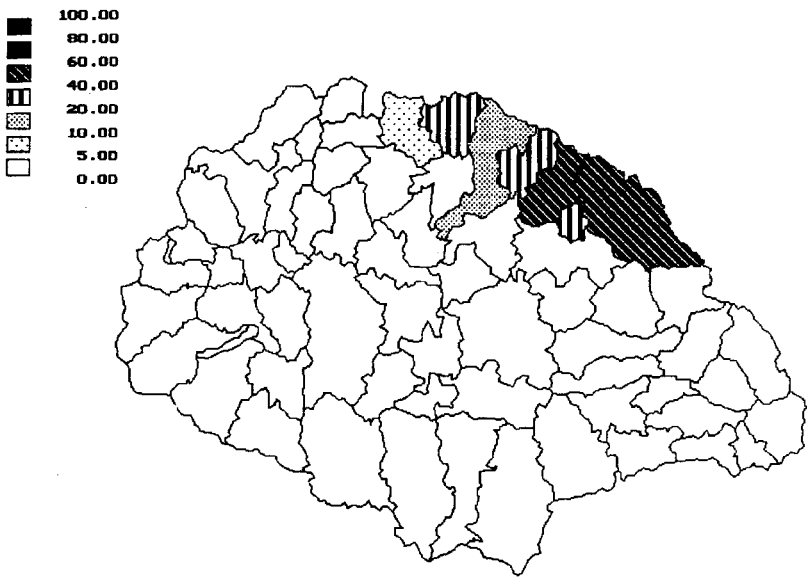


Fig. 6b. Hungary 1910
ratio of Ruthenians in counties (%)

A drastic reduction in relative representation, on the other hand, was observed in southern Slavs (an absolute decrease in the number of Serbs and Croats was recorded in the 1890-1900 and 1900-1910 period respectively). Differences in criteria applied in individual censuses in Hungary make a cartographic analysis of the size of Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian populations rather difficult. A rapid assimilation in Banat was indirectly also confirmed here.

The period under investigation was also characterized by a rapid homogenization of the Hungarian community in the central lowland area (approximately on the territory of the present Hungary), a gradual growth in size of that homogeneous area, and a permanent and stable orientation to the Hungarian language in the counties of the Carpathian arch (The Székels, now Rumania).

For reasons of simplification, our cartograms were based on fixed values in given periods to allow comparisons in the course of years, and between individual ethnic groups in the same year. That may mean that some information obtainable from the data in tables are missing from the cartograms. Cases of ethnic communities which grew or decreased in size by more than 10 points in the study period (1880-1910), and cases where their size changed by more than 2 points in either direction in individual decades were listed separately. The most dramatic decreases were recorded in the case of Slovak community in the counties of Orava (for explanation, see above), Abaúj-Torna, Šariš and Zemplín. The periods of decrease, however, were neither continuous or long. Neither did they always exceed 2 points. For the Slovak losses, the 1900-1910 period was particularly significant and tragical. The proportion of Germans (German-speaking population) used to be always very high in the Moson and Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun counties. They were also the counties where German communities experienced the most significant decreases in their size in periods between censuses. The representation of the Hungarian community in counties underwent a very dynamic development. In the 1880 -1910 period, the size of Hungarians (Magyars) in 10 counties grew by more than 10 points, and 11 counties recorded a dynamic increase in the number of Hungarians in the 3 decades by at least 2 points. Seven of the Hungarian counties appearing on both lists deserve to be mentioned by name: Abaúj-Torna, Hont, Zemplín (all of them along the Slovak-Hungarian language borderline), Moson, Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun (gains from German speakers), Szatmár (borderline between the Rumanian and Hungarian languages) and Ugocsa (Ruthenian-Hungarian borderline). Assimilation to Hungarian was, however, more complicated.

At the time when the basis of the Czech identity is being re-evaluated and relationships between the Czechs and the Germans are stressed by reminiscences, it is necessary to perceive the mutual relationships between the Czechs and Slovaks and the entire history of Hungary in a new light: not only in view of historical problems but also in view of the new common European future.

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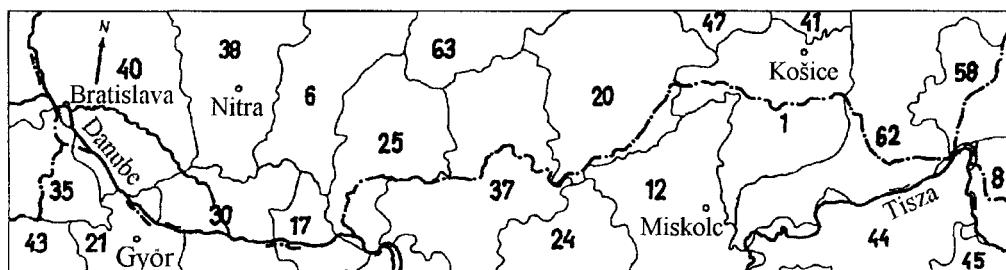


Fig. 7. Slovak - Hungarian frontier and borders of Hungarian counties (numbers of counties: see the list of counties).

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