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## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF MINORITY SELF-GOVERNMENT IN HUNGARY

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Despite the ethnic cleansings, deportations, forced assimilation, homogenization and partly due to the economically motivated migrations there is no country in Europe which could be called as ethnic homogeneous. This is particularly true in the case of the small "nation-states" of the Carpatho-Balkan region, which also includes Hungary. The Hungarian state taught by the nationalistic mistakes of her history, on the basis of the subsidiarity made possible the formation of the self-government "councils" of the minorities on the local and national level (Act Nr. LXXVII., 1993). By the beginning of 1998 736, by the beginning of 2003 1843 minority local self-government councils (999 Gipsy-Roma, 340 German, 114 Slovak, 107 Croatian, 44 Rumanian, 43 Serbian, etc.) were formed beside the 3167 local (settlement) self-government councils of Hungary. This paper outlines the Hungarian form of minority protection, revealing in the public administration, the formation, functioning, problems of the minority self-government councils and generally the political activity of the minorities in the frame work of the public administration.

**Key words:** national and ethnic minorities, minority self-governments, Hungary

### INTRODUCTION

At the elections of the last self-government bodies for minorities held in 2002, in accordance with the Act LXXVII. of 1993, the major national and ethnic minorities third time had an opportunity to exercise their rights to pave the

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way toward defending and asserting their interests. This right, similar to the elections in 1994 and in 1998, was a legal right due of the so called autochthonous minorities, that is, of the 13 minorities living in Hungary for at least one hundred years (Bulgarians, Gypsies-Roma, Greeks, Croats, Poles, Germans, Armenians, Rumanians, Ruthenians, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Ukrainians). The newly established communities of Arabs, Chinese or Russians were not entitled to exercise such rights. According to the law, depending on the local ethnic-demo-graphic weight and proportion of the minority group in question, minority self-government of a locality or minority self-government could be formed indirectly or elected directly (Kaltenbach et al. 1994). The present study is an attempt to compare the results of the elections with the ethnic-demographic geographical endowments of minority communities drawing conclusions as to the extent of political activity (public participation) and the spatial characteristics of the demographic pattern.

### DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF THE MINORITIES IN HUNGARY

More or less “reliable” information on the demographic weight and settlement pattern of minorities involved in the elections might be provided by the last census (2001), which takes a special place in the history of the Hungarian censuses. The census questionnaire of 2001 contained in relation to the subject “nationality”, not only the traditional “ethnicity-nationality” (*nemzetiség*) and the “native-mother language” (*anyanyelv*), but for the first time at the suggestions of the experts on ethnic affairs, also the questions “affinity with ethnic minorities’ cultural values and traditions” and the “language spoken with family members or friends” (Czibulka 2002). Due to various new acts (Act XLVI. of 1993 on statistics, Act LXIII. of 1992 on data protection and Act LXXVII. of 1993 on national and ethnic minorities) in the framework of the strengthening of democracy, the attention of the persons interviewed was directed to the fact that answering of the questions connected with ethnicity, language and religion is not compulsory. The fundamental difference between the 2001 and the previous censuses was not only the voluntary basis of answering these questions, but the possibility of multiple (maximum three) choices of answers. Due to these methodological changes at the time of the 2001 census, 92.3 % of the resident population declared Hungarian, 3.2 % (330,000 persons) non-Hungarian ethnicity, and 4.5 % (452,000 persons) did not want to answer the question “ethnicity”. As a result of the multiple choice of answering 115,886 persons gave two, 1,261 persons three answers (e.g. in the case of ethnicity: Hungarian-Slovak, or Hungarian-Slovak-German) and excluding the Rumanians, the population number of almost all minorities considerably increased in comparison with 1990 (Tab. 1). 95 % (314,000 persons) of the ethnic-national minority population was regarded by the law as autochthonous and most of them declared themselves as Gypsies (Roma) or Germans. At the time of the last census out of the 3,135 settlements of Hungary the absolute majority of the local population declared Hungarian nationality in 3,112, Gypsy in 9, Croatian in 6, Slovenian in 4 settlements, while German, Slovak, Rumanian and Serbian ethnicity each in one settlement (Tab. 2). As a result of the natural linguistic assimilation processes during the 1990s the number of the population of non-Hungarian native (mother) language dropped to 135,000. Similar data were reflected in the

figures answered to the question: "language spoken with family members or friends". About 23 % more persons use the minority language in private communication than those who declared a minority mother language. Due to the facts of the outstanding prestige and communication role of the German, a substantial linguistic assimilation of Gypsies (Roma) and Armenians, the high number of Hungarians resettled from Transylvania, Slovakia and Voivodina speaking Rumanian, Slovak and Serbian, data on the command of languages can provide appropriate orientation concerning the „real" population number only for the Croats, Poles, Slovenes, Bulgarians and Ukrainians. The estimations of the organizations of the "official", autochthonous minorities count more than one million ethnic non-Hungarians in Hungary, which is 3-times more than the number of persons with "affiliation to the minority cultural values and traditions" (295,000; cf. Demeter Zayzon 1999).

A comparison of the data on cultural, traditional affinity and ethnicity in the case of the national minorities mentioned above, shows that only 2/3 of the Slovaks and Germans were willing to assume their original ethnic-national identity. It was due to the settlement geographical and historical reasons, to their relative weak ethnic awareness, which was connected with their massive assimilation for the past one hundred years. Linguistic assimilation poses a danger for Gypsies, Greeks, Armenians and Slovaks: 25-45 % of them declared the minority language as their mother language. On the other hand, a relatively strong ethnic-linguistic identity is represented by the Ukrainians, Rumanians and Serbs with Orthodox religious affiliation.

## THE SYSTEM OF MINORITY SELF-GOVERNMENT IN HUNGARY

As the latest element of the Hungarian constitutional law the system of self-government bodies for minorities has been created to provide an efficient instrument for protecting their interests (Act LXXVII. of 1993). Minority self-government councils are legitimately elected representative bodies possessing warranted licenses and constitutional status, and their partners are the self-government councils of settlements on a local level and the executive power on a national level. Following the elections of self-government bodies of 1994, 1998 and 2002, minority populations in settlements where they reached eligible size, were entitled to form self-government councils of their own and acquired rights identical with cultural autonomy. In areas where settlements with minority populations are found in each other's neighbourhood, regional autonomous structures could be formed through voluntary association of self-government councils (e.g. in the eastern part of Baranya county). These self-government councils have a broad spectrum of rights. On a settlement level they possess a right of consent in affairs of local administration, media, preservation of traditions, culture and the collective use of languages. The tasks and competence of minority self-government was determined keeping in view the targets of cultural autonomy. Accordingly, self-government councils of minorities are not to play the part of authorities and local (settlement) governments are not entitled to delegate such rights to them.

**Tab. 1. Some basic data of the main national and ethnic minority groups of Hungary**

| Minority               | Population number according to ethnicity |         | Population number according to native (mother) tongue |         | Population number according to the language spoken with family members or friends |      | Population number according to the affiliation with ethnic minority cultural values and traditions |      | Population number according to the command of languages |           | Population number according to the estimation of the minority organizations |       | Number of the minority self-government bodies |      | Minority population / minority self-government |      |
|------------------------|--|---------|---|---------|---|------|--|------|---|-----------|---|-------|---|------|--|------|
|                        | 1990                                     | 2001    | 1990  | 2001    | 2001  | 2001 | 2001   | 2001 | 2001  | 1999      | 2003  | 2003  | 2003  | 2003 | 2003   | 2003 |
| Gypsies                | 142,683                                  | 189,984 | 48,072  | 48,438  | 53,323  |      | 129,259  |      | 77,071  | 600,000   | 999   | 190.2 |   |      |  |      |
| Germans                | 30,824                                   | 62,105  | 37,511  | 33,774  | 53,040  |      | 88,416   |      | 1,040,786   | 200,000   | 340   | 182.7 |   |      |  |      |
| Slovaks                | 10,459                                   | 17,693  | 12,745  | 11,817  | 18,057  |      | 26,631   |      | 60,664  | 100,000   | 114   | 155.2 |   |      |  |      |
| Croats                 | 13,570                                   | 15,597  | 17,577  | 14,326  | 14,788  |      | 19,715   |      | 42,549  | 80,000    | 107   | 145.8 |   |      |  |      |
| Rumanians              | 10,740                                   | 7,995   | 8,730   | 8,482   | 8,215   |      | 9,162  |      | 94,721  | 25,000    | 44  | 181.7 |   |      |  |      |
| Poles                  | ..                                       | 2,962   | 3,788   | 2,580   | 2,659   |      | 3,983  |      | 11,206  | 10,000    | 50  | 59.2  |   |      |  |      |
| Serbs                  | 2,905                                    | 3,816   | 2,953   | 3,388   | 4,186   |      | 5,279  |      | 25,483  | 5,000     | 43  | 88.7  |   |      |  |      |
| Slovenes               | 1,930                                    | 3,025   | 2,627   | 3,180   | 3,119   |      | 3,442  |      | 5,643   | 5,000     | 13  | 232.7 |   |      |  |      |
| Greeks                 | ..                                       | 2,509   | 1,640   | 1,921   | 1,974   |      | 6,140  |      | 5,159   | 4,000     | 30  | 83.6  |   |      |  |      |
| Bulgarians             | ..                                       | 1,358   | 1,370   | 1,299   | 1,118   |      | 1,693  |      | 3,513   | 3,500     | 30  | 45.3  |   |      |  |      |
| Armenians              | ..                                       | 620     | 37  | 294     | 300   |      | 836  |      | 501   | 3,500     | 30  | 20.7  |   |      |  |      |
| Ukrainians, Ruthenians | ..                                       | 6,168   | 674   | 5,998   | 5,587   |      | 6,071  |      | 16,215  | 8,000     | 44  | 140.2 |   |      |  |      |
| Total                  | ..                                       | 313,832 | 137,724   | 135,497 | 166,366   |      | 295,101  |      | 1,383,511   | 1,044,000 | 1,843   | 170.3 |   |      |  |      |

Sources: 1990 and 2001 Census data (ethnicity, native tongue, language spoken with family members or friends, affiliation with ethnic minority cultural values and traditions, command of languages), Demeter Zayzon (1999), KSH (1999 and 2003)

**Tab. 2. Distribution of the settlements populated partly by the minorities according to the local share of the minorities of Hungary in 2001**

| Local share categories of the minorities (in %) | C     | D   | HR | SK | RO | SB | SI | PL | UK | RU | GR | BG | Total |
|---|-------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| 50 <  | 9     | 1   | 6  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4  |    |    |    |    |    | 23    |
| 40-49.9   | 9     | 6   | 5  | 3  | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 24    |
| 30-39.9   | 24    | 13  | 7  | 4  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 48    |
| 20-29.9   | 69    | 23  | 7  | 4  |    |    | 1  |    |    |    | 1  |    | 105   |
| 10-19.9   | 183   | 31  | 7  | 12 | 6  |    | 1  | 1  |    | 1  |    |    | 242   |
| 1-9.9   | 1,041 | 270 | 56 | 40 | 12 | 13 | 8  | 2  | 3  | 1  |    | 1  | 1,447 |
| Total   | 1,335 | 344 | 88 | 64 | 20 | 14 | 14 | 3  | 3  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1,889 |

Remark: C: Gypsies, D: Germans, HR: Croats, SK: Slovaks, RO: Rumanians, SB: Serbs, SI: Slovenians, PL: Poles, UK: Ukrainians, RU: Ruthenians, GR: Greeks, BG: Bulgarians

Source: 2001 Census data (ethnicity – nemzetiség)

Electorates are to form the minority self-government councils of localities through direct election, simultaneously with the election of local government, but independently of it (*directly elected minority self-government*). Local governments formed following the elections are entitled to declare themselves minority self-government bodies if more than half of the representatives in the body were elected as candidates of a national or ethnic minority (*transformed minority self-government*). Minority self-government can also be established indirectly if the ratio of minority representatives in the local body is 30-50 % (*indirectly formed minority self-government*). Due to the lack of an official register of the ethnic-national minority population the law enables every Hungarian citizen independently of ethnic affiliation – following the collection of the signature of at least 5 electors – to stand for election as a representative of a minority. After the collection of 50 or more valid votes in case of settlements with less than 1,300 inhabitants three, in settlements with a population number between 1,300 and 10,000 five, in more populous towns (having at least 100 or more valid votes) ten elected minority representatives are allowed to form a minority self-government council.

Minority self-government councils on the national level are formed by minority electors following the election of the self-government councils of localities, but within 120 days. Functioning of minority self-government councils is secured by governmental support (in 2000: 1.253 billion HUF that is, about 5.2 million USD). Moreover they may enjoy revenues as support from the motherland, entrepreneurship and returns of their property.

The first experience from the functioning of minority self-government councils is positive. The minorities have increasingly assumed their identity and there has been a rising demand for minority education and mass media. In spite of their dependence on local government it seems an efficient form of asserting their interests. There is a need to further co-ordinate subsidies from the state and local government budgets and regulations concerning the co-operation of locality and minority self-government. At the same time, it is necessary to mention

the fact that some persons without any ethnic or national minority roots could also establish minority self-government bodies using the back-door of the act LXXVII. (an official, public register of the minority population is impossible) and obtain of financial support as minority self-government councils (ethno-business).

In relation to the self-government of minorities in Hungary a question might be raised on the absence of ethnically-based territorial autonomy as a form of public administration. In Hungary for the above outlined demographic reasons and due to the specific settlement pattern (small demographic size of minority population, their scattered, sporadic distribution, and lack of ethnic blocks) ethnic territorial autonomy cannot be realized.

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE MINORITY SELF-GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS OF 2002

Following the elections held on 20th October 2002, 1843 self-government bodies of minorities were established in Hungary (by 1st January, 2003) which represented a 149 % increase compared with the situation at the beginning of 1998 (736 minority self-government bodies) and can be attributed to the increasing self-awareness of minorities and to recognition of the advantages offered by this form of power to enforce their interests (Tabs. 1 and 3). Chiefly owing to the Gypsies (Romas), Slovaks and Germans there was a strikingly high increase of self-government bodies (Tab. 3). Most of these bodies were formed by Gypsies (999), Germans (340), Slovaks (114) and Croats (107). Concerning the inhabitants per self-government there was an average level of participation shown by Slovaks, Rumanians, Germans and Gypsies (150-190 persons per self-government council), while in the case of Armenians, Bulgarians and Poles this figure came to 20-60 (Tab. 1).



Fig. 1. Counties of Hungary (2001)

**Tab. 3. Number of self-government bodies of minorities of Hungary (1st January, 1998 and 2003)**

| County                 | Armenian |      | Bulgarian |      | Croatian |      | German |      | Gypsy |      | Greek |      | Polish |      | Rumanian |      | Ruthenian |      | Serbian |      | Slovak |      | Slovenian |      | Ukrainian |      | Total |      |
|------------------------|----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|--------|------|-------|------|-------|------|--------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|---------|------|--------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
|                        | 1998     | 2003 | 1998      | 2003 | 1998     | 2003 | 1998   | 2003 | 1998  | 2003 | 1998  | 2003 | 1998   | 2003 | 1998     | 2003 | 1998      | 2003 | 1998    | 2003 | 1998   | 2003 | 1998      | 2003 | 1998      | 2003 | 1998  | 2003 |
| Budapest Capital       | 9        | 16   |           |      | 21       | 10   | 18     | 19   | 23    | 20   | 22    | 1    | 19     | 3    | 15       | 18   | 15        |      | 16      | 2    | 14     | 2    | 4         | 64   | 203       |      |       |      |
| Bács-Kiskun            |          |      |           |      | 9        | 11   | 14     | 23   | 12    | 34   |       |      |        |      |          |      |           | 2    | 3       | 1    | 3      |      |           | 38   | 74        |      |       |      |
| Baranya                |          | 1    | 1         | 1    | 11       | 31   | 33     | 85   | 19    | 112  | 1     |      | 1      |      | 1        | 1    | 1         | 4    |         |      |        | 2    | 65        | 238  |           |      |       |      |
| Békés                  |          |      |           |      |          |      | 4      | 8    | 18    | 25   |       |      | 1      | 7    | 12       |      |           | 1    | 1       | 9    | 17     |      | 39        | 64   |           |      |       |      |
| Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén   | 3        | 1    | 2         |      | 2        | 1    | 9      | 82   | 152   | 1    | 1     | 1    | 12     | 1    | 1        | 9    |           |      | 8       | 17   | 1      | 1    | 95        | 209  |           |      |       |      |
| Csongrád               | 1        |      |           |      | 1        | 1    | 1      | 2    | 6     | 16   | 1     | 1    | 1      | 1    | 2        | 5    |           | 4    | 4       | 1    | 3      |      | 1         | 15   | 35        |      |       |      |
| Fejér                  | 1        | 1    |           |      |          | 2    | 6      | 16   | 6     | 19   | 1     |      | 3      |      |          |      |           | 3    | 1       | 2    | 1      |      | 14        | 48   |           |      |       |      |
| Győr-Moson-Sopron      | 1        |      | 1         | 4    | 8        | 9    | 11     | 4    | 17    | 1    | 1     | 1    |        |      |          |      |           |      |         |      | 1      |      | 18        | 41   |           |      |       |      |
| Hajdú-Bihar            | 1        | 1    | 1         |      |          |      |        |      | 23    | 44   |       |      | 3      | 9    |          |      |           | 1    |         |      |        |      | 27        | 56   |           |      |       |      |
| Heves                  |          |      |           |      |          |      | 1      | 36   | 61    |      | 1     |      | 1      |      |          |      |           |      | 1       | 2    |        |      | 37        | 66   |           |      |       |      |
| Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok   |          |      |           |      |          |      |        |      | 24    | 39   |       |      | 1      |      |          |      |           |      |         |      |        |      | 24        | 40   |           |      |       |      |
| Komárom-Esztergom      | 1        | 1    |           |      |          | 11   | 20     | 3    | 13    | 1    | 2     | 3    |        | 2    | 3        |      |           |      | 7       | 9    |        | 1    | 24        | 48   |           |      |       |      |
| Nógrád                 |          |      |           |      |          |      | 1      | 2    | 18    | 58   |       |      |        |      |          |      |           |      | 13      | 20   |        |      | 32        | 80   |           |      |       |      |
| Pest                   | 1        | 2    | 1         | 3    | 2        | 4    | 22     | 37   | 28    | 70   | 1     | 3    | 4      |      |          | 5    | 9         | 10   | 7       | 24   |        | 1    | 71        | 163  |           |      |       |      |
| Somogy                 | 1        |      |           |      | 4        | 6    |        | 5    | 20    | 62   |       |      | 1      |      |          |      |           |      |         |      |        |      | 24        | 75   |           |      |       |      |
| Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg | 1        | 1    |           |      |          |      | 1      | 7    | 45    | 106  |       |      | 2      |      |          | 1    | 1         | 1    | 1       | 1    | 1      | 1    | 48        | 119  |           |      |       |      |
| Tolna                  |          |      |           |      |          | 1    | 16     | 34   | 16    | 40   | 1     |      |        |      |          |      | 1         | 1    |         | 1    |        |      | 33        | 78   |           |      |       |      |
| Vas                    |          |      |           |      | 9        | 11   | 8      | 10   | 3     | 18   |       |      |        |      |          |      |           |      | 6       | 8    |        |      | 26        | 47   |           |      |       |      |
| Veszprém               | 1        | 1    | 1         | 1    |          | 1    | 15     | 43   | 11    | 32   |       |      | 4      |      |          |      |           |      |         | 1    |        | 1    | 27        | 84   |           |      |       |      |
| Zala                   |          | 1    |           |      | 6        | 11   | 1      | 4    | 8     | 59   |       |      |        |      |          |      |           |      |         |      |        |      | 15        | 75   |           |      |       |      |
| HUNGARY                | 15       | 30   | 3         | 30   | 55       | 107  | 162    | 340  | 402   | 999  | 5     | 30   | 6      | 50   | 12       | 44   | 1         | 31   | 18      | 43   | 51     | 114  | 6         | 13   | 12        | 736  | 1,843 |      |

Sources: KSH (1998 and 2003)

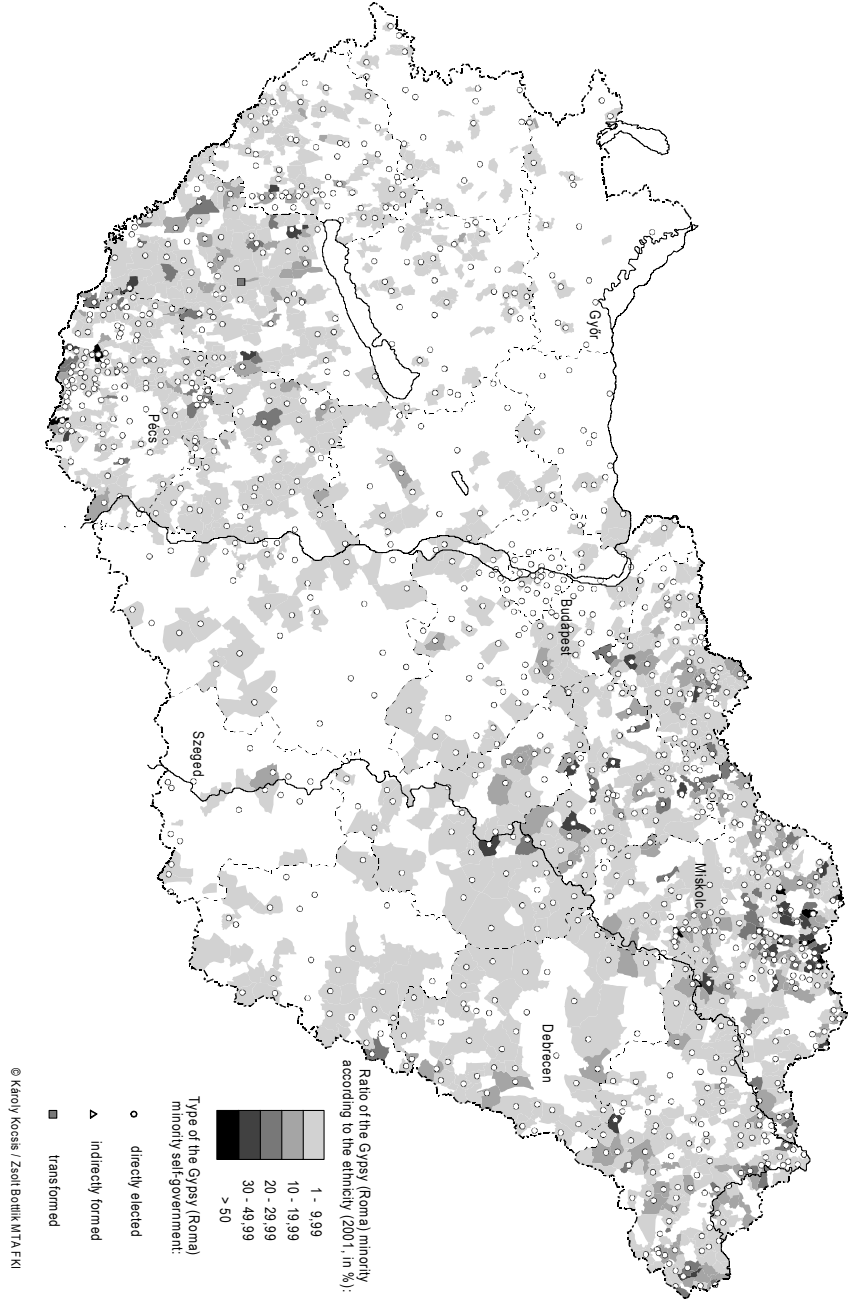


Fig. 2. The Gypsy (Roma) minority (2001) and the Gypsy (Roma) self-government bodies in Hungary (2003)  
Source: 2001 Census data and KSH (2003)



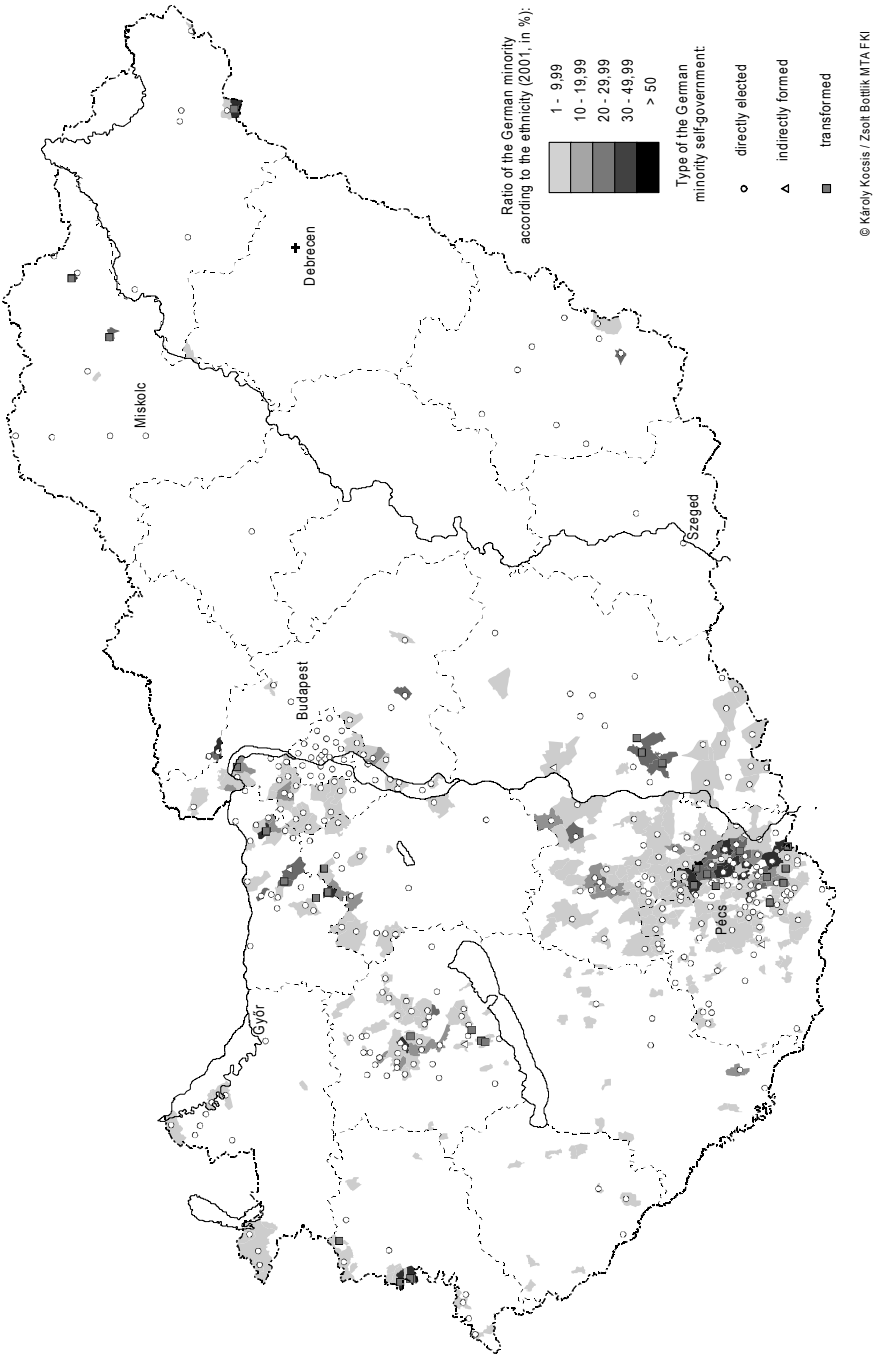


Fig. 3. The German minority (2001) and the German self-government bodies in Hungary (2003)

Source: 2001 Census data and KSH (2003)

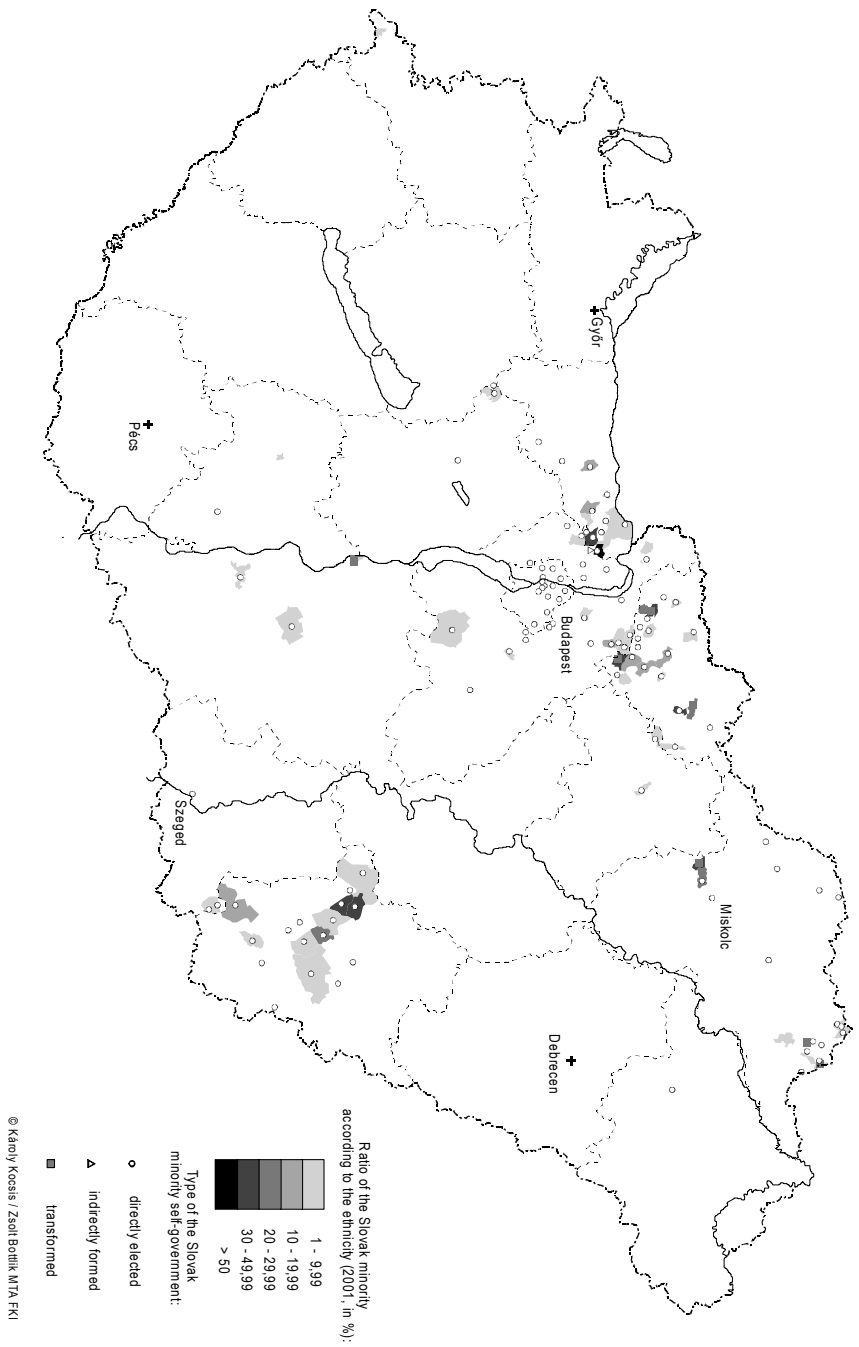


Fig. 4. The Slovak minority (2001) and the Slovak self-government bodies in Hungary (2003)  
Source: 2001 Census data and KSH (2003)

**Tab. 4. Distribution of the settlements populated partly by the minorities according to the local share of the minorities and to the existence (yes) or absence (no) of the minority self-governments (1st January, 2003)**

| Local share categories of the minorities (in %) | Gypsies |       | Germans |       | Slovaks |       | Croats |       |
|---|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|--------|-------|
|   | yes     | no    | yes     | no    | yes     | no    | yes    | no    |
| 50 <  | 8       | 1     | 1       |       | 1       |       | 6      |       |
| 30-49.9   | 27      | 6     | 19      |       | 7       |       | 12     |       |
| 20-29.9   | 46      | 23    | 23      |       | 4       |       | 7      |       |
| 10-19.9   | 114     | 69    | 27      | 4     | 11      | 1     | 7      |       |
| 1-9.9   | 569     | 472   | 158     | 112   | 33      | 7     | 27     | 29    |
| 0-0.9   | 208     | 591   | 104     | 1,185 | 52      | 654   | 46     | 522   |
| 0   | 27      | 994   | 8       | 1,505 | 6       | 2,369 | 2      | 2,487 |
| Total   | 999     | 2,146 | 340     | 2,805 | 114     | 3,031 | 107    | 3,038 |

Hungarian Gypsies, who numbered 190 thousand according to the last census, but were estimated at 600 thousand, succeeded in forming 999 self-government bodies by the 1st January 2003, more than half of them found in the traditional areas of settlement of Gypsies: in Northeast Hungary (377) and in South Trans-danubia (214, see Tab. 3, Figs. 1 and 2). In general, there is a strong correlation between the spatial distribution of Gypsies and the pattern of their self-government councils, moreover, even in settlements where their share in the population is less than 1 %, they managed to elect 208 bodies (Tab. 4, Figs. 1 and 2). Surprisingly the same happened in 27 villages, where at the census 2001 nobody declared Gypsy ethnicity. At the same time, in some areas where their presence is overwhelming, their political passivity was striking.

340 self-government bodies representing the German minority (62 thousand) are also concentrated within their traditional settlement areas, in Baranya (85), Veszprém (43), Pest (37) and Tolna (34) counties (Fig. 3). In 43 villages with more than 20 % ethnic Germans a minority self-government body was formed everywhere. Although according to the last census data only one village (Ófalu) had an absolute majority of Germans, they could establish 29 “transformed minority self-government bodies” (first of all in Baranya and in the Transdanubian Mts.), where in the self-government councils of the given settlement the representatives of the Germans are in the majority. In 116 villages, where their ethnic share is between 1-20 % there was a general neglect to vote. At the same time it should be admitted that of German communities living sporadically (German ratio is below 1 %) 112 self-government bodies were formed chiefly in urban areas (in all districts of the capital, and in large towns) asserting the importance of this form of enforcing interests.

Slovaks in Hungary mostly live in a rather scattered settlement pattern. They are rapidly assimilating, and their number amounts to about 12-27 thousand. At the last elections Slovaks formed a mere 114 self-government bodies, primarily in Pest and Békés counties, and also in Budapest and North Hungary (Fig. 4). Along with larger towns accommodating traditional communities of Slovaks (e. g. Miskolc, Nyíregyháza, Békéscsaba, Szeged, Esztergom, Tatabánya) political activity and public participation of Slovaks inhabiting the Békés and Pilis (*Danube Bend*) regions seem to be stable. The representatives of the Slovaks dominate in the self-government bodies of eight settlements (almost exclusively

in the mountainous areas of North Hungary). In one of them (Nagyhuta) at the census 2001 nobody declared Slovak ethnicity, which could be considered as a sign of the ethnic mimicry. Regrettably, nearly one quarter of the 44 settlements with 1-20 % ethnic Slovak did not form self-government.

Croats divided into several ethnic groups (e.g. Bunjevci, Šokci) have created almost as many self-government bodies (107) as the Slovak community of similar demographic size (14-20 thousand). They used up the opportunity to form Croatian self-government in each of the 32 settlements with a ratio of Croats more than 10 %. The Croats could transform 21 settlement self-government bodies into Croatian dominated ones, mostly along the border of Croatia and Austria. The electoral activity of Croats resulting in minority self-government bodies was striking not only in Budapest, but in Pécs, Baja, Barcs, Nagykanizsa and Szombathely.

Rumanians (8-9 thousand) live chiefly in the Trans-Tisza Region (East Hungary), near the Rumanian border. The number of their self-governments councils (44) almost tripled in 2003 compared to 1998. This was partly due to the event that groups of uncertain ethnic origin, but claiming to be Rumanian, with residence in Budapest and forming one-sixth of the whole minority population formed 8 self-government bodies (which completely contradicted the law on the national and ethnic minorities), in this way putting the representatives of the genuine Rumanian minority, trying to enforce their interests, in a difficult position.

In spite of the fact, that the Serbian national minority amounts to at least five thousand, they established self-government bodies in almost the same number (43) as the Rumanians, two times outnumbering them. Serbs living in diaspora and almost fully using the opportunities offered by the law managed to form minority self-government bodies, especially in the environs of Budapest and in settlements along the Danube River (among others in the only village with a Serbian majority, Lórév) and they were newly established in 16 districts of Budapest.

About three thousand Poles increased the number of their self-governments up to 50 between 1998-2003, that is, eight times more. This especially refers to the Polish self-government councils in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (12) and those in Budapest (15, see Tab. 3).

The combined number of Ruthenians autochthonous on the present-day territory of Hungary for two or three hundred years and that of the newcomer Ukrainians can be estimated at 8,000. Lately Ruthenians formed 31 and the Ukrainians 12 minority self-government councils, mostly in the area of Budapest. Of their representation only the Ruthenian communities in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (eg. Komlóska, Múcsony, Baskó, Irota, first undergoing Slovakization, then Magyarization and recently discovering their Ruthenian roots) can be considered genuinely autochthonous. Out of them Komlóska was the first Ruthenian self-government council established in 1995.

The community of Slovenes (3-4 thousand) concentrated in the "Wend Region" (in southwest of Vas county, in the neighbourhood of Slovenia) the established representation mentioned above in 13 settlements, four of them with a Slovene majority in the population. Those living apart from the homeland

showed public participation at the elections and formed self-governments also in Szombathely, Mosonmagyaróvár, in two districts of Budapest and in Miskolc.

The fistful minorities of Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians numbering 1-6 thousand persons displayed significant activity at the elections and formed 30 minority self-government bodies each. Living in diaspora and due to a specific settlement pattern they are mainly to be found in Budapest and its vicinity while their communities elsewhere are, first of all in the regional centres (e.g. Debrecen, Szeged, Pécs, Miskolc).

## CONCLUSIONS

Summing up, it can be stated that the extent of political activity shown by the minorities to form self-government councils of their own had increased with the decrease of demographic size, and speeding up of their linguistic assimilation on the one hand and breaking up of settlement areas and turning minorities into a scattered spatial position on the other hand. This behaviour has been induced by the ethnic-demographic pressure exerted on the minority groups by the majority nation, posing danger for small ethnic communities on the brink of total assimilation. In the case of national minority communities, however, where such a peril does not exist, as in villages with a majority of the population composed by the given ethnic group (e.g. Gypsies, Slovaks, Germans) political passivity and neglect of elections of self-government bodies could be also observed.

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Károly K o c s i s

## PRÍSPEVOK KU GEOGRAFICKÉMU ŠTÚDIU MENŠINOVEJ SAMOSPRAVY V MAĎARSKU

Napriek etnickým čistkám, deportáciám, násilnej asimilácie, homogenizácii a čiastočne i hospodársky motivovaným migráciám niet v Európe krajiny, ktorá by mohla byť

považovaná za etnicky homogénnu. Platí to zvlášť v prípade malých národných štátov v karpatsko-balkánskom regióne vrátane Maďarska. Podľa posledného sčítania obyvateľstva v roku 2001 3,2 % obyvateľov Maďarska patrí k jednej z národnostných menšín (rómskej, nemeckej, slovenskej, chorvátskej, slovinskej, srbskej), ktoré žijú roztrúsené alebo v rôznych národnostných enklávach na jeho území. Maďarský štát sa poučil z chýb v minulosti a umožnil na základe princípu subsidiarity vytvorenie menšinových samospráv na miestnej i celoštátnej úrovni (zákon č. LXXVII z roku 1993). Popri 3167 miestnych samosprávach sa v Maďarsku do začiatku roku 1998 vytvorilo 736 a do začiatku roku 2003 1843 menšinových samospráv (z toho 999 rómskych, 340 nemeckých, 114 slovenských 107 chorvátskych, 44 rumunských, 43 srbských, atď.). Príspevok načrtáva maďarskú formu ochrany menšín v rámci verejnej správy, opisuje vytváranie, fungovanie a problémy menšinových samospráv a tiež politickú činnosť menšín vo všeobecnosti.

Preložila H. Contrerasová