ROMANIANS IN HUNGARY (1920-2011). DEMOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ∗

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Abstract: After 1920, an important Romanian community remained on Hungarian territory. It constantly knew a graduate decrease. In 2001, only 7995 persons declared themselves to be Romanian. At the 2011 census, 35,641 Romanians were registered. This phenomenon may be explained by the migration of the Romanians and Hungarians from Transylvania and by the way the citizens' ethnicity was registered at the census.

Keywords: Romanians in Hungary, ethnic demography, census.

In 1918, through the implementation of the principles enunciated by US President Woodrow Wilson, the one of the countries' right for self-determination, the nations without history, as Friedrich Engels called the countries that had no ruling elite in the Middle Ages, broke away from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, giving birth to successoral states. The self-determination principle was accepted in the case of all countries, except for the case of the Germans and Austrians. On October 29th 1918, the German representatives from the Austrian Reichstrat, who represented the electoral circumscriptions of Bohemia and Moravia, gathered in Vienna and declared the Independent Republic of German Bohemia, with the capital at Reichenbern (Liberec). France opposed and the republic was occupied by the Czech armies.[1] Austria, in the virtue of the same principle of self-determination, considering the terms of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, requested the unification with Germany. France opposed again, and the independent state of Austria was created. As compensation, Austria was granted the Bürgenland region, claimed by Hungary. Later, a referendum partially modified the situation, the city of Sopron being granted to Hungary. Also, at the Peace Conference, at the American delegation's proposal, it was decided that the area around Bratislava would be returned to Czechoslovakia, and Hungary to be compensated with the Szeged region.[2] Thus, a series of localities, like Gyula, city from where Romanians were represented at the National Assembly from Alba Iulia on December 1st 1918, were granted to Hungary by the decisions of the Paris Conference.

In this way, according to the official data, in 1920, there were 26,000 Romanians on Hungary's territory.[3] Besides them, there were 88,871 Romanian speakers. The data about the

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[1] R. J. Crampton*, Europa Răsăriteană în secolul al XX-lea*, Bucureşti, Editura Curtea Veche, 2002, p. 80.

[2] Corneliu-Cezar Sigmirean, "Românii din Ungaria în corespondenţa Ministerului de Externe al Ungariei", in vol. *Simpozion. Comunicările celui de-al XVII-lea Simpozion al Cercetătorilor Români din Ungaria* , Giula, 2008, p. 86.

[3] Gheorghe Petruşan, Emilia Martin, Mihai Cozma, *Românii din Ungaria*, Budapesta, Editura Press Publica, 2000, p. 9.

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number of Romanians who remained on Hungarian territory after the Treaty of Trianon is contradictory. Romanian historiography attempts to outbid their number, the Hungarian historiography to minimize it. In the first interwar decade, Hungarian representative Viktor Knaller and Romanian diplomat Vasile Stoica, appreciated that about 50,000 Romanians lived in Hungary.[4] Ştefan Manciulea, one of the great Romanian geographers, in a study published in 1943 mentioned that 120,000 Romanians would live in Hungary.[5] We mention that the majority of the Romanians were found in the localities bordering Romania: Aletea, Apateu, Bătania, Bichiş, Bichişciaba (Bekescsaba), Cenadul Unguresc, Ciorvaş, Crîstor, Darvaş, Jula (Gyula), Jaca, Leucuşhaz, Micherechi, Otlaca Pustă, Peterd, Săcal, Szeged and Vecherle. All the settlements are in the region between the West of Tisa and the North of the Mureş. A number of Romanians lived in Budapest, where the 1910 census recorded 2,777 Romanians.[6] After 1918, many of them left the Hungarian capital, settling in Romania.

In the years that followed the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the number of Romanians in Hungary constantly decreased. The loss of connections with the Romanian ethnic block, the excessive promotion of the Hungarian national feeling, the decline of the Romanian elites that remained on the Hungarian state's territory lead to the dramatic decrease of the Romanian ethnic element. School was also a factor of the loss of national identity in the case of some Romanians. Through the 44167/1960 circular issued by the Ministry of Education, all the schools with minority education were forced to stop teaching school disciplines in their own language and to introduce teaching in Hungarian.[7] In the mother tongue, only the Romanian Language and Literature discipline could be taught.

Thus, in many localities, where Romanian had been spoken in the 19th century, today Hungarian is exclusively spoken. We have in this sense the localities in Bihor, with Greek-Catholic Romanian communities, Pocei, Leta Mare, Macău and Bedeu, where Romanian is not spoken any more. Publicist and writer Iosif Vulcan, the founder of the *Familia* magazine, in which poet Mihai Eminescu made his debut in 1866, spent part of his childhood in Leta Mare.

In the 1970 census, 12,624 Romanians were living in Hungary, and in the 1990 census, their number was 10,740. Interestingly, the rhythm of identity loss experienced acceleration after 1990, in the conditions of the fall of Communism and the instauration of a liberal society in Hungary, presumably more open and tolerant. In 2001, only 7,995 people declared themselves Romanians and 8,842 Hungarian citizens admitted their mother tongue was Romanian, and 8,215 mentioned the use of Romanian as a language of communication amongst family and friends.[8] Surely, language does not represent the only identity element. There are many ethnic communities that claim themselves as part of a nation, without even speaking their mother tongue. Interestingly, most claims were to Romanian traditions, and

[4] Gabriel Moisa, *Istoriografia românilor din Ungaria 1920-2010. Între deziderat şi realitate,* Gyula, Editura NOI, 2010, p. 31.
[5] Ştefan Manciulea, "Graniţa de apus a românilor", în *Revista istorică*, nr. XXV, Bucureşti, 1943, p. 18.
[6] *Budapest Székes föváros statiszkai és köyigazgatsi évkönyve, XI, évfozam 1902-1912*, Budapest, 1914, p. 43.
[7] Alexandru Ghişa, *Maghiarii din România-Românii din Ungaria în secolul XX. O analiză comparativă,* în *Partide politice şi minorităţile naţionale din România în secolul XX*, 4, Sibiu, Editura Techno Media, 2009, p. 70.
[8] Ana Borbély, *Limba română şi identitate românească în Ungaria,* Giula, 2013, p. 15.

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less to Romanian nationality, a sign of the loss of national identity, which becomes only a memory.

However, in the conditions in which the Romanian community seemed to record a constant decrease of its members' number, Hungary's Central Office of Statistics, published, on March 28th 2013, the final results of the 2013 census. According to the census, in Hungary 26,345 persons of Romanian nationality live in Hungary and 13,886 declare themselves as having Romanian as their mother tongue. Thus, the number of Romanian citizens that have declared to also have Romanian nationality (in addition to another nationality) is 35,641.[9]. Compared to the 2001 census the number of Romanians increased by 214%. On Hungary's level, Romanians represent as a number the third national minority, after gypsies, with 315,583 persons who declared themselves "in the first or second place gypsies," and Germans, with 185,696 people.

The census also recorded a substantial modification of Hungary's ethnic geography. If, until not long ago, Romanian communities from the localities at the Romanian border and Budapest were known, at the 2011 census new localities emerged. The allocation by counties of the ones that declared themselves Romanians looks like this: Budapest, 8,480, Bácsi-Kiskun 1,797, Baranya 600, Bichiş (Békés) 6,240, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén 652, Csongrád 2,022, Fejér 974, Győr-Moson-Sopron 923, Bihor (Hajdú-Bihar) 2,592, Heves 634, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok 620, Komárom-Esztergom 803, Nográd 269, Pest 5,649, Somogy 431, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg 1,219, Tolna 424, Vas 336, Veszprén 610, and Zala 366. An important number of Romanians was also recorded in the old Romanian settlements in Aletea 271, Bătania 505, Bichiş 58, Bichişciaba 396, Ciorvaş 16, Chitighaz 1,050, Crîstor 66, Jula (Gyula) 974, Leucuşhaz 87, Micherechi 1,637 and Otlaca-Pustă 93. Also, Romanians were recorded in the localities Şercand 130, Debrecen 739, Orosháza 78, Mezőkovácsháza 69, Dombegyház 59, Szarvas 40, Szeged 588, Biharkeresztes 183, etc.

The confessional allocation of the 35,641 citizens recorded as Romanians seems almost surprising: 10,133 Roman Catholics, 914 Greek-Catholics, 205 Greek Orthodox, 73 Russian Orthodox, 30 Serbian Orthodox, 4,230 Romanian Orthodox, 8,801 Reformed, 271 Evangelicals, 573 Unitarians, 705 Baptist, 252 Adventists, 390 Pentecostals, 251 Jehovah's Witnesses, 82 Hit Assembly, 87 Israelites, 42 Buddhists and 31 Muslims. Amongst the ones who declared themselves as Romanians, 294 declared themselves Atheists and 4,081 did not respond to the question regarding their religion.

Indisputably, the confessional distribution indicates the relativity of the census data regarding the people's nationalities. Romanians from Hungary traditionally belonged to the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic denominations. In the 20th century non-Protestant communities of Pentecostals and Baptists appeared in some localities. As a result, how 10,133 Romanians of Roman-Catholic and 8,801 Romanians of Reformed religions appeared remains almost an enigma. Also, a question arises of how such a spectacular growth of Romanians in Hungary occurred. From the consultation of the 2010 chronicle of divine service for the Romanians in Hungary, it results that 51 young people were baptized, amongst whom 48 in the Orthodox religion, 1 in the Baptist Church and 1 at the Pentecostals. On the other hand, 101 funerals

[9] Eva Şimon, Ungaria*:* "Rezultatele recensământului din 2011. Suntem cu 214 % mai mulţi români în Ungaria", în *Romanian Global New Press*, Wensday, 3 April, 2013.

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were recorded: 80 in Orthodox parishes, 7 in the Baptist ones and 5 at the Pentecostals.[10] The demographic growth, obviously, could not contribute to the increase of the number of Romanians in Hungary. Instead, we can take the phenomenon of migration into consideration, which profoundly modified the ethnic structure of many communities in Europe. After 2007, when Romania adhered to the European Union, a series of Romanians from the Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad, Timiş counties or other Romanian regions settled in Hungary. Between 2007 and 2012, 350 families of Romanians moved in Bătania.[11] However, a great number of Romanian citizens of Hungarian nationality immigrated to Hungary. The migration phenomenon entails millions of people annually. A phenomenon of permanence of history, which in the contest of the reduction of cost, time and risks involved in long-distance movements, experienced unprecedented amplitude. In 2005, the migration phenomenon entailed 192 million people on planetary level.[12] It is estimated that, after 1990, over 3 million Romanians left from Romania. In 2008 1,016,000 lived in Italy and 750,000 in Spain. The 2011 census registers, however, that the number of Romanians that live abroad is 727,000.[13] Most of them lived in Western European states: 341,296 in Italy, 171,163 in Spain, 33,689 in Germany, 23,205 in France, 10,378 in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. According to the 2011 census, 10,291 Romanians lived in Hungary. Thus, unofficial data speak about hundreds of thousands of Romanian citizens, of Hungarian ethnicity, that have migrated as work force to Hungary in the past few years.[14] After 1990, Hungary's relative closeness and prosperity towards Romanian and national and linguistic affinities encouraged many German ethnics from Transylvania to settle in Hungary. Hungary, however, preoccupied with its own economic situation, did not offer the legal or the institutional frameworks to integrate the Transylvanian migrants on the labour market. Many Hungarians that left from Romania realized that Hungary was not the benevolent mother who would recuperate all its sons.[15] It got to the situation that, irrespective of their ethnicity or citizenship, they were labelled as "Romanians." Ethnic Hungarian migrants in the "mother homeland" lived in paradox that was difficult to imagine before 1989, to be considered "Hungarians" in Romania and "Romanians" in Hungary.[16] A true symbolic confrontation between migrants and autochtonous Hungarians in Hungary for Hungarianness legitimacy was reached. Many ethnic Hungarians lived a phenomenon of frustration, which met the most diverse forms of manifestations. Through Hungary's LXXVII Law regarding the rights of ethnic and national minorities, minorities have the right to form "self-governments," on local and national level. These self-governments are financed by the Hungarian state. As a result, the situation in which self-governments were formed in localities where Romanians are no longer living, traditionally, was reached. Many cases of self-government are constituted by ethnic Hungarians from

[10] *Calendarul românesc. Almanah al săptămânalului „Foaia românească" pe 2011*, p. 107-111
[11] *Mediafax. ro. 8 octombrie 2013*.
[12] Remus Gabriel Anghel şi István Horvát, *Sociologia migraţiei. Teorii şi studii de caz româneşti*, Iaşi, Editura Polirom, 2009, p. 14.
[13] *Gândul. Info, din 04.07.2013.*
[14] Jon E. Fox*, De la incluziune naţională la excludere economică: migraţia pentru muncă a etnicilor maghiari către Ungaria*, in Remus Gabriel Anghel şi István Horvát, *op. cit*. p. 112. Initially the study has appeared under the title "From National Inclusion to Economic Exclusion", in *Nation and Nationalism*, 13, 1, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 77-96
[15] *Ibidem*, p.114.
[16] *Ibidem*, p.115.

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Transylvania or Hungarians citizens who identified in the XXXVII Law an opportunities of self-financing from the Hungarian state. The phenomenon was defined in the press and political environments as ethno-business. Perhaps the miracle of the spectacular rise of the number of Romanians should be identified here. The 21st century, through its great population mobility, indisputably generates double or even triple national and cultural identities. A "Romanian from Hungary" can define his or her ethnic belonging by origin, language, family tradition, or even citizenship. However, beyond the aspects regarding national identity, conferred by political privileging, by traditions or culture, by national imperatives, by the way of its interpretation, a Romanian community lives in Hungary, as an integral part of the Romanian cultural nation.

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