

Ethnicity and Religion

Ethnic-Lingual Patterns

As a result of the Treaty of Trianon (1920), Hungary lost 71.4% of its territory and 33% of its ethnic Hungarian population. The country thus turned into one of the ethnically most homogenous states on the continent, whilst the Hungarians (Magyars) became one of the most divided ethnicities (Figure 2). From 1920 onwards, Hungarians lived across initially five, then from 1991, eight different countries: Hungary, Slovakia (from 1993), Ukraine (Transcarpathia), Romania (Transylvania), Serbia (Vojvodina), Croatia, Slovenia (Prekmurje region) and Austria (Burgenland). In the period after 1920, these Hungarians went from being

in the majority to becoming a minority – for the first time in history – thus becoming a target for anti-Hungarian vengeance in neighbouring states. Their settlement areas became massively colonised and militarised (mostly frontier) zones of neighbouring countries.

During the 20th century, the proportion of the population with a non-Hungarian mother tongue decreased from 10.4% to 1.1%, for the most part as a result of migration in the years 1919–23, 1938–41 and 1944–47, following border changes, and through the assimilation of the autochthonous minorities. At the same time both the number of ethnic Hungarians and their ra-

Table 11. Hungarians in the regions of the Carpatho-Pannonian Area (1910–2001)

Year	Carpatho-Pannonian Area	HUNGARY (H)	Transylvania (RO)	SLOVAKIA (SK)	Vojvodina (SRB)	Transcarpathia (UA)	Pannonian Croatia (HR)	Prekmurje (SLO)	Burgenland (A)
Number of Hungarians in thousands									
1910	10,036.2	6,730.3	1,653.9	880.9	425.9	184.3	114.0	20.7	26.2
1920	9,710.5	7,156.0	1,305.8	650.6	371.0	111.1	77.0	14.1	24.9
1930	10,637.6	8,000.3	1,476.2	585.4	376.2	116.5	65.0	7.6	10.4
1941	11,946.2	8,655.8	1,735.7	761.4	473.2	233.8	67.3	16.9	2.1
1949	11,527.6	9,076.0	1,481.9	354.5	428.9	120.0	50.8	10.2	5.3
1960	12,565.5	9,786.0	1,616.2	518.8	442.6	146.2	40.8	9.9	5.0
1970	12,964.1	10,166.2	1,625.7	552.0	423.9	151.9	33.8	9.1	1.5
1980	13,403.3	10,579.9	1,691.0	559.8	370.0	166.1	23.8	8.6	4.1
1990	12,955.3	10,222.5	1,619.7	567.3	344.7	166.7	20.0	7.6	6.8
2001	12,016.2	9,546.4	1,429.5	572.9	284.2	158.7	11.3	6.6	6.6
2001	11,822.0	9,416.0	1,416.8	520.5	290.2	151.5	15.0	5.4	..
Ratio of Hungarians in %									
1910	49.2	88.4	31.6	30.2	28.1	30.8	3.5	22.9	9.0
1920	46.7	89.6	25.5	22.0	24.2	18.1	2.4	15.2	8.4
1930	46.9	92.1	26.7	17.6	23.2	15.9	1.8	8.4	3.5
1941	49.0	92.9	29.5	21.5	28.5	27.3	1.7	20.1	0.7
1949	48.4	98.6	25.7	10.3	25.8	15.1	1.4	10.8	1.9
1960	47.6	98.2	25.9	12.4	23.9	15.9	1.0	11.0	1.9
1970	46.3	98.5	24.2	12.2	21.7	14.4	0.8	10.0	0.5
1980	44.8	98.8	22.5	11.2	18.2	14.4	0.6	9.3	1.5
1990	42.9	98.5	21.0	10.7	17.1	13.4	0.5	8.5	2.5
2001	40.8	93.6	19.8	10.7	14.0	12.7	0.3	8.0	2.4
2001	40.1	92.3	19.6	9.7	14.3	12.1	0.4	6.6	..

Remark: *Italic figures* represent data on mother tongue (native language), normal figures refer to those on ethnic affiliation. Source: Population censuses.

tio to locals in the detached territories decreased (Table 11). The non-Hungarian minorities had settled in the present-day territory of Hungary prior to the emergence of the modern concept of nations and thus experienced the process of nation-building, for the most part, as minorities within the Hungarian nation (e.g. Slovenes: 12–13th century; Roma, Serbs, Croats: 15–17th century; Germans/Swabians, Slovaks, Romanians, Rusyns: 17–19th century). A contributory factor to their assimilation was the fact that they found themselves amongst a highly dispersed diaspora and spoke Hungarian as their ‘main language’, rather than their national language, in addition to their dialects. In contrast, the annexed Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin became citizens of neighbouring states only in 1920 (and for a second time in 1945), by which time they possessed an already strong, centuries-old ethnic Hungarian consciousness.

According to the latest census data, of a total 13–14 million *Hungarians in the world* – a number similar to the population of Kazakhstan, a sizeable country – 90% lives in the Carpathian Basin, on the historical territory of Hungary (Table 12). There are nearly 3 million European Hungarians living outside the borders of present-day Hungary, forming one of the largest minorities in Europe, outnumbering the populations of 86 countries of the world (e.g. Mongolia, Latvia or Namibia). Out of those that declared their ethnicity as Hungarian, 9.4 million are inhabitants of Hungary, 1.4 million of Transylvania (in Romania), 520 thousand of Slovakia, 290 thousand of Vojvodina (in Serbia), 151 thousand of Transcarpathia (in Ukraine) and 15 thousand of the Pannonian region in Croatia.

Present-day ethnic patterns. At the time of the 2001 census, of the population of 10.2 million, 5.3 to 6.2% refused to respond to questions about their ethnic-lingual affiliation. Most of those people, who were apparently unmotivated about their ethnic status, i.e. ‘denationalised’ Hungarians or ‘cautious and distrusting’ ethnic minorities, lived in Budapest and its environs, and in other big cities. A total of 92.3% of the population professed Hungarian ethnicity and 93.6% declared themselves to be Hungarian native speakers (Table 13). The number of those who declared a Hungarian ethnic affiliation had dropped from 10.6 million in 1980, down to 9.4 million in 2001, owing to the weakening national identity and natural decrease recorded since 1981. Due to the change in their declared mother tongue and the natural assimilation of the younger members of ethnic minorities, the number of non-Hungarian native speakers decreased considerably (among the Germans and Croats) or stagnated (among the Roma) between 1990 and 2001. The largest minority group, by mother tongue (in thousands) were the Roma 48.7, Germans 33.8, Slovaks 11.8 and Croats 14.3. Over the same period as a result of the above, along with a revival in relations with the mother country, a high natural increase and growing ethnic consciousness among the Roma, the number of people who declared non-Hungarian ethnicity had risen from 233 thousand to 330 thousand.

As far as the lingual spatial pattern is concerned, the territory of the country is rather uniform (Hungarian), but by ethnic affiliation and origin – owing to the increasing number and ratio of the Roma (up to 90% Hungarian native speakers) – the population of north-eastern

Table 12. *Hungarians in the World (1930, 2000)*

Regions	Around 1930	Around 2000
	In thousands	
Hungary	8,000.3	9,546.4
Carpatho-Pannonian Area (excluding Hungary)	2,637.3	2,469.8
Europe (excluding Carpatho-Pannonian Area)	205.0	270.0
North America	630.0	735.0
South America	50.0	55.0
Asia	2.7	230.0
Africa	3.0	10.0
Australia and Oceania	0.3	62.0
World total	11,528.6	13,378.2

Remark: Carpatho-Pannonian Area = Slovakia (SK), Transcarpathia (UA), Transylvania (RO), Vojvodina (SRB), Pannonian counties of Croatia (HR), Prekmurje (SLO) and Burgenland (A)

Source: 1930: NAGY, I.1935, RÓNAI, A. 1938; 2000: Carpatho-Pannonian Area: mother tongue data of the censuses (2001, 2002); other territories: www.hhrf.org/html/?menuid=060209

Table 13. Ethnic structure of the population on the present-day territory of Hungary (1880–2001)

Ethnic groups	1880	1910	1941	1949	1990	2001	2001*
	Population number (thousand)						
Total population	5,343.4	7,612.1	9,316.1	9,204.8	10,374.8	10,198.3	10,198.3
Hungarians	4,402.4	6,730.3	8,655.8	9,076.0	10,222.5	9,546.4	9,416.0
Germans	606.4	553.2	475.5	22.5	37.5	33.8	62.2
Slovaks	199.8	165.3	75.9	26.0	12.7	11.8	17.7
Croats	59.3	62.0	37.9	20.4	17.6	14.3	15.6
Romanians	25.0	28.5	14.1	14.7	8.7	8.5	8.0
Serbs	18.8	26.2	5.4	5.2	3.0	3.4	3.8
Slovenes	4.6	6.9	4.8	4.5	2.6	3.2	3.0
Roma (Gypsies)	..	9.8	18.6	21.4	48.1	48.7	190.0
Other ethnic groups	27.1	29.9	28.1	14.1	22.1	28.4	29.7
Unknown	..	..	..	..	..	541.1	570.5
	in %						
Total population	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Hungarians	82.4	88.4	92.9	98.6	98.5	93.6	92.3
Germans	11.3	7.3	5.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.6
Slovaks	3.7	2.2	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2
Croats	1.1	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
Romanians	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Serbs	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Slovenes	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Roma (Gypsies)	..	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.9
Other ethnic groups	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Unknown	..	..	..	..	..	5.3	5.6

Remark: In 2001 due to the possibility of declaring double, even triple ethnic affiliation the overall figure in total exceed the 100%!

Sources: Mother tongue (1880–2001) and ethnic affiliation (2001*) data of the Hungarian censuses.

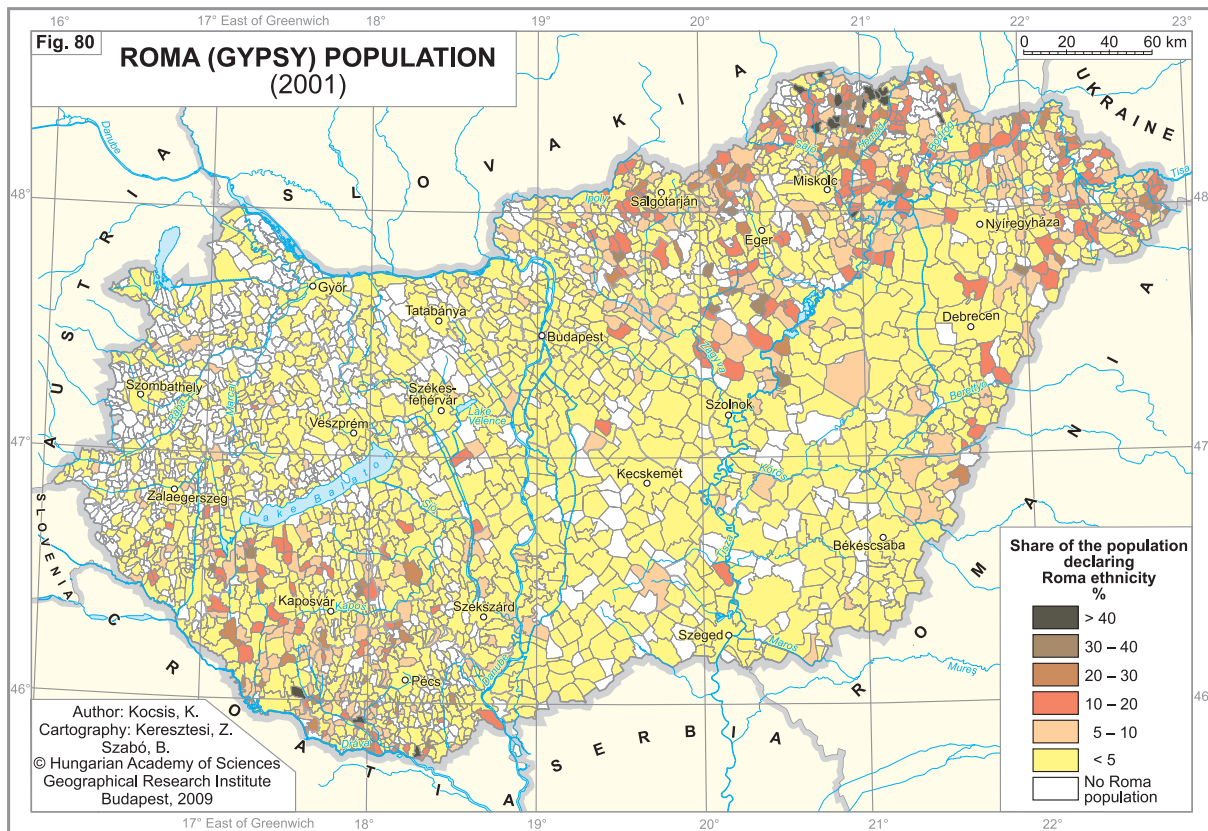
and south-western areas are to be considered mixed.

Based on the census of 2001, the Hungarians formed an absolute majority in all but 33 settlements in the country. Between 1990 and 2001, the number of Hungarians dropped by 700 thousand, and increases were only seen in the county of Pest (by 6.4%), as a result of suburbanisation around Budapest, a massive inward migration of residents formerly living in the capital. The most populous centres for the Hungarians were the capital, followed by (in thousands) Debrecen (200), Miskolc (176), Szeged (157) and Pécs (150).

According to the latest census data, 190 thousand people (1.9%) declared Roma (Gypsy) ethnicity. As the Roma tend to consider themselves to belong to the majority nation (in this case to the Hungarians), this number is far less than that claimed by the non-Roma. Prior to the regime change, Hungarian governmental organisations (e.g. county councils and the Central Statistical Office) put major emphasis on the estimation of their 'real' numbers. According to these surveys, the number of Roma was estimated at 325 thousand in 1978, 450 thousand in 1991 and 520 to 650 thousand in 2003. Between

1990 and 2001, the number of those declaring themselves to be Roma increased by 33.1% due to the high natural growth and ethnic dissimilation. The latter process entails Roma that are increasing aware of their Roma identity, who – being Hungarian native speakers – previously declared themselves to be Hungarians, but latterly have chosen to identify with the Roma ethnicity.

The Roma live overwhelmingly in the less urbanised, traditionally rural areas with a highly mixed population from the perspectives of ethnicity and religious denomination. According to the census statistics of 2001, based only on self-declaration, ten villages had an absolute Roma majority. All of them were located in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, with the exception of Alsószentmárton and Gilvánfa in the county of Baranya (Figure 80). Generally it can be stated that nearly two thirds of the Roma languish in highly segregated environments, with a frequent emergence of ethnic ghettos. The regions with an intense enlargement in the Roma population are in North-East Hungary (10–11%), in Nógrád, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties; the Middle Tisza region; and in South Transdanubia in Baranya and Somogy



counties. Growing ethnic segregation became visible in the second half of the socialist era, when previously depopulating villages and urban areas in decline attracted a mass of Roma migrants. A process of ‘ghettoisation’ has taken place in cities and towns, and even it absorbed whole regions, leading to a gradual separation of the Roma from the majority of the population.

The settlement area of the ethnic Germans (62 thousand) can be subdivided into five regions, comprising clusters of language islets and diaspora: The West Transdanubian borderland; Transdanubian Mountains; Baranya and Tolna counties; south-western part of Bács-Kiskun County; and other diaspora (mainly in Békés, Pest and Somogy counties). During the course of the deportations of 1946 and 1947, about half the Germans of Baranya, Bács-Kiskun and Komárom counties, along with those of Budapest, were not forced to leave their homes, so they remained. They managed to retain their major concentrations in the eastern part of Baranya County and in the Vértes, Gerecse and Bakony mountains. However, according to census data, only 11 villages had a German ethnic majority, predominantly in the county of Baranya. The

largest communities are found in Budapest, Pécs, Sopron, Mohács, Tatabánya, Pilisvörösvár, Csolnok, Hajós and Mór.

The settlement area of the second most populous national minority in Hungary, the Slovaks (12–18 thousand) – due to assimilation and population transfer between 1946 and 1948 – are now to be found in considerable numbers in only three areas (in Békés County, the Pilis Mountains and the common borderland of Pest and Nógrád counties), along with four smaller language islets and diaspora (in the North Hungarian Mountains).

The Croats (14–16 thousand), with regard to their ethnography and regional distribution, can be subdivided into Šokci (South-East Baranya), Bosnians (South Baranya), Bunjevci (Bácska), the Croats of the Drava and Mura regions, and those living along the Austrian border. They form ethnic majority in 11 villages located in the border areas.

Only two thirds of the Romanians (8–9 thousand) live along the present-day Hungarian–Romanian border, due to their internal migration in order to relocate to where the most populous communities are found in Méhkerék, Kétegyháza, Gyula and Elek.

The vast majority of the Serbs (3–4 thousand) live near to the Danube and in the southern border zone (e.g. Lórév, Pomáz, Budakalász, Baja, Mohács, Szeged, Battonya and Deszk), only forming an ethnic majority in Lórév (Csepel Island).

A minority of Slovenes (3 thousand) inhabit a small area of hills near the River Rába. Their most populous communities are to be found in Szentgotthárd and near to the Austrian-Slovenian-Hungarian border in Felsőszölnök.

The number of people belonging to other minorities included in the Act LXXVII/1993 (on the rights of national and ethnic minorities)

amounts to around 10 thousand or less: Greeks (10), Ukrainians (9.4), Poles (7.2), Bulgarians (3.5), Ruthenians (2.8), and Armenians (1.8). A characteristic feature of their spatial distribution is that, a quarter to a third of them, are the residents of the capital and they do not form a majority of the local population anywhere. Ruthenians (Rusyns) achieve a considerable proportion in Komlóska (38%) in Zemplén, as do the Greeks in Beloianisz (23%) in Fejér County. Of the ethnicities that have not been accorded minority rights by the Act, the Chinese (5,196) and Arabs (ca 3,600) are the most numerous.

Church and Religion

Church and religion formed an organic part of Hungarian statehood and society until the mid-20th century. The Carpathian Basin and Hungary was considered to have been the scene of competition between Rome and Byzantium, Western and Eastern Christianity since the 9th century. Despite the conversion of the Hungarians to the Christian faith between the 9th and 11th centuries, and the amalgamation with the Roman (Latin) Church and Western Christianity (1000), owing to the remarkable success of the 16th century Reformation in Hungary, the Catholic Church was unable to occupy a pivotal role in moulding the Hungarian nation and becoming the only solid pillar of self-consciousness, unlike other nations along the 'Catholic-Orthodox front-line' (e.g. the Croats and Poles). Nevertheless, starting with the Counter-Reformation in the 17th–18th centuries, the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary (by this time part of the Habsburg Empire) had become closely interwoven with state institutions and enjoyed a privileged position up to the end of Kingdom of Hungary (1945). In the second half of 20th century, an abrupt change in the attitude of the state toward the Church took place. In 1949 the Hungarian state and the Church officially separated, followed by an era of atheist, anticlerical policies from the Communist totalitarian regime until 1989 (similar to other countries in the Eastern Bloc). In Hungary, the Church played an important role in the maintenance of civil society and up-

holding ideas of national consciousness during the Socialist era, the reason why religious conviction and ecclesiastical affairs have a broader political context in Hungary than generally in the west. In the second half of the 20th century secularisation gathered pace, supported by the state. Following the regime change, such policies were curbed and reversed, partnered with a religious revival, mainly in rural areas with a Catholic predominance. Another characteristic feature of the new wave of sacralisation is religious pluralisation, manifest in the expansion of other (and not necessarily Christian) churches and small religious communities. The scale of religious pluralisation, associated with the immigration of people belonging to religions not historically present on the territory (e.g. Islam, Buddhism and Hindu), however, is negligible compared to that in western Europe.

Present-day patterns of religious affiliation. According to the census of 2001, 89.2% of the country's population of 10.2 million were willing to respond to the query on religious beliefs or confessional affiliation. Of them, 74.7% declared religious convictions and 14.5% were non-religious or atheist (*Table 14*). Compared to 1949, the number of religious people dropped from 9.2 to 7.6 million, but composition by denomination has changed only slightly. Among believers the share of Catholics somewhat increased (from 70.5 to 73.1%), that of Calvinists remained virtually the same (21.4%), whereas

Table 14. Religious structure of the population on the present-day territory of Hungary (1910–2001)

Denominations	1910	1930	1941	1949	2001
	Population number in thousands				
Total population	7,612	8,685	9,316	9,205	10,198
Roman Catholics	4,774	5,631	6,120	6,240	5,289
Greek Catholics	165	201	234	248	269
Calvinists	1,633	1,813	1,935	2,015	1,623
Lutherans	484	534	557	482	305
Unitarians	5	7	8	9	..
Orthodox	61	40	38	36	15
Baptists	..	9	18	19	18
Jews	471	445	401	134	13
Other religious	19	5	5	8	79
Non-religious	..	..	..	12	1,483
Unknown	..	..	..	2	1,104
	in %				
Total population	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Roman Catholics	62.8	64.8	65.7	67.8	51.9
Greek Catholics	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.6
Calvinists	21.5	20.9	20.8	21.9	15.9
Lutherans	6.4	6.1	6.0	5.2	3.0
Unitarians	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	..
Orthodox	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2
Baptists	..	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Jews	6.2	5.1	4.3	1.5	0.1
Other religious	..	0.1	..	0.1	0.8
Non-religious	..	..	..	0.1	14.5
Unknown	..	..	..	..	10.8

Sources: Data on religious affiliation from the Hungarian censuses.

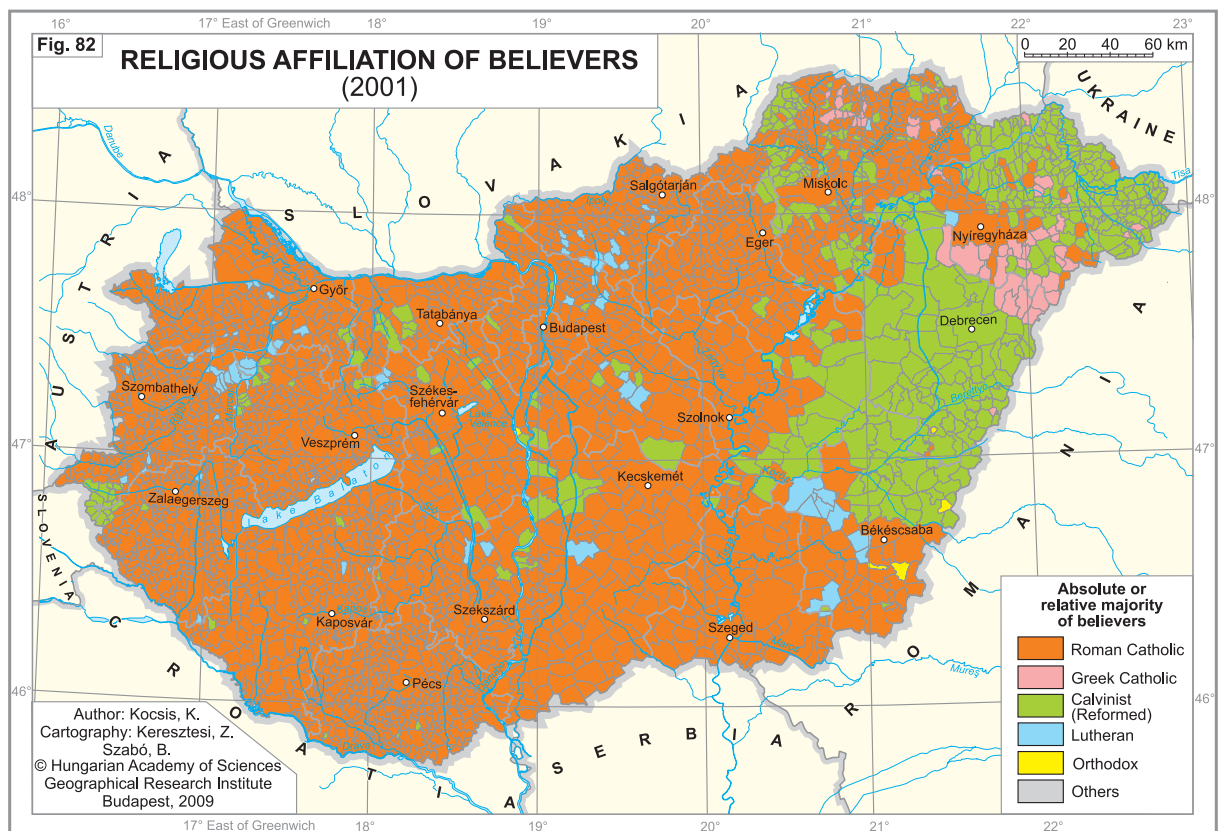
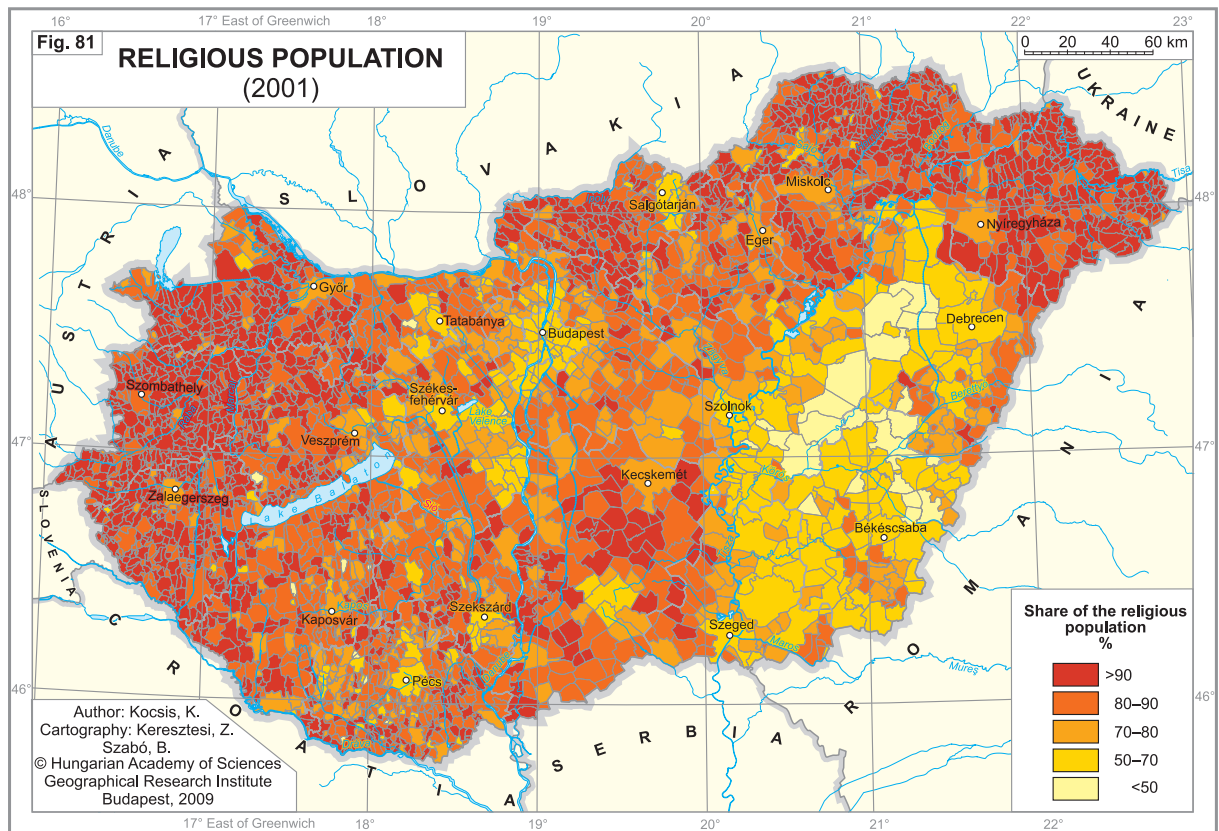
the ratio of Lutherans, Jews and Orthodox decreased considerably. As a reflection of expanding religious pluralisation, the number of followers of small churches rose from 27 thousand to 97 thousand between 1949 and 2001. As a consequence of decades of atheist, anti-clerical ideology, 86.3% of the non-religious population are younger than 50.

The ratio of religious people is roughly two thirds among those under 30, although it is 80 to 90% for those between 50–70 years of age, and above 90% among those older than 70. Based on the rate of live births per 100 married women older than 15, religious people have a higher fertility rate (189) than non-religious ones (179). The non-religious population are more likely to be found in an urban environment (80% of them are urban dwellers), compared to their religious counterpart (60.1%). The rate of secularisation – in addition to Budapest and other big cities – is particularly high in the former regions of heavy industry (e.g. in the vicinities of Dunaújváros, Oroszlány, Tatabánya and Salgótarján), and in the Middle Tiszántúl region where there is a Protestant (Calvinist and Lutheran) majority (Figure 81). In these territo-

ries of the Alföld (Great Hungarian Plain), the village poor became highly receptive to socialist ideology as early as the first half of 20th century and Protestant churches have been unable to hang onto their followers and to curb the process of secularisation during recent decades.

The religious spatial pattern of believers has not altered considerably since 1949, with the exception of urban centres heavily affected by socialist urbanisation and internal migration. Today, out of the 19 counties, 17 have a Roman Catholic majority and 2 of them are dominated by Calvinists. There was a Roman Catholic majority in 127 of the 150 statistical microregions, 2 were dominated by Greek Catholics, 14 by Calvinists, and 7 by a non-religious majority in 2001.

The *Roman Catholics* prevail almost everywhere west of the Tisza River, whereas the *Greek Catholics* dominate the border zone between the counties of Szabolcs and Hajdú and the inner areas of Abaúj (Figure 82). Despite four decades of atheist socialist propaganda, an eager attachment of Catholic believers to their church remains typical of the western half of Transdanubia and (particularly rural) areas of the North Hungarian Mountains (Nógrád and Heves), along with the southern



part of the Alföld. In the post-1989 elections these areas proved to be firm supporters of Christian right-wing parties that championed the concept of the Hungarian nation. The seat of the Hungarian Catholic Church has been Esztergom since the year 1000, and the country's territory is subdivided into 4 archbishop's provinces (Esztergom-Budapest, Kalocsa-Kecskemét, Eger and Veszprém), 12 bishoprics (e.g. Győr, Szombathely, Kaposvár, Pécs, Székesfehérvár, Szeged, Vác and Debrecen-Nyíregyháza) and an abbey of diocesan right (Pannonhalma). The seat of the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church is Hajdúdorog.

Areas of *Calvinist* dominance are focused in the county of Hajdú-Bihar and the north-eastern part of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County. The latter is an outlying region on the upper reaches of the Tisza, bordering with Ukraine, where the attachment of Calvinist believers to their church is very strong, and much stronger than that of the Protestants living in the Middle Tiszántúl

region. The Hungarian Reformed Church is subdivided into 4 church districts (with seats in Debrecen, Miskolc, Budapest and Veszprém). There are two Calvinist universities (in Debrecen and Budapest), and their academies (ancient secondary schools founded in 1531 and 1538) are in Debrecen, Sáropatak and Pápa.

Lutherans form the majority of the population of some tens of (formerly ethnic Slovak) settlements, primarily in counties of Békés, Nógrád and Pest. Their largest congregations live in Budapest, Békéscsaba and Nyíregyháza. There are three Lutheran districts in the country (their seats are Budapest and Győr).

In 2001 a mere 12,871 persons declared a religious affinity with Judaism, but estimates put the actual number of Jews between 64 and 120 thousand. Since 1945 around three-quarters of them live in Budapest and there are smaller communities in Debrecen, Szeged, Miskolc and Pécs.