

**HUNGARIAN AND AUSTRIAN (GERMAN)
ETHNIC MINORITIES AT THE AUSTRO-
HUNGARIAN BORDER REGION**

**MADŽARSKA IN AVSTRIJSKA (NEMŠKA)
MANJŠINA V AVSTRIJSKO-MADŽARSKEM
OBMEJNEM OBMOČJU**

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Abstract

UDC 911.3 : 327.58 (94+439)

Hungarian and Austrian (German) minorities at the Austro-Hungarian border region

The Hungarian and Austrian (German) minorities living in the Austro-Hungarian border area take up a very special place among the minorities of the border regions. They were separated from their motherland not only by the frontier, but also by the boundary of the worldwide confrontation, by the so-called 'iron curtain'. The aim of this paper is to highlight the impact of the social-economic processes which have been taking place since 1945, of the change of the economic-political permeability of the Austro-Hungarian border, and the impact of the rise and fall (1989) of the 'iron curtain' on national minorities. Our aim is to present the geographical situation of the minority settlements, the demographic-social structure and the spacial activity of the local population.

Izveleček

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Madžarska in avstrijska (nemška) manjšina v avstrijsko-madžarskem obmejnem območju

Madžarska in avstrijska (nemška) manjšina vzdolž avstrijsko-madžarske meje zavzemata posebno mesto med narodnimi manjšinami v obmejnih območjih. Od matične dežele jih ni ločevala samo meja, temveč tudi meja konfrontacije svetovnih razsežnosti, t. i. 'železna zavesa'. Namen prispevka je osvetliti vpliv socialno-ekonomskih procesov po 1945, spremembe v gospodarsko-politični prepuštnosti avstrijsko-madžarske meje ter vpliv nastanka in padca (1989) 'železne zavesa' na narodni manjšini. Predstavljen je tudi geografski položaj manjšinskih naselij, demografsko-socialna struktura in prostorska aktivnost domačega prebivalstva.

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The Hungarian and Austrian ethnic minorities in West Pannonia (West Transdanubia), the historic region divided between Austria and Hungary, occupy a unique place among the ethnic minorities of border regions. Their special situation has arisen from the fact that they were separated from the motherland not only by the state border but also by the frontline of the worldwide ideological, political and military confrontation formed gradually from 1945 onwards, which later on was built up to become the 'iron curtain'.

The objective of our study is to outline the influence of the socioeconomic processes after 1945, of the economical-political permeability of the Austro-Hungarian border and the building up and dismantling of the iron curtain, exerted on the ethnic minorities. Besides, we aimed at introducing the present geographical situation of the minority settlements under investigation (Hungarians: Unterwart, Siget; Germans: Vaskeresztes, Pornóapáti) and also the demographical-social structure and the spatial mobility of their inhabitants.

THE AUSTRIAN AND HUNGARIAN ETHNIC MINORITIES OF THE WEST PANNONIAN BORDER REGION IN THE PERIOD AFTER 1945

Following the Second World War, in accordance with the ruling of the Potsdam Conference, the deportation of the ethnic German population was planned in Hungary and as a result, 28,266 people were deported from the West Transdanubian counties between April and June 1946 from the ethnic German population which had not previously escaped. Relative to the data of the 1941 population census the highest proportion of Germans were deported from Sopron County (60.2 %) and the smallest proportion from Vas County (35.2 %) to Germany. From the present territory of the town of Sopron 8,651 ethnic Germans were forced to leave (Z i e l b a u e r, 1989).

As a result of the fear from deportation for years, the persecussions, being held collectively responsible, the discrimination, only 2,597 Transdanubian inhabitants dared to admit German as their mother tongue by the time of the 1949 census (Table 1, Fig. 1). The number of settlements inhabited by a German majority decreased from 21 in 1941 – after the deportations – to 3 (Vaskeresztes, Pornóapáti, Kiszsidány).

The shrinking of the German-speaking region was most conspicuous around Sopron, Szentgotthárd and in the Hungarian part of the Moson plain.

After the war, on the Austrian side of the border, in Burgenland, which was also under Soviet occupation, the former autonomy of the province was reestablished on October 1,

1945. In Hungary, under the direction of the Communist Party which came to power with Soviet backing, the fundamental, communist-Soviet type transformation of the economy and society started (nationalization, state-planned command economy, senseless extensive industrialization, collectivization of the agriculture, total control over life, etc.). At the beginning of the Cold War in the increasingly hostile international situation, the Rákosi-regime technically sealed the Austrian border, thus built up the 'Iron Curtain' and eliminated the former border posts. At the same time a 15 km wide zone along the Austro-Hungarian border which included virtually all settlements of the Transdanubian German, Croatian and Slovene minorities was made a closed region by the regime that could be visited only by permission. Thus the natural interethnic economic and social relationships of the population of West Pannonia reaching beyond the borders which had lasted for centuries, abruptly came to an end. The contacts of the Germans, Croats, Hungarians of Burgenland had been broken with their largest commercial centres (Sopron, Kőszeg, Szombathely). The ethnic-psychological trauma caused by the presence of the 'Iron Curtain' was a similar or an even bigger catastrophe to the population of the region than the economic one. The ethnic Germans in Hungary and the ethnic Hungarians in Burgenland lost their contacts with the linguistic environment of their motherland and there was no possibility for further

Table 1: Change in the number and ratio of the German and Croation minorities in West Hungary (1880–1980) by mother tongue.

Tabela 1: Spreminjanje števila in deleža pripadnikov nemške in hrvaške manjšine na zahodnem Madžarskem (1880–1980) po materinem jeziku.

| Year | Germans | % | Croats | % |
|----------|---------|------|--------|-----|
| 1880 | 71,140 | 15.2 | 10,719 | 2.3 |
| 1910 | 60,965 | 10.4 | 11,606 | 2.0 |
| 1920 | 62,912 | 10.1 | 12,230 | 2.0 |
| 1930 | 54,450 | 8.5 | 9,918 | 1.5 |
| 1941 | 51,205 | 7.7 | 8,696 | 1.3 |
| 1949 | 2,597 | 0.4 | 5,266 | 0.8 |
| 1955* | 13,500 | 2.0 | 8,300 | 1.2 |
| 1960 | 4,300 | 0.6 | 7,100 | 1.0 |
| 1970 | 3,215 | 0.5 | 5,659 | 0.8 |
| 1980 | 2,629 | 0.4 | 5,747 | 0.8 |
| 1980** | 14,000 | 1.2 | 8,200 | 1.1 |
| 1980*** | 17,154 | 2.4 | | |
| 1980**** | 23,325 | 3.3 | 8,103 | 1.1 |

Remarks:

* Report of the Central Statistical Office (KSH, 1955)

** Estimation of the communes

*** Data of the Association of the Germans in Hungary

**** Persons who can speak German resp. Croatian (Census data, 1980)

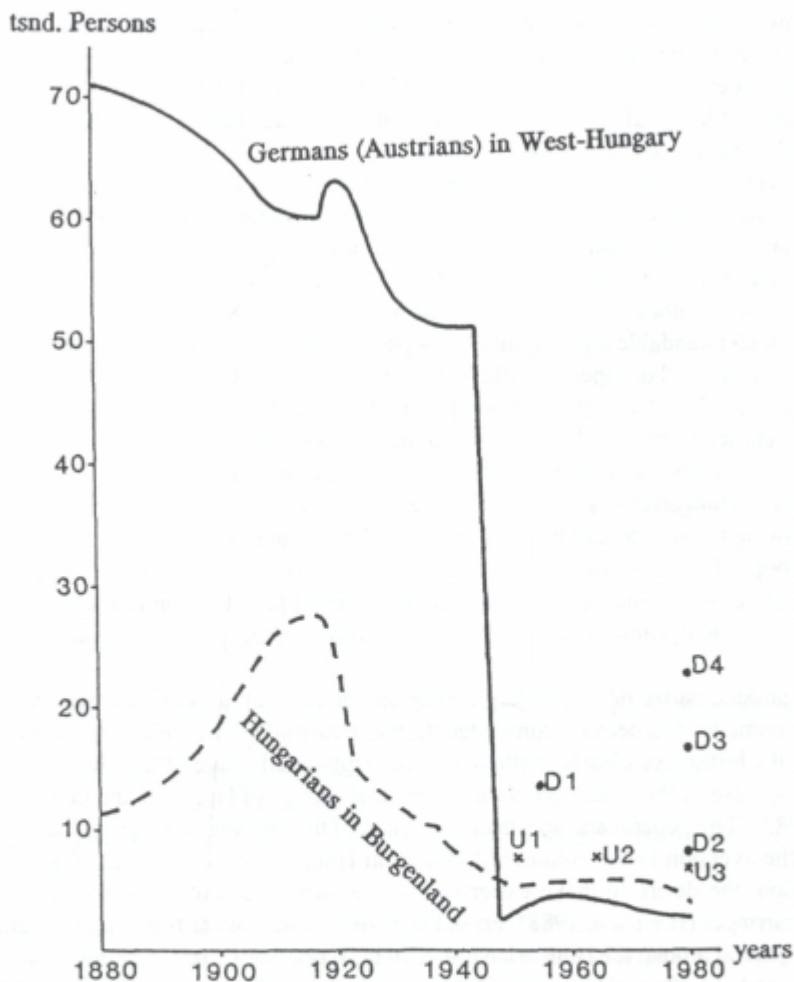


Fig. 1: Change in the number of the German (Austrian) and Hungarian national minorities in West Pannonia (1880–1981).

Slika 1: Spreminjanje števila pripadnikov nemške (avstrijske) in madžarske manjšine v Zahodni Panoniji (1880–1981).

Sources: Censuses; Other data: D1: Central Statistical Office (KSH, 1955, Budapest); D2: Estimation of the commune councils, 1980; D3: Estimation of the Association of the Germans in Hungary; D4: Persons who can speak German; U1: by A. Burghardt (1958); U2: by L. Somogyi (1966); U3: Estimation of the Hungarian Cultural Union in Burgenland (BUKV).

education in their mother tongue. It was similarly difficult for the 9,000 Croats in Western Hungary and the 35,000 Croats in Burgenland to accept their forced separation.

Following the dramatic socioeconomic events, the Austro-Hungarian border became a 3-4 fold faultline by the middle of the twentieth century (1. state border from 1923; 2. language border from 1946; 3. social-political-ideological system border; 4. border separating different levels of economic development, separating agrarian and industrial, 'poor' and 'rich' Europe from the 1950-ies).

The change of political system in Hungary put the Hungarians in Burgenland into a very difficult position because on the one hand, owing to the events in Hungary, the words 'Hungarian' and 'communist' often became synonyms in the eyes of the Western public opinion and on the other hand the Hungarians in Burgenland viewed the motherland increasingly as a symbol of cultural homeland and communism only (H e n k e, 1988). It is therefore understandable that the number of people indicating Hungarian as their first language in Burgenland dropped to half (5,251, Fig. 1, Table 2) compared with the number in 1934 (10,442). 31.5 % of the population which could then be considered as Hungarian (7,669) regarded German as his/her first language. It was rather the population of the former border-guard villages who acknowledged their Hungarian origin (77.3 %), in contrast with the scattered Hungarian population of Burgenland (57.4 %).

Following the signature of the state-treaty of Austria and the departure of the occupying Soviet troops (1955), during the emerging economic boom in Austria, the social and spatial mobility underwent an unprecedented increase in Burgenland and thus also among the local Hungarians. The dynamic social transformation broke up age-old rural, ethnic communities.

Hungarians, partly or completely giving up agricultural activity, left their villages in growing numbers and became commuters to the industrial centres nearby or further away. Leaving the birthplace clearly implied a more emphasized usage of the German language and in the case of the young generation a gradual change of language and culture (S u p p a n, 1983). The general and spectacular decline of the Hungarian language can be attributed to the aversion to the communist system in Hungary, the avoidance of possible discrimination, the desire to make easier progress at school and at work and, of course to mixed marriages (H e n k e, 1988). From the 50-ies, 60-ies onwards having two languages became general among the Hungarian minority in Burgenland, and furthermore, among the generations born after 1945, among public employees and city-dwellers there has been a strong tendency towards having only one language: German. The above mentioned natural assimilation tendencies, in addition to the reduced demographical reproduction lead to the gradual decline in the number of Hungarians there.

At the time of the 1981 census in Austria only 4,147 citizens put down Hungarian as their 'environmental language' (Umgangssprache) so that on the linguistic map of Burgenland in 1981 Hungarians were represented by only a few ever shrinking islands (Fig. 2).

The social structure, spatial mobility, identity, state of language of the ethnic German minority in Western Hungary in many cases were influenced by similar factors in the decades following 1949 as in the case of Hungarians in Burgenland. Due to the collectivization of the agriculture and the explosive growth in the number of industrial workplaces, the

Table 2: Change in the number and ratio of the Hungarian and Croatian minorities in Burgenland (1880–1981).

Tabela 2: Spreminjanje števila in deleža pripadnikov madžarske in hrvaške manjšine na Gradiščanskem (1880–1981).

| Year | Hungarians | % | Croats | % |
|-----------|------------|-----|--------|------|
| 1880* | 11,162 | 4.2 | 42,789 | 16.1 |
| 1910* | 26,225 | 9.0 | 43,633 | 15.0 |
| 1920* | 24,867 | 8.4 | 44,753 | 15.2 |
| 1923** | 15,254 | 5.3 | 42,011 | 14.7 |
| 1934* | 10,442 | 3.5 | 40,500 | 13.5 |
| 1951** | 5,251 | 1.9 | 30,599 | 11.1 |
| 1951*** | 7,669 | 2.8 | 34,427 | 12.6 |
| 1961**** | 5,642 | 2.1 | 28,126 | 10.4 |
| 1964***** | 7,586 | 2.3 | | |
| 1971**** | 5,673 | 2.1 | 24,526 | 9.0 |
| 1981**** | 4,147 | 1.5 | 18,762 | 7.0 |
| 1981***** | 7,000 | 2.5 | 32,000 | 11.9 |

Remarks:

- * Mother tongue (Hungarian censuses)
- ** Linguistical affiliation (Austrian censuses)
- *** With the German-Hungarian and with the German-Croatian categories (B u r g - h a r d t, 1958)
- **** Environmental language ('Umgangssprache', Austrian censuses)
- ***** By own surveying of L. S o m o g y i (1966)
- ***** Estimation of the BUKV (Oberwart) and the visitors of the masses in Croatian language

population of the German villages, which anyway had fallen apart after the deportations abroad and within the country in 1946, migrated to mining and industrial regions en masse. Apart from compulsive economic reasons another factor in leaving the birthplace, especially for the young generation, was that the German settlements were situated almost exclusively in the shadow of the 'Iron Curtain', in the 15 km wide special zone forbidden for nonlocals (Alsószőlőnk, Rábafüzes, Nemesmedves, Pornóapáti, Vaskersztes, Brennergébánya, Ágfalva, Fertőrákos, etc.; Fig. 2).

Sopron, which was home to the largest town-dwelling German community in Western Hungary and which reached deeply into Austria and thus was encircled by the Iron Curtain, was sentenced to stagnation and decline.

This double isolation both from the west and the east lasting for four decades affected the society of German villages in both a 'negative' and a 'positive' manner. The living conditions repulsive to the young lead to the acceleration of the aging and decline of the

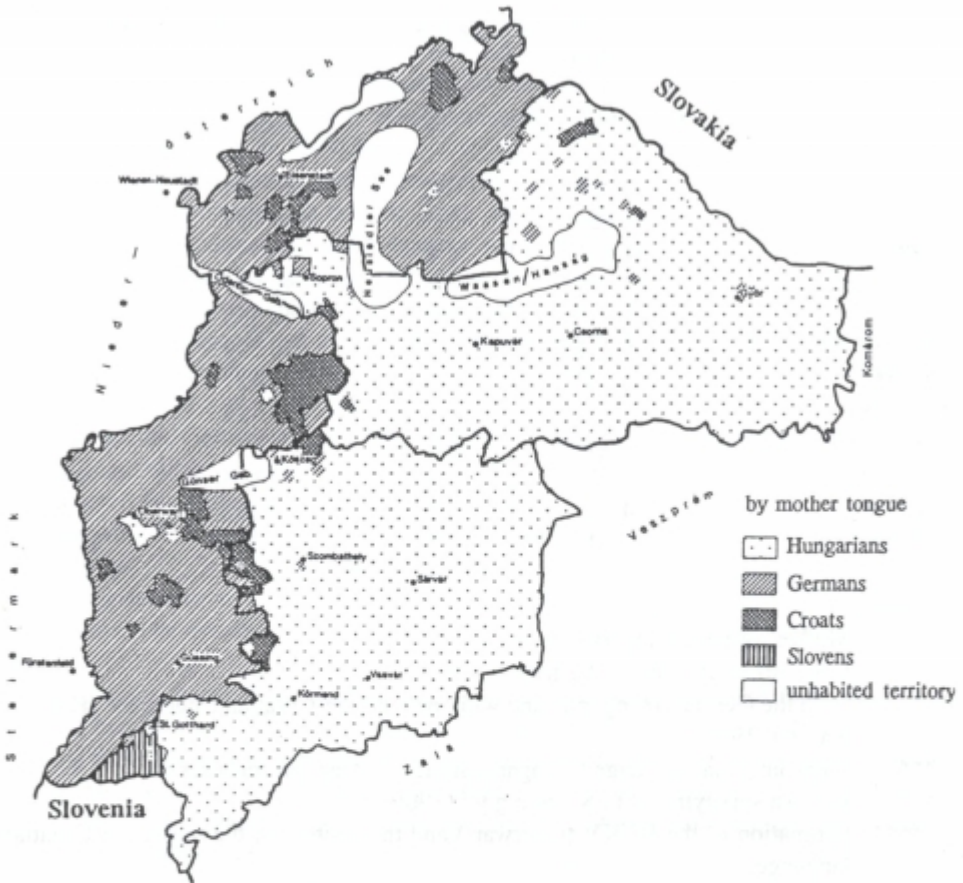


Fig. 2: Linguistic map of West Pannonia (Burgenland and West Hungary; 1980/1981).
 Slika 2: Lingvistična karta Zahodne Panonije (Gradišćansko in zahodna Mađarska; 1980/81).

local society on the one hand, and conserved the ethnic structure formed after the deportations, slowing down, making difficult the moving in of others, i. e. mainly Hungarians. Despite this, due to natural assimilation, aging, declining natural reproduction, the ethnic German population in the two West Transdanubian counties between the censuses of 1960 and 1980 decreased at a similar rate to the Hungarian population in Burgenland. Clearly, the data recorded during censuses do not reflect the real number of the given ethnic minority for various reasons, either in Austria or in Hungary. The number of ethnic Germans in West Transdanubia according to the latest data (1980) lies somewhere between 2,629 (data from the census) and 17,154 (estimated number by the Association of Germans in Hungary).

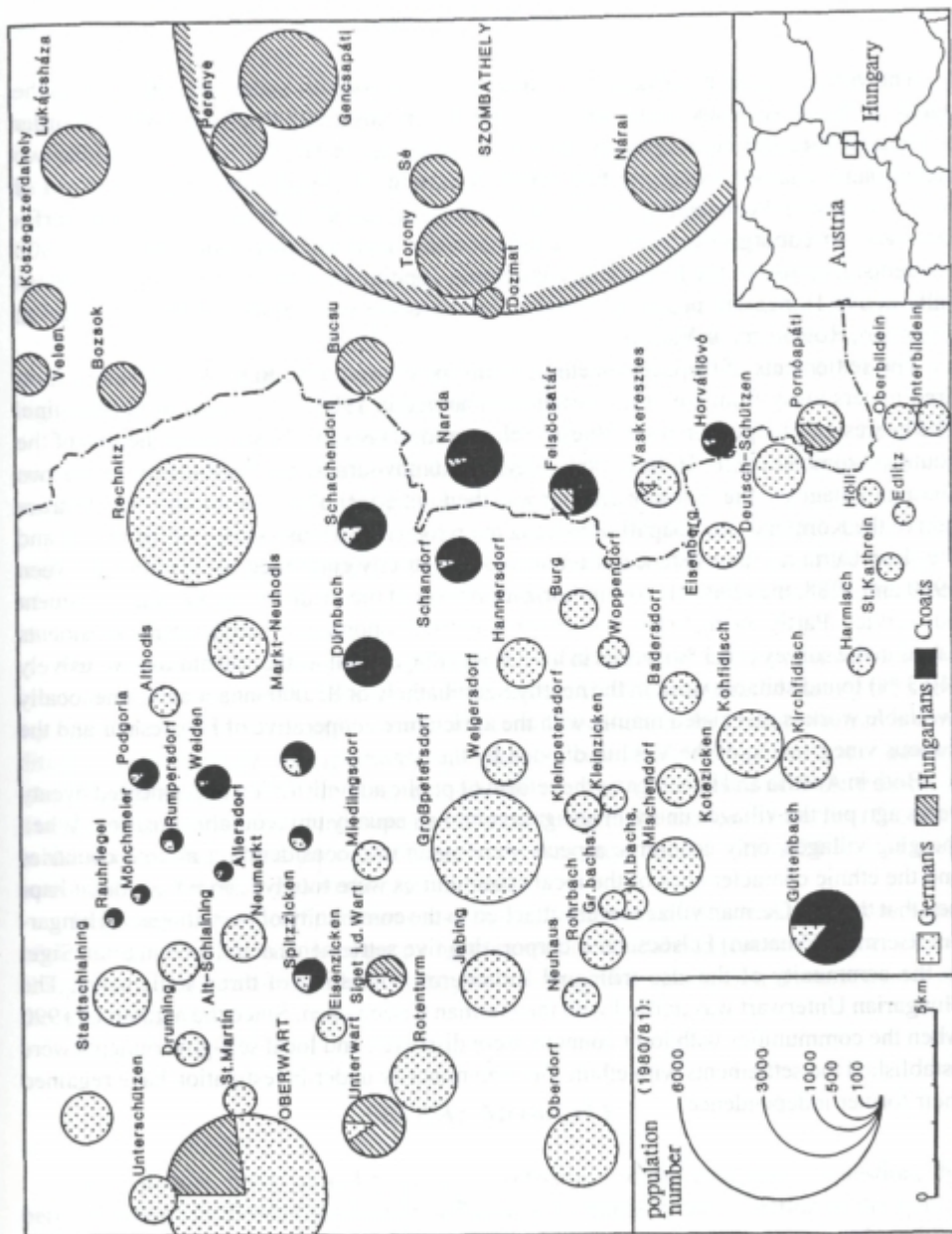


Fig 3: Border region between Oberwart and Szombathely.

Slika 3: Obmejno območje med Oberwartom in Szombathelyjem.

THE SITUATION OF THE MINORITY SETTLEMENTS UNDER INVESTIGATION

The villages under investigation (Vaskeresztes, Pornóapáti, Unterwart, Siget) lie in the valley of the Pinka brook. Unterwart and Siget are in Austria 15 to 17 km from the border as the crow flies and 21 to 23 km on the road No. 63 (Fig. 3). The traffic situation of the two Hungarian villages is extremely favourable because of the proximity of the main road of South Burgenland connecting Szombathely, Oberwart and Friedberg, the Schachendorf – Oberwart–Friedburg railway line (1-2 km) and the district centre, Oberwart with 6,000 residents. Because of the favourable commuting conditions, only 40.4 % of the economically active Hungarian population works locally, while the majority earn their bread in Oberwart, Rotenturm or Vienna.

The settlements of the German ethnic minority are right next to the border, a few hundred meters away from the 'Iron Curtain' dismantled in 1988. They have no railway line. The nearest border post on road (Bucsu–Schachendorf) is 12 to 16 km away, the seat of the county, Szombathely, is 16 to 20 km away. The unfavourable traffic situation of the two German villages in the past few decades was the joint effect of several factors: the destruction of the Körmend–Pornóapáti–Rechnitz main road in the Pinka valley by the border and the 'Iron Curtain', the existence of the forbidden, strictly controlled border zone between 1950 and 1988, the relatively low motorization level of the local population, the infrequent bus service. Partly owing to this, the majority of the economically active German residents asked in the survey (56.1 %) works in his native village whereas the rest almost exclusively (40.3 %) found suitable work in the nearby Szombathely of 85,000 inhabitants. The locally available work is associated mainly with the agriculture cooperative of Felsőcsatár and the famous vinegrowing of the Vas hill divided by the border.

Both in Austria and in Hungary, the reform of public administration implemented twenty years ago put the villages under investigation into an equally unfavourable position. When merging villages, only economic aspects were taken into consideration in both countries and the ethnic characteristics of the local communities were totally ignored. So did it happen that the two German villages were attached to the community of the trilingual (Hungarian, German, Croatian) Felsőcsatár incorporating five settlements and the Hungarian Siget to the community of the also trilingual Rotenturm, consisting of three settlements. The Hungarian Unterwart was unified with the German Eisenzicken. Since the autumn of 1990 when the communities with joint councils were dissolved and local self-governments were established the settlements with ethnic German minority under investigation have regained their former independence.

THE DEMOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF THE MINORITY POPULATION

In the West Pannonian region the largest communities of the Hungarian and German minorities live in the towns (Germans: Sopron, Mosonmagyaróvár, Győr, Kőszeg, Szombathely; Hungarians: Oberwart, Oberpullendorf). The largest rural communities where the respective ethnicities kept their absolute majority are represented by the model settlements chosen by themselves (Vaskeresztes, Pornóapáti and Unterwart, Siget).

In connection with the large-scale spatial and social mobility arising in the 1950-ies and 60-ies, due to the migration of the young generations, gradual change of language, assimilation and decreasing birth rate both ethnic groups have grown significantly older by today.

The characteristics of the distribution of marital status among the ethnicities are related to the older age-structure, the lower than average proportion of singles (20 %) and the higher than average proportion of widows (13-18 %).

The distribution of the economic activities of the population reflects not only the differences in the age structure but also the differences in the systems of social insurance and pension between Austria and Hungary. It is conspicuous that for both ethnic groups the proportion of pensioners among the 'inactive earners' is higher than in the surrounding region and that much fewer people receive pension among the Hungarians in Burgenland, who are on average more advanced in age than among the German minority on the Hungarian side of the border.

The differences in social mobility in the past few decades are also well reflected by the breakdown of active earners by sectors of the economy. This restructured mainly the society of the Hungarian ethnic group living in a central location under favourable traffic conditions. The percentage of people working in the service sector (46.9 %), and that of administrative employees, clerks (35.7 %) exceeds the average of the whole of West Pannonia. The social transformation of the German minority living in the shadow of the 'Iron Curtain', in the border zone with a poor selection of jobs was more modest. Thus 28.1 % of their active earners are still employed in agriculture.

There are system-specific features also in the differences of education at the two sides of the border. The percentage of people with general secondary education is higher on the Hungarian side while those with secondary education giving specialist training is higher on the Austrian side.

SPATIAL MOBILITY

The economic, political and touristic attractiveness of the countries in question, the permeability of the border, profoundly influences the intensity and direction of the spatial mobility of the ethnic groups living in the border zone. The Austro-Hungarian border region has many special characteristics in this regard as well. Prior to the dismantling of the 'Iron Curtain', the opening of the Austro-Hungarian border in 1988, for four decades there were significant differences between the border-crossing, external, spatial mobilities of the two

ethnic groups under investigation, especially after the abolishment of the obligatory visa system between Austria and Hungary in 1978. The border-crossing possibilities of the ethnic Germans living on the Hungarian side of the border towards Austria, similarly to any other Hungarian citizen, were rather limited in contrast to the possibilities of the Austrian citizens. The Hungarians in Burgenland were motivated by similar reasons to other Austrian citizens to travel to Hungary:

1. Attractive factors: huge, favourable differences between the Austrian and the Hungarian prices (services and goods of relatively acceptable quality at an extremely low price), geographical proximity, friends, relatives.

2. Repulsive factors: the political system and the related bureaucracy, the much lower standards in the nationalized units of the service sector (stores, shops, restaurants, hotels etc.) than in Austria.

From 1988 onward when the border was opened, especially since the drastic changes in the political system of Hungary, the situation has fundamentally changed. 80 % of ethnic Germans on the Hungarian side and 50.6 % of ethnic Hungarians on the Austrian side felt the effects of the events in his/her private life. Since then 38.6 % of the German minority and 14.1 % of the Hungarian minority travel more often to the other country. Clearly, the welcome changes revolutionized primarily the informal contacts between the German-Austrian minority and Austria, since 84.5 % of the Hungarians in Burgenland visits Hungary with the same frequency as before 1988.

The majority of the surveyed members of both ethnic groups (Hungarians 67.8 %, Germans 97.8 %) has relations or friends in the neighbouring ('mother') country. The groups having the highest proportion of such contacts beyond the border were those between the age of 14–30 (Germans 100 %, Hungarians 87.5 %) and the public employees (Germans 100 %, Hungarians 78.6 %). Similarly to the intensity of the above mentioned contacts, the spatial mobility indicator of the ethnic German inhabitants of the villages along the border on the Hungarian side (84.2 %) far exceeds the similar indicator of the inhabitants of the Hungarian villages in Burgenland, approximately 22 km from the border (62 %). At the same time huge differences are experienced in the range of spacial activity between the two ethnic groups. The range of activity of the Hungarian ethnic group, mainly consisting of public employees and skilled workers, is far larger (on average 77.5 km) than that of the mainly peasant-worker German minority (53.2 km). The Hungarians primarily visit Szombathely, Lake Balaton and the capital, Budapest, while the German minority visits the villages on the other side of the border (Eisenberg, Deutsch Schützen, Rechnitz, Höll, Bildein, etc.) and the shopping centre of the region, Oberwart (Fig. 4).

The ethnic Hungarians purpose is primarily touristic (34 %) and visiting people (31.4 %) when they cross the border, whereas that of the ethnic Germans is mainly visiting relatives (38.5 %) and shopping (27.9 %).

When visiting, the ethnic Hungarians visit mainly their friends and relatives living in Szombathely (55.2 %) and Budapest (12 %) while the ethnic Germans mainly visit their relatives living in the neighbouring villages across the border (Deutsch Schützen, 25.7 %, Eisenberg, 21.4 %).

For excursions, the Hungarians mainly travel to Lake Balaton (45.3 %) and Szombathely (32 %) and the Germans to Mariazell, a place of pilgrimage, and to Oberwart. But in the past five years a significant percentage of the latter went to Vienna (16.1 %) and to Salzburg (11.5 %) as well.

On the two sides of the border, Szombathely (90 %) and Oberwart (76 %) are considered to be the most important shopping centres. As far as cultural events are concerned, the most attractive places for the Hungarians are the towns near the border (Szombathely, 50 %, and Kőszeg, 21.4 %) and for the Germans the neighbouring Austrian villages (Deutsch Schützen, Bildein, Höll).

Following the well-known political changes in Hungary, the assumed radical moderation of the still existing vast differences between the socioeconomic systems of the two countries, the revival of the inter-border contacts, border-posts, traffic lines destroyed during the cold war would greatly contribute to the stabilization of the bilinguality of the Hungarian and German ethnic groups with their increased spatial activity and to the minimization of their natural assimilation. This is particularly important because we think that the population living at the border region, in spite of their relatively small numbers, may play an increasingly important intermediary role in the inter-border Austro-Hungarian relations on a local-mezonegional level due to their bilinguality and double culture.



Fig. 4: Number of the Austro-Hungarian frontier crossing persons from the investigated minority settlements and their destinations in the neighbouring country (1985-1990).
Slika 4: Število oseb, ki so prečkale avstrijsko-madžarsko mejo s proučevanih naselij, in njihovi cilji v sosednji državi (1985-1990).

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MADŽARSKA IN AVSTRIJSKA (NEMŠKA) MANJŠINA V AVSTRIJSKO-MADŽARSKEM OBMEJNEM OBMOČJU

Povzetek

Avstrijska in nemška manjšina v Zahodni Panoniji po 1945

Po koncu druge svetovne vojne so v skladu s sklepi postdamske konference med aprilom in junijem 1946 izselili 28 266 Nemcev iz transdanubijskih županij. Glede na podatke popisa prebivalstva 1941 so največ Nemcev deportirali iz mesta Sopron (8651; Z i e l b a u e r, 1989). Zaradi strahu pred deportacijami in diskriminacije si prebivalci ob popisu 1949 niso upali navesti nemščine kot materni jezik (slika 1), število naselij z večinskim nemškim

prebivalstvom pa se je zmanjšalo z 21 v letu 1941 na 3 (Vaskeresztes, Pornóapáti, Kiszidány).

Na začetku hladne vojne je Rákosijev komunistični režim zapečatil madžarsko-avstrijsko mejo, zaprl nekdanje mejne prehode ter razglasil 15 km širok obmejni varnostni pas, v katerem so ležala skoraj vsa naselja z nemško, hrvaško in slovensko govorečo manjšino, s čimer so se prekinile stoletne medetnične gospodarske in socialne povezave med prebivalstvom Zahodne Panonije. Nemci, Hrvati in Madžari na Gradiščanskem so bili odrezani od največjih gospodarskih središč (Sopron, Kőszeg, Szombathely), še hujša pa je bila etnično-psihološka travma, ki jo je povzročila 'železna zavesa'. Nemška manjšina na Madžarskem in madžarska v Avstriji sta izgubili stike z matičnima narodoma, kar jim je preprečilo nadaljnje izobraževanje v maternem jeziku.

Sprememba političnega sistema na Madžarskem je postavila Madžare na Gradiščanskem v težak položaj, ker sta zaradi dogodkov na Madžarskem postali besedi 'Madžar' in 'komunist' sinonima v očeh zahodnega javnega mnenja, Madžari pa so imeli svojo matično deželo vse bolj le za simbol kulturne domovine in komunizma (H e n k e, 1988). Razumljivo je, da se je število Madžarov, ki so navedli madžarščino kot svoj prvi jezik, prepolovilo z 10 442 v letu 1934 na 5251 (slika 1, tabela 2).

Po podpisu avstrijske državne pogodbe in odhodu sovjetskih okupacijskih sil (1955) se je v času gospodarskega razcveta v Avstriji močno povečala tudi socialna in prostorska mobilnost Madžarov na Gradiščanskem, kar je razbilo stare ruralne etnične skupnosti. Madžari so deloma ali v celoti opustili kmetijstvo in postali dnevni migranti v bližnja ali bolj oddaljena industrijska središča. To je stopnjevalo uporabo nemškega jezika in, zlasti pri mlajši generaciji, postopno zamenjavo jezika in kulture (S u p p a n, 1983). Dvojezičnost je postala splošno razširjena, med generacijo, rojeno po 1945, javnimi uslužbenci in meščani pa je bila močna težnja k enojezičnosti – nemščini – kar je poleg zmanjšane demografske reprodukcije povzročilo upad števila Madžarov. Po popisu 1981 je samo 4147 državljanov navedlo madžarščino kot pogovorni jezik (Umgangssprache).

Na nemško manjšino na Zahodnem Madžarskem so po 1949 vplivali podobni dejavniki. Zaradi kolektivizacije kmetijstva in eksplozivnega povečanja delovnih mest v industriji se je prebivalstvo iz nemških vasi množično izselilo v rudarska in industrijska središča, tudi zato, ker so ležala vsa nemška naselja v zaprti obmejni coni (slika 2). Ta dvojna izoliranost nemških vasi z zahodne in vzhodne strani je po eni strani povzročila staranje in upad prebivalstva, po drugi strani pa ohranila etnično strukturo vasi, ker je bilo otežkočeno tudi priseljevanje Madžarov. Kljub temu se je število Nemcev v transdanubijskem delu Madžarske zmanjšalo na 2629 (uradni podatki popisa 1980) oziroma 17 154 (ocena Nemške zveze na Madžarskem).

Razmere v proučevanih manjšinskih naseljih

Proučevane vasi (Vaskeresztes, Pornóapáti, Unterwart in Siget) ležijo v dolini potoka Pinka, slednji dve v Avstriji v ugodni prometni legi vzdolž ceste št. 63 (slika 3). Zaradi ugodne prometne lege je samo 40,4 % zaposlenih v domačem kraju, ostali pa v Oberwartu, Rotenturmu in na Dunaju. Nemški naselji ležita le nekaj sto metrov vstran od železne zaves.

Najbližji cestni mejni prehod je 12-16 km v stran (Bucsú-Schachendorf). Ta neugoden prometni položaj vasi je posledica odstranitve ceste Kőrmend-Pornóapáti-Rechnitz po dolini Pinke, strogo nadzorovanega obmejnega območja 1950-1988, nizke motoriziranosti prebivalstva ter slabih avtobusnih zvez. Po anketi dela večina nemško govorečega aktivnega prebivalstva v domači vasi (56,1 %), vsi ostali pa v 16-20 km oddaljenem Szombathelyu.

Upravna reforma je bila za nemško prebivalstvo zelo neugodna, saj so jih priključili trojezični (madžarsko-nemško-hrvaški) občini Felsőcsatár, madžarski Siget v Avstriji pa prav tako trojezični občini Rotenturm. Po ponovni vzpostavitvi lokalne samouprave (1990) so dobila naselja z nemško manjšino svojo nekdanjo samostojnost.

Demografske in socialne razmere manjšinskega prebivalsta

Največje skupnosti madžarske in nemške manjšine živijo v mestih (Nemci v Sopronu, Mosonmagyaróváru, Győru, Kőszegu, Szombathelyu, Madžari v Oberwartu in Oberpuldendorfu). Največje agrarne skupnosti živijo v proučevanih naseljih, ki so jih izbrali sami.

Zaradi navedenih vzrokov so značilne postopne jezikovne spremembe, asimilacija in upad naravnega prirastka ter staranje prebivalstva v obeh skupnostih. Ekonomska struktura prebivalstva kaže razlike v starostni strukturi ter v sistemu socialnega in pokojninskega zavarovanja na obeh straneh meje. V obeh etničnih skupinah je nadpovprečni delež upokoencev. Očitne so tudi razlike v socialni mobilnosti: v madžarski skupnosti je bilo 46,9 % zaposlenih v storitvenih dejavnostih in 35,7 % v javni upravi, medtem ko je v nemški etnični skupnosti 28,1 % aktivnega prebivalstva še vedno zaposlenega v kmetijstvu.

Pred odstranitvijo železne zavese so bile velike razlike v prehajanju meje ter prostorski mobilnosti obeh etničnih skupnosti, saj so lahko avstrijski državljani prosto potovali, zlasti po ukinitvi viz med državama (1978), medtem ko so bile možnosti madžarskih državljanov omejene. Po odprtju meje 1988 so se razmere korenito spremenile. Po anketi je 80 % Nemcev na madžarski strani in 50,6 % Madžarov na avstrijski strani čutilo vpliv sprememb na zasebno življenje. Odtlej potuje v matično deželo pogosteje 38,6 % Nemcev in 14,1 % Madžarov.

Večina anketiranih pripadnikov obeh etničnih skupnosti (Madžari 67,8 %, Nemci 97,8 %) ima stike z znanci iz sosednje države. Najvišji delež je v starostni skupni 14-30 let (Nemci 100 %, Madžari 87,5 %) in med javnimi uslužbenci (Nemci 100 %, Madžari 78,6 %). Tudi akcijski radij madžarske etnične skupnosti (pretežno uslužbenci in kvalificirani delavci) je večji (77,5 km) kot v nemški skupnosti (večinoma kmetijski delavci; 53,2 km). Madžari večinoma obiskujejo Szombathely, Blatno jezero in Budimpešto, Nemci pa vasi na drugi strani meje ter nakupovalno središče Oberwart (slika 4).

Po velikih političnih spremembah na Madžarskem še vedno obstajajo velike razlike v socialno-ekonomskih sistemih obeh držav, vendar pa oživitev prekomejnih stikov, mejnih prehodov in prometnih zvez veliko prispevajo k stabilizaciji dvojezičnosti med madžarsko in nemško etnično skupnostjo ter s povečano prostorsko mobilnostjo zmanjšujejo njihovo naravno asimilacijo. To je še zlasti pomembno, ker menimo, da lahko manjšini na obeh straneh meje kljub majhnemu številu igrata vse pomembnejšo posredniško vlogo v avstrijsko-madžarskih odnosih na lokalnem in mezoregionalnem nivoju.