

Changes in the population and ethnic structure in the towns of Székely Land between 1910 and 2011

Tibor Elekes

University of Miskolc,
Hungary
E-mail: ecoeti@uni-miskolc.hu

Ferenc Szilágyi

Partium Christian University,
Romania
E-mail: ferenc.szilagyi@partium.ro

The Székelys live in South-Eastern Transylvania, speak the Hungarian language and form a special group and ethnic bloc of the Hungarians. From 1910 till the present day, they have experienced several border and regime changes. Until the Trianon Peace Treaty, Székely Land, with an area of 12,500 km², was Hungary's easternmost territory under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was a part of Great Romania between the two World Wars. From 1940 to 1944, it became once again a part of Hungary. From World War II to 1989, it belonged to communist Romania. From 1990 to the present day, it has remained a part of a slowly democratising Romania, which is finding its way back to the market economy. The economic and social processes and border changes witnessed over the course of 100 years significantly altered Transylvania's demography, and Székely Land was similarly affected. The social, ethnic, and denominational structure developed during the historical periods and has been marked by border changes. The most powerful changes occurred in the period between 1945 and 1989. The demographic data of the most significant towns in Székely Land are a good illustration of the national tendencies and local peculiarities of the studied processes.

Keywords:

Székely Land,
towns,
'balancing' of the ethnic structure

Introduction

Székely Land in southeastern Transylvania is a historical and ethnographical area that covers mostly the eastern Carpathians and a small part in the Transylvanian Basin (Figure 1). Medieval Latin sources refer to this area of 12, 500 km² as Terra Sicularum. It is also referred to as Szeklerland in German, Ținutul Secuiesc or Secuime in Romanian, and Székely Land or Szeklerland in English (Elekes 2016).

The settlement of the militant, border-protecting ethnic group that served in the armies of the Hungarian kings and later on the Transylvanian princes in Székely Land began in the mid-12th century and ended by the end of the 13th century. The

Székelys received tax exemptions and privileges for their military services, they organised the military service and socio-economic life in Székely Land for centuries, in accordance with their own laws (Köpeczi 1993, Bereznay 2011, Egyed 2016). Even today, the Székelys, who speak Hungarian and form a special group of Hungarians, can be seen upholding their special customs and traditions. The century-old processes have defined and established today's settlement network.

Figure 1

Geographical position of Székely Land



Methods

This study used the official census data (Data of Hungarian census in 1910, 1941, Romanian census 1930, 1956–2011), the database of statistical offices (The National Statistical Institute in Romania, insse.ro, statisztikak.erdelystat.ro, and studies by experts (Varga 1998, Kocsis et al. 2006, 2015, Demeter 2020).

According to the current administration, the demographic data of the towns (1910-2011) represent the combined population of the towns and the attached villages. Censuses between the World Wars counted the Hungarian Greek Catholics and the Orthodox in Transylvania as Romanians, while Hungarian-speaking Jews, Gypsies, and other nationalities were not counted among the Hungarian population (Varga 1998, Kocsis et al. 2006).

We used the final data of the 2011 Romanian census. As per the preliminary census data, 19,043,767 inhabitants were registered in Romania. With more than

1 million people added from the population registers, the country has a population of 20,121,641. Consequently, according to the official census, the nationality of 378,298 people in Transylvania remains unknown (recensamantromania.ro).

In the course of our study, we used publications on the population processes in Romania, Transylvania, and Székely Land; on the results of the census; and on the population forecast of Hungarians in Romania (Varga 1998, Kocsis et al. 2006, 2015, Kiss–Csata 2016, Péti–Szabó 2016, Ghețău 2020, Péti et al. 2020, Veres 2020).

Today's town network of the Székely Land

Of the oldest surviving documents, in the papal tithe list written between 1332 and 1337, 1/3 of the settlement system of today's Székely Land was mentioned as a tax-paying parish. One parish may have had several villages. Hence, the number of settlements could have been higher. Approximately 440 settlements can be identified according to the military census in 1567 in the Székely Land. Documents from that time already confirmed the existence of the vast majority of today's more than 500 settlements of the territory. Most mountain- and sporadic villages known today were created in the 18th and 20th centuries (Elekes 2016).

The market towns (oppidum) were organised in the central parts of the micro-regions and later in the traditional administrative units and seats. Subsequently, for centuries, they organised and managed the military, ecclesiastical, social, economic, and cultural life of their area (Balogh 1993).

In the 15th century, Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureș, Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, Székelyudvarhely/Odorhei Secuiesc, Kézdivásárhely/Târgu Secuiesc, Székelykeresztúr/Cristuru Secuiesc; in the 16th century, Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc, Szentegyháza/Vlăhița, Nyárádszereda/Miercurea Nirajului; and in the early 17th century, Gyergyószentmiklós/Gheorgheni appeared as market towns in the documents available from that time. The most significant town, Marosvásárhely, functioned from 1616 to 1876 as a free royal town.

In the slowly industrialised, progressing population of the conservative, traditional Székely Land, the role of Marosvásárhely, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Székelyudvarhely, and Csíkszereda strengthened. The smaller, but significant towns included Kézdivásárhely and Gyergyószentmiklós.

To this day, this type of urban settlement system forms the backbone of the Székely Land town network. Gyergyószentmiklós lost its urban role at the beginning of the dualism period, and then in 1907 it regained its role. Székelykeresztúr and Szentegyháza lost their urban status during the time of dualism and regained it after 1950 due to their growing industrial role under the Romanian communist regime.

In the latter half of the communist time, Szováta/Sovata, Kovászna/Covasna, Borszék/Borsec, Tusnádfürdő/Băile Tușnad were counted among the small towns,

based on their tourism-related revaluation; Balánbánya/Bălan based on its mining, Barót/Baraolt based on its mining and industrial contribution, and Bodzaforduló/Întorsura Buzăului based on its industrial contribution.

After 1990, Nyáradszereda/Miercurea Nirajului regained its urban rank, lost during the dualism, Erdőszentgyörgy /Sângeorgiu de Pădure and Nyárádtő/Ungheeni also became towns.

The largest city (a settlement with more than 100,000 inhabitants) in today's Székely Land is Marosvásárhely, with a population of 134,000 as of 2011. It served as the regional centre from 1950 to 1968, and it continues to serve as the seat of Maros/Mureş County. Regarding population as well as economic and social importance, it is followed by Sepsiszentgyörgy, the centre of the historical Háromszék (Three seats), serving as the seat of Kovászna/Covasna County (56,000 inhabitants) since 1968. The third most populous town is Csíkszereda, the seat of Hargita/Harghita County, which includes the Csík-, Gyergyó-, Kászón-, and Udvarhely seats, with 39,000 people. Its socio-economic importance is closely matched by Székelyudvarhely/Odorheiu Secuiesc, with a population of 34,000. The four listed towns as well as Kézdivásárhely and Gyergyószentmiklós, with a population of 18,000, are considered municipalities (cities with county status) (insse.ro).

Szováta and Kovászna, with a population of 10-10,000 and the 10 small towns with a smaller population (Székelykeresztúr, Barót, Szentegyháza, Nyárádtő, Bodzaforduló, Balánbánya, Nyáradszereda, Erdőszentgyörgy, Borszék, and Tusnádfürdő) exhibit strong rural character.

Traditionally, the proportion of urban dwellers in the historical Székely Land remained below the Transylvanian and Romanian average. In 2011, 42.6% of the total population lived in towns in Hargita County, 47.6% in Kovászna County, 50.2% in Maros County, which also includes Maros seat in Székely Land; the Romanian average was 52.8% (insse.ro).

Romania, Transylvania, Székely Land – changes in population and ethnic structure

Between 1912 and 1990, the population of Romania increased by 10.4 million (81.7%) (Table 1). Between 1910 and 1990, the population of the 103,000 km² area of Transylvania, which became part of Romania after the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920, increased from 5.2 to 8.0 million (53.8%) (insse.ro). The regions of Romania outside the Carpathians significantly contributed to the increase in number.

Table 1

Changes in the total, urban, and rural population of Romania

Year	Total population of Romania	Urban population		Rural population	
		number	%	number	%
1912	12,768,399	2,079,860	16.3	10,688,539	83.7
1930	14,280,729	3,051,253	21.4	11,229,476	68.6
1948	15,872,624	3,713,139	23.4	12,159,485	76.6
1956	17,489,540	5,474,264	31.3	12,015,186	68.7
1966	19,103,163	7,305,714	38.2	11,797,449	61.8
1977	21,559,910	9,395,729	43.6	12,164,181	56.4
1983	22,553,074	11,054,179	49.0	11,498,895	51.0
1990	23,206,720	12,608,844	54.3	10,597,876	45.7
1992	22,810,035	12,391,819	54.3	10,418,216	45.7
2002	21,698,181	11,436,736	52.7	10,261,445	47.3
2011	20,121,641 19,043,767 ^{a)}	10,054,000	52.8	8,989,000	47.2
2020	19,318,000				

a) Preliminary data of the 2011 Census.

Source: insse.ro/cms/ro.

The World Wars disrupted the growth of the first half of the 20th century. The number of births decreased in the decade after World War II. After 1966, the Abortion Act ensured a high birth rate. Population growth lasted until 1990. After 1990, population loss was typical. In the 3 decades after 1990, due to emigration and natural decline, Romania's population decreased by 3.9 million (16.7%); in Transylvania, the loss of more than 1.2 million (15%) between 1990 and 2011 was lower than the national average. This can be explained by positive interregional migration and lower emigration in Transylvania, having traditionally a population growth rate below the national average. National processes prevailed in Székely Land as well, but in general, their intensity and strength were milder than the national average.

In Transylvania, the proportion of Romanians within the total population increased from 53.8% to 74.8% over 100 years, while the proportion of Hungarians decreased from 31.6% to 19.0% (Table 2, Figure 2).

Table 2

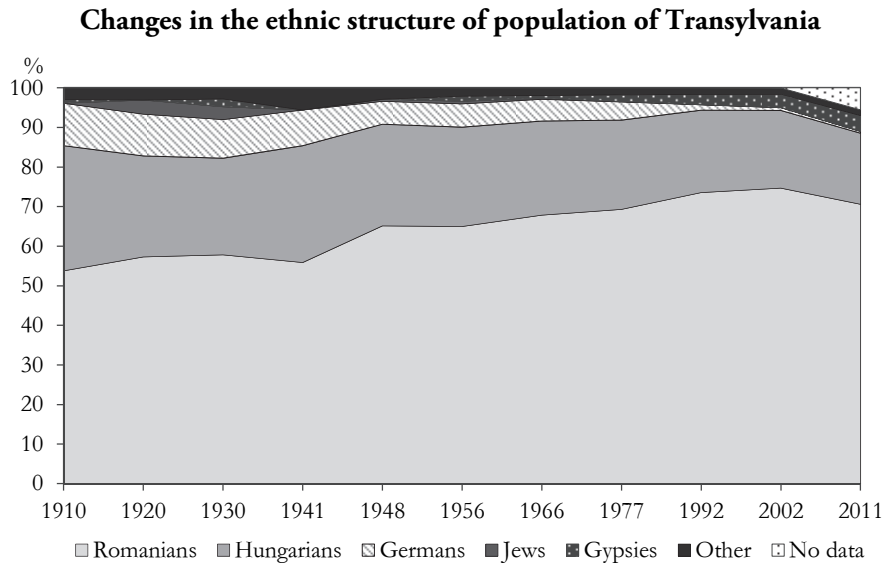
Changes in the ethnic structure of population of Transylvania

Year	Total population	Romanians		Hungarians		Germans	
		number	%	number	%	number	%
1910	5,260,181	2,829,351	53.8	1,663,774	31.6	563,416	10.7
1920	5,114,124	2,930,120	57.3	1,305,753	25.5	539,427	10.5
1930	5,549,806	3,208,767	57.8	1,353,288	24.4	544,278	9.1
1941	5,912,413	3,304,063	55.9	1,744,179	29.5	535,359	9.0
1948	5,761,127	3,752,269	65.1	1,481,903	25.7	332,066	5.8
1956	6,218,427	4,041,156	65.0	1,558,254	25.1	367,857	5.9
1966	6,719,555	4,559,432	67.9	1,597,438	23.8	371,881	5.5
1977	7,500,229	5,203,846	69.4	1,691,065	22.5	347,896	4.6
1992	7,723,313	5,684,142	73.6	1,603,923	20.8	109,014	1.4
2002	7,221,733	5,393,552	74.7	1,415,718	19.6	53,077	0.7
2011	6,789,250	4,794,577	74.8	1,216,666	19.0	32,805	0.5

Year	Ethnic Jews		Romani people (Gypsies)		Others		No data	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
1910	....	....	47,876	0.9	155,764	3.0		
1920	181,340	3.5	....	....	157,484	3.2		
1930	178,810	3.2	109,156	2.0	155,507	2.8		
1941	....	....	....	....	328,812	5.6		
1948	30,039	0.5	....	....	164,850	2.9		
1956	43,749	0.7	78,278	1.3	129,133	2.0		
1966	13,530	0.2	49,105	0.7	128,169	1.9		
1977	7,830	0.1	123,028	1.6	134,293	1.8	118	0
1992	2,687	0.0	202,665	2.6	123,411	1.6	158	0
2002			244,475	3.4	113,978	1.6	933	0
2011			270,755	4.2	96,149	1.5	378,298	

Sources: Varga (1998), Kocsis et al. (2006, 2015), Data of Hungarian census in 1910, 1941 (konyvtar.ksh.hu), Romanian census 1930, 1956–2011, and the National Statistical Institute in Romania (insse.ro, ststiztikak.erdelystat.ro).

Figure 2



Sources: Varga (1998), Kocsis et al. (2006, 2015), Data of Hungarian census in 1910, 1941 (konyvtar.ksh.hu), Romanian census 1930, 1956–2011, and the National Statistical Institute in Romania (insse.ro, stazistikak.erdelystat.ro).

The economic and social processes significantly changed over 100 years the composition of the Transylvanian population. The social structure developed specifically in the period between 1945 and 1989 and then in the period after 1990 (Bereznay 2020). The ethnic and denominational structures were redrawn. By 2011, Hungarians were in the minority in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and in significant parts of mixed-population areas.

Today, the vast majority of the population of Transylvania are Romanians. Two Hungarian ethnic blocs emerged in the territory of Transylvania: one in the Székely Land and one in the northwest (so called Partium) North Bihar, (West Szatmár) where Hungarians make up the majority. The number and proportion of the Romani people is also increasing in areas of mixed nationality between ethnic blocs. The Germans lived in the southern and north-eastern parts of Transylvania and in Banat. During and after World War II, this community was almost completely eliminated. Further, most Jewish communities living in cities were liquidated during and after World War II (Bereznay 2011, p. 213. [www.historyonmaps.com], Kocsis et al. 2015, Péntzes et al. 2018) (Figures 2).

In the historical Székely Land, the number of Romanians more than tripled to over 170,000 over 100 years. In 2011, they formed 23.1% of the total population of 762,000. In 2011, the number of Hungarians in Székely Land was 581,000 (72.2%), which was less than the 50% increase compared to 1910. The Romani people form the third highest community (27,000 people, 3.6%).

In the Romanian census, most Romanians and Hungarians were counted in 1992 in the Kovászna and Hargita Counties of Székely Land (54,000 49,000; 175,000 and 295,000) (insse.ro). Between 1910 and 1992, the proportion of Romanians in Kovászna County increased from 11.5% to 23.7% and in Hargita County from 6.1% to 14%. The proportion of Hungarians decreased from 87.5% to 75.2% in Hargita County and from 92.7% to 84.7% in Kovászna County (Varga 1998, Pakot 2013). Between 1992 and 2011, the decrease in the population caused by emigration and increasing natural decline was also typical in Székely Land. In two decades, the proportion of Romanians in Kovászna and Hargita Counties changed to 22.1% and 13.0%, and that of Hungarians changed to 73.7% and 85.2%, respectively. At the same time, the proportion of the Romani people in the 2 counties increased to 4.1% and 1.8%. In 2011, 2.9% and 2.7% of the total population in Kovászna and Hargita Counties did not have a nationality and denoted identities (national value 6.1%, 1.236 million).

Changes in the ethnic structure of Maros County, which also includes the Maros seat, differ from the two Székely counties. Between 1910 and 2002, the proportion of Romanians increased from 39% to 53.3%, and the proportion of Hungarians in the total population decreased from 48.8% to 39.3%. In 1977, the number of Hungarians was the highest (268,000), and in 1992, the number of Romanians was the highest (317,000) (Varga 1998, Elekes 2016, Veres 2020, erdelystat.).

Between 2002 and 2011, the rate of population decline of Hungarians and Romanians was almost the same in Székely Land, which indicates the balance between the Hungarian-Romanian ethnic structure. At the same time, there was a nuanced difference between the three administrative units (Hajdú 2020). In Kovászna County, the proportion of Romanians decreased by 1.2%, that of Hungarians decreased by 0.1%, and that of the Romani people increased by 1.4% in a decade. In Hargita County, the proportion of Romanians decreased by 1.1%, that of Hungarians increased by 0.5%, and that of the Romani people increased by 0.6% over the same period. In Maros County, the decrease was 0.6% for Romanians, 1.2% for Hungarians, and there was a 1.9% increase in the Romani population (Varga 1998, statistikak.erdelystat.ro).

Population and ethnic structure in the towns of the Székely Land

The demographic processes of the last 100 years were mostly related to towns, large cities, industrial and mining areas, and centres (Gyenizse 2011, Atkinson 2019, Kulcsár–Brown 2017, Páthy 2017, Kőszegfalvi 2020). The data of the most significant Székely Land towns described below illustrate the national tendencies of the processes and the local peculiarities (Figures 3, 4, Table 3).

In the Székely Land, before World War I, the impact of industrialisation and civilisation was lesser compared to other areas of contemporary Hungary.

Marosvásárhely is the most significant city of the conservative, tradition-respecting Székely Land, which has a high natural reproduction and is characterised by significant emigration. Other major centres of industrialisation are Székelyudvarhely, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Csíkszereda, Kézdivásárhely, and Gyergyószentmiklós, which are the backbone of the traditional urban network. In each of the 6 major towns, the share of the Hungarian population is over 89%. The Székelys lost more than 20,000 people in World War I, and at the end of the war, more than 15,000 people fled from Székely Land (Varga 1998, Nyárádi 2003). After World War I, the men of the new Romanian power settled in Transylvania, with a population of 5,257 million at that time. Thousands of people arrived in Székely Land mostly to work for the public administration, education, police, army, and the Orthodox Church. In the census of that time, Hungarian Greek Catholics and Orthodoxes in Transylvania were counted as Romanians, while Hungarian-speaking Jews, Gypsies, and other nationalities were not counted among the Hungarian population (Varga 1998, Kocsis et al. 2006). Emigration, managed resettlement, and specific statistics resulted in the decreased proportion of Hungarians and a significant increase in the number and proportion of Romanians between the two World Wars. The ethnic structure changed significantly in the major cities and towns, mainly in the four county seats of Marosvásárhely, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Székelyudvarhely, and Csíkszereda (Varga 1998, Kocsis et al. 2006).

According to the second Vienna Decision (30.08.1940), northern Transylvania (43,104 km², 2,577 million inhabitants) was returned to Hungary by Romania. After World War I, those arriving on behalf of the Romanian state and the Orthodox Church left northern Transylvania. The majority of Székely Land came back as part of Hungary again. By February 1941, more than 20,000 Romanians left Székely Land, and more than 30,000 Hungarians arrived from southern Transylvania, which remained with Romania (Varga 1998). The number of Hungarians increased owing to the public administration, police and army, which came to represent the new power, and settled mostly in the towns. The number and proportion of Romanians fell to the pre-World War I levels.

During and after World War II, tens of thousands of Hungarians fled Székely Land again, and people of the re-established Romanian state settled in their place. By the 1950s, ethnic proportions similar to those between the two World Wars developed in the Székely towns.

After World War II, the centrally-controlled, forced industrialisation provided the scope to consciously implement Romanian nation-building and an ethnic homogenisation policy (Kocsis et al. 2015). After 1966, the Abortion Act ensured a high birth rate. The communist state allowed a limited number of Romanian citizens to settle abroad as international migrants. At the same time, installed millions of people in cities to operate new industrial facilities (Bottoni 2008). Most of the young labour came to Transylvania from the urban areas and, to a lesser extent, from areas outside the Carpathians.

The primary target areas were towns of regional significance, large cities, county capitals, new mining, industrial zones and centres (Szilágyi 2013, Egri–Kőszegi 2018, Egri–Tánczos 2018, Kókai 2020), and the western border region (Elekes 2008). This period resulted in the biggest change, within Székely Land, in Marosvásárhely. Between 1948 and 1992, there was a change in the proportion of the Romanian and Hungarian population by around 23%.

The change was similar but smaller (around 11% between 1956 and 1992) in Sepsiszentgyörgy and Csíkszereda. Among the major studied towns, Székelyudvarhely, Gyergyószentmiklós, and Kézdivásárhely had the smallest ratio of change between 1956 and 1992 (1–5%). A similar process characterised the small towns.

Following the events of December 1989 new social, economic, and demographic processes began in Romania, which had been characteristic of the former communist countries of the region (Kincses–Bálint 2016, Siskáné 2018, Benedek et al. 2018, Bartke 2020). Mass emigration, increasing natural loss, declining population, ageing, declining number and proportion of active population were typical processes of the last three decades.

Between 1992 and 2002, more than half of the decrease in the number of Hungarians in Romania was due to natural loss, less than half due to emigration, and 5-10% due to assimilation-related losses. Between 1977 and 2011, more than a quarter of a million Hungarians emigrated from Transylvania to Hungary (some of them later to western Europe) (Veres 2020). The main reason for the mass exodus from Romania was the economic factor. The future prospects for children, political and institutional instability, legal uncertainty, shortcomings in the functioning of central and local administration, decreasing personal security are factors that increasingly encourage emigration (Ghețău 2020). In the case of the Hungarians of Transylvania, political factors (e.g. the events in Marosvásárhely in March 1990) also intensified emigration.

Between 2002 and 2011, a much smaller, slighter change continued to be reflected in the proportion of Romanians or Hungarians in Sepsiszentgyörgy, Csíkszereda, Székelyudvarhely, Gyergyószentmiklós, and Kézdivásárhely. In these towns with diverse economic structures, demographic processes around the national average and a small amount of migration were typical during this period.

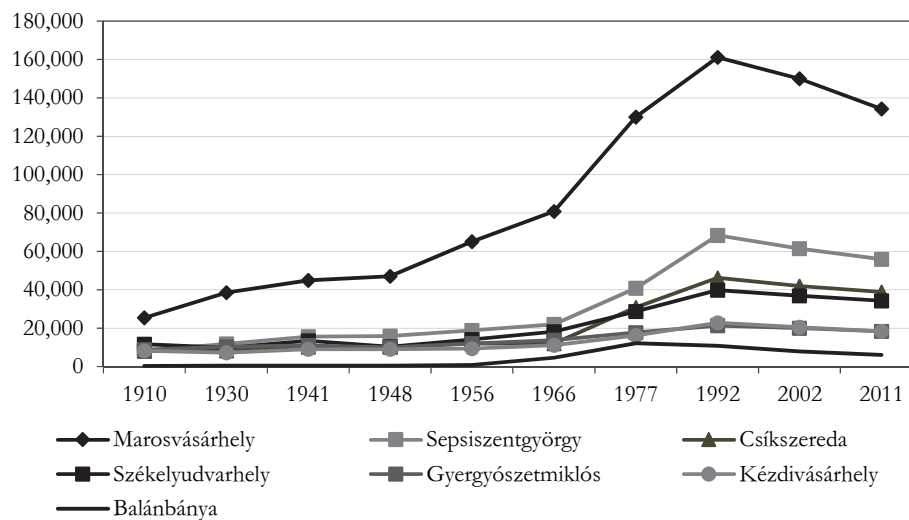
In general, ‘balancing’ was typical. The increase in the number and proportion of the Romani people at the country and county levels is less visible in the statistics of the studied towns (in the tables of the towns, majority of those from other nationalities are Romani people).

Balánbánya is characterised by a special process, typical of single-function settlements. Simultaneous to the vigorous industrialisation after World War II, mineral reserves became more valuable. Between 1956 and 1990, the population of the mining town, settled for the extraction of copper ore, increased by more than 15 times to nearly 15,000. The economic collapse after 1990 and the mine closures resulted in mass emigration and a spectacular population decline.

In recent years, the number of births in Székely Land has generally been higher than the national average, the tendency to emigrate and internal migration has been lower, indicating a decrease in the rate of population decline and a ‘stabilisation’ of the Hungarian-Romanian ethnic ratio (insse.ro, Figures 3, 4, Table 3).

Figure 3

Population changes in Marosvásárhely and in 6 important towns of Székely Land



Sources: Elekes (Data of Hungarian census in 1910, 1941 [konyvtar.ksh.hu], Romanian census 1930, 1956–2011, and the National Statistical Institute in Romania [insse.ro]).

Table 3

**Changes in the ethnic structure of Marosvásárhely and
6 important towns of Székely Land**

Year	Total population	Romanians		Hungarians		Germans		Others		No data	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Marosvásárhely/Târgu-Mureş											
1910	26,779	2,416	9.0	23,253	86.9	624	2.3	486	1.8		
1930	40,058	10,715	26.7	22,898	57.2	667	1.7	5,778	14.4		
1941	46,332	2,287	4.9	43,243	93.3	443	1.0	359	0.8		
1948	47,043	11,007	23.4	34,943	74.3	72	0.1	1,021	2.2		
1956	65,455	14,669	22.4	48,290	73.8	263	0.4	2,233	3.4		
1966	86,464	24,638	28.5	60,211	69.6	456	0.5	1,159	1.4		
1977	130,076	45,639	35.1	82,200	63.2	773	0.6	1,464	1.1		
1992	164,445	75,851	46.1	84,493	51.4	558	0.3	3,543	2.2		
2002	150,041	75,533	50.3	70,108	46.8	303	0.2	4,041	2.7	56	
2011	134,290	66,033	49.3	60,747	45.2	202	0.1	198	0.1	7,110	5.3
Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe											
1910	8,125	52	0.7	7,986	98.3	73	1.0	77	1.0		
1930	11,898	2,037	17.1	9,411	79.1	212	1.8	238	2.0		
1941	15,585	100	0.6	15,116	97.0	244	1.6	125	0.8		
1956	18,896	2,317	12.3	16,308	86.3	102	0.5	169	0.9		
1966	22,058	2,613	11.8	18,976	86.0	88	0.4	381	1.8		
1977	40,804	5,812	14.2	33,975	83.3	149	0.4	867	2.1		
1992	68,359	16,092	23.5	51,073	74.7	153	0.2	1,028	1.5	13	
2002	61,543	14,178	23.1	46,113	75.0	118	0.2	1,079	1.7	55	
2011	56,006	11,807	21.1	41,233	73.6	61	0.1	485	0.9	2,420	4.3
Csíkszereda/Miercurea-Ciuc											
1910	8,044	46	0.6	7,877	97.9	61	0.8	60	0.7		
1930	8,306	690	8.3	7,134	85.9	91	1.1	391	4.7		
1941	10,285	50	0.5	10,125	98.4	37	0.4	73	0.7		
1956	11,996	668	5.6	11,247	93.8	45	0.3	36	0.3		
1966	11,996	702	5.6	11,144	92.2	47	0.4	103	0.8		
1977	30,936	4,894	15.8	25,822	83.5	87	0.3	133	0.4		
1992	46,228	7,497	16.2	38,359	83.0	73	0.2	299	0.8		
2002	42,029	7,274	17.3	34,359	81.8	48	0.1	333	0.8	15	
2011	38,966	6,538	16.8	30,607	78.5	22	0.1	381	1.0	1,418	3.6
Székelyudvarhely/Odorheiu Secuiesc											
1910	11,650	121	1.0	11,286	96.9	214	1.8	29	0.2		
1930	9,981	978	9.9	8,331	83.5	184	18.8	488	4.8		
1941	13,550	57	0.4	13,339	98.4	130	1	24	0.2		
1948	10,366	756	7.3	9,549	92.1	28	0.3	33	0.3		
1956	14,162	453	3.2	13,623	96.2	59	0.4	27	0.2		
1966	18,244	811	4.4	17,377	95.3	39	0.2	17	0.1		
1977	28,738	866	3.0	27,688	96.3	47	0.2	137	0.5		
1992	39,959	837	2.1	38,937	97.4	39	0.1	146	0.3		
2002	36,948	1077	2.9	35,357	95.8	25	0.1	442	1.2	47	
2011	34,257	861	2.5	31,665	92.4	9	0	528	1.5	1,194	3.5

(The table continues next page.)

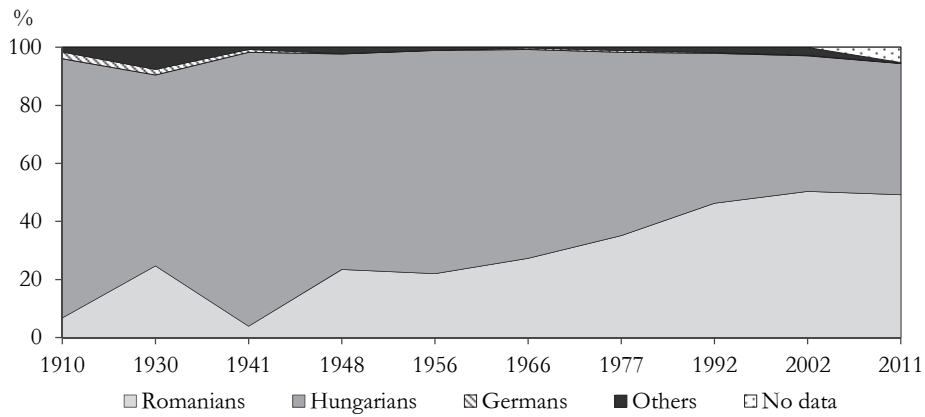
(Continued.)

Year	Total population	Romanians		Hungarians		Germans		Others		No data	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Gyergyószentmiklós/Gheorgheni											
1910	8,905	155	1.7	8,549	96.0	115	1.3	86	1.0		
1930	10,355	455	4.4	9,421	91.0	69	0.7	410	3.9		
1941	10,979	136	1.2	10,715	97.6	60	0.6	68	0.6		
1948	10,031	748	7.5	9,222	91.9	8	0.1	53	0.5		
1956	11,969	759	6.3	11,144	93.1	31	0.3	35	0.3		
1966	13,828	893	6.5	12,907	93.3	16	0.1	12	0.1		
1977	17,748	1,890	10.6	15,682	88.4	21	0.1	155	0.8		
1992	21,433	2,255	10.5	18,946	88.4	8	0.0	222	1.0		
2002	20,018	2,161	10.8	17,524	87.6	7	0.0	319	1.6	7	
2011	18,377	1,664	9.1	15,388	83.8	5	0.0	445	2.4	875	4.7
Kézdivásárhely/Târgu Secuiesc											
1910	8,338	62	0.7	8,211	98.5	38	0.5	27	0.3		
1930	7,364	252	3.5	7,018	95.3	61	0.8	33	0.4		
1941	9,033	32	0.4	8,921	98.8	65	0.7	15	0.1		
1956	9,435	277	2.9	9,009	95.5	26	0.3	123	1.3		
1966	11,286	469	4.2	10,781	95.5	26	0.2	10	0.1		
1977	16,329	1204	7.4	15,041	92.1	23	0.1	71	0.3		
1992	22,912	1818	7.9	20,998	91.6	19	0.1	77	0.4		
2002	20,488	1601	7.8	18,633	91.0	19	0.1	233	1.2		
2011	18,491	1293	7.0	16,292	88.1	12	0.1	292	1.6	602	3.2
Balánbánya/Bălan											
1910	402	5	1.2	385	95.8	8	2	4	1.0		
1956	921	40	4.4	878	95.3	2	0.2	1	0.1		
1966	4,646	2,124	45.7	2,493	53.7	3	0.1	26	0.5		
1977	12,161	8,190	67.3	3,949	32.5	17	0.1	5	0.0		
1992	10,937	7,617	69.6	3,244	29.7	0	0	74	0.7		
2002	7,902	5,121	64.8	2,703	34.2	0	0	77	1.0		
2011	6,115	3,575	58.5	2,092	34.2	0	0	101	1.7	347	5.6

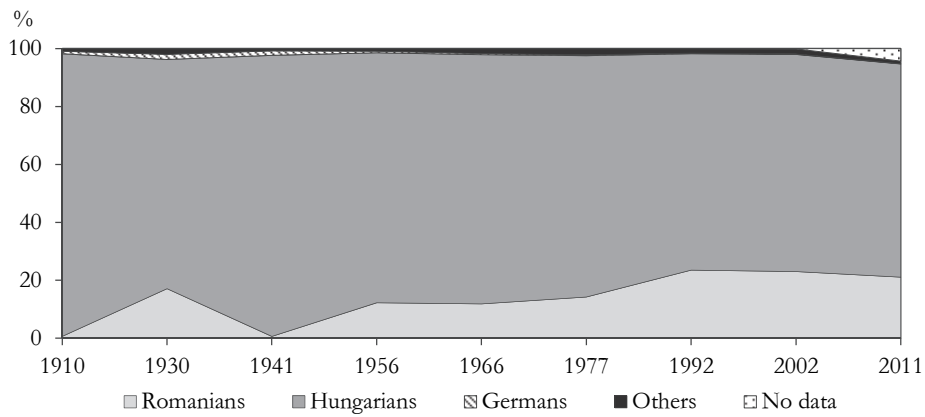
Sources: Varga (1998), Kocsis et al. (2006, 2015), Data of Hungarian census in 1910, 1941 (konyvtar.ksh.hu), Romanian census 1930, 1956–2011, and the National Statistical Institute in Romania (insse.ro, stazistikak.erdelystat.ro).

Figure 4

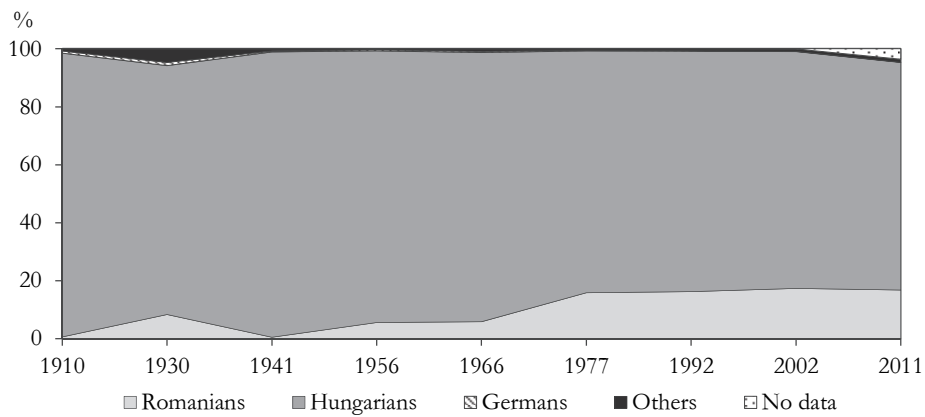
**Changes in the ethnic structure of the population
Marosvásárhely/ Târgu-Mureş**

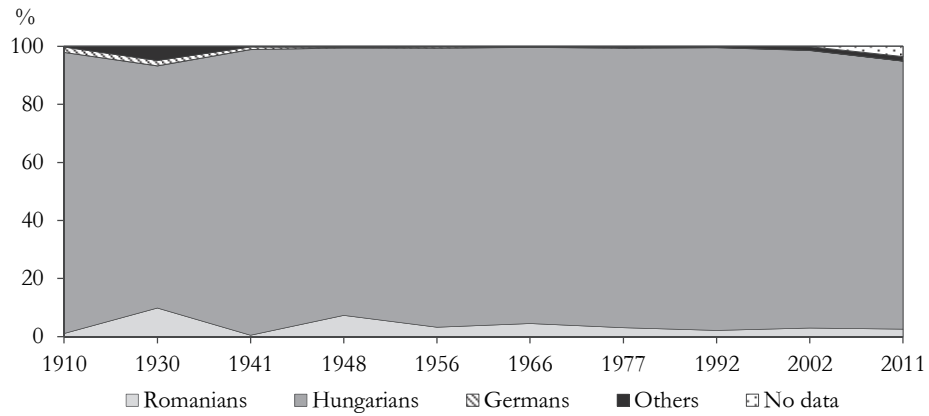
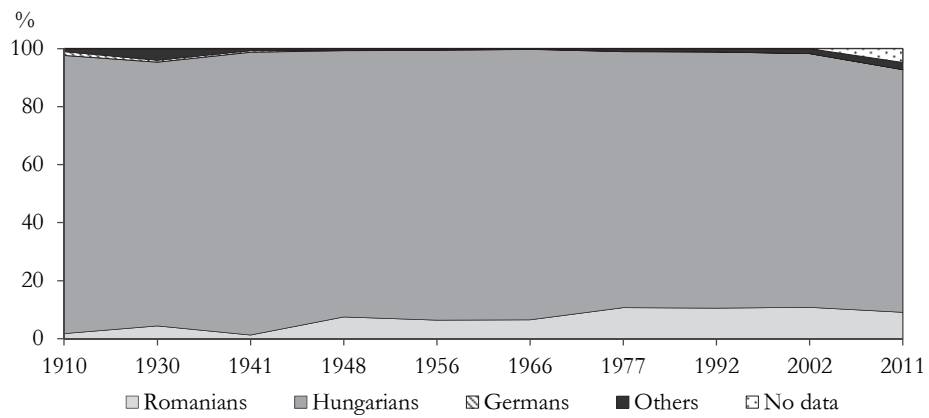
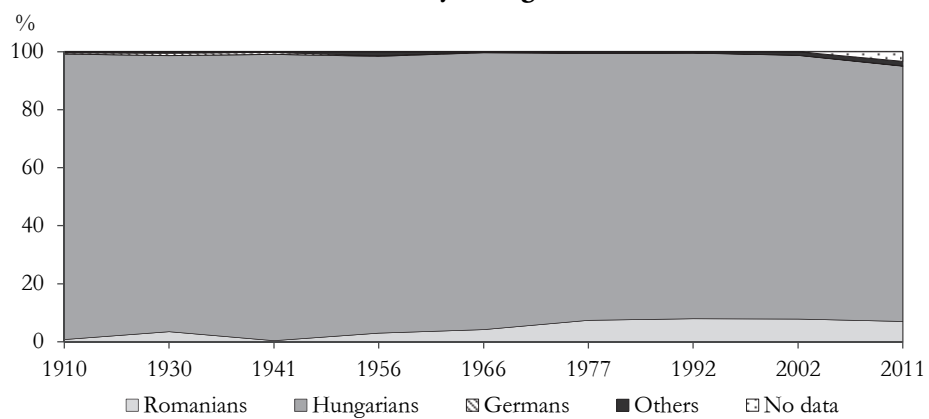


Sepsiszentgyörgy / Sfântu Gheorghe

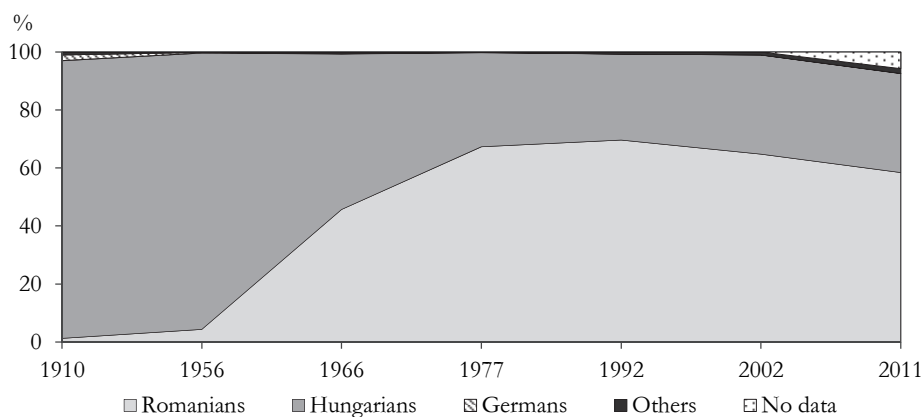


Csíksereda / Miercurea-Ciuc



Székelyudvarhely / Odorheiu Secuiesc**Gyergyószentmiklós / Gheorgheni****Kézdivásárhely / Târgu Secuiesc**

Balánbánya / Bălan



Sources Elekes (Data of Hungarian census in 1910, 1941 [konyvtar.ksh.hu], Romanian census 1930, 1956–2011, and the National Statistical Institute in Romania [insse.ro]).

Conclusion

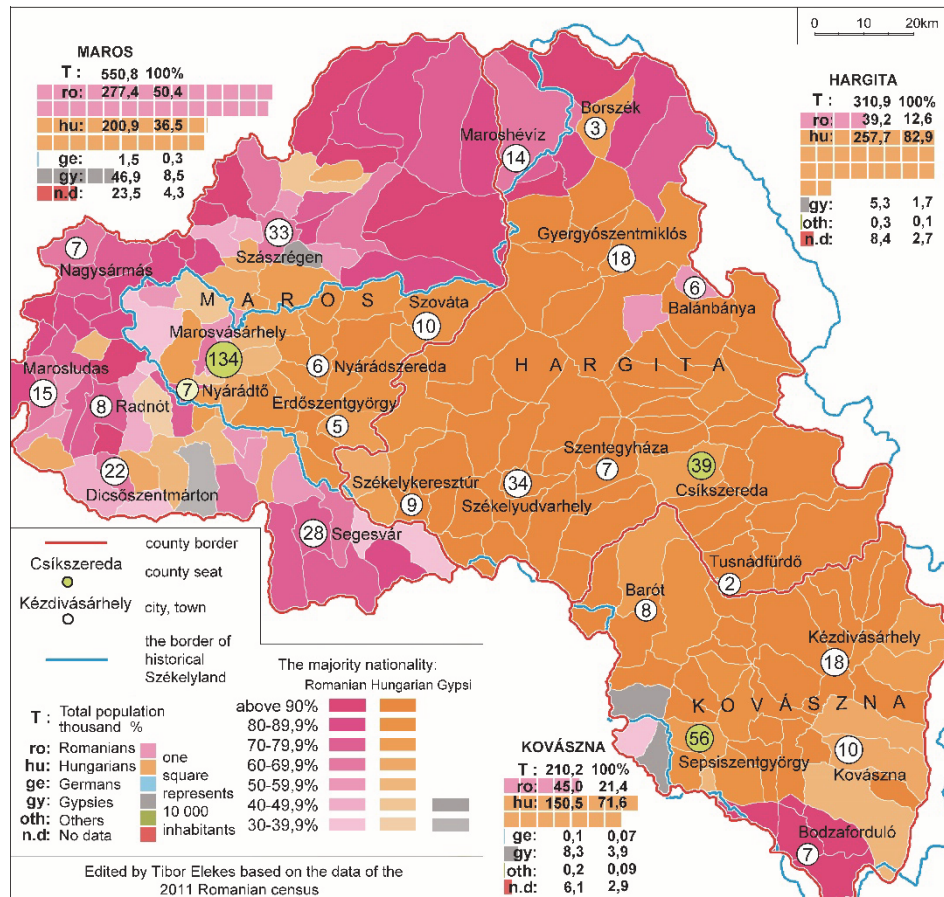
Between 1910 and 1990, population increase was typical in Transylvania, particularly in the Székely Land. The growth slowed down during the World Wars. After 1990, emigration and intensifying natural decline resulted in a steady decline in population.

The economic and social processes and border changes taking place over 100 years significantly changed the ethnic structure of Transylvania and that of Székely Land. In the historical Székely Land, the number of Romanians more than tripled in 100 years, and the growth of Hungarians has been less than 50%. After World War II, the change was strongest during the decades of communism. Forced industrialisation offered scope for the completion of a conscious Romanian nation-building and ethnic homogenisation policy. At that time the total population of Transylvania and Székely Land increased the most, including the proportion of Romanians. The ethnic structure of Marosvásárhely completely changed; the two other county capitals (Sepsiszentgyörgy and Csíkszereda) changed significantly. To a lesser extent, the ethnic composition of Gyergyószentmiklós, Kézdivásárhely, Székelyudvarhely, and the small towns underwent changes. An exception was Balánbánya, which developed during communism and then encountered a crisis after 1990 due to mine closures. The population processes and changes in the ethnic structure of Transylvania occurring over 100 years were also witnessed in Székely Land. However, the extent and intensity remained lower than the Transylvanian average. In 2011, within the total population of 762,000 of Székely Land, the number of Hungarians was 581,000 (72.2%) and that of Romanians was 170,000 (23.1%). The Romani people constitute the third most populous community (27,000 people, 3.6%).

Between 2002 and 2011, a much smaller, slighter shift in the proportion of Romanians or Hungarians continued in the studied cities and towns. In general, the Hungarian-Romanian ethnic ‘balance’ remains typical in Székely Land.

Figure 5

The ethnic structure, the county, and city system of Székely Land in 2011



Source: Elekes (Data of Romanian census in 2011[insse.ro]).

In recent years, the rate of population decline and the willingness to emigrate (insse.ro) has been lower in Székely Land than the national average. The character of the Hungarian ethnic bloc in the area survived to this day (Figure 5). In recent years, several authors (Kiss–Csata 2016, Péti–Szabó 2016, Péti et al. 2020) published population prognosis for Székely Land, Transylvania, Romania, Hungary, and the neighbouring states. According to Péti et al. (2020), the proportion of Hungarians in Romania within the total population will either remain unchanged by 2051 or decrease by 1.5-2% nationally and by 3–5% in Transylvania, depending on

the source and scenario. According to the baseline scenario, the number of Hungarians will be about 750,000 in Romania, with a population of 15–16 million, and in Transylvania, with a population of about 5 million. At the same time, the proportion of Székelys within the Hungarian minority in Romania is increasing, and 417,000 (55%) of the Hungarians from Transylvania will be Hungarians from Székely Land.

Social and economic factors affecting the demographic numbers, including the number of different ethnicities, may change in the coming decades. At the same time, the Hungarian ethnic bloc in Székely Land and the ethnic structure of Hungarian-majority cities remain preserved.

Autonomy could ensure the survival of the native Hungarian minority in Transylvania. In the case of Hungarians living in blocks in Székely Land and northwestern Transylvania, it would be possible to realise autonomy (Kocsis 2013, Elekes 2020, Szilágyi–Elekes 2020). Romanian political parties and a significant part of the society are opposed to the realisation of any kind of autonomy over the country's territory. Given the current social and economic processes as well as the pandemic, the importance of integrating communities into the society and conducting efficient economic activities is increasing.

Acknowledgements

The research work presented in the article/presentation/study was carried out as part of the EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00011 'Younger and Renewing University – Innovative Knowledge City project'– the institutional development of the University of Miskolc aimed at intelligent specialisation– implemented within the framework of the Szechenyi 2020 programme. The realisation of this project is supported by the European Union, co-financed by the European Social Fund.

The authors wish to thank Mária Szabó for translating this study.

REFERENCES

- ATKINSON, R. (2019): The small towns conundrum: What do we do about them? *Regional Statistics* 9 (2): 3–19.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS090201>
- BALOGH, J. (1993): A székely város a 16–17. században. In: *Város és társadalom* pp. 27–33., Studia Miskolcinsia 1. Miskolci Egyetem, Miskolc.
- BARTKE, I. (2020): Az életszínvonal, a társadalmi-gazdasági struktúra három évtized alatti változása és az urbanizációs folyamat *Területi Statisztika* 60 (1): 39–49.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/TS600105>
- BENEDEK, J.–TÖRÖK, I.–MÁTHÉ, CS. (2018): Evidence-based designation of development regions in Romania *Regional Statistics* 8 (1): 120–140.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS080105>

- BEREZNAVY, A. (2011): *Erdély történetének atlasza* Méry Ratio Kiadó, Somorja.
- BEREZNAVY, A. (2020): Trianon: self-defeating self-determination *Regional Statistics* 10 (1): 151–155.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100106>
- BOTTONI, S. (2008): *Sztálin a székelyeknél. A Magyar Autonóm Tartomány története (1952–1960)* Pro Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda.
- DEMETER, G. (2020): Estimating regional inequalities in the Carpathian Basin – Historical origins and recent outcomes (1880–2010) *Regional Statistics* 10 (1): 23–59.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100105>
- EGRI, Z.–KŐSZEGI, I. R. (2018): A gazdasági-társadalmi (komplex) térszerkezet kelet-közép-európai képe *Területi Statisztika* 58 (1): 27–56.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/TS580101>
- EGRI, Z.–TÁNCZOS, T. (2018): The spatial peculiarities of economic and social convergence in Central and Eastern Europe *Regional Statistics* 8 (1): 49–77.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS080108>
- EGYED, Á. (ed.) (2016): *Székelyföld története I–II–III.* MTA BTK–EME–HRM, Székelyudvarhely.
- ELEKES, T. (2008): Demográfiai, gazdasági-társadalmi folyamatok Románia városaiban 1948-tól napjainkig *Tér és Társadalom* 22 (2): 185–201.
<https://doi.org/10.17649/TET.22.2.1177>
- ELEKES, T. (2011): Székelyföld közigazgatás-földrajzi változásai a 13. századtól napjainkig *Földrajzi Közlemények* 135 (4): 415–429.
- ELEKES, T. (2016): Székelyföld földrajza és közigazgatása. In: EGYED, Á. (ed.): *Székelyföld története I.* pp. 55–71., MTA BTK–EME–HRM, Székelyudvarhely.
- ELEKES, T.–SZILÁGYI, F. (2020): Administrative, spatial and demographic changes in Székelyland since the Treaty of Trianon to the present day *Regional Statistics* 10 (1): 120–132. <https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100107>
- GYENIZSE, P.–LOVÁSZ, GY.–TÓTH, J. (2011): *A magyar településrendszer* PTE TTK Földrajzi Intézet, Pécs.
- HAJDÚ, Z. (2020): Structural and administrative implications of the Trianon Peace Treaty, 1920 *Regional Statistics* 10 (1): 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100103>
- KINCSES, Á.–BÁLINT, L. (2016): Migration settlement networks in the Carpathian Basin, 2001–2011 *Regional Statistics* 6 (2): 95–113. <https://doi.org/10.15196/RS06205>
- KISS, T.–CSATA, I. (2016): *Demographic perspectives. A projection of the Hungarian-speaking population of Transylvania for the time period between 2011 and 2031* Kós Károly Akadémia–Wilfried Martens Center for European Studies, Kolozsvár–Brussels.
- KOCSIS, K.–BOTTLIK, ZS.–TÁTRAI, P. (2006): *Etnikai térfolyamatok a Kárpát-medence batáron túli régióiban (1989–2002)* MTA FKI, Budapest.
- KOCSIS, K. (2013): Historical predecessors and current geographical possibilities of ethnic based territorial autonomies in the Carpathian Basin *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 62 (1): 3–46.
- KOCSIS, K.–TÁTRAI, P.–AGÁRDI, N.–BALIZS, D.–KOVÁCS, A. (2015): *A Kárpát-Pannon-térség változó etnikai arculata a 15. század végétől a 21. század elejéig* MTA CSFK Földrajztudományi Intézet, Budapest.

- KÓKAI, S. (2020): How the Trianon Peace Treaty impeded social and spatial structure progress in the Bánság *Regional Statistics* 10 (1): 133–150.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100108>
- KÖPECZI, B. (ed.) (1993): *Erdély rövid története* Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.
- KŐSZEGFALVI, GY. (2020): A magyarországi településrendszer strukturális változásának sajátos vonásai *Területi Statisztika* 60 (1): 76–106.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/TS600107>
- KULCSÁR, J. L.–BROWN, D. L. (2017): Population ageing in Eastern Europe: Toward a coupled micro-macro framework *Regional Statistics* 7 (1): 115–134.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS07107>
- NYÁRADI, R. K. (2003): *Erdély népesedéstörténete* Központi Statisztikai Hivatal Levéltára, Budapest.
- PAKOT, L. (2013): *Nemek és nemzedékek. Demográfiai reprodukció a 19–20. századi Székelyföldön* KSH Népeségtudományi Kutatóintézet, Budapest.
- PÁTHY, Á. (2017): Types of development paths and the hierarchy of the regional centres of Central and Eastern Europe *Regional Statistics* 7 (2): 124–147.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/RS070202>
- PÉNZES, J.–TÁTRAI, P.–PÁSZTOR, I. Z. (2018): A roma népesség területi megoszlásának változása Magyarországon az elmúlt évtizedekben *Területi Statisztika* 58 (1): 3–26.
<https://doi.org/10.15196/TS580101>
- PÉTI, M.–SZABÓ, B. (2016): Külhoni magyar városok a Kárpát-medencében napjainkban *Falu-Város-Régió* 17 (2): 107–113.
- PÉTI, M.–PAKOT, L.–MEGYESI, Z.–SZABÓ, B. (2020): A Kárpát-medencei magyarság népesség-előreszámítása, 2011–2051 *Demográfia* 63 (4): 269–318.
<https://doi.org/10.21543/Dem.63.4.1>
- SISKÁNÉ SZILASI, B. (2018): Migrációs potenciál, migrációs szándék Magyarországon. In: SISKÁNÉ SZILASI, B.–HALÁSZ, L. (eds.): *Boldogulni itthon vagy külföldön?: legújabb trendek a magyarországi kivándorlásban* pp. 37–45., ME Földrajz-Geoinformatika Intézet, Miskolc.
- SZILÁGYI, F. (2013): *Partium társadalom és térszerkezet* Dokumentum Kiadó, Nagyvárad.
- SZILÁGYI, F.–ELEKES, T. (2020): Changes in administration, spatial structure, and demography in the Partium region since the Treaty of Trianon *Regional Statistics* 10 (1): 101–119. <https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100104>
- VARGA, E. Á. (1998): *Erdély etnikai és felekezeti statisztikája I. Kovászna, Harghita és Maros megye* Teleki László Alapítvány, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Budapest, Csíkszereda.
- VERES, V. (2020): Az erdélyi magyarság demográfiai sajátosságai. In: BENEDEK, J. (ed.): *Erdély. Tér, gazdaság és társadalom* pp. 200–220., Kolozsvár.

INTERNET SOURCES

- GHEȚĂU, V. (2020): *Anul 2020: O populație rezidentă cu 4 milioane de locuitori mai mică*. București.
<https://www.piatafinanciara.ro/anul-2020-o-populatie-rezidenta-cu-4-milioane-de-locuitori-mai-mica/> (downloaded: 03 July .2020)

INTERNET LINKS

- <http://konyvtar.ksh.hu/index.php?s=kb> statisztika A Magyar Szent Korona országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása. – Magyar Királyi statisztikai közlemények. Ú. S. 42. kötet. Budapest, 1912.– XI, 50. (downloaded: 30 August 2020)
- <http://Insse.ro> (downloaded: 20 September 2020)
- <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/TS6.pdf> (downloaded: 21 September 2020)
- [http://statisztikak.erdelystat.ro/adatlapok/ro/adatlapok/romania/3293"Romania/3293](http://statisztikak.erdelystat.ro/adatlapok/ro/adatlapok/romania/3293) (downloaded: 30 August 2020)