

Ethnic Revival? The Methodology of the 2011 Census and the Nationalities of Hungary¹

The latest census in Hungary was held in October 2011. The census, which is held approximately every tenth year not only informs us on the size and composition of the population, households and apartments, but has further, legal consequences as well. According to the 2011 Act on the Rights of Nationalities of Hungary, language rights and the right to establish minority self-governments depend on the number or proportion of persons belonging to a minority.²

Other than that, the censuses may have a social effect as well. Kretzer and Arel in their work on the connection between censuses and identity formation showed the parallel history of censuses and the formation of the modern nation state and argued convincingly, how the classification of people into distinct identity categories form the collective identities of these people.³ As a result the questions of the census regarding ethnic background acquire a political-power aspect, which can question their scientific validity. As antropologists point out, identities are social constructs, which are therefore „not real”, and as such inappropriate for enumeration. Others however point out, that identities, although non-existent independently from people’s perceptions, being the basis of social practices, become „socially real”, and therefore scientifically relevant.⁴ We have to be aware of these considerations when analyzing the census data, and especially so in the case of ethnic data. These belong to the so called „non-core”, sensitive data, the answer is voluntary, and the questions are operationalized in multiple ways in different countries, even in censuses held approximately at the same time.⁵ Ethnic affiliations

¹ Present paper was written as part of the project „Minority competencies” of the Institute for Minority Studies of the HAS Centre for Social Sciences. Leader of the research group: Attila Papp Z.

² Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the Rights of Nationalities

³ Kertzer, David I. – Arel, Dominique: Censuses, identity formation, and the struggle for political power. In Kertzer, David I. – Arel, Dominique (eds.): *Census and Identity. The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge University Press. 2004. 1–42.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For a comparison of Hungary and the neighbouring countries, see Papp Z. Attila: Az etnikai adatgyűjtés módszertana a Magyarországgal szomszédos országok

can be operationalized as open or closed, single or multiple-choice questions, the answers may be ordered (first, second option, etc.) or not. Providing the respondent with prespecified categories breaks up the society into distinct ethnic groups and even involuntarily creates preferred and non-preferred, or – as in case of Hungary – recognized and non-recognized ethnic (statistical) groups.

One also has to take into consideration the political and social context of the censuses. The difference between the estimated number of Roma and the number measured in the censuses is a recurrent issue in Hungary and similarly in other Central-Eastern European countries. Compared to the 205 000 persons declaring ethnic Roma affiliation in the 2001 census different estimations put the number of Roma between 700 000 and 800 000. In this sense one could say there was a pressure on the committee responsible for the preparation of the census, which decided to allow respondents to choose a primary and a secondary ethnic affiliation, hoping for the population to declare their multiple identities.⁶

Present paper analyzes the ethnic composition of Hungary based on the 2011 census primarily from the hitherto neglected aspect of primary nationality, which allows for comparison with the data of the 1990 census. Without questioning the complexity of social identities in general and ethnic identities in particular, we are convinced that such an analysis may contribute to the better understanding of the increase in the number of people belonging to national minorities between 2001 and 2011. This comparison may show if there really was a significant change in the ethnic composition of Hungary during 21 years. If we compare the data of the 2001 and 2011 censuses, we might perceive some kind of an „ethnic revival” which leads to remarkable shifts in ethnic self-identification. However if we compare the data of the 1990 census with the data of the 2011 census on primary nationality, and see no significant change in ethnic self-identification, we may accept our hypothesis that the shifts in the numbers were due to methodological changes.

népszámlálásában (Methods for the collection of ethnic data in the censuses of Hungary's neighbour countries). *Statistikai Szemle* 2010, 1. 5-28.

⁶ Source: <http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/docs/modszertan.pdf>; Page 15. Retrieved: 22 September 2015

Changes of the methodology of the Hungarian censuses

The analysis of the ethnic data of the last few censuses requires special attention due to methodological changes as well. One of the reasons is, that the operationalization of ethnic affiliation has changed multiple times in the last few censuses, which might have had significant impact on the results. We also have to take into consideration, that in the last census the proportion of respondents, who didn't answer the sensitive questions regarding ethnic or religious affiliation was remarkably high. Therefore, the results of the 1990, 2001 and 2011 censuses are directly incomparable.

In 1990 questions on nationality, mother language and languages spoken beside mother tongue have been asked. In the case of nationality and mother tongue respondents could choose one of eight given nationalities/languages and an „other” option, which they could specify.⁷ The question on other spoken languages was left open, and the first three languages were recorded. However, as the mother tongue was excluded in this case, we have no information on the actual use of the vernacular in everyday life. Therefore this is incomparable with the question on the language used in family and among friends that was used in the subsequent censuses.

In 2001 another question was added: beside nationality, mother tongue, language used in family and with friends, respondents could choose if they affiliate with the cultural values and traditions of any nationality. The predefined answers corresponded with the 13 native ethnic groups and languages listed in the Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities.⁸ In the case of the mother language and used languages Gypsy (Roma), Boyash (Beás) and Romani categories were listed separately. The respondents could of course choose the „other” option or – for the first time – decline to answer. Three unordered answers could be marked for each of the above questions.

In 2011 the questions regarding ethnic affiliation changed again.⁹ The question on cultural values and traditions has been removed, but two separate questions were asked on nationality: respondent could choose a primary affiliation (Question 34: „Which nationality do you feel you belong to in the first place?”) and a secondary affli-

⁷ The listed nationalities/languages: Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian, German, Gypsy.

⁸ Along with those listed in 1990 Bulgarian, Greek, Polish, Armenian, Rusyn and Ukrainian were listed as well.

⁹ On the parliamentary debate regarding the census questions see Körtvélyessi Zsolt: Census, ethnic data and legislation. *Minorities Research*. 2011. 13. 105–120.

ation (Question 35: „Other than your answer on the previous question, do you belong to any other nationality as well?”).¹⁰ There was one question on the mother tongue and another on the language used in family and with friends. The respondents could mark two answers for each, without specifying their order. Respondents could choose among predefined answers and an „other” option or choose to decline to answer. The order of the categories has been changed: the „Hungarian” option was moved to the first place, followed by the 13 native ethnic groups and finally additional four nationalities were added to the end of the list.¹¹ This change in the order might have affected the responses as well, especially the decision which nationality to mark as primary and which as secondary.¹²

Because of the changes made in the questions and the high proportion of people who declined to answer these, the analysis of the change of the number of people belonging to nationalities is limited.¹³ It is mainly due to the fact, that the possibility to declare multiple – three in 2001, two in 2011 – affiliations may in itself result in the increase in the number of people belonging to nationalities. The results of these censuses are therefore directly incomparable with the 1990 census results, when respondents could choose only one nationality, one mother tongue and instead of language used with family members or friends, language use in general was asked, with the mother tongue excluded. However, neither the 2001 and 2011 census results can be compared, because the number of potential affiliations changed: in 2011 respondent had to choose his primary and secondary national affiliation separately and the order of categories was changed, too.

In practice however, under certain assumption the results can be compared. In the news articles and studies the most evident comparison of the 2001 and 2011 census results has been accomplished. We argue that from a methodological perspective it is a fruitful approach to compare the 2011 results on primary national affiliation (unpublished in the official summaries) with the 1990 data on national affiliation.¹⁴ Accordingly, in our study we explore, how the ethnic composi-

¹⁰ In our paper we refer to the answers to question 34 as primary nationality or primary affiliation, to the answers to question 35 as secondary nationality/affiliation.

¹¹ Respondents could choose from a list consisting of the thirteen native ethnic groups, Arabian, Chinese, Russian and Vietnamese.

¹² Kapitány Balázs: Kárpát-medencei népszámlálási körkép (An overview of censuses in the Carpathian Basin). *Demográfia*. 2013. 56 (1). 25–64.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ The underlying assumption is, that if the respondents had to choose only one nationality, they would have chosen the one declared as primary nationality.

tion of the population of Hungary has changed based on the primary national affiliation. We use primarily a 5% sample of the 1990 census¹⁵ and a 10% anonymized sample of the 2011 census, and in smaller part a 10% anonymized sample of the 2001 census.¹⁶ We relied on the official results published by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) only in a few cases, because in these only the total number of people affiliated with any ethnic community is reported, therefore the primary and secondary national affiliation cannot be distinguished. Based on the comparison with the official results the sample is representative of the population of Hungary, only the Germans and Serbs are slightly underrepresented in the 2011 sample.¹⁷

Changes in the ethnic composition of the population of Hungary

The most interesting and discussed result of the 2011 census was the significant increase in the proportion of people affiliated with minority ethnic groups.¹⁸ In the official reports of the 2001 and 2011 censuses everyone was categorized as belonging to a particular ethnic group, who in at least one case (nationality, mother tongue, language used with family members or friends, cultural values and traditions) identified with this ethnic group/language/cultural heritage. This however poses several methodological problems. By following this method, we indeed see, that compared to 2001 the number of people belonging to nationalities rose by 50%, while the proportion of Hungarians decreased by 12%. Out of the 13 native ethnic groups only the proportion of Greeks, Slovaks and Slovenes decreased and the proportion of Ukrainians and Croats remained approximately the same, the proportion of the other 8 groups increased. The biggest increase can be seen in the case of Armenians and Bulgarians, these are however small communities, as are the Rusyns, Serbs and Poles.

¹⁵ The 1990 census database was provided by the Minnesota Population Center. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International: Version 6.3 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2014. Retrieved: <http://www.ipums.org>; 22 September 2015

¹⁶ The 10% anonymized databases of the 2001 and 2011 censuses were provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. The HCSO can not be held responsible for the results and conclusions derived from them.

¹⁷ We use the terms Germans, Serbs, etc. as shorthand for the name of ethnic categories and not for the citizens of these countries, i.e. instead of ethnic Germans, ethnic Serbs, etc.

¹⁸ Tóth Ágnes – Vékás János: A magyarországi nemzetiségek létszámváltozása 2001 és 2011 között (The change in the number of people belonging to nationalities in Hungary between 2001 and 2011). *Statistikai Szemle*. 2013. 91 (12). 1256–1267.

Out of the more populous ethnic groups, the number of Roma, Germans and Romanians increased significantly, too.¹⁹ But we have to bear in mind, that in this interpretation all those, who either feel to belong to a particular nationality – either primarily or secondarily –, they consider the given language their mother tongue or at least use it in the family or among friends, are considered to be members of this ethnic group.²⁰

Table 1. *People belonging to ethnic groups in 2001 and 2011*²¹

	2001	2011	change (2001 = 100%)
Total population	10 198 315	9 937 628	97,44%
Hungarian	9 627 057	8 504 492	88,34%
Bulgarian	2 316	6 272	270,81%
Gypsy (Romani, Boyash)	205 720	315 583	153,40%
Greek	6 619	4 642	70,13%
Croatian	25 730	26 774	104,06%
Polish	5 144	7 001	136,10%
German	120 344	185 696	154,30%
Armenian	1 165	3 571	306,52%
Romanian	14 781	35 641	241,13%
Rusyn	2 079	3 882	186,72%
Serbian	7 350	10 038	136,57%
Slovak	39 266	35 208	89,67%
Slovenian	4 832	2 820	58,36%
Ukrainian	7 393	7 396	100,04%

By examining the dimensions, that constitute the basis of one's ethnic affiliation, we see notable differences between ethnic groups. While most of the people belong to the particular ethnic group through their nationality – let it be primary or secondary – and/or mother tongue, nevertheless in several cases the respondent's ethnic affiliation is solely based on the language used in the family or among friends. This proportion varies between 0.9–25.9 percent, depending

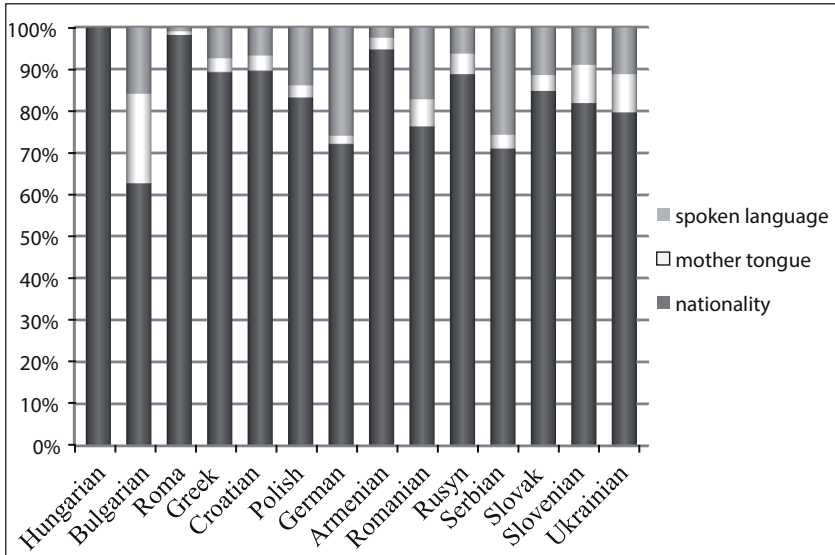
¹⁹ 2011. évi népszámlálás 9. Nemzetiségi adatok (Census 2011 9. Ethnic data), Source: http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/nepsz2011/nepsz_09_2011.pdf, Downloaded: 2015.09.22.

²⁰ Népszámlálás 2011 – Módszertani megjegyzések, fogalmak (Census 2011 – Methodology, Concepts), Source: <http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/docs/modszertan.pdf>, Downloaded: 2015.09.22.

²¹ Source: www.nepszamlalas.hu, Retrieved: 22 September 2015

on the ethnic group. We argue, that the sufficiency of the used language as a basis of ethnic identity is in several cases questionable, therefore it is necessary to examine the change in proportions excluding this dimension from the analysis.²²

Figure 1. *The primary basis of affiliation (2011, estimated from sample)*²³



If we exclude used language as an indicator of ethnic affiliation, we get significantly smaller increases in proportions for several ethnic groups, however in some cases quite to the contrary, we see smaller decreases or even bigger increases. On the whole, the increase in proportions of people belonging to the more numerous ethnic groups – except the Slovaks – is still remarkable, especially so in the case of Romanians, whose number increased by a factor of 2.3 in ten years.

²² According to the census methodology, everyone is considered minority, who speaks for instance English or German with friends or as an ethnic Hungarian from one of the neighbouring countries uses the country's official language to interact with family, friends, even if he does not identify with the particular nationality.

²³ If a respondent is affiliated with a particular nationality in more ways, we operationalized primary basis of affiliation according to the following rule: declared nationality was the most important, mother tongue the second and language used in everyday interactions only the third. If a respondent was affiliated with multiple nationalities, the same rule was used to choose among these. As a result only those are categorized as Hungarians, who are affiliated with the Hungarian nation and language on all the three dimensions.

Table 2. *The number of people belonging to nationalities – 2001 and 2011 without language used in the family or with friends (Source: www.nepszamlalas.hu)²⁴*

	2001	2011	corrected change (2001 = 100%)	original change
Population	10 198 315	9 937 628	97,44%	97,44%
Hungarian	9 599 119	8 476 033	88,30%	88,34%
Bulgarian	2 119	5 073	239,41%	270,81%
Gypsy (Romani, Boyash)	202 640	312 087	154,01%	153,40%
Greek	6 453	4 113	63,74%	70,13%
Croatian	23 607	24 620	104,29%	104,06%
Polish	4 633	6 013	129,79%	136,10%
German	103 363	137 177	132,71%	154,30%
Armenian	1 106	3 407	308,05%	306,52%
Romanian	12 798	29 144	227,72%	241,13%
Rusyn	1 828	3 559	194,69%	186,72%
Serbian	6 259	7 835	125,18%	136,57%
Slovak	33 693	31 134	92,40%	89,67%
Slovenian	4 453	2 597	58,32%	58,36%
Ukrainian	6 686	6 382	95,45%	100,04%

The increase was the highest in the dimension of nationality (average factor of 1.77), in the dimension of mother tongue it was substantially smaller (average factor of 1.09). At the same time there are significant differences among ethnic groups: while the number and proportion of Slovenian or Ukrainian-speakers decreased significantly, the proportion of Armenian-speakers increased by a factor of 1.5 and the proportion of Bulgarian-speakers by a factor of 2.2. These are however small communities, therefore even this significant increase had only small effect on the overall ethnic composition of Hungary's population. Of the more numerous communities, the number of Romanians rose remarkably, but the change in the number of German-speakers was more moderate and the number of Slovak or Croatian-speakers decreased slightly. As the increase was primarily in the dimension of nationality, we deem it important to explore this aspect in more detail.

²⁴ The number of people, who are affiliated with a particular language and ethnic group only by using it's language in everyday interactions with family members or friends can be found in the official results of the census published by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. By subtracting this number from the total number of people belonging to a particular nationality, one gets the number of people affiliated by declared nationality or mother tongue.

Table 3. *The degree of change in ethnic affiliation by its dimensions (2001 = 100%, www.nepszamlalas.hu)*

	nationality	mother tongue	language used
Population	97,44%		
Hungarian*	88,30%	88,09%	87,73%
Bulgarian	261,86%	223,17%	246,51%
Gypsy (Romani, Boyash)	162,62%	112,18%	115,20%
Greek	156,08%	97,45%	118,84%
Croatian	151,06%	95,74%	108,62%
Polish	193,45%	118,18%	143,47%
German	212,46%	113,25%	180,79%
Armenian	531,13%	151,02%	165,33%
Romanian	329,52%	163,71%	218,90%
Rusyn	302,64%	89,76%	105,90%
Serbian	188,94%	109,45%	136,48%
Slovak	167,56%	83,68%	90,08%
Slovenian	78,84%	54,18%	56,15%
Ukrainian	111,10%	69,27%	71,81%
Nationalities total	177,01%	109,34%	137,59%

* Respondents were considered Hungarians/Hungarian-speakers/Hungarian-users, if they chose this option in every case (nationality, mother tongue, used language). If a respondent chose to declare any other nationality, mother tongue or used language, in accordance with the census methodology was classified as belonging to that particular nationality.

As discussed above, in the last censuses the operationalization of the question regarding nationality was different every time. In 2001 respondents could choose to identify with three nationalities, but couldn't indicate the preference order. The original order of the categories determined, which was coded as first, second and third answer. Therefore, even though one could affiliate with multiple ethnic groups, only relatively few respondents took advantage of this. Estimated from the sample, approximately 1.1 percent of the respondents chose two nationalities, and only 0.01 percent chose three.

In 2011, however, the proportion of those who declared dual national identity was 4.5 percent, which is approximately four times higher than in 2001. Such an increase in this proportion may have resulted from the campaign of the Alliance of the Minority Self-Governments called Multicoloured Hungary – Census 2011 (Sokszínű Magyarország – Népszámlálás 2011) and the initiative We Belong Here (Ide Tartozunk), which aimed to encourage people to answer the questions on ethnic affiliation, and to declare their ethnic or dual affiliation, but it may also be the consequence of the changed methodology.

Table 4. *Number of people choosing a particular nationality as their primary or secondary affiliation (2011, estimated from a 10% sample)*

nationality	primary	secondary	total	primary (%)
Gypsy (Roma)	133680	177380	308990	43,26%
German	42750	83480	125280	34,12%
Non-native	30260	27560	55580	54,44%
Croat	11060	12420	23190	47,69%
Romanian	8310	18010	26100	31,84%
Slovak	7200	22380	29320	24,56%
Serb	2590	4090	6310	41,05%
Pole	2410	3660	5920	40,71%
Bulgarian	1950	1730	3610	54,02%
Ukrainian	1950	3940	5630	34,64%
Greek	1710	2250	3860	44,30%
Armenian	1000	2180	3060	32,68%
Rusyn	950	2530	3410	27,86%
Slovene	830	1330	2090	39,71%
Total (native)	246650 (216390)	362940 (335380)	602350 (546770)	40,95% (39,58%)

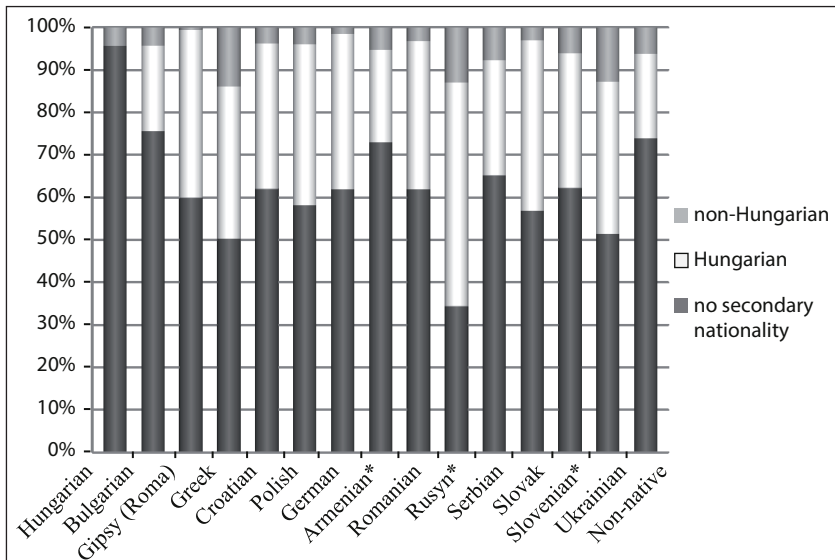
The 2011 census not only permitted the declaration of dual identity, but also to choose, which one is the primary and which one the secondary affiliation. In 2001 this was not provided. Nevertheless, based on the assumption, that if the respondents had to choose, they would choose the nationality declared as primary, it is possible to compare the results of the 2011 census with those of the 1990 census.

In the 10 percent representative sample, which we used 60,235 people chose another nationality rather than Hungarian as their primary or secondary affiliation. Out of these 54,677 respondents chose one of the thirteen native ethnic groups. However out of these respondents only around 40 percent chose this affiliation as primary (40.9% for all respondents and 39.6% for the native ethnic groups). There are noticeable differences among the individual groups, but there are only two categories – Bulgarians and „Non-native nationality” –, that the majority of the members is primarily affiliated with the particular ethnic group (Table 4).

It is also worth exploring, what is the proportion of those with dual identities among people affiliated with a particular nationality, and how many of them chose Hungarian as secondary identity. Most of the respondents who answered the question regarding primary nationality didn't choose a secondary identity. Only 4.4 percent of those, who are primarily Hungarian chose a secondary nationality

and among those primarily affiliated with some minority approximately 62 percent didn't choose a secondary affiliation. The individual groups differ in this aspect as well: in the case of Rusyns, those declaring dual-identity constitute the majority, but also in the case of Greeks and Ukrainians, almost half of the respondent's have dual-identity. If they declared a secondary affiliation, it was mostly to the Hungarian ethnicity, only 1 out of 20 respondents chose some other, and this proportion is only higher in the case of smaller native ethnic groups and the non-native category.

Figure 2. *Secondary nationality by respondent's primary nationality (2011, estimated from sample)²⁵*



As seen in Table 6, based only on the nationality marked as primary, the increase in the total number of nationalities is not as high as previously. Out of all the nationalities living in Hungary only the „other” nationalities and the Germans show an increase in numbers, which is nevertheless significant. The number of Serbians is approximately the same as 20 years earlier. The rest of the ethnic groups experienced decreases in their numbers ranging from 5 percent to more than 50 percent. The number of Slovaks decreased

²⁵ The results for Armenians, Rusyns and Slovenes are to be treated with caution due to small sample sizes (less than 100).

Table 5. *The change in ethnic composition of the population based on first nationality (estimated from sample)*

first nationality	1990	2011	2011 (without NAs)	change (1990 = 100%)	change (without NAs)
Hungarian	97,78%	82,75%	97,09%	84,63%	99,29%
Gypsy/Roma	1,35%	1,35%	1,58%	99,96%	117,28%
German	0,30%	0,43%	0,50%	143,85%	168,78%
Croatian	0,13%	0,11%	0,13%	83,00%	97,38%
Slovak	0,11%	0,07%	0,09%	68,78%	80,70%
Romanian	0,10%	0,08%	0,10%	80,71%	94,70%
Serbian	0,02%	0,03%	0,03%	108,07%	126,79%
Slovenian	0,02%	0,01%	0,01%	46,55%	54,61%
Non-native	0,19%	0,30%	0,36%	216,54%	254,06%
Polish		0,02%	0,03%		
Bulgarian		0,02%	0,02%		
Ukrainian		0,02%	0,02%		
Greek		0,02%	0,02%		
Armenian		0,01%	0,01%		
Rusyn		0,01%	0,01%		
No answer (NA)	-	14,77%	-	-	-
Nationalities (total)	2,22%	2,48%	2,91%	111,96%	131,36%

Table 6. *Change in the size of ethnic groups based on first nationality between 1990–2011. (estimated from samples)*

first nationality	1990	2011	change (1990 = 100%)
Hungarian	10135000	8222130	81,13%
Gypsy/Roma	139500	133680	95,83%
German	31000	42750	137,90%
Croatian	13900	11060	79,57%
Slovak	10920	7200	65,93%
Romanian	10740	8310	77,37%
Serbian	2500	2590	103,60%
Slovenian	1860	830	44,62%
Non-native	19380	30260	207,59%
Polish		2410	
Bulgarian		1950	
Ukrainian		1950	
Greek		1710	
Armenian		1000	
Rusyn		950	
No answer	0	1467220	-
Nationalities (total)	229800	246650	107,33%

almost by 45 percent, and the Slovenes suffered the largest decrease, more than 55%. Nonetheless, the number of Hungarians decreased as well, which change slightly exceeds the number of those who didn't answer the question. In total the proportion of nationalities, based on primary affiliation, rose by approximately 7.3 percent. If we excluded the non-respondents in 2011, and calculated the proportions of nationalities only for the respondents, we would see an increase in the case of the Roma and the Serbs as well and the total increase would be approximately 31%. In short we may conclude, that if we compare the 1990 and 2011 data on the basis of primary affiliation, the increase in the size of ethnic communities is not as high as is often stated, and we don't see signs of a pronounced ethnic revival.

In his analysis Balázs Kapitány questions the assumption, based on which those, who didn't answer the question regarding primary affiliation, are in different studies automatically counted as Hungarians, and argues that similarly to other sensitive questions, which are „ethnically neutral” the unwillingness to answer is at least partly independent from one's ethnic affiliation.²⁶ Kapitány argues, that it is reasonable to assume, that the ethnic composition of those, who declined to answer both ethnic and other sensitive questions is approximately the same as of those, who did answer. In the case of those, who were only reluctant to answer ethnic questions, he argues that the proportion of respondents belonging to nationalities is higher. Yet, there is no evidence to support either of these claims regarding the non-respondents.

The characteristics of non-respondents

The proportion of those, who didn't answer the two questions regarding nationality was 14.8 percent. The individual reasons for declining to answer may be diverse, be that the weakening of ethnic affiliation, the hiding of minority identity, the omitting of the question on the part of the interviewer (as it is „not compulsory”), a general attitude towards the census or that it is „easier” not to answer in case of online self-completion.²⁷

²⁶ Kapitány, 2013. Kárpát-medencei népszámlálási körkép (An overview of censuses in the Carpathian Basin)

²⁷ Kapitány, 2013. Kárpát-medencei népszámlálási körkép (An overview of censuses in the Carpathian Basin)

Table 7. *The proportion of non-respondents (2011, estimated from sample)*

	Responded	Didn't respond
Mean	85,2%	14,8%
Gender		
male	84,7%	15,3%
female	85,7%	14,3%
Settlement type		
districts of Budapest	82,2%	17,8%
County seats, towns with county rights	84,3%	15,7%
Other cities/towns	85,3%	14,7%
Villages	87,5%	12,5%
Region		
Central Hungary	83,6%	16,4%
Central Transdanubia	84,4%	15,6%
Western Transdanubia	85,8%	14,2%
Southern Transdanubia	85,4%	14,6%
Northern Hungary	86,5%	13,5%
Northern Great Plain	86,9%	13,1%
Southern Great Plain	86,1%	13,9%
Born abroad		
no	85,9%	14,1%
yes	73,3%	26,7%
Citizenship		
stateless (<i>N=14</i>)	0,0%	100,0%
Hungarian	85,8%	14,2%
Hungarian and other	84,7%	15,3%
foreign	50,6%	49,4%
dual foreign (<i>N=137</i>)	39,4%	60,6%
Highest degree		
completed primary or lower	85,3%	14,7%
vocational	84,4%	15,6%
maturity	85,1%	14,9%
tertiary	86,5%	13,5%
Age		
18 or less	83,3%	16,7%
19–35	83,5%	16,5%
36–50	84,0%	16,0%
51–65	86,8%	13,2%
more than 65	89,7%	10,3%

The proportion of non-respondents was only slightly, 1 percent higher among male respondents. There is also a moderate relationship between settlement type and the non-response rate: the proportion of non-respondents was the highest in Budapest and the lowest in villages. One reason may be the difference in age composition, the proportion of those who responded via internet, but also that in smaller settlements, there is less chance to hide one's ethnic identity, than in larger cities or the capital. The non-response rate was slightly lower in the eastern part of the country – in ascending order Northern Great Plain, Northern Hungary, Southern Great Plain –, and somewhat higher in the central and western regions – the highest in Central Hungary and Central Transdanubia. The proportion of non-respondents was particularly high among stateless and foreign – especially dual and non-Hungarian – citizens, and among those born abroad. Among tertiary educated the probability of response was somewhat higher than the average, and among respondents with a vocational degree slightly lower. Non-response was slightly more typical for the younger age groups: while the non-response rate among people younger than 40 was between 15–17 percent, over 40 years this ratio decreases and is only 10 percent among people above 65. This might also have resulted from the probably higher proportions of online completion among younger respondents, but other factors might have contributed as well.²⁸ In the case of children younger than 18, it was the parents' decision to answer a question or not. Unfortunately, it was not possible to compare the respondent's answers with the answers of his/her relatives, so we cannot test the assumption, that the „non-response” of minors and the non-response of their parents are strongly associated. Those, who declined to choose nationality, typically left the other sensitive questions unanswered as well, which makes it likely, that this is not a deliberate choice but rather a general attitude towards the questionnaire („we don't answer what's not compulsory”). We see similar non-response rates in the case of mother tongue and language use in everyday interactions – 14.5 and 15 percent respectively – and even higher rate in the case of religious affiliation – 27.2 percent.

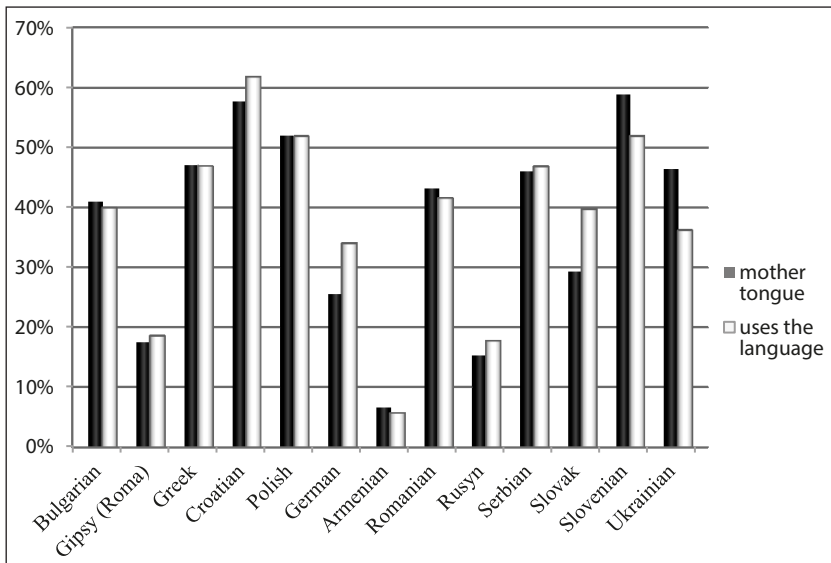
All these however account only for a small part of the variation in response rates and further inquiries are necessary to explore the underlying motives and to obtain further information regarding the ethnic affiliation of non-respondents.

²⁸ The sample didn't make it possible to analyze the mode of completion of the questionnaire, therefore our hypothesis is untestable based on the available data.

The characteristics of language use

Besides the changes in the numbers and proportions of nationalities, it is important to explore, if those declaring minority affiliation – be that primary or secondary – use the language of the particular nationality, and if they consider it their mother tongue. Even if the „categorical reproduction” is assured, this does not automatically result in the reproduction of cultural practices, of which language is one of the most important.²⁹

Figure 3. *The proportion of language-speakers and language-users by „composite” nationality (2011, estimated from sample)³⁰*



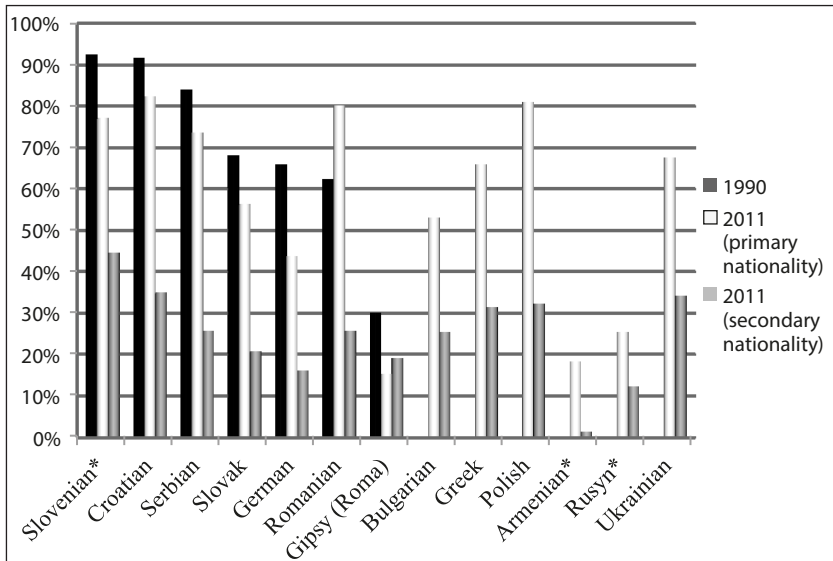
In this aspect, the results of the census show, that for a high proportion of nationalities the minority language is neither the mother tongue, nor a language used in everyday interactions. Data show, that the proportion of language-users is in several cases lower

²⁹ Horváth István: Az etnolingvisztikai reprodukció az erdélyi magyarság körében (Ethnolinguistic reproduction among Hungarians in Transylvania). *Erdélyi Társadalom*. 2008. 6(1-2). 37–65.

³⁰ Composite nationality in this case means that everyone, who was primarily or secondarily affiliated with a particular nationality was categorized as such. A respondent who declared two non-Hungarian nationalities was categorized according to the primary nationality.

than that of the language-speakers.³¹ The individual ethnic groups differ, of course. Out of the thirteen native nationalities, the language-speakers constitute the majority of Slovenes, Croats and Poles, but their proportion is particularly low among Armenians, Rusyns and the Roma. The differences in the proportions of language-users are similar in magnitude.

Figure 4. *Ethnic language-speakers by nationality (estimated from samples)³²*



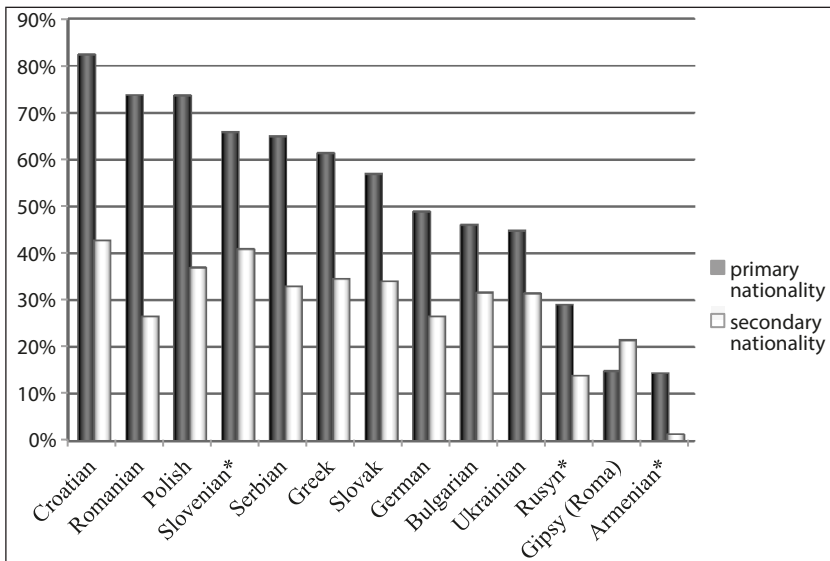
The sample of the 1990 census makes it possible for us to analyze the change in the use of mother tongue, but the everyday use of the language was not asked in 1990. From the comparison with the 2011 results, we may conclude, that among those, who are primarily affiliated with a particular ethnic group, the proportion of those, who also consider its language their mother tongue has decreased. The only exceptions are the Romanians. This again shows that in the 20 years

³¹ The term language-speakers is used as shorthand form for those, who consider the particular language their mother tongue and language-users for those who use it in everyday interactions with family members or friends.

³² In 2011 several linguistic groups did not figure separately in the questionnaire, therefore only the data from 2011 are available for these. The proportions for Armenians, Rusyns and Slovenians (*) have to be treated with caution due to the small sample sizes.

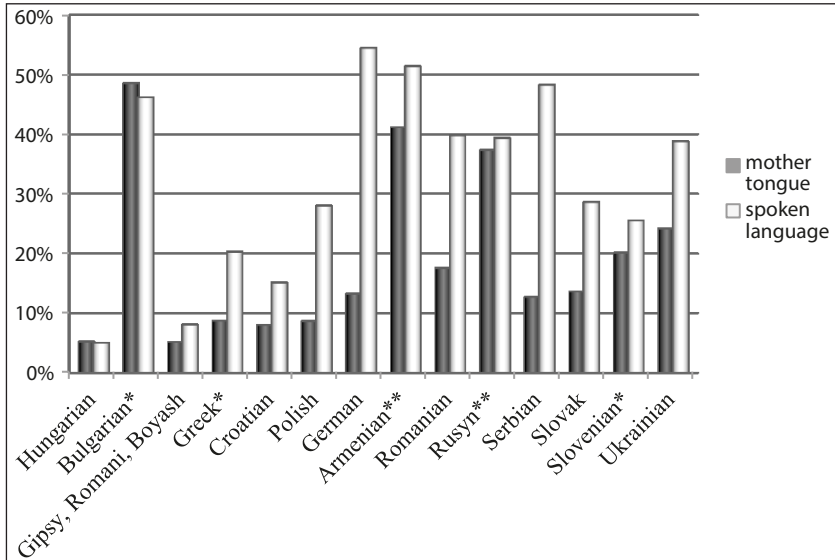
prior to the latest census, the ethnic language was losing its importance. Among the secondarily affiliated the proportion of language-speakers is typically lower, the only exception being the Roma, which highlights their distinctive pattern of integration-assimilation: the already low level of the use of the Romani language shows the intention to integrate-assimilate, and those who still speak the language as the vernacular language or in everyday life often choose the Gypsy (Roma) nationality only as their secondary affiliation. All this, coupled with the low levels of language use in family and among friends leads to the conclusion, that in the 2011 census there was a high percentage of respondents, who took advantage of the opportunity to declare their dual identity, express their ethnic origin, however does not take part in the reproduction of the ethnic culture – which was in this case operationalized in the narrow concepts of mother tongue and language use.

Figure 5. *Language-users by primary and secondary nationality (2011, estimated from sample)³³*



³³ Language used in family and among friends was asked for the first time in 2001, therefore it cannot be compared with 1990 data. In the case of Slovenians, Rusyns and Armenians the proportions have to be treated with caution due to the small sample sizes.

Figure 6. *Proportion of respondents, who chose a nationality other than mother tongue and language spoken with relatives or friends by linguistic groups based on mother tongue and spoken language (2011, estimated from sample)³⁴*



Nevertheless, in every linguistic group, there are in smaller or bigger proportions people, that consider the particular language their mother tongue, and in this form declare some form of ethnic origin, but do not identify with the ethnic group, and declare some other nationality. The estimated proportions should be interpreted with caution, because the individual linguistic groups are small in size and therefore the number of sampled cases is also small. However, the proportion of those who do not identify with the given nationality is relatively high, around 10 percent among the more numerous linguistic groups as well. The same is true for everyday use of language; those who by declaring their nationality contribute to the „categorical reproduction” of the ethnic group do not overlap with those, who guarantee the „etnolinguistic reproduction” by using the language in everyday interactions. In the case of some languages, the proportion of people who do not affiliate with the corresponding nationality is particularly high. This is especially apparent in the case of the German, Romanian and Serbian

³⁴ In case of some language groups (* and **) the estimated proportions are to be treated with caution due to small sample sizes.

languages, which also questions the assumption, that people who use the particular language in everyday interaction should be categorized as belonging to the ethnic group, as one might assume, that among these respondents we could find for instance Hungarians from the neighbouring countries, who use the official language of their country of origin in everyday interactions.

Conclusion

The present paper aimed to provide a comparison of the 1990 and 2011 census results on ethnic identity and to explore the increase in the number of Hungary's minorities from a different perspective. This was made possible by the change in the census questionnaire which allowed the respondents to declare a primary and a secondary nationality.

Based on representative samples of the two censuses we attempted to show, that if we take the primary national affiliation as the basis of comparison, the increase in the number of minorities is considerably smaller, in fact several ethnic groups have decreased in size, which questions the narrative of national/ethnic revival. The analysis was complicated by the fact that the proportion of those who didn't answer the ethnic questions was remarkably high in 2011. This may have resulted from multiple reasons, and further studies are necessary to determine, which nationality if any these non-respondents identify with.

On the whole, based on the available information, we came to the conclusion, that the higher proportion of people belonging to nationalities in 2011 is not independent from the changes in the methodology of the census, but the campaigns promoting the declaration of ethnic and dual identity might also have affected the results. The two factors are inseparable without further inquiries.

However comparing the results with mother tongue and language use, we may state that of those, who in the census declared their minority affiliation, only a more or less small fraction considers the language of the particular minority their mother tongue or uses it in everyday life. In short, the „categorical reproduction” of ethnic groups does not automatically lead to their cultural reproduction. These facts regarding language use further question the thesis of ethnic revival, therefore we cannot state, that the number and proportion of minorities increased significantly in the 20 years between the 1990 and 2011 censuses. Nevertheless, the 2011 census, by making it possible for the respondents to declare their dual identities probably resulted in more accurate numbers and contributes to our better understanding of the real processes.