

THE MACRO AND MICRO STRUCTURAL IMPACT OF THE ETHNIC ELEMENT IN BIRDA-MORAVIȚA PLAIN

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ABSTRACT. - **The Macro and Micro Structural Impact of the Ethnic Element in Birda-Moravița Plain.** The article aims to perform an evaluation of the ethnic specificity both at regional level (macro structurally) and at the level of the most representative localities (micro structurally). In Birda-Moravița Plain, both regionally and on a commune level, the ethnic element registered major variations throughout the analysed censuses. These variations were caused especially by a strong migration wave. The main consequence of this wave was the transition from a heterogeneous ethnic structure to a higher degree of homogeneity and to an assimilation by the Romanians of the other ethnic elements.

Keywords: *ethnicity, ethnic diversity, Romanian inhabitants, national minorities.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Concepts such as nation, nationality, ethnicity, ethnic or national minority groups were often discussed in literature by both Romanian and foreign authors who have tried to define or find a new meaning for already known concepts in international human geography.

Writers such as R. Hartshorne (1950, p. 43) consider the nation as “*a space occupied by a group of people between whom there is a strong connection determined by common principles and values of paramount importance in that region*”.

In time, with a much broader scope and with deep implications for human geography, different definitions for the term ethnicity or ethnic group were assigned. “*Thus, a population who has the same origin, cultural tradition, consciousness of belonging to the same group and whose unity is based on the same territory and history is called ethnicity*” (R. Crețan, 1999, p.24).

The presence of numerous national minorities in ethnic groups resulted in several attempts to define them. In the paper *Political Geography*, N.J.G. Pounds (1972, p. 152) considers that the national groups represent “*the only minority in a state who can identify themselves with the national minorities*”. A similar concept is presented in the paper *L'identité culturelle*, where D. Schnapper (1992, p. 31) states that the difference of race, nationality or language from the majority group designates a national minority.

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In the paper *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives*, Thomas Eriksen tries to find a suitable definition for the concepts mentioned above, equally trying to establish a relationship between them. Thus, Eriksen (1993) believes that *"when someone talks about ethnicity, he indicates that those groups and identities have developed in mutual contact rather than separately"*. According to the same author, *"ethnicity is seen as an aspect of social relationship between people who consider themselves as being culturally different from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum regular interaction"*. However, in the introduction of the aforementioned work, Eriksen noted that terms like *"ethnic groups, ethnicity and ethnic conflict have become quite regular terms in the English language, and they keep appearing in the press, in TV news, in political programmes and in casual conversations"*. *"The same thing can be said for nation and nationalism, and we should admit that the meaning of these words frequently seems ambiguous and vague for us"* (T. Eriksen, 1993, p.36).

Similar definitions were given by authors such as George de Vos (1975, p.16). He considers ethnicity as *"the subjective symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from other groups"*.

A more complex definition is given by Elaine Burgess. According to her, *"ethnicity is the character, quality, or condition of ethnic group membership, based on an identity with a consciousness of group belonging that is differentiated from others by symbolic 'markers' (which includes cultural, biological, or territorial), and is rooted in bonds to a common past and perceived ethnic interests"* (E. Burgess, , 1978, p. 270).

Establishing a connection between the term ethnicity and culture has also been a matter of interest for other authors. The relationship between the two terms still remains unclear to a certain degree. In this respect, Jack David Eller argues that *"not all the culturally distinct groups are ethnic groups precisely and not all the ethnic groups are culturally distinct groups"*. According to Eller, *"ethnicity and culture are not always in a perfect relationship"* (J.D. Eller, 1999, p.8). The same author states that *"ethnicity is presented as a stand-alone entity"*. Eller defines this notion as *"the symbolic use of any aspect of culture to differentiate between them and other groups (Eller, ibid) or consciousness of difference and the subjective salience of that difference"* (J.D. Eller, 1999, p. 9). According to Eller, *"ethnicity is connected to cultural or historical markers"* (ibid).

The relationship between the formation of ethnic groups and social and cultural processes is also treated in Fredrik Barth's studies. The work that involves the formation of ethnic groups includes social processes of exclusion and incorporation and the selection of social and cultural aspects which are deemed relevant to the construction of identity and boundaries (F. Barth, 1969). According to Fredrik Barth (1969, p.15) *"ethnic groups are not necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories; and the various ways in which they are maintained, not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation, need to be analyzed"* (ibid).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The evaluation of the social impact on a region was analyzed in works included in the international geographical literature in an attempt to find an appropriate definition and to present the importance of these theories in the study of a geographical area, more

or less large. A possible definition related to the social impact complexity is given by F. Vanclay in the paper *Social Impact Assessment*, who considers that *"the social impact assessment is not only a technique or a component of EIA, but it is philosophy about development and democracy"* (F. Vanclay, 2002, p. 33). According to the same author, *"social impact assessment is analyzing, monitoring and managing the social consequences of development"* (F. Vanclay, 2003, p. 6).

In the article *Social Impact Assessment: A Contribution to the State of the Art Series*, Rabel Burdge and Franck Vanclay state that *"social impacts include all social and cultural consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society"* (R. Burge and F. Vanclay, 1996, p. 59). The same authors also refer to the so-called *"cultural impact"*, highlighting the fact that this type of impact *"involves changes to the norms, values, and beliefs of individuals that guide and rationalize their cognition of themselves and their society"* (ibid).

Based on these statements, we intend to perform an analysis on the assessment of types of impact that demographic indicators such as the ethnic structure of the population or the internal migration may have on a regional system.

The analysis of the assessment of the socio-economic impact is a common method used in international human geography. In this respect, we also had as reference the Anglo-Saxon specialized literature (N.C. Taylor, C.H. Bryan, C.G. Goodrich, 2004). The research objectives fall into two categories: the theoretical category, based on definitions, concepts, calculation formulas, interviews or semi-structured questionnaires and the practical category, highlighted by statistics.

Given the fact that this is a research based especially on the quantitative component, I have not hesitated to use a number of classical methods, such as analysis, synthesis, comparison or the geographical-historical method in order to highlight the main geographical phenomena generated by the evolution of the population ethnic structure.

Based on this principle, I have used the comparison method in order to present the passage from ethnic heterogeneity both at regional level and on a commune level (1900) to a relative homogeneity (2002). This phenomenon was caused both by the migrations and by the assimilation by the Romanians of the other ethnic groups.

The geographical-historical evolution of a territory often has various consequences on the ethnic element (causing migration, assimilation etc.). This is why the geographical-historical method aims to highlight the background on which the ethnic element in Birda-Moravița Plain has evolved over time.

3. BIRDA-MORAVIȚA PLAIN. GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION

The Birda Plain is located in the southern part of the Banat Plain, and it is bordered to the east by the Bârzava Plain and the Hills of Tyrol. To the west, it is bordered by the Timiș River, the Bega Mică Plain and the Timișoara Plain. *"The Moravița Plain is a low alluvial plain which flows deep into the Gâtaia Plain"* (G. Posea, 1997, p. 297). To the south, the Birda- Moravița Plain is bordered by Serbia. It should be noted that the

delimitation of natural units does not coincide with the administrative division. There are villages which are part of natural units other than the Birda- Moravița Plain (Lățunaș, which belongs to the Jamu Mare commune, is located in the Clopodia Plain and Cerna, which belongs to the Liebling commune, is located in the Bârzava Plain) (fig. 1).

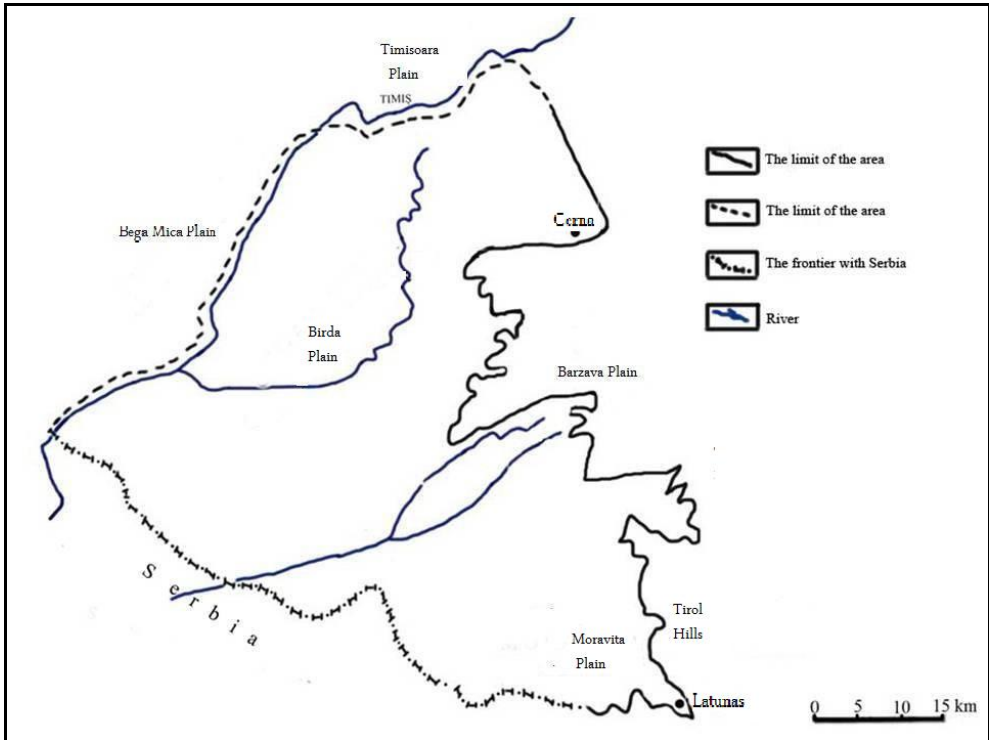


Fig. 1. Birda-Moravița Plain. Geographical Position
Source: G. Posea (1997)

4. THE ETHNIC STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION IN BIRDA-MORAVIȚA PLAIN. FROM A MULTIETHNIC SPACE TO A HOMOGENEOUS SPACE

The regional system called Birda-Moravița Plain has been characterized by multi-ethnicity since early times. This is the convergence space of several ethnicities. Over time, within the main census, at a regional level, there were localities where the ethnic structure retained its Romanian specificity, while others were characterized either by ethnic heterogeneity or by a constant change of the ethnic specificity, a natural consequence of massive migrations.

Before presenting the phenomenon of multiethnicity that is characteristic to the Birda-Moravița Plain, it should be noted that in 1900 there were still a few old Romanian centres on which the successive colonization waves had had different impacts. It is the

case of some villages situated in the north-western and north-eastern part of the Birda Plain, and in the northern part of the Moravița Plain, which stand out by the majority of the Romanian population in all census years.

The massive colonisations with German population during the Habsburg rule (in the years 1722, 1775 and 1784-1787) imposed an ethnic mosaic at a regional level. Thus, the 1900 and 1930 censuses show that the Germans had relative and even absolute majority in the villages from the southern, northern and eastern parts of the Birda Plain and in most of the villages from the Moravița Plain.

The causes of the mass migration of the Germans both to the studied region and to the whole Banat, were of military and religious nature. Their aim consisted in *"strengthening the borders of the country, and increasing the number of Catholic people to support the Habsburg monarchy"* (G. Ilie, 1930, p.4-5 apud R. Crețan, 1999, p.86).

The entire 18th century was marked by consistent colonization in Birda-Moravița Plain, but one of the purposes of Josephine colonization policies in Banat required that "firstly, the settlers should be German and Catholic, secondly, that they should be non-German but still Catholic, and, in exceptional cases, they could be of other religions or dissenters" (N.M. Popp 1942, p. 360-361, apud R. Crețan, 1999, p. 86). From 1890 and then after 1930, there was a strong German emigration to countries like the U.S.A. and Germany at the regional level. This was the main reason for which at the censuses of 1992 (fig) and 2002 (fig) from the Birda-Moravița Plain there no longer were any villages left where the ethnic German population held the majority. Most villages had an insignificant number of Germans.

Regionally, the specificity of the ethnic mosaic was also completed by the presence of a consistent Hungarian population. These colonisations were carried out either by the state or they were private, taking place on the estates of Hungarian or Austrian nobles (R. Crețan, 1999, p. 115). It should be noted that in 1900, at the entire regional system, there were a few villages with a strong Hungarian element, even if Hungarians did not have an absolute majority. The private colonisations with Hungarians had primarily a strong economic impact on the studied area. This led to the establishment of specific organization forms such as hamlets of workers specialized in rice culture (R. Crețan, 1999, p. 119). Other forms of organization of Hungarians in the Birda- Moravița Plain were represented by *hodăi*², Hungarian dwellings, *maiere*³ or farms of important owners who had as employees Hungarian peasants and tenants or even people who had a different ethnicity and who were required to learn Hungarian (Gh. Birăescu, 1939, p. 60 apud R. Crețan, 1999, p.120). Among the best known *maiere*, farms and *hodăi* present in the analyzed area, we can mention: *Maierele Moritz*, the *Karatsony* rice plantation, *Hodăile Wekerle*, the tobacco plantation etc. (Gh. Birăescu, 1939, p.87).

In 1900 there were villages with Hungarian majority in the southern part of Moravița Plain and in the eastern and central parts of the Birda Plain. Most of the Hungarian population from the southern part of the Moravița Plain is mainly due to the emigration of native Serbs and the subsequent colonization of Hungarians in two stages (around 1821 and in 1829). In the central and eastern parts of Birda Plain, the

² temporary settlements

³ farms that belonged to land owners

phenomenon of massive colonization was largely based on economic reasons. Count Clary organized one of the most important rice plantations of the Habsburg empire, with the participation of Hungarian families brought to the village. The villages mentioned above preserved their ethnicity until the census of 2002, when, following the Hungarian emigration, these villages became predominantly Romanian.

A Serbian majority can be found in only three villages in the Birda Plain (in the south-west, in the south-central and in the central-east), the number of ethnic Serbs being much smaller in other parts. This majority is the result of the second (1459-1465) and the third (1541) colonization period of Serbians in Banat, the causes of these infiltrations being political. It consisted in trying to defend Hungary from Turkish attacks. After 1930, the Serbs have never held a majority in any village in Birda-Moravița Plain.

An interesting phenomenon is found in the central-southern part of the Birda Plain because after the emigration of the Serbians, the area was colonized by Ukrainians, who have held the majority since 2002 until the present day. The Ukrainians arrived and finally settled in the village because of a forest located outside the village. Carpentry work was specific for the Ukrainians.

The colonisations during the Habsburg rule also brought successive waves of Bulgarians who settled in the central-eastern part of the Birda Plain between 1842 and 1846. This is the location where they held the majority in all censuses.

The existence of various ethnic groups in a relatively small area also generated a religious mosaic, but it did not cause major regional conflicts, the ethnic minorities being assimilated by the dominant ethnic group (fig. 2, 3 and 4).

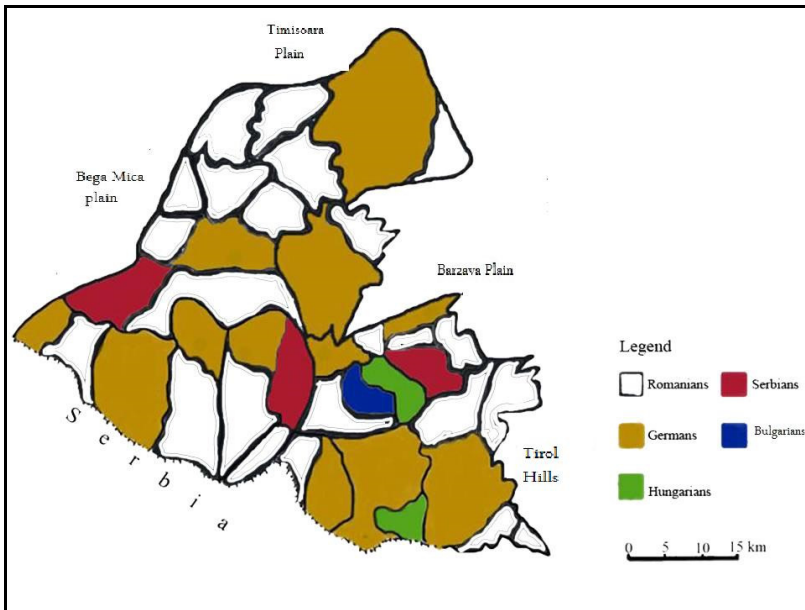


Fig. 2. Dominant ethnic groups in Birda-Moravița Plain at the 1900 and 1930 censuses
Source: A. Varga (2002)

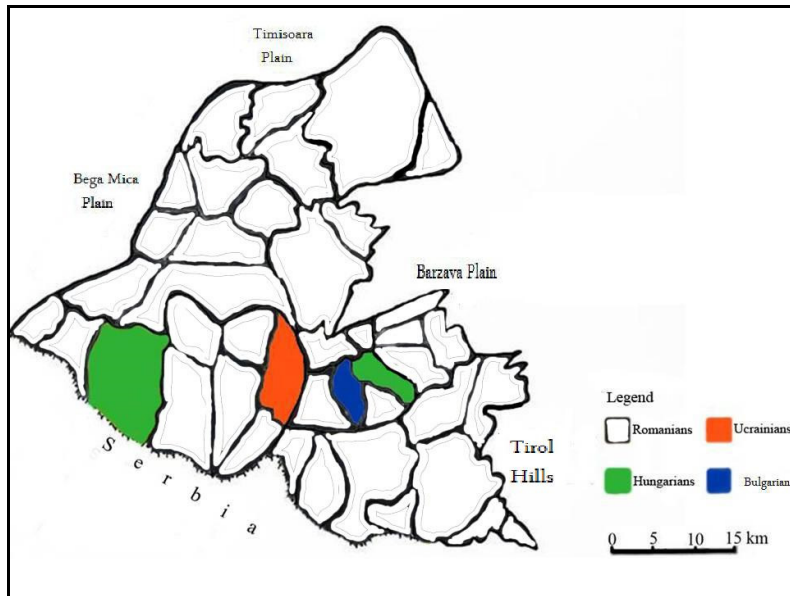


Fig. 3. The dominant ethnic groups in Birda-Moravița Plain at the 1992 census.
Source: A. Varga (2002)

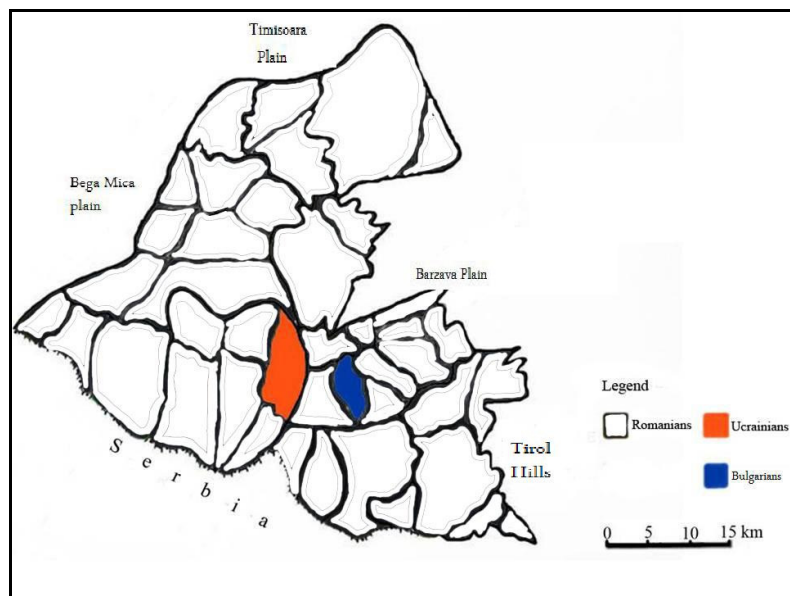


Fig. 4. The dominant ethnic groups in Birda-Moravița Plain at the 2002 census
Source: A. Varga (2002)

5. THE ETHNIC ELEMENT EVALUATION AT MICRO STRUCTURAL LEVEL

The ethnic element evaluation at regional level does not always have certain particularities that generate major differences within the localities. This fact makes it necessary to also analyse in detail the ethnic specificity characteristics at micro regional level.

5.1. The Romanian population

Birda-Moravița plain area is characterized by multiple ethnical structures. However, if we were to analyze the various nationalities recorded now and in the past within this area, we could observe the significant presence of the Romanians.

Starting with the 1880 census, significant Romanian population centres were identified in both Romanian old centres and in the newest ones, with various nationalities. In the 80's we could find, in old Romanian villages such as Jebel and Ghilad, more than 2000 Romanians, more precisely 2671 or 2173. There are also many regions where the population exceeded 1,000 Romanian inhabitants: Banloc, Petroman, Parța, Pădureni, Cebza, Denta.

The evolution of the Romanian population according to the 1880 census can be observed in the figure below.

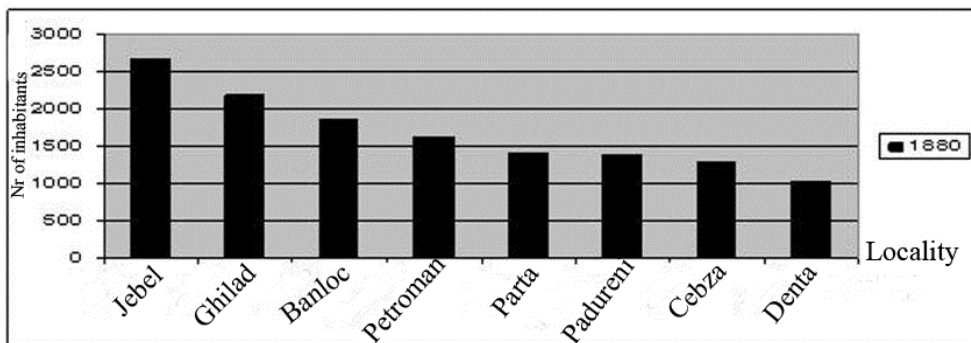


Fig. 5. Distribution of the Romanian population at the 1880 census

Source: Adaptation according to A. Varga (2002)

Less than 1000 inhabitants were registered in regions such as: Ferendia, Ciacova, Parța, Lățunaș, Livezile, Toager, Macedonia, Cerna, Clopodia, Obad, Gherman (table 1).

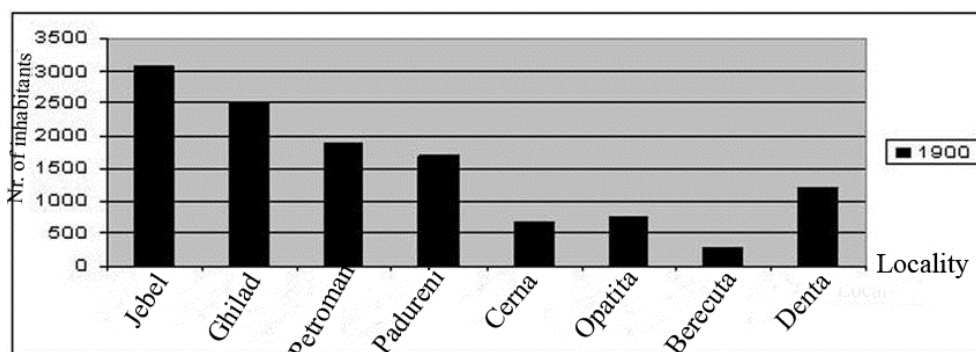
According to the 1900 census, the majority was held by Romanians and by the end of the 19th century, regarding the entire Banat area, Romanians were approaching absolute majority, with 600,000 persons (Crețan, 1999, p. 46).

Table 1**Distribution of the Romanians at the 1880 census in communities with less than 1000 persons**

Community	Ferendia	Ciacova	Partoș	Lățunaș	Livezile	Toager	Macedonia	Cerna	Clopodia	Obad	Gherman
No. of inhabitants	991	860	779	768	763	726	682	672	609	525	519
Weight (%)	80.43	20.39	80.55	87.07	46.86	86.42	88.91	96.96	40.27	71.81	93.17

Source: A. Varga (2002)

In 1900, in Ciacova-Deta area, in Deta subfield, there were communities in which the majority population was of Romanian origin: Berecuța (96,9%), Opațița (80,1%). Important numbers of Romanians were also recorded in: Jebel, Ghilad, Petroman, Pădureni (over 1000 Romanians), Cerna, Deta (starting from 1000 and up to 1300) (fig. 6).

**Fig. 6.** The Romanian population at 1900 census*Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)*

The 1930 census highlighted a Romanian population growth in most places in Birda-Moravița plain. Therefore, at that time, in the Deta area there were 32 settlements, out of which 12 had an absolute majority of Romanians and only 4 had Romanians in a smaller number. There were over 2000 Romanians in old Romanian villages, such as Jebel, Ghilad, Banloc, with a percentage of around 40.9% (fig. 7).

Other settlements where the Romanian inhabitants prevailed in 1930 were: Berecuța, Gaiu Mic and Gherman (90-100%), Ferendia and Opațița (80-90%), Mănăstire, Folea, Partoș (50-80%), Voiteg (41,4%), Deta (38,9%), Clopodia (37,4%), Birda (33,4%), Sângeorge (33,7%) and Omor (32,6%).

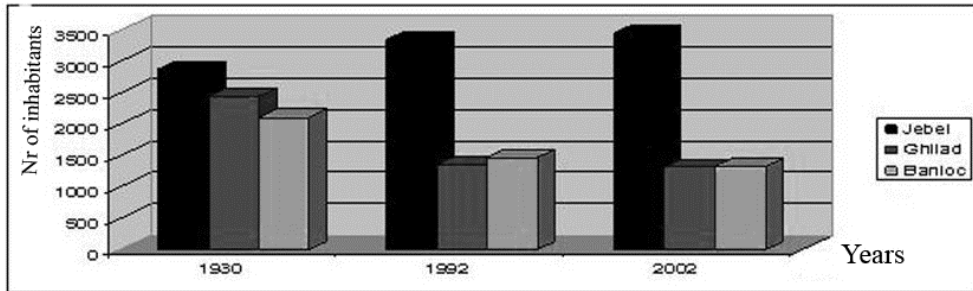


Fig. 7. The Romanian population in Jebel, Ghilad and Banloc at the 1930, 1992 and 2002 censuses
Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

Over 1000 persons could be found in both Ciacova area (Cebza, Pădureni, Petroman, Ciacova) and Deta area (Ferendia, Denta) (fig. 8.)

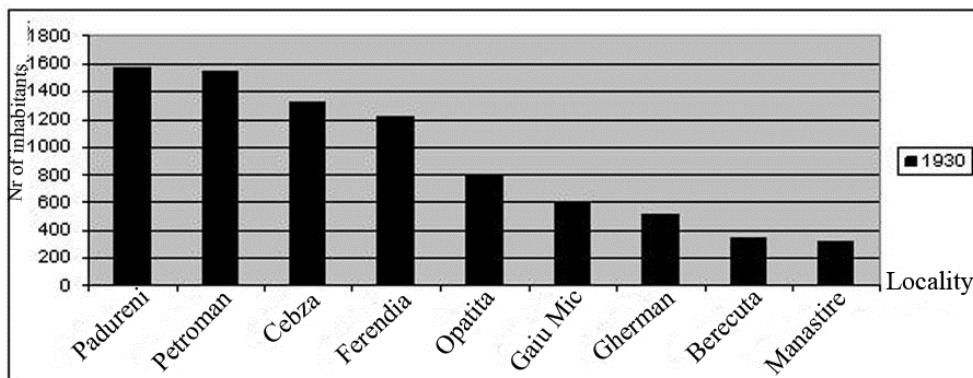


Fig. 8. Major Romanian settlements at the 1930 census
Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

Less than 1000 Romanians were registered in Macedonia, Toager, Tolvădia, Clopodia, Folia, Opațița and in Voiteg. The Romanian population registered smaller numbers of inhabitants in Breștea (6 persons), Moravița (53), Ofșenița (57), Soca (30), Stamora Germană (69), regions dominated by Hungarians or Germans. Due to the high population growth, during this period, significant changes were registered in the ethnical structure, especially in places such as Lățunaș, Opațița or Omor, where the Romanian population increased by almost 10%.

Significant increases of Romanian population were also registered in Jamu Mare, a commercial and agricultural village. Still, there were decreases in the number of Romanian inhabitants in some places. Such cases can be mentioned in Voiteg (-35.9%), Birda (-10.1%), Sângeorge (-26.6%), Jebel and Petroman. The reason for this decrease is the mass migration of Romanians towards Timișoara.

From the 24 regions belonging to the Ciacova area, 11 had a majority of Romanian population. Among these we mention: Cebza, Macedonia, Pădureni with 90-100% Romanians, Petroman and Toager (80-90%), Ghilad and Obad (50-80%).

If we compare the 1900, 1930 and the 2002 censuses, we can see a significant increase of the Romanian inhabitants in Serbian villages such as Dolat, in the mixed ones (Ciacova - 30,3% and Giera, Gad - 32,8%), or even in German villages (Stamora Germană, Liebling) as seen in fig. 9.

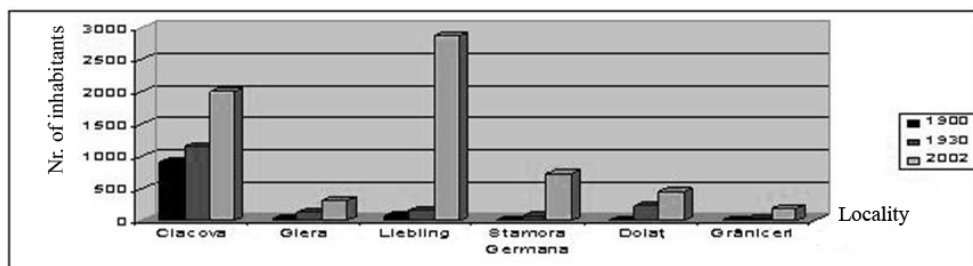


Fig. 9. Main settlements that have registered high increases of Romanian population between 1900, 1930 and 2002

Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

5.2. National minorities

5.2.1. The German minority

In 1880 the number of registered Germans in the regions of Birda-Moravița plain was quite high. Liebling had a majority of German inhabitants. Other significant demographical masses of Germans were also registered in: Deta, Jamu Mare, Ciacova. Villages that had over 1000 Germans were: Moravița, Stamora-Germana, Dolat. Villages that had less than 1000 Germans were: Ofsenița, Voiteg, Grăniceri, Giera (fig. 10).

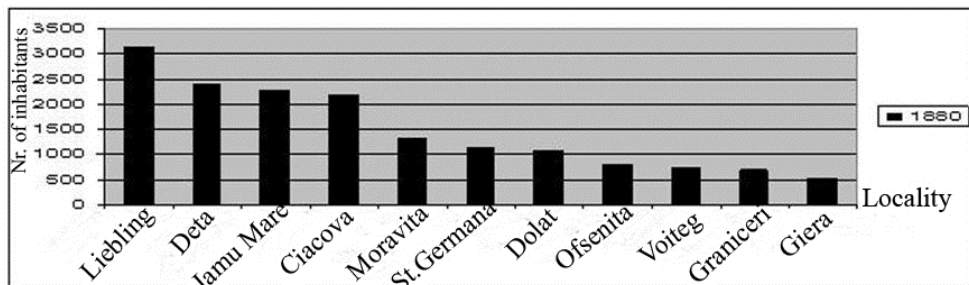


Fig. 10. The German population at the 1880 census in settlements with German majority

Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

According to the 1900 census, in Deta area there were settlements with an absolute majority of German population (Stamora-Germana, Jamu Mare, Deta and Voiteg). Still, in Birda the number of Germans was relatively small. In the Ciacova area we can mention Liebling as having only a German population and a majority of Germans in Ciavoş (70.8%), Ciacova and Giera (50-60%) was also observed.

The largest German community was in Liebling, followed by Ciacova (fig. 11).

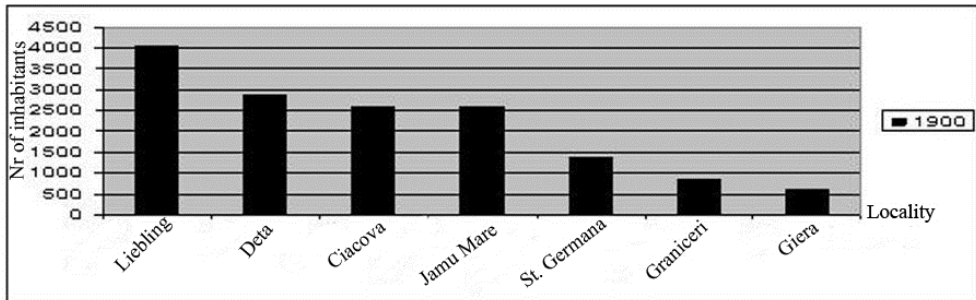


Fig. 11. Settlements with German majority in 1900

Source: Adaptation after A.Varga (2002)

The largest number of Germans (more than 2800) was registered in Deta, a higher value than in 1880. Very important numbers of Germans (1000-1700) were found in the regions of Stamora-Germana, Moravița and Voiteg. Around 100-600 Germans (9-30%) were living in Omor, Clopodia, Ferendia, Dejan, Breștea and Opațița.

The 1930 census showed significant changes in Birda-Moravița plain, because Jamu Mare and Deta (which in 1900 had an absolute German majority) registered a major decrease of German population. Such a decrease was also registered in the Omor village. Still, there was an increase in Birda (+259). The decrease in the Germans' number is due, especially, to migrations to the U.S.A. between 1900 and 1930.

Very important centres of German population were also recorded in Ciacova, Dolat, Moravița, Stamora-Germana and Voiteg. Birda, Ciavoș, Gier, Clopodia and Ofsenița and registered less than 1000 Germans.

Although at the 1992 census the German balance was quite high in Timiș county, regions in Birda-Moravița Plain witnessed a major decline in German population. Thus, Deta, which in 1900 was of German majority (over 2,800 German inhabitants), in 1992 only had around 600 people of German origin. Ciacova, Jebel, Giera, Ghilad, Jamu Mare were also affected by drastic mass decreases in the German population. Compared to other censuses, in 1992 Ciacova had around 220 Germans (compared to over 2000 in early 1900, and about 1700 in 1930). In the same year, Jebel had around 70 Germans compared to 300 in 1900 and 200 in 1930. In Giera, Germans were reduced to 30 persons from 619 in 1900 and 243 in 1930. Ghilad registered, in 1992, a total of 66 Germans compared to 480 in 1900 and 312 in 1930. The demographical evolution of the German population and the drastic decreases in most places is represented in fig. 12.

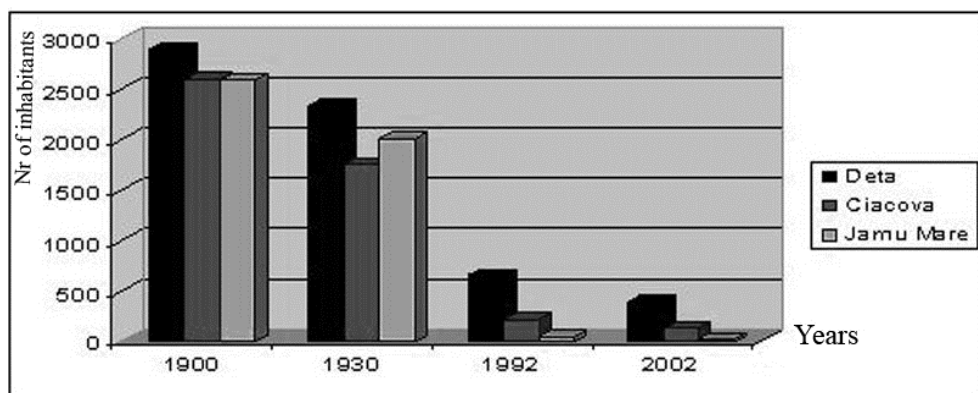


Fig. 12. Distribuiton of the German inhabitants in Deta, Ciacova and Jamu Mare at 1900, 1930, 1992 and 2002 censuses

Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

5.2.2. The Hungarian minority

The 1880 census registered a very weak presence of the Hungarian minority in the regions of Birda-Moravița plain, without exceeding 500 Hungarians in some places. However, the highest values were present in Dejan, Jebel, Jamu Mare and Deta.

According to the 1900 census, Ciacova-Deta area was one of *"the newest geographical areas inhabited by Hungarians"* (R. Crețan, 1999, p.119), the Deta subarea being one of the most densely Hungarian populated in Banat. Between 1821 and 1828 the first Hungarians were colonized in Dejan and in 1842 in Ghilad, both Romanian villages.

In Ciacova subarea the phenomenon of Hungarisation was not so strong and the Hungarian presence there was primarily due to colonization. However, very important numbers of Hungarians were found in Giera, Ghilad, Ciuvoș and Jebel (15-25%), and in Ghilad, Ciacova and Jebel there were more than 500 Hungarians.

In Banloc-Denta area there was a village called Topola, that had Hungarian workers specialized in rice culture (Crețan, R., 1999, p.120). In 1910, the Deta area included several farms, like the rice plantation Karatsony, that was located at Partoș, near Banloc, and had 252 Hungarians, the Wekerle farms from Clopodia with 122 Hungarians, and the Tobacco Garden in Ofsești, with 130 Hungarians.

According to the 1930 census, Deta remained the main centre of the Hungarian population (971 persons), followed by Ciacova, Ghilad, Giera, Ciuvoș, Jebel. The number of Hungarians (200-500) in Dejan, Omor, Partoș, Ferendia, Folea increased until 1913 and this was mainly due to the employment of Hungarian workers in agriculture outside the village or building new villages.

According to the 1992 census, Ciacova was a centre of Hungarian population, represented by 350 - 500 persons. Hungarians were found also in Giera and Rovinița Mare, but in smaller numbers.

According to the 2002 census, the Hungarian population has been decreasing, but still had significant concentrations in Deta (1147-19.82%). In Ciacova it had a significant proportion, more precisely 408 persons, equivalent to 7.70%. In Banloc, in 2002, Hungarians were the most numerous of all minorities, representing around 5% of the total 230 persons. The numbers regarding the Hungarian population at 1930, 1992 and 2002 censuses are represented in fig. 13.

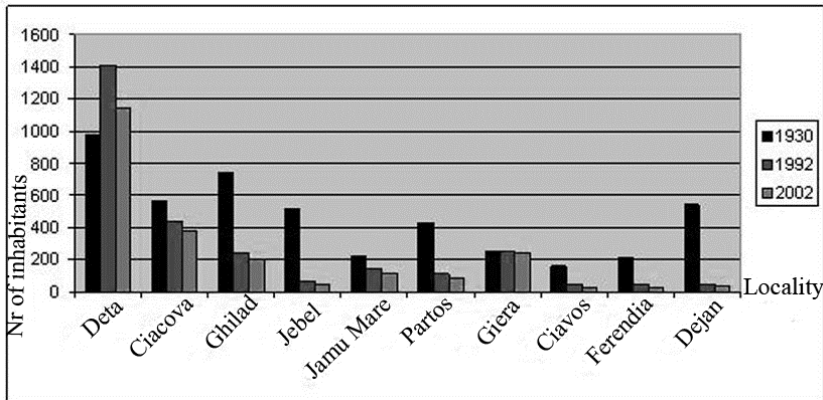


Fig. 13. Distribution of the Hungarian population at the 1930, 1992 and 2002 censuses
Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

5.2.3. The Serbian minority

The Serbian presence in the whole Banat area is *“the consequence of southern Slavs’ migration, they mixed with the native Romanians and, in time, they were assimilated”* (R. Crețan, 1999, p. 141).

According to the 1880 census, Serbians were recorded in insignificant values in Birda-Moravița plain, values which did not exceed 1000 persons. However, higher numbers of Serbians were reported in Deta, Ciacova, Gad and Livezile (fig. 14).

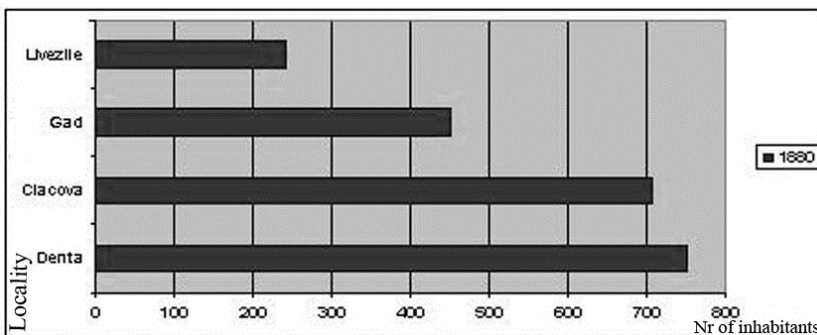


Fig. 14. Distribution of the Serbian population in 1880
Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

According to the 1900 census, major centres of Serbian families could be found in the Denta subarea. Although Serbians are found in many places, they are registered in small numbers. Denta was the village with the largest Serbian community, followed by Dejan, Sângeorge, Deta, Gaiu Mic, Partoș, with values from 5% to 25% (table 2).

Table 2
Serbian population in communities with less than 1000 inhabitants in 1900

Community	Number of Serbians	Percentage (%)
Denta	804	24.96
Dejan	158	18.03
Sângeorge	416	65
Deta	87	2.17
Gaiu Mic	85	12.70
Partoș	80	5.38

Source: A. Varga (2002)

In the subarea of Ciacova, according to the 1930 census, Serbians were found in Gad, Tolvădia, Giera and Ciacova but without forming significant mass population (from 100 to 600 persons). The reason of the Serbian population decrease is due to their migration to Yugoslavia (between 100 and 150 Serbians emigrated from Grăniceri) or towards Timișoara (Serbians from Ciacova). There were almost 2000 Serbians in Deta. Still, there were only two places with Serbian majority, namely Soca and Sângeorge. Besides these villages, a significant demographical Serbian population is found in Denta and Dejan.

There were no significant changes highlighted by the 1992 and 2002 censuses for Birda-Moravița region, the same places maintaining or even decreasing their Serbian mass population, the most important values being registered in Soca (22.17%) and Gad (25.15%). The main concentration of Serbian inhabitants in 1930, 1992 and 2002 is represented in fig. 15.

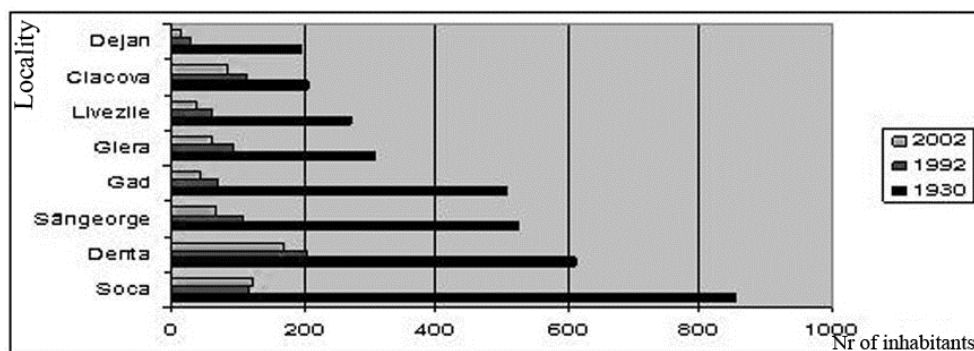


Fig. 15. Distribution of Serbian inhabitants by settlements in 1930, 1992 and 2002
Source: Adaptation after A. Varga (2002)

The passage from heterogeneity to a relative degree of ethnic homogeneity during the analysed censuses is presented in figure. Thus, the decrease of the German, Hungarian and Serbian inhabitants and the simultaneous increase of Romanian inhabitants becomes evident (fig. 16, 17 and 18).

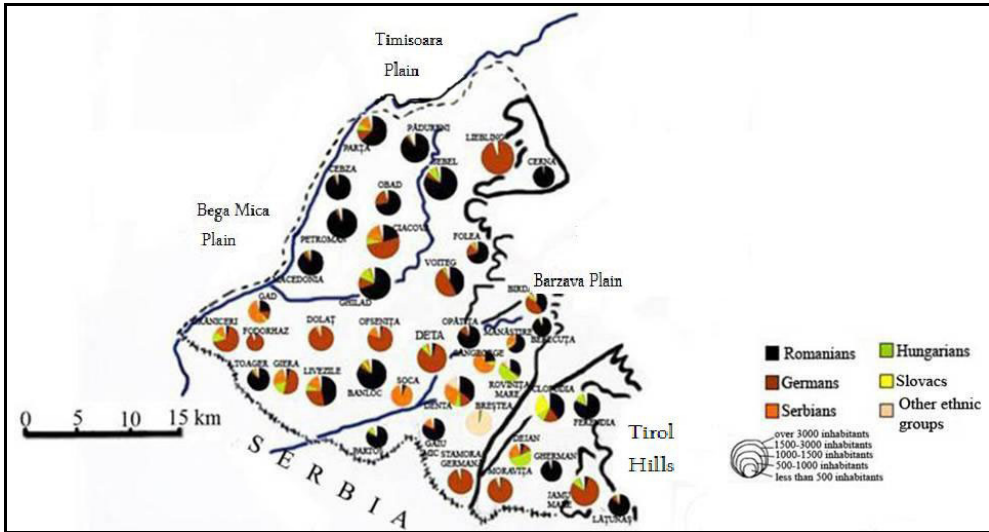


Fig. 16. Ethnic structure of settlements in 1880

Source: A. Varga (2002)

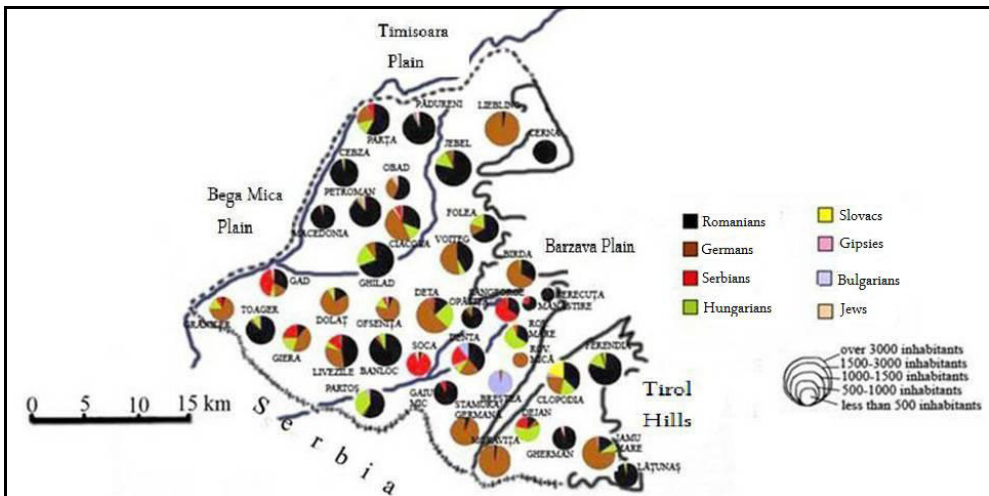


Fig. 17. Ethnic structure of settlements in 1930

Source: A. Varga (2002)

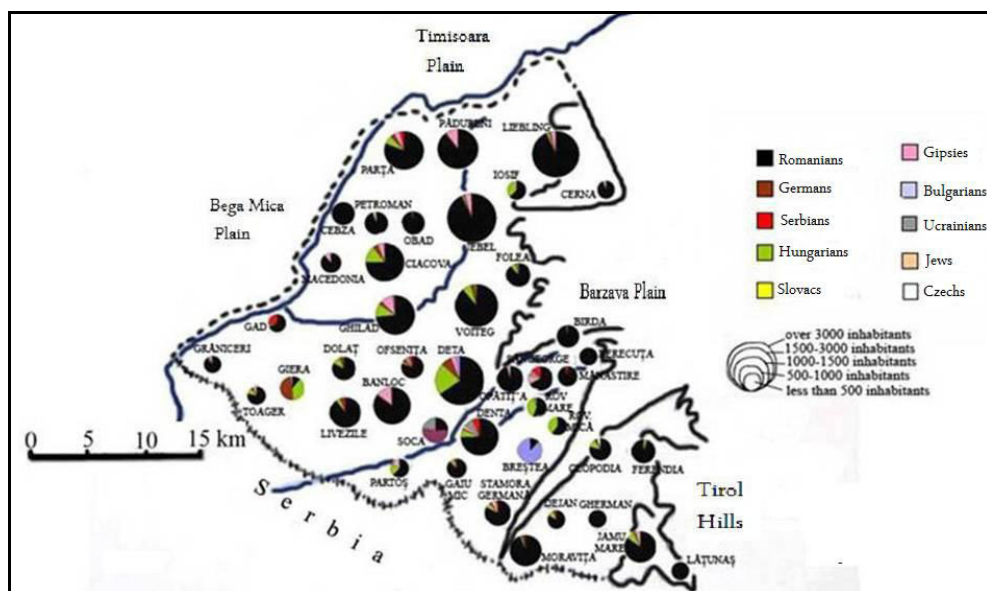


Fig. 18. Ethnic structure of settlements in 2002

Source: A. Varga (2002)

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper reviewed concepts like ethnicity, ethnic group, social impact, presented in the works of authors such as R. Hartshorne (1950), T. Eriksen (1993), G. de Vos (1975), Elaine Burgess (1978), F. Barth (1969), R. Burge and F. Vanclay (1996), N.C. Taylor, C.H. Bryan and C.G. Goodrich (2004).

By using evaluation methods of the impact generated by the changes in the ethnic phenomenon at regional level, as well as classic analysis, synthesis and comparison methods, the main conclusion is that there was a homogenisation phenomenon of the population in 2002 as compared to 1880, 1900, 1930. The heterogeneous ethnic structure was mainly due to the historic circumstances in which the region was colonized by huge waves of German, Hungarian and Bulgarian population. The communes presented in the article were dominated by German, Hungarian, Serbian or Bulgarian inhabitants.

On the other hand, the increase of the ethnic homogeneity phenomenon that started after the 1990s and that has advanced until nowadays was generated by the massive migrations to other countries and regions. The migration from the village to the city also mobilized an important segment of the Hungarian, Serbian or Bulgarian population.

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