

HUNGARIANS IN USA

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The Characteristics of the 2000 United States Census and Its Scope in Quantifying Hungarian Americans

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant sources of examination of the ethnic groups of the United States is the U.S. Census taken in every decade. The census is essentially the only official document that attempts to exhaustively quantify and classify the composition of the country's population.

The census data is processed in varying degrees regardless of whether they seek to quantify the number of Hungarians¹ or inform on the demographic characteristics² or to present a to this day unrivaled sociological analysis,³ all data has to be equally validated against the unique characteristics of the data source and the attendant analytical

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- ¹ Nagy, Károly: Hány Magyar él az Egyesült Államokban a XX. század végén. (How Many Hungarians Live in the United States at the end of the 20th century) In: Nagy, Károly –Papp, László (eds.) *A magyar nyelv és kultúra megtartása az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban 1977* (The preservation of Hungarian language and culture in the United States of America in 1977): Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága (International Society of Hungarian Culture and Language) – Ancestry Language Conference, Budapest 1998. 26–33. Nagy, Károly: Magyar népesedési tendenciák az Egyesült Államokban (Hungarian Demographic Tendencies in the United States), *Valóság* 2005/12. 122–123.
- ² Huseby-Darvas, Éva V.: *Hungarians in Michigan*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. 2003.
- ³ Fejős, Zoltán: Magyarok az Egyesült Államokban az 1980-as Években (Hungarians in the United States in the 1980's [demography, social data, conceptual

problems. The recurrent theme and source of inquiry for the authors is to what degree it is possible to describe the Hungarian ethnic presence in the U.S. population based on the census data. A particular challenge is the identification and evaluation of the different foreign ethnic groups or ethnic origin of populations that in English we call „ancestry”. There is a tendency within the wider population polled to accept the ethnic origin or ancestry category incorporated in the survey responses, including those of Hungarian origin, as truly representative of actual social communities or groups. Based on this premise, it is assumed that the subjective relationship of the questionnaire respondent, that is, the individual who has Hungarian ancestors, is to him or her and to others, from the community or social standpoint, Hungarian. This premise was challenged, first and foremost by Zoltán Fejős in several studies pointing out that the use of *ancestry* related data has to be used with great caution, particularly if we want to quantify from that the data the number of ethnic Hungarians within the population.⁴ An important finding by Fejős is that “based on the «hard» statistical data we could only determine a picture of the Hungarians by examining the nature and characteristics of the data sources regarding them.” According to him, „the statistical categories of the analyses, the questions and the wording of the questionnaire, as well as unexamined phenomena of past censuses, are determinants of the overall structure of the national ethnic canvas.”⁵

Based on the realistic interpretation of the 2000 census data – it is necessary to review the theoretical, methodological and technical characteristics that were used in mapping the various ethnic groups, including the identification of the Americans of Hungarian origin. Below, I am examining the following related issues: 1) What were the main characteristics in carrying out the 2000 census? 2) How did the census and with what precision did it measure ethnicity? 3) based on the data, what is the picture that we have of the profile of Hungarian Americans residing in the United States?

issues]) In: *Magyarságkutatás 1988* (Research of Hungarians 1988), Annals of the Institute of Hungarian Research, Budapest, 1988, p. 177–216.

4 Fejős (1988) that is, Fejős, Zoltán: Az etnicitás változatai: identitások a magyar diaszpórában. (Modalities of ethnicity: identity in the Hungarian diaspora), In: Gergely, András A. (ed) *A nemzet antropológiája (Hofer Tamás köszöntése)* (The Nation's Anthropology [Salute to Tamás Hofer]), Új Mandátum, Budapest, 2002, p. 145–159.

5 Fejős 1988. p. 177.

To accomplish these objectives in the first part of the study, I outline the motivational factors of the 2000 U.S. census and the main characteristics of its execution. After this, I present an overview of the historic evolution of statistics of race and ethnicity as well as the main modifications that have taken place in the last decades. I introduce the immediate and mediate issues affecting race and ethnicity, and in a separate chapter I address the question of the population of Hungarians living in the United States. I discuss in detail the statistical reliability in measuring ethnic populations. Finally, at the end of the study I analyze the social perspectives and processes that could support certain characteristics of the ethnic data.

In my study I propose that in the last census, the preparation and realistic interpretation of the data regarding Hungarian Americans could only be realized paying due attention to the analytical constraints stemming from characteristics of the available data.

2. THE MOTIVATING FACTORS OF THE CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES

The most important source for the demographic data of the population of the United States is the national census taken every decade since 1790 that aims to account exhaustively for all the country's residents.⁶ Besides the fundamental interest of learning about the national demographic profile, the census undertaken every decade has an inherently political cause. In keeping with the wishes of the framers of the American Constitution (1787) the census taken every decade also serves as the basis for political representation among the states as well as the proportional distribution of the budget. The organization, execution, processing and transmission of the census was for a long time the ad-hoc responsibility of each administration, until 1902, when the census became the responsibility of the Census Bureau.⁷

⁶ To process the data of the 2000 Census, see: Farley, Reynolds – Haaga, John (eds.) *The American People: Census 2000*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2005. The processings carried out by the Census Bureau are available on the Internet: <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>.

⁷ The history of American censuses and the circumstances of the establishment of the Census Bureau are detailed in Desrosieres, Alain: *La Politique Des Grands Nombres: Histoire de la Raison Statistique*. Éditions la Découverte. Paris, 1993. 218–257.

In the course of the nation's history the continuing census undertaken 22 times made possible the *reapportionment* of the seats of the House of Representatives in proportion to the state populations. The political significance of the census increased in the course of the last two hundred years. The census is also important in the enforcement of today's stronger civil rights laws, the distribution of Federal funds, as well as in the political *redistricting* between states and a host of economic and socio-political decision-making at the local and national level. We should consider – in agreement with the opinion of Kenneth Prewitt and Thomas Jones, that the census may be regarded as the widest in scope and longest lasting social study project.⁸

3. THE EXECUTION OF THE 2000 CENSUS AND ITS MOST SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS

The 2000 Census sought to quantify the population residing in the United States, including servicemen abroad, employees of the U.S. Government overseas as well as foreign nationals and their relatives who reside in the country either as workers or students. The census tried to quantify all residents of the United States on April 1, 2000 (Census Day) in their „usual residence”.⁹

Just as in earlier census, the Census Bureau has been doing preparation work before the census including planning and testing for the operations to be undertaken.¹⁰ The greatest challenge for the agency was to estimate the population of the country as accurately as possible. Among the reasons that spurred the agency to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible was the fact that they received strong criticism from politicians and from the public that in recent censuses there were shortcomings on data compilations and in the execution of the census. Repeated censuses indicated that there was a systematic undercount (differential undercount) that affected differently the

⁸ Prewitt, Kenneth-Thomas, A. Jones: *Census 2000: An Overview*, ICPSR Bulletin 2001, 21 (3, Sprong): 1–7.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau: *Plans and Rules for Taking the Census*. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC. 1999 (<http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/plnsruls.html>, downloaded on June 3, 2007).

¹⁰ For details for the preparation and execution of the 2000 Census see: Prewitt-Jones in.: U.S. Census Bureau: *Census 2000 Operational Plan*, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2000.

various segments of the population. There were certain groups in the population such as the homeless, the itinerants, the travelers, the renters, children and minorities for whom the distribution of the census survey form presented difficulties. Statistical data showed that this undercount in 1980 was four times greater among African-Americans than those whites and nine times higher among urbanites than in the population at large.¹¹ As a result of the socio-political changes in the second half of the 20th century, such as civil rights laws, social justice and implementation of affirmative action, the issue of differential undercount came to the fore of public discussions. It became apparent that if the undercount becomes higher among certain segments of society – such as ethnic or racial minorities, the homeless, the urban poor, may well result in significant errors in the formulation of policies guided by those statistical data. And in the course of the 20th century the significance of this demographic data grew¹² in importance because of the implementation of human rights laws that secured state funding for assistance programs as well as provided for demarcation of new or revised electoral districts, to name the most salient government responsibilities. According to New York City officials because of the differential undercount of 1980, the city of New York lost one seat in the House of Representatives and 50 million dollars.¹³ To remedy this problem the Census Bureau introduced the dual system estimation. This consisted essentially, in carrying out a parallel evaluation or estimation to the national census, taking a national sample for evaluation, called accuracy and coverage evaluation, and comparing the results of both estimates to assess the size of the undercount, correct the errors and come up with a new and more reliable demographic profile.¹⁴

¹¹ Maier, Mark H.: *The Data Game. Controversies in Social Science Statistics*. M. E. Sharpe Inc., New York, 1991. 11.

¹² Prewitt, Kenneth: The US Decennial Census: Political Questions, Scientific Answers. *Population and development review* 2000. 26(1). p. 1–16.

¹³ The discussion related to the issue of undercount is found in: Anderson, Margo J. – Fienberg, Stephen E.: Who Counts? The Politics of Censustaking, *Society* 1997, (37) 3. p.19–26.

¹⁴ For pros and cons about the incomplete recordings, see: Anderson, Margo J.: *Who Counts? The Politics of Census-Taking in Contemporary America*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1999.; illetve Skerry, Peter.: *Counting on the Census? Race, Group Identity, and the Evasion of the Politics*. The Brookings Institution., Washington D. C. 2000.

The next challenge of the census was the design of the survey form, including the text and form of the questionnaire, and their order. Prior to the census, two demographic tests were carried out. The *National Content Survey* of 1996, sought to find out the effect of the newly worded and designed survey questionnaires. Similarly, the same year's *Race and Ethnic Targeted Test*, sought to test possible modifications to the questions related to race and ethnicity.¹⁵ Besides these two significant test studies, numerous small scale focus group studies were carried out to gather information related to the wording and design of the survey's questionnaire.

The actual Census 2000 was performed in a number of steps. As in earlier censuses the technical staff of the Census Bureau designed two different questionnaires: a short and a long one that in the course of the month of March was mailed to all households.¹⁶ The short form questionnaire sought information on seven topics and was successfully delivered to about 83% of the households. After reception of the survey questionnaire it is the responsibility of the heads of household to provide information on the ownership of the residence and provide the following information for each member of the household: name, sex, age, relationship to the head of household, Hispanic origin, racial category and legal status within the household (*table 5.1*). The questions of the short form questionnaire were also called „100 per cent data” because the information was collected from all individuals. Of the total households, 17% received the long form questionnaire from the Census Bureau where the gathered information went beyond the data gathering of the short form and asked for the social, economic and financial profiles as well as additional information about the physical aspects of the place of residence. These questions are known as „sample questions” since it was sent to every sixth household.

Following up on the delivery of the survey questionnaire a multi-faceted marketing program was launched to induce the population to send in the responses to the questionnaire either by mail, telephone or internet. The primary objective was to minimize as much as possible

¹⁵ For a summary of the research results in the 1966 *Race and Ethnic Targeted Test* see: Hirschman, Charles – Alba, Richard –Farley, Reynolds: The Meaning and Measurement Of Race in the U.S. Census: Glimpses Into Future, *Demography* 2000, 37 (3), P. 381–93.

¹⁶ Since 1960 in the United States, the census is done voluntarily by the head of the household filling out the questionnaire sent to the household by the postal service.

the number of non-respondents, since the non-responsive households had to be followed up by a visit. Thanks to the mentioned campaign the response of the population in 2000 was 67%, that is, about two thirds of the households answered the survey. Those not responding until the end of April were sent a follow up form (*Nonresponse Follow-up*) until the end of June.

The second largest part of the Census is the *Quality Counts Program* that seeks to revisit 10% of the households as a quality control exercise. It has two main components: the *Coverage Improvement Follow-up*, that sought to insure completeness of the responses and the *Coverage Edit Follow-up* that tried to improve the quality of the responses. In the first instance the surveyors sought out households where there was response to the questionnaires, while in the second, the aim was to identify households with multiple residents, that is, more than six, and those households that needed follow up on the response provided.

According to the 2000 Census, the population of the United States as of December 28 was 281 421 906 individuals. This represents an increase of 32,7 million over the population of 1990, that is an increase of 13,2%. In an estimate of the Census Bureau taken before the Census the number of residents exceeded by 6.9 million the estimate, that is, an increase in 2.5%, over the projected estimate announced on April 1 of the earlier year.¹⁷

4. ETHNIC AND RACIAL STATISTICS

It would be helpful to better understand the questions related to ethnicity and race if we present first a historical perspective the efforts to include ethnic and racial groups in the national census, and we also mention briefly the changes introduced in the last few decades. We would like to underscore two essential points. First of all, that in current classification practices certain physical characteristics, such as skin color, and ethnic groupings or segmentation are treated separately. And we can find the explanation for this in the uniquely American narrative of race relations. On the other hand, in the last decades very significant advances have been made in the area of ethnic and racial identification from objective ques-

¹⁷ Farley, Reynolds – Haaga, John (eds.) *The American People: Census 2000*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2005.

tions (mother tongue, place of birth) made by the census taker towards a more subjective and self-defining determination.

4.1. *The separation of race and ethnicity*

American history is often told as the story of the waves of immigrants that practically since the country's inception has taken place. It is no coincidence therefore that since its beginnings government of the United States had to deal the identification of immigrants in the official documents. Given the presence of native residents, the importation of black people from Africa and the influx of European groups arriving to the country meant that, from the beginning, the United States was a multiracial and ethnically diverse society.

In the censuses of the colonial period – exception made of the 1765 census of Massachusetts¹⁸ – the population was classified according to race: the European immigrants were differentiated from the blacks and the Indians. But no ethnic distinction was made among whites: „if you were white, your place of origin did not matter, nor your religious belief or affiliation” – says the American historian Stephan Thernstrom.¹⁹ This practice of classifying individuals of the population based primarily on race has been followed by census takers every decade from 1790 to our days.

The classification of ethnic groups came about the second half of the 19th century, in parallel fashion due to the increase of immigrants coming in and also because of the greater diversity of the immigrant groups. In the first half of the century and in the last decades, the number of European immigrants grew exponentially – the earlier mainly protestant denominations immigrants were overtaken by a majority of Roman Catholic and other religious affiliated groups (Irish and German Catholics, later Italians, Jew and immigrants originating from Eastern and Southern Europe). These new immigrants were received with fear and

¹⁸ The census at that time categorized the population as whites, Indians, blacks and mulattos as well as „French neutrals” (most likely the Acadian French of northern Maine) were also included.

¹⁹ Thernstrom, Stephan: *American Ethnic Statistics*. In: Horowitz, D. L. – Noiriell, G. (eds.) *Immigrants in Two Democracies: French and American Experience.*; New York University Press, New York and London, 1992. p. 83.

animosity by the already settled a few generations ago, citing differences in language and culture and consistently questioned their capacity for assimilation. In order to identify and differentiate the new groups of immigrants the census required from 1850 the identification of the place of birth, and from 1870 there the identification of the place of birth of the immigrant parents was added, information helpful to determine the origin of the immigrants up to two generations.²⁰ We can say that until the 1980 Census when the term „ancestry” was introduced to denote ethnic origin, there was no attempt to categorize by ethnic groups the white immigrants beyond the second generation of their arrival.²¹ For a long time it was the defining assumption that beyond the second generation, the groups that comprise the white population mix among themselves so much, becoming so assimilated that, in their case, it becomes meaningless to try to sort out the third and succeeding generations.

This assumption existed only in case of the population of European origin and did not include, for instance, oriental immigrants. The Chinese, Japanese, Korean and other Asian groups were considered racial categories, and were treated accordingly as permanent categories. In was the view of the census takers, that race categories remained the same in later generations, even if the place of birth of individuals and their parents were not. As a result, the differences had to be reflected in the way that race was categorized.²²

In this area, the civil rights movement of the 1960–1970-ies period brought significant changes that fundamentally transformed the political context and the aims of race categories. The Federal *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 and 1968 and the *Voting Rights Act* of 1965, with later addendums sought to eliminate mechanisms of discrimination in the categorization and treatment of minority groups including, the right to vote, hous-

²⁰ The question about the individual's birth place is currently among the census questions. The question about the birthplace of the individual's parents was included in the questionnaire continuously from 1870 to 1970.

²¹ To record more accurately the ethnic category (two generations) starting in 1910 the question of „mother tongue” was introduced, in its retrospective mode. Stated in different ways, the question tried to elicit the language of childhood or the language of the household. For background on the mother tongue of immigrants and its application in the American census, see: Stevens, Gillian.; A Century of U.S. Censuses and the Language Characteristics of Immigrants, *Demography* 1999, p. 389–390.

²² Thernstrom op. cit.90.

ing discrimination, job discrimination and exclusion from institutional life. Current public policy measures are based on the notion that certain groups that have suffered discrimination in the past (blacks, Native Americans, Asians and later Hispanics) and these groups require special treatment in the areas of education, job placement and other areas of social interaction.²³

To validate this policy the *Office of Management and Budget* (OMB) established official guidelines for the gathering of information for ethnic and race categories.²⁴ The latest Federal guidelines were issued in 1997 directing the use of 5 broad categories to be used in Federal offices: „American Indian or Native Alaskan”, „Asiatic”, „Black or Afro-American”, „Hispanic or Latin”, „Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” and „White”. In conformity to the regulations Federal administrators may collect more additional and detailed information on the ethnicity and race of the population, but the data aggregation has to keep the categories specified in the guidelines.

For the white population born in the United States there are no ethnic identity guidelines. The use of ethnic categories are governed by the already mentioned affirmative action, although here we cannot really talk about group differentiation within the population of European origin, exception made of the small group of the original population of Spain that would go under the category of „Hispanic”. Sociological studies indicate that within the used ethnic categories, whites are free to determine their own ethnic identity, and the importance they assign to that emphasis. The best evidence for this is that many of the individuals with mixed ethnic backgrounds, highlight multiple identity,

²³ For a critique of the racial categories see among others: Thernstrom, Stephan: *The Demography of Racial and Ethnic Groups*. In: Thernstrom, Abigail M. – Thernstrom, Stephan (eds.) *Beyond the Color Line: New Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America*. Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, California, 2002. 13–36. Hirschman, Charles: *The Origins and Demise of the Concept of Race*. *Population and development review* 2004. 30(3). p. 385–415.

²⁴ OMB: *Statistical Policy Directive 15, Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting*. Office of Management and Budget, 1977. OMB: *Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*. Office of Management and Budget, 1997.

others emphasize a single identity and yet others, do not give any importance to their ethnic background.²⁵

4.2. The basis for categorization: self-enumeration – self-identification

The racial and ethnic categorization in the last censuses were based on self-enumeration and self-identification²⁶. This method is relatively recent, since it was introduced in the 1960 Census. Self-enumeration was introduced primarily as a cost saving measure, because it meant a less costly and less labor intensive operation on part of the census enumerators. It also had a technological advantage, since with the use of computers reading the data from the turnaround forms was done quickly. The other significant reason for the introduction of self-enumeration was that researchers gave greater significance to the objective indicators than to the subjective self-identification. Among the former category was language as an ethnicity marker. But this turned out to be a poor ethnicity marker since the vast majority of Americans use English. The other ethnicity marker, the birthplace of the parents also became questionable, when we consider that by the seventies more than half of the American population was at or beyond third-generation of the immigrant ancestors.

The introduction of self-enumeration was also spurred by the fact that self-identification is in harmony with American individualism. According to Peter Skerry the opposition of government agencies in the enumeration of the American population may be found in the historical experience that individualistic values could not hold valid in the case of racial minorities (slavery, Jim Crow, the wartime internment of citizens of Japanese origin). As a result, a certain historical gap exists between values held and practice, and the self-identification of race and ethnicity came to the fore as a virtual regime principle.²⁷

²⁵ Alba, Richard D.: *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990. Waters, Mary C.: *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. University of California Press. Berkeley 1990.

²⁶ The section below is largely based on the line of thought of Skerry, Peter: *Counting on the Census? Race, Group Identity, and the Evasion of the Politics*. The Brookings Institution., Washington D. C. 2000. p. 43–79.

²⁷ Skerry *op. cit.*47.

The transition from identification by enumerators to self-identification according to Matthew Snipp has moved the concept of race from determination of essentially physical characteristics towards the notion that self-identification may have quite a wide interpretation.²⁸ In the opinion of Peter Skerry self-identification carries with it a duality that manifests itself in response to the question: „which self” plays the defining role in the self-identification process. Skerry says that there are two possibilities: in one case, the social self draws the individual to identify with a given group or groups, and in the other case, the sense of individual autonomy, is driven by individual desire to reach the self-actualizing self.²⁹ Skerry thinks that since about 30 years ago when the census transitioned to self-identification of racial and ethnic groups, the Americans perception of self became increasingly psychologized. It has become the norm that the individual is the sole arbiter in choosing to belong to a group or groups. And most Americans according to Skerry interpret group ties not so much as social relationships as psychological identification with group goals and symbols. Ethnicity has shifted from a social concept of belonging to given groups to a psychological concept of identity. According to Srephan Thernstrom ethnicity in the census has become „matter of choice” a state of mind, rather than a matter for genealogists to decide: „it does not matter, if you do not think I look Chinese. I feel Chinese, then, I am Chinese.”³⁰

The two conceptualizations of ethnicity and race described above are not mutually exclusive, but neither are they identical. A key point, emphasized by Peter Skerry, is that census experts assert either or both conceptualizations to suit their purposes, without acknowledging that an important shift has taken place. However, to the degree that these categories are becoming more subjective and psychological, they are more imprecise and fleeting. In other words – says Peter Skerry – „as the census moves towards racial and ethnic *identities*, its task becomes more difficult.”³¹

²⁸ Snipp, Matthew C.: Racial Measurement in the American Census: Past Practices and Implications for the Future. *Annual review of sociology* 2003. 29. p. 570.

²⁹ Skerry *op. cit.* 48.

³⁰ Thernstrom 1992. p. 9.

³¹ Skerry *op. cit.* 48–49.

5. THE QUESTIONS RELATED TO ETHNICITY AND RACE IN THE 2000 CENSUS

In the 2000 Census we find five questions that directly or indirectly relate to ethnicity or race: 1) race; 2) Hispanic origin; and 3) independently of the direct question of ethnic origin 4) birth place of the respondent, as well as 5) questions related to the language spoken at home that indirectly may relate to ethnic origin.

During the census all individuals asked the question about race and Hispanic origin, but the questions regarding ethnic origin, household language and place of birth are asked only to those individuals sampled in the census.

5.1. Direct questions: race, Hispanic ancestry and origin or Ethnic origin (ancestry)

In reality, the census captured data more comprehensively and in greater detail than the OMB guidelines required. The directly addressed questions of the 2000 Census were: race, Hispanic origin, or ethnic origin or ancestry (*Table 5.1*)

The respondents had to reply to specific, that is, not open-ended questions. The sequence of the possible responses was: white; black; African-American or Negro; American Indian or Alaskan Native (blank space field for tribal designation); Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, other Asian (blank space); Native Hawaiian, Guam or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander (blank space) and other race (blank space). While earlier censuses instructed the respondent to choose a single response to the ethnic identity question, the 2000 census allowed to respond to the race question as „one” or „multiracial” response.

Since 1970 the short form of the census questionnaire includes a question regarding Spanish or Hispanic ancestry. The main cause in introducing the question to the census was that the majority of Spanish-speaking immigrants, particularly newcomers were uncertain about the race related responses, since Latin-American culture was not altogether receptive to changing American race relations. Hispanic political leaders recognized early on that the recognition by OMB and the separate census category may represent an advantage in their petitions, given the

large size of the group.³² The question of Hispanic origin was placed in the 2000 Census before the choice of race categories. These categories included: no (Not Spanish/Hispanic/Latin), or, yes (Mexico), yes (Puerto Rico), yes (Cuba), yes (other Spanish/Hispanic). The last choice included a blank space for the appropriate response. (*Figure 1*)

From our perspective, the subject matter that deserves most attention is the long form direct question on ethnic origin or ancestry that was included in the census in 1980.³³ Since the question of place of birth did not allow the differentiation and identification of groups from multiethnic societies (e.g. Russia and Austria-Hungary) at the third and later generations, the staff of the Census Bureau decided to introduce to include in the census in 1980 the question about „ancestry”.

At each of the subsequent three censuses the wording of the question was modified. In 1980, the question was: „What is this person’s ancestry?” In 1990 the question was extended to: „What is the person’s ancestry or ethnicity?” In 2000 the question was modified again: „What is this person’s ancestry or ethnic origin?” The question was open-ended because the respondent could choose any response. The questionnaire provided additional information to assist respondents in providing an answer, including the option to select one or more ethnic groups, but excluded indication of religious affiliation.

The question of „ancestry or ethnic origin” tries to capture that element of ethnicity that is related, to ancestors, earlier generations and common family trees. It is a conceptually wide term, since it may include immigration groups as well as country of origin. Those who formulated the question evidently presumed that respondents would be at least somewhat knowledgeable of their family history. We see in the questionnaire the question aimed to inform the ethnic origin of the respondent, and, in addition, instructions on the choice of answers

³² Choldin, Harvey M.: Statistics and Politics: The “Hispanic Issue” in the 1980 Census. *Demography* 1986. 23(3). p. 403–18.

³³ For the processing of ancestry data, see Farley, Reynolds: The New Census Questions about Ancestry: What Did It Tell Us? *Demography* 1991. 28(3):411–29. Lieberman, Stanley – Waters, Mary C.: *From Many Strands: Ethnic and Racial Groups in Contemporary America*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1988. Lieberman, Stanley – Waters, Mary C.: The Ethnic Responses of Whites: What Causes Their Instability and Inconsistency? *SOCIAL FORCES* 1993. 72(2):421–50. References to Hungarian ethnicity are discussed in detail by Fejős 1988. p. 200–210.; Fejős 2002. p. 146–147.

suggesting to indicate the group with which the respondent „identifies” with. The question therefore mixes the concept of ancestry or origin with that of identity.

The instructions to the 2000 census emphasize that the ethnic origin or ancestry question does not seek to measure the degree of identification with a given group or groups. The responses may imply a deep connection with an ethnic community or merely the memory of generations of ancestors.

The researchers specializing on ethnicity underscored the importance of differentiating between ancestry and ethnic identity. According to the American sociologist Richard Alba in the data available for sociologists the mixing of the concepts of ancestry and ethnic identity are the source of most errors in the evaluation of ethnicity.³⁴

Richard Alba observed that to understand ethnicity in the United States it is very important to differentiate between self-identity and objective knowledge of the family past (ascendants, ancestry). The two concepts are certainly related, since to have an identity other than American implies certain knowledge about ancestry, but that knowledge does not necessarily imply ethnic self-identification. In a parallel way, the increasing number of individuals with mixed ancestry increases the complexity of the question. It is conceivable that a given individual is familiar with his ancestry, but that the elapsed time factor may make the ethnicity component irrelevant to him or her. The individual with multiple ethnic ascendants may think of a multiethnic background. Finally, it also may occur that the individual, for various reasons, has little or unreliable information about his or her ancestry, and will state, as far as his or her generational memory goes, American ethnicity.

Contrary to ancestry, identity involves the image we have of ourselves. According to Alba, identity does not only refers to the statement „my great-grandparents came from Poland” but rather by certain way of expression saying that „I am Polish”, although adds Alba, in certain circumstances stating that his or her ancestors came from Poland could be also understood as an expression of identity.³⁵

³⁴ Alba, Richard D.: *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990. p. 39.

³⁵ Alba *op. cit.*38.

5.2. *Indirect Questions: place of birth and language at spoken at home.*

The 2000 Census presented questions related to ethnicity in an indirect fashion that is, asking for the place of birth and language spoken at home. The respondent had to specify in the „place of birth” question the actual place of birth – either the American state or foreign country – conforming political demarcations.

After the 1980 Census the questions related to the use of language remained in their wording and contents nearly the same. Unlike past Censuses, the post 1980 Censuses primarily emphasized the level of knowledge of English, essentially focusing on the current use of language.³⁶ The Census of 1980, followed by the 1990 and 2000, had their questions in closely related wordings³⁷: „Does this person speak a language other than English at home?” This question then led to other two language related questions that seek to identify the language and the level of knowledge of the English language. These questions were primarily useful to determine the geographic area where there may be a large population with poor English language skills, and also to evaluate the need of services such as bilingual education and perhaps other services.

In the censuses of 1980, 1990 and 2000 the question regarding knowledge of English was asked from Native Americans as well as foreign-born Americans. The usefulness of the responses was significantly curtailed by the fact that the answers were mandatory only to those who spoke at home a language other than English.

The data related to the use of language only takes into account the language spoken at home. It excludes information on those who also speak English at home, even if their native language may be different (for instance, in ethnically mixed marriages).

³⁶ A good historical review of the language related data in the censuses is in Stevens, Gillian.: *A Century of U. S. Censuses and the Language Characteristics of Immigrants. Demography* 1999. 36(3). p.387–397.

³⁷ The survey questionnaires differed only slightly in the questions and responses. In 1980 the English language appeared underscored, which was not the case in 1990. In 1990 the sentence „speaks only English” was dropped – earlier this response could be given to the second question (Does this person speak a language other than English at home?) provided the answer was negative. In 1980 the response to „what is the language?” included Chinese, Italian and Spanish; in 1990 the languages were Chinese, Italian, Spanish and Vietnamese. In 2000, the languages were Korean, Italian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Figure 1. The 2000 Census Survey form with questions related to ancestry and ethnicity

→ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Questions 5 and 6.**

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? Mark the "No" box if **not** Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.

No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano Yes, Cuban
 Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino — *Print group.* ↗

6. What is this person's race? Mark **one or more races** to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.

White
 Black, African Am., or Negro
 American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ↗

Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian
 Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro
 Filipino Vietnamese Samoan
 Other Asian — *Print race.* ↗ Other Pacific Islander — *Print race.* ↗

Some other race — *Print race.* ↗

10 What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?

(For example: Italian, Jamaican, African Am., Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Norwegian, Dominican, French Canadian, Haitian, Korean, Lebanese, Polish, Nigerian, Mexican, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and so on.)

6. THE HUNGARIANS LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

The identification of the Hungarians living in the United States is determined by questions regarding ancestry, use of language at home and place of birth.³⁸

6.1. Population of Hungarian origin/ancestry

In the 2000 Census 0.5 of the total population, that is 1,398 thousand individuals identified themselves as „Hungarian” or „Hungarian and Other”.³⁹ Of that total 903 thousand individuals indicated Hungarian as primary ancestry and 494 thousand as secondary ancestry. (Table 1). The wording of the questions on ancestry, the data changes along the decades may be observed in Table 2. The continuously falling tendency should be viewed with strong reservations.

Table 1. Responses to Hungarian origin/ethnic ancestry in the order of category in 2000

<i>Name of Category</i>	<i>Primary Ancestry</i>	<i>Secondary Ancestry</i>	<i>Total</i>
„Hungarian”	903 963	494 028	1 397 991
„Magyar”	699	34	733
Total	904 662	494 062	1 398 724

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Special Tabulation PHC-T43* (http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/ancestry_q_by_DAC_2000.xls).

³⁸ For Hungarian ancestry data in the first and second option, and the demographic profile of those speaking Hungarian at home, with a detailed socio-demographic study of Hungarian speakers see Papp, Attila Z. *Beszédből Világ. Elemzések, adatok amerikai magyarokról. [Data and Analysis on Hungarian Americans]*, MKI, Regio, Budapest 2008 demographic appendices p. 459–506.

³⁹ The ancestry/ethnic origin data are sample based, that is, the question is given only to those households in the sample, that is, on average every sixth household. The numbers obtained are then estimates of the values given by the population as a whole. Sampling and non-sample errors are likely to affect the estimated value and be at variance with the actual demography profile. For information on the margins of confidence and sampling and non-sample errors see: U.S. Census Bureau: *Census 2000 Summary File 3*, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2002.

Table 2. The Population of Hungarian Ancestry between 1980 and 2000

1980	1990	2000	Difference 1980–1990		Difference 1990–2000	
			In numbers	%	In numbers	%
1 776 902	1 582 302	1 398 702	-194 600	- 10.9	-183 600	- 11.6

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Special Tabulation PHC-T43*; U. S. Census Bureau, *Census 1990 Special Tabulations CPH-L-149*; U. S. Census Bureau, *Ancestry of the Population by State: 1980 (Supplementary Report PC80-S1-10)*.

The age structure of the population of Hungarian ancestry shows a slightly aging population. (Table 3) 15% is over 65 and the proportion of women is high. There are no fundamental shifts within the age groups. The lack of balance or maturity characterizes the young as well: marriages, leaving the parental household are life turning points that do not affect the stated ancestry. The household types has a high proportion of non-family households (35.4%) The household's 10% is over 65 years of age and the head of household is an aged woman or man.

The level of education may be considered high, since 90% of the population over 25 years has a high school degree or higher level of education. (Table 4)

Table 3. General Demographic Characteristics of the Population of Hungarian Ancestry in the United States in 2000

<i>Demographic characteristics</i>	<i>In numbers</i>	<i>In %</i>
Total Population	1 398 702	100.0%
Sex and age		
Male	674 485	48.2%
Female	724 217	51.8%
Under 5 years	66 596	4.8%
Between 9 and 5	75 395	5.4%
Between 10 and 14	81 816	5.8%
Between 15 and 19	79 444	5.7%
Between 20 and 24	73 400	5.2%

<i>Demographic characteristics</i>	<i>In numbers</i>	<i>In %</i>
Between 25 and 34	183 649	13.1%
Between 35 and 44	240 782	17.2%
Between 45 and 54	227 949	16.3%
Between 55 and 59	86 365	6.2%
Between 60 and 64	66 535	4.8%
Between 65 and 74	110 355	7.9%
Between 75 and 84	80 498	5.8%
Over 85	25 918	1.9%
Average age (in years)	40.3	
Over 18	1 126 653	80.5%
Male	534 605	38.2%
Female	592 048	42.3%
Over 21	1 080 092	77.2%
Over 62	255 828	18.3%
Over 65	216 771	15.5%
Male	94 925	6.8%
Female	121 846	8.7%
Type of Household		
Households	622 846	100.0%
Family Households (Family)	402 215	64.6%
With own children under 18	172 423	27.7%
Married Couple	335 585	53.9%
With own children under 18	138 720	22.3%
Female Householder, No Husband Present	49 127	7.9%
With own children under 18	25 503	4.1%
Non-Family Households	220 631	35.4%
Householder living alone	180 601	29.0%
Householders over 65	66 581	10.7%
Households with individuals under 18	182 410	29.3%
Households with individuals over 65	211 153	33.9%
Average household	2.37	
Average family	2.94	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau , Census 2000 Summary File 4, Matrices PCT1, PCT3, PCT4, PCT8, PCT9, PCT10, PCT11, PCT12, PCT14, PCT15, PCT23, PCT26, HCT2, and HCT7.

Table 4. Main Social Characteristics of the Population of Hungarian Ancestry in the United States

<i>Social Characteristics</i>	<i>In numbers</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT		
Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	323 862	100.0%
Nursery school, pre-school	21 506	6.6%
Kindergarten	14 262	4.4%
Elementary (1–8 grades)	128 835	39.8%
High school (9–12 grades)	65 384	20.2%
College or Graduate School	93 875	29.0%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
Population 25 and over	1 022 051	100.0%
Less than 9th grade	27 672	2.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	71 888	7.0%
High School graduate (includes equivalency)	266 038	26.0%
Some college, no degree	225 171	22.0%
Associate degree	71 293	7.0%
Bachelors degree	211 193	20.7%
Graduate or Professional degree	148 796	14.6%
High School graduate or higher in percentage	90.3	
Bachelor degree in percentage	35.2	
MARITAL STATUS		
Population 15 years and over	1 174 895	100.0%
Never married	283 184	24.1%
Married	674 834	57.4%
Single household	15 442	1.3%
Widowed	83 598	7.1%
Female	67 755	5.8%
Divorced	117 837	10.0%
Female	70 831	6.0%
CAREGIVER GRANDPARENTS		
Grand parent with grandchild under 18	15 604	100.0%
Responsible for the grandchild	5 483	35.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4, Matrices PCT1, PCT3, PCT4, PCT8, PCT9, PCT10, PCT11, PCT12, PCT14, PCT15, PCT23, PCT26, HCT2, and HCT7.

92 percent of the individuals of Hungarian origin or ancestry were born in the United States and are descendants of second, third or higher generations. (Table 5)

Of the 110 thousand foreign born more than 50 percent immigrated to the United States before 1965 (Table 6). After 1965 immigration patterns resemble light waves: in the seventies we note a decrease and in the eighties and nineties the number of immigrants increases. In the late nineties we find the highest numbers (between 1995 and 2000 the number of immigrants is 11 900 while between 1990 and 1994 is 7442) If we look at the sex of the immigrants we see a slight difference between men and women, particularly in the last decade of the 20th century, were women top men by almost 1%.

Table 5. Hungarian origin/ancestry, place of birth, citizenship and year of entry in 2000

Place of Birth, Citizenship and Year of Entry	In numbers	Percentage
Total population	1 398 702	100.0 %
Born in the United States	1 288 425	92.1 %
Foreign born	110 277	7.9 %
Naturalized citizen	81 658	74.0 %
Not a citizen	28 619	26.0 %
Entered between 1990 and March 2000	19 342	17.5 %
Naturalized citizen	3 004	15.5 %
Not a citizen	16 338	84.5 %
Entered between 1980 and 1989	15 942	14.5 %
Naturalized citizen	10 148	63.7 %
Not a citizen	5 794	36.3 %
Entered before 1980	74 993	68.0 %
Naturalized citizen	68 506	91.3 %
Not a citizen	6 487	8.7 %

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 Summary File 4

Table 6. Population of Hungarian ancestry by Sex and Year of Entry in 2000

<i>Sex and Year of Entry</i>	<i>In numbers</i>	<i>In percentage</i>
Total	110 277	100.0%
Men:	54 029	48.9 %
Between 1995 and March 2000	5 472	4.9 %
Between 1990 and 1994	3 340	3.0 %
Between 1985 and 1989	4 510	4.0 %
Between 1980 and 1984	3 640	3.3 %
Between 1975 and 1979	2 621	2.3 %
Between 1970 and 1974	3 046	2.7 %
Between 1965 and 1969	3 507	3.1 %
Before 1965	27 893	25.2 %
Women:	56 248	51.0 %
Between 1995 and March 2000	6 428	5.8 %
Between 1990 and 1994	4 102	3.7 %
Between 1985 and 1989	4 599	4.1 %
Between 1980 and 1984	3 193	2.9 %
Between 1975 and 1979	2 324	2.1 %
Between 1970 and 1974	3 062	2.7 %
Between 1965 and 1969	4 114	3.7 %
Before 1965	28 426	25.7 %

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 Summary File 4

Table 7 shows the immigration pattern of the foreign born population of Hungarian ancestry classified by region. The table shows the preponderance of the European born immigrants, that is 90.4% or 99,797 as their total number.

88.3 percent of the Hungarian ancestry population speak only English at home (*Table 8 and Table 9*). Their number differs little from the population born in the United States so that we may assume that there is an overlap among the two categories of the population. If our assumption is correct, we see at work a very important tendency regarding use of language. In parallel with the phenomenon of the sequential timing of generations arriving to the country, there is also the reality of lan-

guage adaptation to the language of the dominant culture. Based on this we may assume a generational gap in the use of language between the older and younger generation. We find those speaking Hungarian at home in the „any other language” category. They constitute 7.7 percent and 68.8 percent of them „speak English very well”.

Table 7. Foreign born population of Hungarian ancestry by region of origin and year of entry

Region of Birth and Year of Entry	In numbers	In percentage
Europe	99 797	100.0 %
Between 1990 and March 2000	16 584	16.6 %
Between 1980 and 1989	14 292	14.3 %
Before 1980	68 921	69.1 %
Asia	1 414	100.0 %
Between 1990 and March 2000	289	20.4 %
Between 1980 and 1989	258	18.2 %
Before 1980	867	61.3 %
Africa	220	100.0 %
Between 1990 and March 2000	34	15.5 %
Between 1980 and 1989	41	18.6 %
Before 1980	145	65.9 %
Oceania	372	100.0 %
Between 1990 and March 2000	143	38.4 %
Between 1980 and 1989	72	19.4 %
Before 1980	157	42.2 %
Latin America	2 733	100.0 %
Between 1990 and March 2000	592	21.7 %
Between 1980 and 1989	530	19.4 %
Before 1980	1 611	58.9 %
North America	5 741	100.0 %
Between 1990 and March 2000	1 700	29.6 %
Between 1980 and 1989	749	13.0 %
Before 1980	3 292	57.3 %

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 Summary File 4

Table 8. Population of Hungarian ancestry over 5 years and language spoken at home in 2000

	<i>In numbers</i>	<i>In percentage</i>
Population over 5 years	1 332 106	100.0%
Speaks English only	1 175 743	88.3%
Speaks a language other than English	156 363	11.7%
Spanish	17 214	100.0%
Speaks English very well	13 062	75.9%
Speaks English well	2 178	12.7%
Does not speak English well	1 895	11.0%
Does not speak English	79	0.5%
Other Indo-European languages	35 050	100.0%
Speaks English very well	25 185	71.9%
Speaks English well	6 112	17.4%
Does not speak English well	3 378	9.6%
Does not speak English	375	1.1%
Asian and Pacific Ocean languages	1 391	100.0%
Speaks English very well	1 203	86.5%
Speaks English well	96	6.9%
Does not speak English well	90	6.5%
Does not speak English	2	0.1%
Any other language	102 708	100.0%
Speaks English very well	70 657	68.8%
Speaks English well	23 793	23.2%
Does not speak English well	7 373	7.2%
Does not speak English	889	0.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Summary File 4, Matrices PCT38, PCT40, PCT41, PCT42.*

Table 9. Population of Hungarian ancestry and Ability to Speak English in 2000

<i>Ability to Speak English</i>	<i>In numbers</i>	<i>In percentage</i>
Population over 5 years	1 332 106	100.0%
Speaks a language other than English	156 363	11.7%
Between 5 and 7 years of age	15 882	1.2%
Between 18 and 64 years of age	95 370	7.2%

<i>Ability to Speak English</i>	<i>In numbers</i>	<i>In percentage</i>
Over 65 years of age	45 111	3.4%
Speaks English less than very well	46 256	3.5%
Between 5 and 7 years of age	4 155	0.3%
Between 18 and 64 years of age	24 856	1.9%
Over 65 years of age	17 245	1.3%
<i>Ability to speak English at home</i>		
Linguistically isolated households*	14 723	
<i>Population over 5 years</i>	<i>1 308 880</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
In linguistically isolated households	21 927	1.7%
Between 5 and 7 years of age	1 060	0.1%
Between 18 and 64 years of age	9 849	0.8%
Over 65 years of age	11 018	0.8%

* Linguistically isolated households are those homes where there are no residents older than 14, who 1) speak English only, or 2) speaks a language other than English, and speaks English very well. In other words, the households where the residents are over 14, find it difficult to communicate in English.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Summary File 4, Matrices PCT38, PCT40, PCT41, PCT42.*

6.2. Population born in Hungary

Among the population of Hungarian ancestry, those born in Hungary (92 thousand) are well below the total Hungarian ancestry population, and closely approach the Hungarian ancestry population born in Europe (99,797). This population has an aging profile since the average age is over 61; 42 percent is over 62 (Table 10). Most likely the refugees of 1956 are the most significant contingent within the age of 60 and 84; this age group constitutes 43 percent of the total population.

Of the total households 21 percent are single households of men or women, who are 65 or older. The married couple families are also high (53.2%) among the total households. Educational attainment is also high (Table 11). The population's 77% has a high school degree or higher education.

Table 10. Demographic characteristics of the Hungarian-born population of the United States in 2000

<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>	<i>In Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Total Population</i>	92 015	100.0%
Sex and age		
Male	45 060	48.9%
Female	46 955	51.0%
Below 5 years old	340	0.3%
Between 5 and 9 years old	550	0.6%
Between 10 and 14 years old	685	0.7%
Between 15 and 19 years old	1 230	1.3%
Between 20 and 24 years old	2 705	2.9%
Between 25 and 34 years old	7 410	8.0%
Between 35 and 44 years old	7 340	7.9%
Between 45 and 54 years old	15 635	16.9%
Between 55 and 59 years old	8 190	8.9%
Between 60 and 64 years old	10 625	11.5%
Between 65 and 74 years old	17 910	19.4%
Between 75 and 84 years old	12 040	13.0%
85 and over	7 355	7.9%
Average age	61.1	
Over 18 years old	89 865	97.6%
Men	43 865	47.6%
Women	45 995	49.9%
Over 21 years old	88 940	96.6%
Over 62 years old	44 160	47.9%
Over 65 years old	37 310	40.5%
Men	16 630	18.0%
Women	20 680	22.4%
Households by type		
Total Households	53 595	100.0%
Family Households (Families)	33 145	61.8%
With own children under 18	7 620	14.2%
Married couple family	28 560	53.2%
With own children under 18	6 405	11.9%

<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>	<i>In Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Female householder, no husband present	3 230	6.0%
With own children under 18	805	1.5%
Non-family households	20 450	38.1%
Householder living alone	18 190	33.9%
Householder 65 years or over	11 275	21.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Special Tabulations (STP-159)

Table 11. Main Social Characteristics of the Population of Hungarian Ancestry born in the United States

<i>Social Characteristics</i>	<i>In Numbers</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT		
Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	6 915	100.0%
Nursery school, pre-school	160	2.3%
Kindergarten	125	1.8%
Elementary (1–8 grades)	975	14.1%
High school (9–12 grades)	1 235	17.8%
College or Graduate School	4 420	63.9%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
Population 25 and over	86 510	100.0%
Less than 9th grade	9 555	11.0%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	10 280	11.8%
High School graduate (includes equivalency)	20 675	23.9%
Some college, no degree	15 455	17.8%
Associate degree	4 555	5.2%
Bachelors degree	11 630	13.4%
Graduate or Professional degree	14 355	16.5%
High School graduate or higher in percentage	77.0	
Bachelor degree in percentage	30.0	
MARITAL STATUS		
Population 15 years and over	90 440	100.0%
Never married	9 610	10.6%
Married	55 680	61.5%

<i>Social Characteristics</i>	<i>In Numbers</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Single household	1 175	1.3%
Widowed	14 360	15.8%
Female	11 720	12.9%
Divorced	9 620	10.6%
Female	5 105	5.6%
CAREGIVER GRANDPARENTS		
Grandparent with grandchild under 18	1 885	100.0%
Grandparent responsible for grandchild	490	25.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Special Tabulations (STP-159)

The demographic profile corresponds to the detailed data shown in the immigration periods. *Table 12* shows that the immigrants arriving before 1980 exceeds 70 percent of the total. 23.5 percent of the Hungarian born population are not U.S. citizens; between 1990 and 2000; 50 percent of them immigrated to the United States. 10 percent arrived to the United States before 1990 and they do not have currently U.S. citizenship.

In the Hungarian born population the details of language spoken at home and ability to speak English indicates the prevalence of the use of the language other than English (75.8%). Nearly half of this population claims to speak English „less than very well”. Going back to the language gap or fault line mentioned earlier, it would be reasonable to conclude that such a gap takes place between the first and second generation. If we assume that keeping the language bears relation with continuity or with a renewed manifestation of ethnic identity, then the language gap and the process of assimilation may have a connection. According to the American researcher Gillian Stevens the language boundaries, the language gap or fault lines run counter to the theory that the descendants of immigrant groups are homogenous entities. The language boundaries are likely to generate a level of language and social diversity that may create internal conflicts with, for example, maintaining certain institutions, such a bilingual schools.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Stevens, Gillian: Nativity, Intermarriage, and Mother-Tongue Shift. *AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW* 1985. 82.

Table 12. Hungarian-born Population by Citizenship and Period of entry in 2000

U.S. Citizenship and Period of U.S. Entry	In Number	Percentage
Total Population	92 015	100.0%
Naturalized U.S. Citizen	70 320	76.4%
Entered 1990 to 2000	2 075	2.2%
Entered 1980 to 1989	7 000	7.6%
Entered before 1980	61 245	66.5%
Not a U.S. Citizen	21 700	23.5%
Entered 1990 to 2000	11 970	13.0%
Entered 1980 to 1989	4 225	4.5%
Entered before 1980	5 500	5.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Special Tabulations (STP-159)

Table 13. Hungarian-born Population by Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English

Language Spoken at Home and ability to Speak English	In Numbers	Percentage
Population 5 years and over	91 680	100.0 %
English only	22 165	24.1 %
Language other than English	69 515	75.8 %
Speak English less than very well	29 135	31.7 %
Spanish	735	0.8 %
Speak English less than very well	335	0.3 %
Other Indo-European languages	9 300	10.1 %
Speak English less than very well	3 880	4.2 %
Asian and other Pacific Island languages	100	0.1 %
Speak English less than very well	40	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Special Tabulations (STP-159)

6.3. Population of Hungarian Also Spoken at Home (5 years and over)⁴¹

We have less information from the census data of the population where individuals speak Hungarian at home, but we do have information regarding this group from other sources.⁴² According to the data of *Table 14*, the number of individuals who speak Hungarian at home is 117 thousand; this number represents a decrease of nearly 40 percent since 1980, which reinforces our assumptions regarding the generational gap or fault line in the use of the mother tongue.

Table 14. Population of Hungarians who Speak Hungarian at Home (5 years and over) between 1980 and 2000

1980	1990	2000	Difference 1980–1990		Difference 1990–2000	
			Numbers	%	Numbers	%
178 995	147 902	117 975	- 31 090	- 17.3	- 29 929	- 20.2

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Special Tabulation 224*; Fejős 1988: 192.

Based on estimates derived from the IPUMS database 111,320 individuals speak Hungarian at home and of this total nearly half was born in Hungary (49.6%), 7.1% in Romania, 6.4% in Ohio and 5% in New Jersey. If we examine those who speak Hungarian at home and those whose ancestry is Hungarian we can find individuals who were not of Hungarian origin, yet they spoke Hungarian at home. (See the case of countries of origin: Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, (and former Czechoslovakia,) and the former Soviet Union. – *Table 15*). We assume that those are mixed marriages originated in Central Europe, where one spouse was not Hungarian, but still spoke Hungarian.

⁴¹ This section of the chapter was co-authored with Attila Papp Z..

⁴² We obtained data used in the subsection of this chapter, such as the 5 percent sample from the 2000 Census, from a IPUMS (*Integrated Public Use Microdata Series*) project, organization located next to the Minnesota Population Center. For other demographic data, see Papp *op. cit.* 459–506.

Table 15. Population of Hungarian Ancestry and Country of Birth in Central Europe

Place of Birth	Total	Hungarian Ancestry			Hungarian speakers at home
		Option 1	Option 2	Total	
Hungary	88 820	73 440	640	74 080	55 260
Romania	126 420	6 900	620	7 520 ^a	7 940
Czechoslovakia	82 620	1 940	400	2 340 ^b	2 980
Yugoslavia	220 840	1 700	360	2 060 ^c	1 220
Soviet Union	758 600	380	20	400 ^d	700
(Russia)	68 340	1 340	660	2 000	580

^a Presumably Hungarians from Transylvania

^b Presumably Hungarians from Southern Slovakia

^c Presumably Hungarians from Voivodina

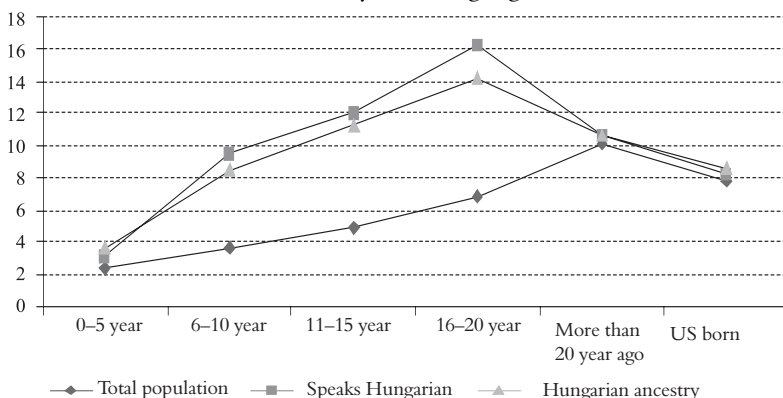
^d Presumably Hungarians from Subcarpathian Ukraine.

Source: IPUMS database

The Hungarian speakers (at home) classified by place of current residence are highest in California (16.1%), New York (15.2%) and Ohio (10.3%). The same populations classified by cities are primarily in New York (9,560 individuals), followed by Los Angeles (4080), Chicago (1060) and Cleveland (940).

If we examine the profile of the Hungarian speakers and those with Hungarian ancestry and their immigration status, among Hungarian speakers, and to a lesser degree among those with Hungarian ancestry we notice a much higher rate of divorce than among the U.S. population at large. This is particularly true among those who are in the United States 20 years ago or less. (see Chart 3) This proportion, however, decreases to the general population level among those who were in the United States for 20 years or more. This is to say, that the rate of divorce is highest among those who speak Hungarian; however, after 20 years of immigration experience, there is no significance from the point of view of divorce, whether the language used at home is Hungarian or not, and similarly, the Hungarian ancestry also may be irrelevant. We could also say that if a couple could surmount 20 years of speaking Hungarian at home, the eventual divorce should not necessarily be attributed to ancestry or language but rather to accommodation to an average American trend.

Chart 3. Proportion of Divorces in Relation to Immigration Status, Ancestry and Language

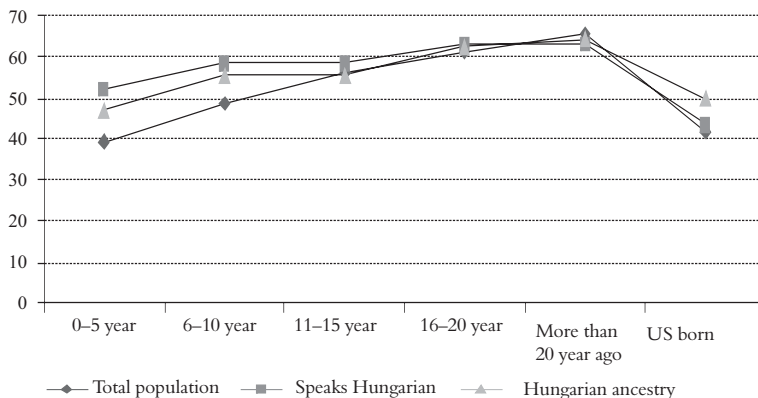


Source: IPUMS database

With some variations, we have noticed a high rate of marriage among Hungarian speakers that after 15–20 years levels off to the tendencies of the U.S. population at large. (*Chart 4*) In Hungarian speaking immigrant households the rates of marriage and divorce are high, showing a high degree of intensity in marriage related activity. The ethnically homogeneous Hungarians tie the knot in greater proportion to untie them also in greater proportion than the average American marriage does.

Upon examination of the social and demographic trend of the Hungarian speaking population we can determine that the population is very much aged (average age 54.7), and that in this group the proportion of women is high. This data indicates that in a family setting the language spoken hinges on the mother. Those who speak Hungarian at home have lived longest in the United States. It is of interest to note that among those who were not born in the U.S. but identify themselves as Hungarian live, on average, in the U.S. 3.87 years. We could also say that among the population of Hungarian ancestry, but not born in the U.S., after nearly four years, tend to stop speaking Hungarian at home (or because they are in mixed marriages or for reason of assimilation).

Chart 4. Proportion of Marriages in Relation to Immigration Status, Ancestry and Language



Source: IPUMS database

Finally, we could determine from the data of *Table 16* that the income of the Hungarian speaking income is the lowest, since it is an aged population with a defining proportion of retirees. At the same time they are the most educated, not only in relation to the population of Hungarian ancestry, but compared to the American average as well.

Table 16. Social Characteristics of the Population of Hungarian Ancestry Speaking Hungarian at Home

	<i>Hungarian Ancestry: 1st option</i>	<i>Hungarian Ancestry: 2nd option</i>	<i>Hungarian speakers</i>	<i>Total Population</i>
Average Age (year)	43,09	35,65	54,78	36,2
Proportion of Women	51	52	55	51,2
Years in the U.S.	3,87	0,68	20,2	2,01
Total Personal Earned Income	23643	23666	18777	16731
Educational Attainment	10,1	9,7	10,3	8,7

Source: IPUMS database

7. THE RELIABILITY OF THE ANCESTRY DATA

The quality of the ancestry data of the U.S. Census has received numerous critical comments on part of researchers.⁴³ Below, I am presenting studies that support those critical comments, focusing on the results of two research studies. First, I present the results of the *Census 2000 Content Reinterview Survey's* concerning the ethnic origin and ancestry data. This is followed by a summary of the ancestry data study of 1980 by the American sociologist Reynolds Farley. The results of the two studies may further affect our own views on the nature of the data.

7.1. *The Results of the Census 2000 Content Reinterview Survey*

The *Content Reinterview Survey* (CSR) that follows the census is fundamentally designed to determine the measurement reliability of the statistical data. The CSR study is essentially a repeat survey of the survey questionnaire filled out by individuals of a selected sample. The results obtained in the census survey and the CRS surveys are then compared to look for any discrepancies. The study seeks to determine measurement reliability, that is, to what degree does a question elicit identical responses taken at different times.

The Census 2000 Content Reinterview Survey used a *test-retest methodology* in which a sample of households from Census 2000 long form respondents were contacted a second time a re-asked the long form questions. The intent was to measure the simple response variance. The measure used to summarize this response variance is the index of inconsistency. The higher the index value, the more problematic is the interpretation of the data from the census item. Census workers consider an index of 20 or less as a good or low level of response variance, an index between 20 and 50 as a moderate variance, that is moderately problematic; and a variance index of over 50, as high variance and problematic. In the Reinterview Survey of 2000, the ancestry question gave a medium variance (30.7) than the white population (37.3). The variance

⁴³ Concerning the work done in Hungarian we should first mention the studies of Zoltán Fejős. Among other works he has published critiques on the handling of ancestry data in the 1980 Census; Fejős 1988. p. 200–204. A summary of the most significant aspects of his work are in Fejős 2002. p. 146–148.

index for those of Hungarian ancestry had an inconsistency level (23,4) considered moderately problematic.⁴⁴

7.2. Characteristics related Ethnic Origin or Ancestry

In an independent study (Farley 1991) examined to what extent does the question of ancestry measures ethnicity. By doing a comparison of the 1980 ancestry data with the *Current Population Survey* of 1979 and the *National Content Test* of 1986 (the survey prior to 1990) Farley very much questioned the usefulness of the ancestry question. He concluded that there was very strong inconsistency among certain European groups in 1979, in 1980 and in 1986. In the case of the British, the Russians and the French found discrepancies in the range of 25–30%. Farley also concluded that the wide variations measured in a short period of time rendered the handling of the ancestry data with great caution, particularly in trying to determine the size of a particular group.

Farley has used the *Current Population Survey* of 1979 and *Content Reinterview Study* that followed the 1980 Census to evaluate linkages between ancestry data and other demographic characteristics (place o birth of parents and use of language). The CPS of 1979 linked ancestry data of 100 000 individuals, including place of birth, place of birth of the parents, use of mother tongue, use of language other than English in the household. This data allowed examining the closeness of the languages and national groups to the ancestry responses. Based on the tabulation of the responses, Farley observed three fundamental tendencies:

- There is a sharp contrast among the groups that entered the United States after the 1968 Immigration Law (Asian Indians, Chinese, Colombians, Vietnamese, Filipinos, Iranians, Jamaicans, etc.) Four fifth of them had an ancestry matching the birth-place of their parents, and a significant number of them spoke the language of ancestry.
- The second group is also well differentiated, that is, those immigrants who entered the United States between 1880 and World War I, and their descendents. These individuals came from

⁴⁴ U. S. Census Bureau: *Census 2000 Content Reinterview Survey: Accuracy of Data for Selected Population and Housing Characteristics as Measured by Reinterview*, U. S. Census Bureau. Washington, DC. 2003.

countries of Eastern and South Central Europe (Czechs, Hungarians, Italians, Lithuanians, Poles, Romanians and Ukrainians); in this group 5 to 10% was born in the listed countries, one quarter to one third of their parents were born in those countries, and approximately the same number identified these same countries as their mother tongue. These individuals and their descendants represent the survivors of the second great migration wave. According to Farley, this group is aging quickly and it will cease to exist in two decades.⁴⁵

- The third group is made up of individuals who entered the United States before the period of the American Civil War. Their ethnic identity is mostly Dutch, French, German, Irish, Norwegian or Scottish. In this group very few were born outside the United States, their parents were also native and few of them speak the language of ancestry.

In the course of the CRS of 1980, following the Census of the same year, 13,800 households were surveyed as a quality control exercise. Instead of repeating the census questions, census officials gathered information related to ancestry, that information on parents, grandparents, and earlier generations. If the response was that the ancestors were born in the United States, they asked about the nationality or country of origin of the most remote ancestor. After reviewing the responses, Farley found dramatic differences among the generations. In the first and second generation group of individuals 90% of the ancestry coincided with the place of birth of the individual and that of the parents. There were only two exceptions: half of the French and a third of the British stated that they do not have ancestors in the countries cited.

Less than half of the respondents with ancestry going back to the third and fourth generation provided answers that matched the country of origin and ethnicity of the ancestors. In this group the majority stated that all ancestors were born in the United States and that they have no knowledge of the particular country their ancestors immigrated from.⁴⁶

We see therefore that the more consistent responses to the ancestry question are those respondents whose ancestors came to the United States relatively recently and the most inconsistent responses were made

⁴⁵ Farley, Reynolds: *The New Census Questions About Ancestry: What Did It Tell Us?* *Demography* 1991. p. 423.

⁴⁶ Farley *op. cit.* 424.

by those individuals whose ancestors entered this country before the Civil War, that is, British, Dutch, German and other northern European groups. It seems that these results, outline in the ancestry responses the generational changes that have taken place, a pattern that we were able to correlate in the use of language.

8. SOCIAL PROCESSES THAT EXPLAIN THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ETHNICITY RESPONSES

Researchers identify and associate with assimilation the ultimate cause of the unreliability of ethnic data of the European population in the 20th century, and particularly in the period after World War II. Assimilation has been called „*America's dirty little secret*“⁴⁷ and assimilation according to authors Richard Alba and Victor Nee is the result of a long term social process that gradually chipped away those social elements safeguarding the ethnic differentiation of groups. First of all, the cultural differentiation that served as ethnic identity markers and strengthened ethnic solidarity diminished. Gradually, the playing field for social advancement, such as school diplomas and well paid jobs, evened out; at the same time that ethnicity lost connection with specific segments of economic activity. A shift took place of people moving from downtown urban ethnic enclaves to ethnically mixed suburbia or other urban districts. And finally, it became socially acceptable to cross ethnic barriers, which resulted in a high number of mixed marriages and ethnically diverse population. (Alba & Nee 2003: 70–71). Although ethnicity is present in the lives of third and fourth generation populations, its manifestation has evolved significantly. The current situation is best characterized by – using an expression borrowed from Alba and Nee – „the twilight of ethnicity“ where ethnicity is more of a symbolic expression than social determinants such as endogamy, segregation and economic marginalization.

According to Richard Alba and Victor Nee certain hallmarks of contemporary identity for white unmistakably support the successful assimilation of these groups.⁴⁸ One of the hallmarks is malleability, that is, for

⁴⁷ Massey, S. Douglas.: *Revenge of The Chicago School. Contemporary sociology* 2004. 33(4). p. 408–10.

⁴⁸ Alba, Richard D. – Victor Nee: *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Mass. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2003. p. 96–97.

most individuals the importance, intensity and even definition of ethnic identity may vary from situation to situation, that is, it is situationally specific.⁴⁹ In the background of the malleability of ethnic identity, undoubtedly there is a role to play by the generational distance separating the individual from their immigrant ancestors makes complicated and difficult establishing the particular ethnic identity. At the same time we should note that in the great majority of cases, there is no strong social pressure to associate with any ethnic groups, since most often their ethnic backgrounds are not self-evident. There are in this group, those whites who hold intensely to ethnic identities in a variety of situations, and also those who believe that ethnicity has little or no importance. The majority, however, are between the two extremes, who take a middle of the road approach to ethnic identity. For this group ethnic identity often manifests itself with family events or festivities celebrated with the family.

Another common feature of American white identity in the view of Alba and Nee is that expression of this identity is usually weak in their daily manifestations, such as, for instance, in the consumption of ethnic food. This is an experience that is within the realm of private life and it does not have the potential for negative outside criticism. At the same time, it is an experience that may be shared with individuals of a different ethnic background.

The third hallmark according to Alba and Nee is the „privatization” of ethnic identity. For most white American individuals ethnic identity belongs eminently to the family because most community connections have lost their former ethnic character. For this group membership in ethnic organizations is not a priority, even if the cost of voluntary association would require minimal effort. Typically, most of them are unconcerned about the ethnic affiliation or sense of belonging of their children to a particular ethnic group, a choice they regard as personal.

⁴⁹ In the *Summary* of the book we will return to examine the limits of situationally specific ethnic identity and also the characteristics stemming from interaction with ethnic organizations.

9. SUMMARY

The method whereby we measure ethnicity, reflects well the limits of our data gathering and our theoretical assumptions, says Calvin Goldscheider.⁵⁰ It would be worthwhile to take this statement as a normative principle.

We could see that the ethnic origin or ancestry question of the *Census 2000* failed to distinguish between those individuals with deep connection to an ethnic group or ancestry and those whose ethnicity was merely a casual choice among various ethnic ancestors as preserved in family memory. Some researchers contend that a separation of ethnic self-identification and ethnic or national origin would yield better measurements. This would include a set of questions aiming at identifying the most important ethnic groups as well as the individuals' ancestors. The wording of the questions would be as follows: 1) „Among the groups listed which do you consider the one closest to your primary identity?“ and 2) Thinking about your parents, your grandparents and your ancestors, what nationalities or ethnic groups are represented in your family history?“⁵¹

The direct question related to ethnic origin that asks for the place of birth merely helps identify first generation ancestry. Many researchers think that it was a mistake to drop the question regarding the place of birth from the survey questionnaire.⁵² The cross reference of the questions regarding Hungarian ancestry and the language spoken at home highlight the generational dynamics of the population of Hungarian ancestry.

⁵⁰ Goldscheider, Calvin: Ethnic Categorization in Censuses: Comparative Observations from Israel, Canada, and the United States.” In: Kertzer D. I. and Arel, D. (eds.): *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 2002. p. 85.

⁵¹ See also: Hirschman, Charles: How to Measure Ethnicity: An Immodest Proposal, In: *Challenges of Measuring an Ethnic World: Science, politics and reality. Proceedings of the Joint Canada-United States Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity April 1–3, 1992*. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1993. 547–558.

⁵² Thernstrom, Stephan: Counting Heads: New Data on the Ethnic Composition of the American Population. *Journal Of Interdisciplinary History* 1989.20(1). p. 107–16. Boyd, Monica: *Offspring-Parent Shifts in Ancestry: Ethnic Bedrock or Ethnic Quicksand?* Florida State University: Center for the Study of Population. Working Paper, vol. WPS 1997. p. 97–138.

We should realize that the responses regarding the white population do reflect a measure of the reality despite the problems of interpretation and inconsistency. The complexity of the data derives also from the fact that in the case of most individuals, the ethnicity of the ancestors may be multiple and that the importance of a particular ethnicity depends on the timing and social context when the choice is made.

Despite these constraints we found the available data on the Hungarian population of the United States enriches our knowledge not only with new information but with new perspectives.