

## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis dissertates about Slovak minority in the former Hungarian Kingdom, focusing on the Slovak minority in Bácsky Petrovec. Slovak minority is located in the following countries: Hungary, Serbian Vojvodina, Croatia, Romania. Research is done in four dimensions: the historical-geographic, dimension focussing the current state of the formation and maintenance of Slovak identity and inquiry which was made in Slovak community in Bácsky Petrovec and with Serbs in Novi Sad. The aim is to provide a comprehensive analysis of social and cultural situation of the Slovaks in the successor countries of former Hungarian Kingdom, where Slovak immigrants flowed after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, mainly from 17th to 19th century. Two issues are presented: regions where there was a significant Slovak minority and the situation of the Slovak minority in these regions over time. The most important regions which retain Slovaks to present time are South Backa and South Banat in Vojvodina, Pilis Mountains, Békés county and Beech Mountains in Hungary and Bihar Mountains in Romania. According to the latest census the Slovak nationality in these areas was declared by 96.3 thousand people, but it is not even half of the original number of Slovaks in present area of Hungary a hundred years ago. There was an intensive assimilation observed in all regions. An important part of the work is the definition of Slovak identity in regard to ethnic and national affiliation. Until the end of existence of multi-ethnic Hungarian Kingdom, there was a large population of Slovaks with nationality Hungarus (Natio Hungarica, political nationality), and they were Slovaks by ethnicity. Because of this, a large percentage of Slovaks in Hungary never declared Slovak nationality. So nationality in Hungarian Kingdom is a controversial issue because it is vague and hardly separated from ethnicity. In countries where the Slovaks found themselves in the new state territories it could have created a sense of differentiation from the dominant ethnic group what prompted the foundation of a different nationality. Important in shaping and maintaining identity should be mainly language, religion, politics, art, and later nationality. Where the nationality was not created and the state did not provide ethnic-cultural security, there was a decline of minority. In the case of Vojvodina it is friendly atmosphere between Slovaks and Serbs from both sides and above standard relationships. The research found that Vojvodina similarly as Romania is a multi-ethnic territory with good laws to support minorities and relations between minorities. In order to preserve former numerous Slovak minority in Croatia and Hungary, these states could learn from other countries where the Slovak minority has not diminished and where its minority rights are guaranteed.

**Key words:** ethnicity, identity, region, nationality, assimilation, Slovaks