





of national or ethnic minorities (Hungarians, Roma, Ruthenians and Ukrainians), religious groups (Roman Catholics, Lutherans, reformed evangelicals, Eastern Orthodox and Greek Orthodox) and regional affiliations (e.g. *Gorole*, or mountain people). Several of the *okres* regions (incl. Nové Zámky, Levice, Trebišov, Rimavská Sobota) combine areas dominated by ethnic Slovak populations with those inhabited by Hungarians. As the Hungarian votes tend to be concentrated and the Slovak votes are distributed between several parties some of the maps presenting the outcomes of the elections of 1998, 2002 and 2006 could be interpreted to suggest that about one-third of the Slovakian territory is dominated by Hungarians. The pattern of the 2010 elections, when the Hungarian votes became dispersed and the Slovak votes were unusually concentrated, gives an impression that the Hungarians had somehow disappeared in the meantime. Partly correcting this picture are the few maps with pie charts representing the support for individual parties in these regions.

This drawback, however, could be seen as a benefit, since the results shown in large local authority units reveal the effects of concentration or dispersal of votes among

groups of citizens otherwise identified as uniform in terms of election patterns.

The author's choice of local authority unit may also be justified by a high degree of dispersion at the subsequent lower tier of administration. The Slovakian *okres*, which corresponds to the county level elsewhere in Europe (e.g. *Kreis* in Germany and *powiat* in Poland), is divided into several '*obec*' that typically correspond to a village or town. This means that there is no territorial unit of the commune/municipality size (*gmina* in Poland and *Gemeinde* in Germany) and the number of *obecs* exceeds that of *gminas* in Poland, while Slovakia has only one-eighth of the Polish population.

In conclusion, the choice of *okres*, despite its limitations, as the territorial focus in this book is in itself correct. The study offers a characteristic appraisal of this territorial unit, outlines the spatial variability of election behaviour of Slovaks, and uses a number of interesting analytical methods. All of these aspects make this study highly valuable to election geographers and researchers of other disciplines. The study may also serve as a model for researchers wanting to analyse other aspects of elections or even different spatial phenomena.

