

DEMOGRAPHIC BEHAVIOUR OF THE ROMA POPULATION – BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY. CASE STUDY: OLTENIA REGION, ROMANIA

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Abstract: Analyzing the demographic behavior of the Roma population is a difficult endeavor due to the fact that the available statistical data concerning this population's exact number presents significant errors. Considering the fertility data, to which we should add the mortality rates, we appreciate that Roma, as an ethnic group, have had a mostly ascending evolution from a demographical point of view - and this situation isn't always reflected by the statistics. As far as the fertility data goes, its level is dictated by a series of factors whose detailed analysis shows a past preference for a high number of children per family, specifically for the continuously nomadic tribes, also associated with increased values of fertility rates which perpetuated to this day. The mortality values registered within the Roma population fall within the standard values for the entire population - differences were spotted by analyzing the infant mortality. On a final note, these indicators are meant to present inequalities based on the living standards of the population. The analysis of migrants as an important component of the migratory movement brings into discussion one of the most current subjects: that of the percentage of Roma population that participate to the international migration flow. The preference for destination countries, which in most cases is attributed to their previously nomadic traditional life style, is determined by a series of factors, the most important of which being their financial situation. All these elements lead towards an accurate appreciation of the demographic behavior of this ethnic group, while also emphasizing the causes which determine the demographic phenomena, both due to the traditional and modern background.

Key words: Infant mortality, Fertility, Demographic behaviour, Roma population, Oltenia

The numeric evolution of the Roma population

The numeric evolution of the Roma population is influenced by the regional specific factors which have had repercussions upon the entire Romanian population, as the tendencies for increasing, maintaining or decreasing the population number are consistent with the general trend.

The factors causing changes in the evolution of a population are related to its economic profile and its political and socio-

cultural features, as all of these set their mark on the evolution of the Roma ethnic group as a whole.

The economic factors refer to the population's living standards, the specificities of the Roma population life style definitely influencing their numeric evolution.

The socio-cultural factors refer to the dimensions a family takes correlated with the cultural specific of the ethnic group and the preference for large families that has manifested itself in the past, when the Roma population had a traditional life style. We can include the population's level of education in the same category, level which leads to

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inappropriate sanitary education and thus makes family planning impossible.

The political factors have a similar importance considering that the manner in which Romania's population evolved was the result of applying demographic policies.

The numeric dynamic of the Roma population was analysed according to the official statistic data offered by the major population censuses. The number of Roma in Oltenia in 1930 was of 26,094, it decreased until 26,095 according to the 1956's official data which continued until 1966 when a number of 3,899 Roma were registered. A demographic increase starting with 1977 can be observed which is still visible nowadays. The dynamic of the Roma population from Oltenia has the same characteristics as the ones mentioned above (fig. 1).

The population censuses haven't been able to always properly determine the Roma population's true numbers as the ethnic affiliation can easily be denied, which reveals an auto defence-like attitude as a response to the political and social measurements that

were often directed against this population group. While in 1930 the population census manages to reveal an almost exact number of Roma that was living in Romania, the situation changed in 1956 when their number diminishes greatly due to an increase in migration rather than a drastic decreasing of the fertility rate. The laws imposed by the government lead by Antonescu, that required that almost 12,000 (25,000 according to different sources) Roma from all over Romania were to be deported in Transnistria, has had drastic consequences reverberating even today in the collective memory of this ethnic group.

Thus, in 1956 after the Transnistria episode, the Roma haven't declared their ethnic affiliation and the fear of further similar measurements was perpetuated until 1966 or even up to the present day. This small number is visible in 1977 as well, when for the first time after the 1942 census, the number of ethnics registers a slight increased compared to the previous censuses.

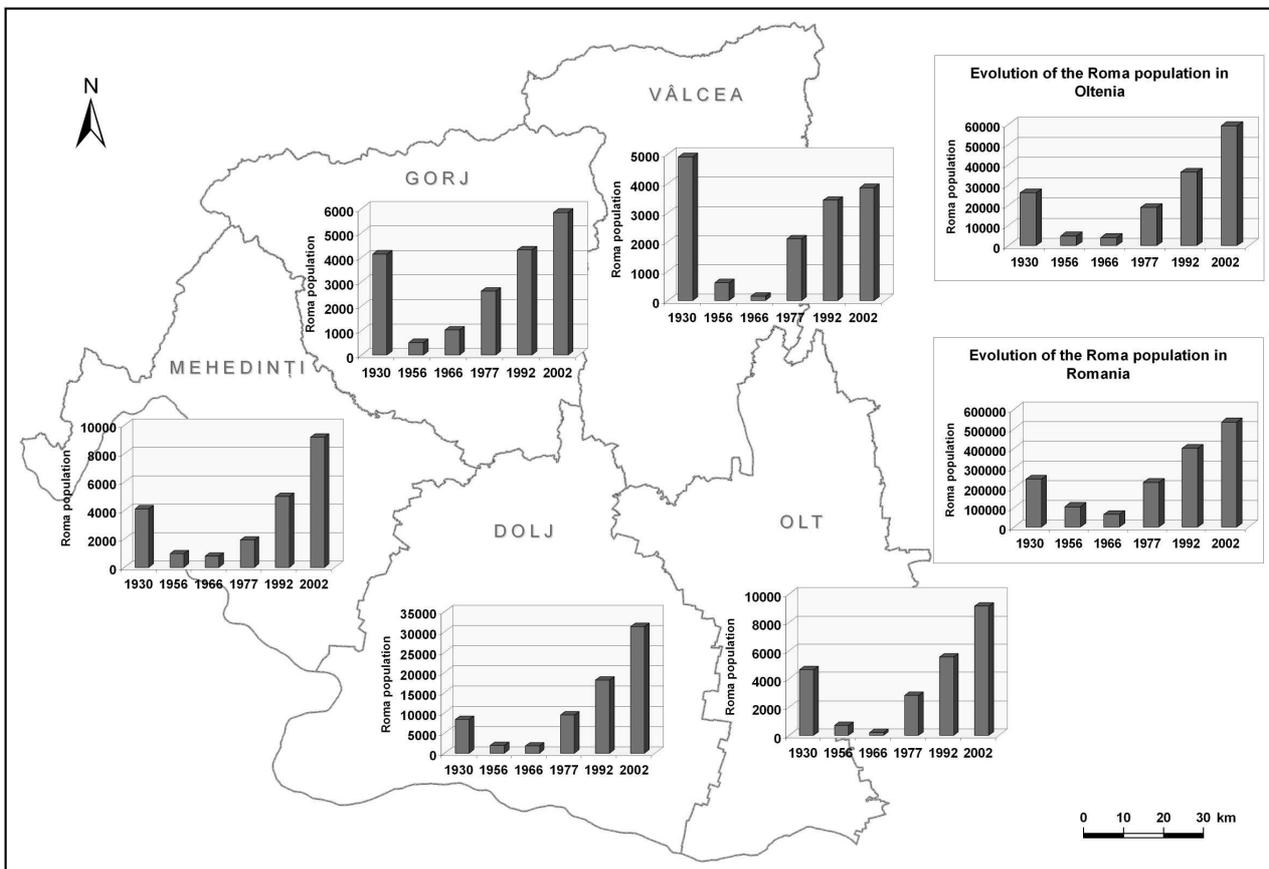


Figure 1. The dynamic of the Roma population in Oltenia

The population censuses haven't been able to always properly determine the Roma population's true numbers as the ethnic affiliation can easily be denied, which reveals an auto defence-like attitude as a response to the political and social measurements that were often directed against this population group. While in 1930 the population census manages to reveal an almost exact number of Roma that was living in Romania, the situation changed in 1956 when their number diminishes greatly due to an increase in migration rather than a drastic decreasing of the fertility rate. The laws imposed by the government lead by Antonescu, that required that almost 12 000 (25 000 according to different sources) Roma from all over Romania were to be deported in Transnistria, has had drastic consequences reverberating even today in the collective memory of this ethnic group.

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After the year 1992 an increased number of Roma was registered within all the Romanian counties although family planning was allowed and abortion no longer constituted an illegal act as it was before 1989.

In spite of all this the Roma population has not been affected by the general trend of decreased natality which manifested itself within the non-Roma population as a result of the possibility of family planning or of demographic pessimism.

This situation is due to the poverty characteristic to this group that appeared and was amplified by the economic transition period, as part of this population lost their jobs that were mandatory for them to have during the previous regime. The pro-natalist demographic policy that is presently in act isn't decisively affecting the fertility rate among the Roma population in fact it is the family allowance received from the state for

each child that is responsible in most case for the large number of children as most families subsist from the revenue earn in this manner.

International migration hasn't really affected this population number as the migration rate is compensated by the permanent elevated natural increase rate. The above presented situation is specific to the entire Roma population both at the level of Oltenia and Romania, as all the administrative regions respectively counties have the same characteristics.

Thus, if the fertility rates will continue to register high values the Roma population will continue to grow even with a constant number of emigrants.

High fertility rates – a consequence of the traditional life style or a characteristic of the economic level of the population? Specific features of the Roma ethnic groups

Evaluating the fertility rate represents one method for explaining the numeric evolution of the Roma population given the specific mortality conditions of the general population. In order to understand the increasing or decreasing trends of this population group one needs to keep in mind the above mentioned causes as they don't always act towards the increase of this particular indicator.

The analysis of the fertility rate was made on sample areas containing Roma in Oltenia, in order to obtain the average number of children per family, which was considered to be made out of parents and their descendants, respectively children and their number was analysed as the average of the total population per each family. Thus, according to the number of children per family, a series of territorial inequalities stand out which are caused by the presence or absence of certain factors that influence the fertility rate.

At the level of the sample area there are disparities based on the number of children/family thus communities that register *very high values* (more than 4 children/family) are those from Iancu Jianu, Grădinari Amărăștii de Jos and Cerăt (fig. 2). This situation is due to the low economic development as the Roma from the

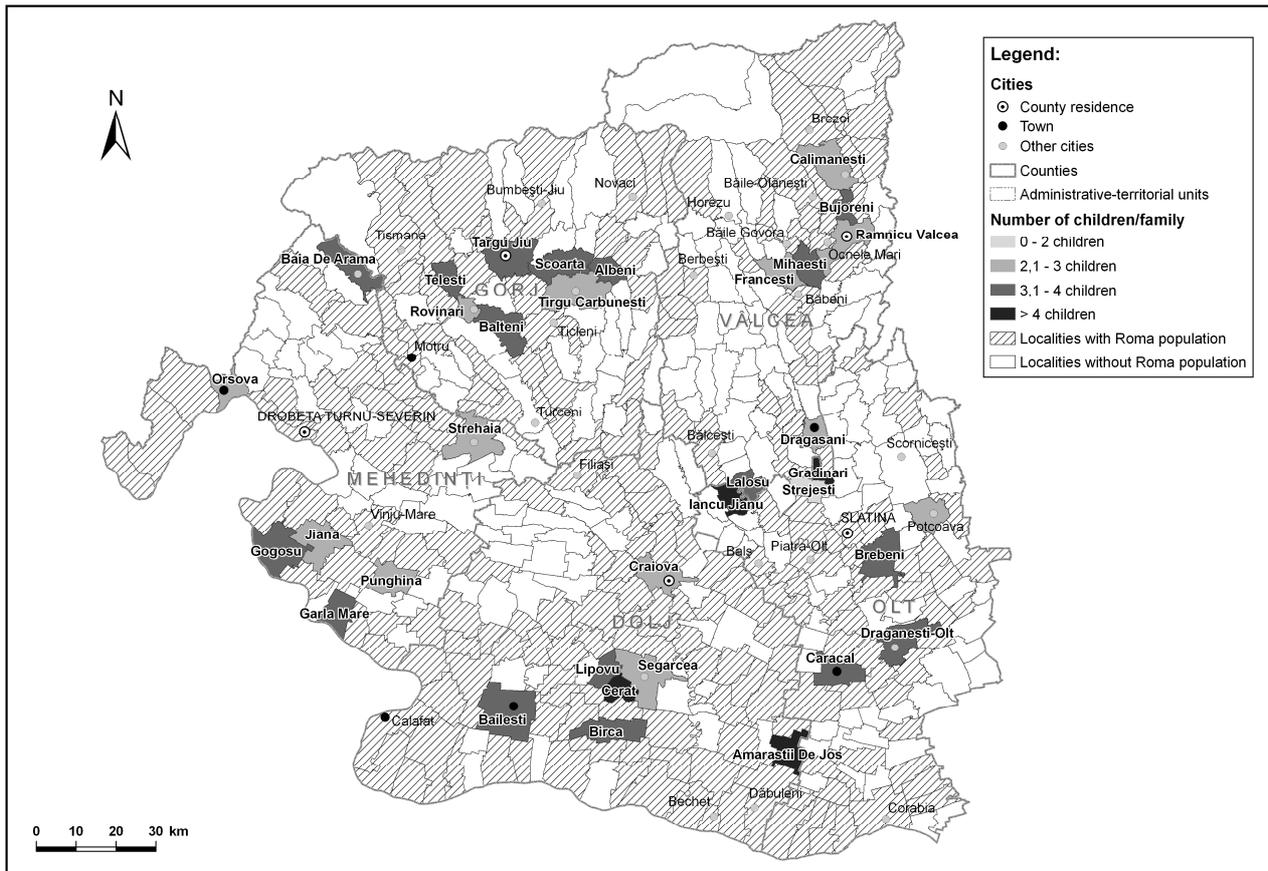


Figure 2. Disparities of the fertility rate (children/family) within the Roma population by sample areas from Oltenia

above mentioned communities live in dire poverty, have a low educational level and marry very young. The educational level of the parents is itself very low and the income volume for each family often consists of the social welfare, the family allowances received for the children or incomes from occasional activities.

As far as the analysis of the fertility rate based on the Roma specific groups goes we mention the presence of the woodworker clans (Iancu Jianu), brick-maker clans (Iancu Jianu, Grădinari, Amărăștii de Jos, Cerăt) and bear tamer clans (Cerăt), within the above mentioned areas and that in the case of all these clans the traditions that directly influence the fertility rate all have a modern approach to them.

Thus the specificity of the fertility rate for different clans based on the customary perception must be dealt with prudence because the traditional families that have customs such as marriage at a very young age as well as the birth of the first child very early

don't present these characteristics strictly as a result of the ethno-cultural pattern.

This argument is based on that fact that the fertility rates register low values in clans such as the copper-smiths which will be presented further along, although the nuptiality customs of these clans are also determined by their traditional life style.

We also mention as a main argument that according to several studies low fertility is perceived as result of the assimilation process, thus the loss of the traditional values should have direct repercussions upon the values the fertility rate registers by decreasing it. According to this idea the woodworkers that are the clans mostly assimilated by the general population, should register low values equal to the non-Roma population, as a direct result of the loss of their cultural identity.

We note that among the above mentioned groups the woodworkers from Iancu Jianu also register high fertility rates although this Roma population doesn't speak romanian doesn't keep the customs related to

nuptiality and the marriage isn't planned by the family elders thus the decisions belongs entirely to the young people involved, and despite all this the age people get married is still a very young one and as a consequence the first birth takes place very early and as a result the fertility rate presents high values. In such cases the high fertility rate is a result of the socio-cultural factors, as the traditional practices don't have a primary role and that is the reason for which the high values of this particular indicator are not exclusively characteristic to those population groups that present a customary mentality or behaviour.

As for the woodworker' clans, their high fertility rates are a result of the same economic conditions of poverty, the increased number of children that existed in their previous generations is no longer a decisive factor as the number of children per family is a result of the precarious living conditions, of the poor expectancies for their future possibilities all of these constituting the direct result of the low education level of this ethnic group that is preoccupied more on their everyday life rather than their future.

The bear tamer clans which are also integrated in this category fall under the influence of the same determining factors for a large family as the marriage does not take place according to traditional customs and as in the case of the woodworker clans they don't have set an engagement from the childhood period, and the necessity for the two newlyweds to accept each other is not a decision the parents take. The young ages that couples marry into are a result of the same above mentioned economic factors.

A **high fertility rate** (3.1 - 4 children/family) is also registered in the Roma communities from Caracal, Drăgănești Olt, Brebeni (Olt), Târgu Jiu, Telești, Albeni, Scoarța, Bâlteni (Gorj), Baia de Aramă, Gârla Mare, Gogoșu, (Mehedinți), Bujoreni, Mihăești, Laloșu (Vâlcea), Băilești, Lipovu, Bârca (Dolj).

In the case of the Roma groups from Caracal, Drăgănești Olt, Târgu Jiu and Mihăești, where the copper-smith clans register 30% out of the total population a series of explanation for why these groups were included in his category are necessary.

The copper-smiths are by far one of the few remaining groups that preserve in very large proportions the specific customs, and that is the main reason for which the fertility rate is considered to be the result of the traditional life style. The controversies surrounding this population group refer to the nuptiality arrangements and that the first births take place at a very early age all due to the marriage customs they have. The couple doesn't decide the age, or the moment of the marriage as the choice for husband/wife is up to the parents, because in the traditional Roma ideology marriage represents a symbol of fulfilment, a superior position gained within the community, and such the possibility for the married man or woman, now an adult and responsible person, to become a decision factor for the community. As such the bride is "bought" or engaged at around 12-14 years old for girls and 13-15 years old for boys, and is followed by a wedding in which the marriage agreements are mandatory even if the people involved are both minors. The consequences of such marriages is that the woman immediately gives birth to her first child at around 16 years old or even 15 due to the fact that the arrangements of these marriages are often decided by elders of the clan.

The coppersmiths represent one of the Roma clans that still abide to the rules of the life style of the previous nomadic generations, whose characteristics regarding nuptiality perpetuate even today with consequences over the education level, as the age at which children marry is usually the age at which they abandon school.

In spite of all these, the coppersmith clans are among the wealthiest ones, as the income per family member is one above the average of the other Roma population, their living standards are higher and their houses are usually equipped with very good utilities.

The economic level of this group dictates a fertility pattern that doesn't align itself with the general trend of other Roma groups as the coppersmiths represent, depending on their income level, a population with a decreasing fertility rate. In order to prove that the economic level is a determining factor for the fertility rate we calculated the fertility level individually for the coppersmith

clans and the average was 2.4 children/family a lot smaller than the previous cases.

This proves that, in spite of the fact that this population group presents a high incidence of marriages happening at very young ages and a precocious fertility, the number of children is small due to the economic level, and the nowadays customs gain modern features as a high number of children requires a substantial dowry (of minimum 100 gold) for the girls or the construction of a house for the boys and the financial volume is bigger as its distribution is done to a smaller amount of children.

Thus, the dimension of a family, even in the case of the traditional clans, is influenced by the economic factors, and the social modernization directly depends on the living standards both of them having an impact on the options people have regarding their future that must translate into living style at least of the same level of the present generations.

As for the communities in which the predominant clans are made out of woodworkers (Baia de Aramă, Gârla Mare, Gogoșu, Albeni), brick-makers (Târgu Jiu, Telești, Scoarța, Bâlteni, Laloșu, Bârca, Brebeni), bear-tamers (Băilești) or silversmiths (Bujoreni), the high values of the fertility rate is due to the precarious living conditions, as a numerous family represents the potential element that generates income and the traditional life style's influence over the dimension of the family is very slim.

Roma the register a **moderate fertility rate** (2.1-3 children/family) are those from Potcoava, Strejești (Olt), Rovinari, Târgu Cărbunești (Gorj), Orșova, Strehaia, Jiana, Punghina (Mehedinți), Râmnicu Vâlcea, Drăgășani, Călimănești, Frâncești (Vâlcea), Craiova and Segarcea (Dolj), these communities having the lowest number of children/family registered among the sample area in Oltenia.

The communities from Craiova, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Drăgășani, Strehaia, Orșova and Potcoava include members of the coppersmith, as well as woodworkers, bear-tamers, brick-makers or silversmiths clans, and this category is influenced by the poorer groups as the coppersmiths present their usual

economic characteristics and thus a low fertility rate.

A moderate fertility rate registered within these areas is caused by the superior living conditions from the urban environment with the Roma exploiting a series of income generating opportunities, and the education and information level of the population being slightly higher than within the rural communities. The brick-makers (Târgu Cărbunești), woodworkers (Jiana, Punghina, Călimănești), fiddlers (Rovinari), the ones living around Tismana Depression (Strejești, Jiana, Punghina) and bear-tamers (Strehaia, Craiova) that live in the above mentioned areas have different fertility characteristics compared to members of the same clans that are part of the previous category and the differences occurring with this particular indicator are due to their economic situation.

The Roma behaviour towards fertility abides the rule that the poorer groups tend to register higher fertility rates values and the territorial disparities among the different Roma clans support this affirmation.

The clans that are traditional by excellence and keep their customs regarding marriage and family tend to modify their fertility rate according to the increase of the living standards reflected in a decrease of the family members, the clans with an increased assimilation degree that don't necessarily have a traditional behaviour register a high fertility rate as a result of pauper living conditions.

In spite of all this, the fertility rate among the Roma population maintains itself at high values of 3.3 children/family for the communities from Oltenia, with the highest values registering in Dolj County (3.7 children/family), followed by Olt County (3.6 children/family), Gorj and Vâlcea Counties (3.1 children/family) and Mehedinți County (3 children/family).

The high fertility is caused by the low economic level that is characteristic for this ethnic group, the clans that benefit from increased incomes register lower fertility rates, and the ones affected by extreme poverty will perpetuate the traditional family model, with numerous children in order to receive incomes like the children allowances or social welfare, or to include them into occasional

activities in order to increase the family budget.

Measurements like family planning that are meant to regulate the dimensions of the family are still regarded with scepticism by the entire Roma population, caused mainly by the poor education and information level rather than the traditional behaviour.

Mortality

The factors that determined the values of the mortality rate vary from the population's socio-economic characteristics, education level with repercussions upon their attitude towards their health status, the age of the population, but also certain exogenous factors related to the characteristics of the geographical environment.

As for the Roma population, this analysis aims to describe a series of specific aspects of this indicator whose values respect the trend registered by the general population.

The analysis of the general mortality rate is made following the data from 2006 within the Oltenia population which was 17.1‰ with the highest death rate registering in Dolj County of 19.4 ‰ higher than the average for the region, followed by Mehedinți (18.3‰) and Olt (17.3‰) Counties.

The high mortality rates registered in the above mentioned counties are caused both by the morbidity level influenced by the economic level and the education of the population but also by the characteristics of the sanitary infrastructure. The polarization of the sanitary services almost exclusively within the urban areas, the insufficient number of qualified personnel in the rural areas, to which we add the poorly equipped medical units, makes for high mortality rates in counties where the rural population predominates.

The general mortality within the Roma population registers causes and manifestations similar to the general population. The differences of the specificity of the mortality rate for the Roma population raise from the indicators that influence it directly respectively the infant mortality and the morbidity rate.

The analysis of the morbidity rate for the Roma population means to differentiate a series of causes that influence the general mortality as the morbidity differs in the case of the above mentioned population because it has a specific causality which directly depends on a series of socio-economic factors, the level of information and the population's accessibility to the sanitary infrastructure.

Thus the analysis of the general mortality doesn't offer the possibility of constructing an exact picture of the causal factors, as the infant mortality and the morbidity are indicators that present relevant differences within the Roma population and these differences constitute the actual causes that can influence the general mortality rate.

Infant mortality

The infant mortality for the Roma population was analysed for the sample areas considering the number of infant deaths registered within the Roma ethnic group related to the total number of infant deaths for the entire population, and the increased percentage of the infant deaths within the Roma population shows the high degree of participation to the general infant mortality rate for these sample areas (fig. 3).

According to fig. 3 we can note that within the sample areas for Oltenia in 2006 there were registered 122 infant deaths, more than half of them occurring within the Roma population. We thus estimate that the infant mortality registers high values for Roma considering that the Roma population consists of maximum 30% of the total population in these sample areas but participates in a significant amount to the increase of the general infant mortality rate for these areas.

As for the analysis within the administrative territorial units, the highest number of infant Roma deaths registered in the sample areas from Dolj County with 30 deaths out of the total number of 46. This aspect can be explained through a multiple causality process but the most important factor is the economic level of the population.

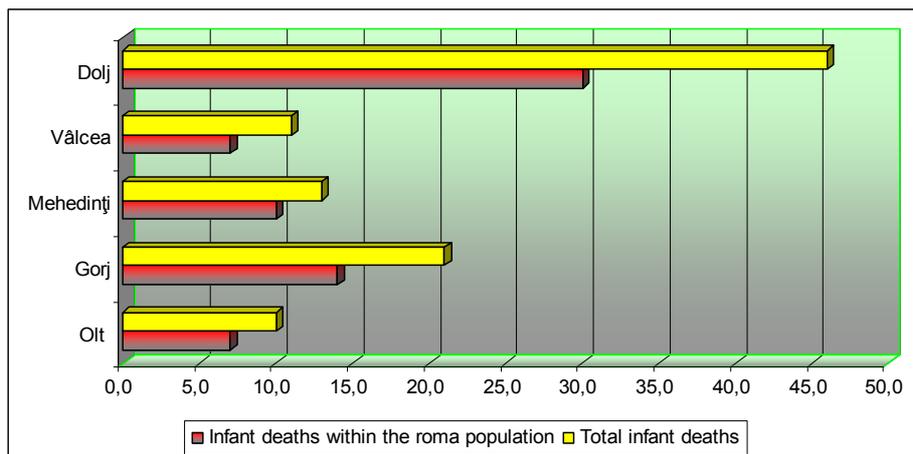


Figure 3: Infant deaths within Roma population in the sample areas of the Oltenia region

The Roma population from the rural areas respectively Lipovu, Amărăștii de Jos, Cerăt and Bârca, are characterized by severe or extreme poverty making them highly dependent on the society, as the social welfare are for most of them an important income source.

The temporary activities that are meant to provide some sort of incomes for the family are not enough to ensure decent living conditions even more considering the fact that the areas above mentioned are included in the category with high or very high fertility rates (more than 3 children/family).

As such, it is poverty as a main characteristic of this population that influences the level of the mortality rate maintaining it at a high value, because raising and taking care of their children is done in precarious conditions, in poor sanitary-hygenouse conditions, and the access to medical assistance, as well as the possibilities to provide food and supplies are conditioned by the financial resources of the family.

Another cause refers to the education level of the parents which is responsible for whether or not they will use contraceptive methods in order to control the dimension of their families. The weak response towards the possibilities for controlling the dimension of their families manifested by the Roma population from the sample areas from Dolj County for example, where only 7.6% of the interviewed women declared that they are indeed using these methods, leads to the birth of unwanted descendents thus increasing the

infant death risk. Thus, the birth of children into an already numerous family, with extremely poor financial resources, leads to a decrease in the interest their parent have for their growth and education as both processes are extremely costly.

Another factor constitutes the defective alimentation of the mother during the pregnancy period closely related to the education level, which depends on the financial level of each family.

The sanitary infrastructure is also responsible for the value of the infant mortality rate. The Roma population from the sample areas in Dolj County is directly affected by the poor development of the medical units network as the urban areas respectively Craiova (7 hospitals), Drăgășani, Calafat, Filiași, Șegarcea (each with one hospital) often polarizing the surrounding rural areas. There is only one surgery with 9 family doctors serving these sample areas from Dolj County.

In the urban areas the access to the medical infrastructure is easier, and the Roma population has superior living standards compared to the rural areas, and the determining factor is the financial level of the families, even if a moderate one and the communities from Craiova, Șegarcea or Băilești are not that affected by severe or extreme poverty.

The increased number of infant deaths registered within the Roma population is homogenous for the sample areas and the main causes are mostly economic, poverty

being the determinant factor that dictates the attitude towards health care which is closely related to the education level of the population.

Family planning represents a variable with a weak manifestation for the Roma population, and it represents one of the main reasons for an increased dimension of the family, and as a consequence an increased fertility rate for the population affected by poverty and highly dependent of the social welfare all these aspects present the premises for the increase of the infant mortality rate.

Morbidity

Morbidity represents the second important variable in analysing the general mortality, and it directly influences it through the health care state of the population.

The evaluation of morbidity concerning the Roma population, will take into consideration the appreciation of their personal health care, also analysing the main morbidity causes and their degree of manifestation within this target population.

The evaluation of the morbidity causes for each type of diseases was done by centralizing the answers of the Roma population within the sample areas that declared whether they though their health care was a good or a bad one and underlined the cause.

At the level of the sample areas with Roma population from Oltenia the main morbidity cause are represented by circulatory diseases (31.2% out of the total respondents), cerebrovascular diseases, coronary diseases, hypertension is extremely frequent among the elderly population but with a broad incidence among the adult population as a result of an unhealthy life style and last but not least due to a reduced interest in maintaining a proper health state, an eventual examination only takes place in situations when the disease becomes severe and has radical manifestations.

As for the incidence of the circulatory diseases for each county, the counties in which Roma population registers the highest values are Gorj (30.1 %), followed by Dolj (21.4%), Olt (20.7%), Mehedinți (19.9 %), and the lowest percentage of population with this kind of health issues is located in Vâlcea County (17.2%). The incidence of the cardiovascular diseases in each county is as follows: the Roma population presents the highest values in Gorj County (30.1 %), followed by Dolj (21.4%), Olt (20.7%), Mehedinți (19.9 %), with the weakest percentage of this type of diarises present in Vâlcea County (17.2 %). The second place is occupied by the respiratory diseases for the Roma population from Oltenia (21.8% out of the total respondents), with asthma registering the highest incidence (fig. 4).

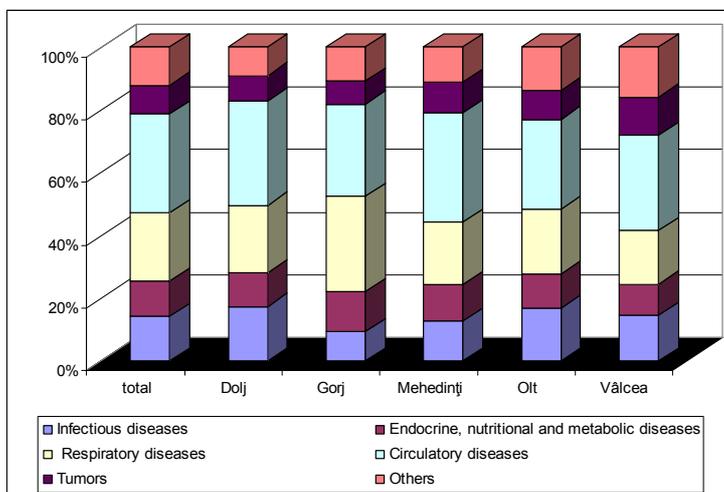


Figure 4. Morbidity according to the main disease causes for the Roma population from Oltenia

This type of disease is present among the Roma population in shares of 30.1% in Gorj County, 21.4% in Dolj County, 20.7% in Olt, 19.9% in Mehedinți and having the least number of cases in Vâlcea with 17.2%.

The infectious and parasitic diseases are also responsible for an increased morbidity among the Roma population, 14.2% of the respondents are affected by this type of diseases. The most wide spread illness is tuberculosis also known as “the poverty disease”, caused by a life style filled with shortcomings, an inadequate diet, that leads to a weakened immunity and high risk of being taken ill.

The Roma population from Dolj County has the highest morbidity rate (17.4%), and the share that this disease holds is equally high in counties like Olt (16.9%) and Vâlcea (14.7%) and Mehedinți (12.8%) with the lowest values registered in Gorj (9.4%).

Another category of diseases responsible for the increase of the morbidity rate are the endocrine, nutritional and metabolic ones, as the share of the respondents that declared that they suffer from such a disease was of 11.1% for the region of Oltenia, with the population from Gorj County being the most numerous (12.8%), followed by that from Mehedinți (11.6%), Olt and Dolj both of them holding 10.8% of their population account for suffering from an endocrine, nutritional or metabolic disease and the lowest value being registered in Vâlcea County (9.8%). Among the most often illness from this category we name diabetes, due to a poor information and education regarding a proper diet.

Tumours affected a percentage of 9.3% of the total respondents, situation which is caused by the late diagnosis generated by a poor information level of the population concerning their own health status in most cases the tumours are located around the lungs of the patients (caused most often by smoking), in the case of women most often tumours are mammary or genital.

The highest proportion of population suffering from this type illness registers in Vâlcea (12.3%) and the lowest in Mehedinți (7.2%), the rest of the administrative areas registering percentages between 8 and 9% (see

figure no. 4). 12.1% of the respondents declared that they suffer from other diseases like for example gastric, genitourinary or nervous system related.

The high percentage of Roma population with a declared health condition is most due to their economic situation, as the poverty in which they live is the main factor that leads to them having such a precarious health state. The lack of financial resources represents an obstacle in accessing medical assistance; as most of the Roma population are not allocated with any family doctor as most of them do not pay any health insurance, as a direct repercussion of the reduced numbers of persons among them that actually have a job. Thus, the health state is rarely supervised and the risk of becoming ill is a serious one, most the times the appropriate medical assistance is sought only in emergency cases when the disease has aggravated.

The same precarious financial situation leads to a weakened responsibility for their sanitary education. This aspect is not exclusively related to the poor groups of Roma as the richer categories are equally uninterested in adopting a healthy life style due to their lack of information (such an example are the copper-smiths clans that due to their dietary taboos like for example the high consumption of sugar and fat register the highest diabetes incidence as well as multiple cardiovascular diseases).

Recent features of the international migration: causes and effects

The international migration phenomenon directly depends on a series of factors that transform it from a potential act to a feasible one. **The chance of success** of those that already realised such migrations is very important; thus, within communities where people with the same qualifications and education level have already succeeded to leave a much stronger and positive attitude towards the possibility of migration exists.

The presence of relatives or friends in the host countries is equally important as in the case of Roma population migration is usually done via family ties, element which

shows that a groups cohesion is necessary in any type of situation, and the traditional model used for organizing this type of community follows a series of internal rules that are functioning outside the country's borders as well.

The available financial resources decide whether migration is possible or not as the desire to migrate is insufficient if the family is unable to support the costs of the future emigrant to be.

The age of the emigrant is also an important element, as the option to emigrate belongs to the young and adult age groups and the elderly are excluded; this aspect is obvious if we think about the fact that adaptability to new situations tends to decrease once a person becomes older, and the action of migrating implies an increased effort on the part of the person that migrates to adapt to new and various circumstances.

The purpose for which the responded declared that they would migrate is an economic one, as the precarity and the lack of jobs are determining aspects; the migrants aim at a financial gain, and the long term or definitive migration is out of the question as all the Roma desire to return to their original communities.

The preference for international migration is demonstrated by the increased number of Roma that have already performed this type of displacements and the large proportion of respondents that declared that they were willing to migrate abroad (45.7%).

International migration becomes an important alternative for gaining additional incomes not only for the Roma population for the entire Romanian population and implicitly Oltenia's population and the preferred destinations are not necessarily exclusive to the ones Roma prefer.

The percentages of the persons that are willing to emigrate is significant as it exceeds 40% in most of Oltenia's counties (Gorj, Mehedinți, Vâlcea and Dolj) and the most important motivation is one of an economic nature. Within the interviews made on site in the sample areas a percentage of 100% of the respondents declared that they would migrate solely for that reason.

'I would like to travel abroad to get rid of the poverty I'm living in, in the same way all the Roma around here did' (woman, Telești, Gorj County).

'I would like to go to Italy and make some money, so I would be able to put some bread on my children's table' (man, 42 years old, Bârca, Dolj County).

'Here we don't have where to work, I would like to leave for Europe to make some money, i don't want to live from day to day job in this village' (man, 50 years old, Grădinari, Olt County).

'Many people left this village and came back with cars and money, they build homes for themselves and that is why I would also like to leave for Italy' (woman, 42 years old, Strehaia, Mehedinți County).

'It's poverty which drives us to leave our homes, although it is hard to leave for Italy and wok in constructions' (man, 37 years old, Călimănești, Vâlcea County).

These examples demonstrate the fact that the element that triggers the international migration flows are strictly related to the economic conditions, and the lack of opportunities due to a scarce offer of working places in the sample areas all lead to the population searching for an alternative abroad.

We have previously shown the fact that certain variables like for example the chance to succeed of other people that already migrated, the migrant's age, the financial level or the presence in the host country of relatives or friends are important aspects that influence the decision of whether or not to migrate. The typology of these factors leads to a real image regarding international migration because the preference for choosing to migrate is determined by the lack of alternatives in their native country as the Roma that lead a life without being financially excluded didn't show a desire to migrate.

All these aspects lead to an increased number of Roma that travelled abroad, and the preferred destinations were Italy, Spain and Greece where unqualified labour force is still required and the earnings they declared

to have made came from agriculture, constructions and housekeeping (which are the specific income generating domains for the families of the ones that left to work abroad).

Thus at the level of the sample areas with Roma population from Oltenia a series of areas that register high percentages of international migrants (more than 30.1%) stand out: (Caracal, Drăgănești Olt (Olt), Telești (Gorj), Călimănești (Vâlcea) și Drăgășani (Dolj)). Within these communities the only people that migrate are those belonging to clans that are affected by poverty while the members of the coppersmiths' clans or the tinsmiths' clans which benefit from living standards due to them exploiting the local business opportunities don't have any representatives abroad.

A high percentage of people working abroad (15.1-30%) is registered in communities from Brebeni (Olt), Târgu Cărbunești (Gorj), Strehaia, Baia de Aramă, Gârla Mare (Mehedinți), Drăgășani, Laloșu (Vâlcea), Craiova, Segarcea, Amărăștii de Jos și Bârca (Dolj). With the exception of the Roma from Craiova, Strehaia and Drăgășani where most of them are coppersmiths that are not affected by the international migration phenomenon, these urban communities are mostly made out of members of the woodworks and fiddlers' clans, the rest of the communities are not made out of clans that are considered to be rich, that being the main reason for the increased percentage of people that are looking for additional income sources.

Percentages with values between 5.1 and 15% representing a moderate share of Roma that have migrated abroad are found in communities from Potcoava, Iancu Jianu, Grădinari (Olt), Târgu Jiu, Rovinari, Albeni, Bâlteni (Gorj), Orșova, Gogoșu, Jiana, Punghina (Mehedinți), Râmnicu Vâlcea, Bujoreni, Frâncești (Vâlcea), Lipovu and Cerăt (Dolj). Moderate shares of Roma who left for the west-European space are the result of the limited financial resources that doesn't allow them to cover the travel and accommodation costs (as in the case of the poor communities from Iancu Jianu, Bâlteni, Lipovu and Cerăt), the existence of an alternative given by

exploiting the opportunities offered by the local labour market, be they even temporary (Grădinari, Rovinari, Albeni, Gogoșu, Jiana, Punghina) or the existence of Roma categories with an above average living standards that do not participate at the migration phenomenon (Potcoava, Târgu Jiu, Orșova și Râmnicu Vâlcea).

Low shares of emigrants (less than 5%) are present in communities from Strejești (Olt), Scoarța (Gorj) and Mihăești (Vâlcea). In the case of the Roma from Strejești, which are part of the Roma clan living around Tismana Depression, the low share of those that have travelled abroad is due to the fact that in this area agriculture is an important income source, as for the communities from Mihăileș, they are mostly made out of copper-smiths and their major source of income is making copper objects to use in households to which they add the incomes earn by selling used iron, forest fruits, mushrooms etc., and the fiddlers were the ones that emigrated for Italy and Spain; as for the communities from Scoarța, the element that prevents the possibility of emigrating is the poverty in which these groups live in (fig. 5).

At a county level, the share of migrant Roma population doesn't exceed 18.6% in Dolj, the other region register values between 15.4% (Olt), 14.9% (Mehedinți), 14.6% (Vâlcea), with the lowest percentage of international migrants registering in Gorj County (15.5%).

Within the Roma population from Oltenia one can distinguish the obvious preference for migrating internationally which is perceived as a positive alternative for ensuring a level of incomes above the one they have, specific to the Roma groups that are affected by different levels of poverty

The spatial variation of the Roma population that migrate depends on the economic vulnerability of the geographic area, but also on exploiting the existing opportunities.

The preferred destination are common for the entire population as the Roma don't have any special targets only the common spaces that receive the Est-European migration flows.

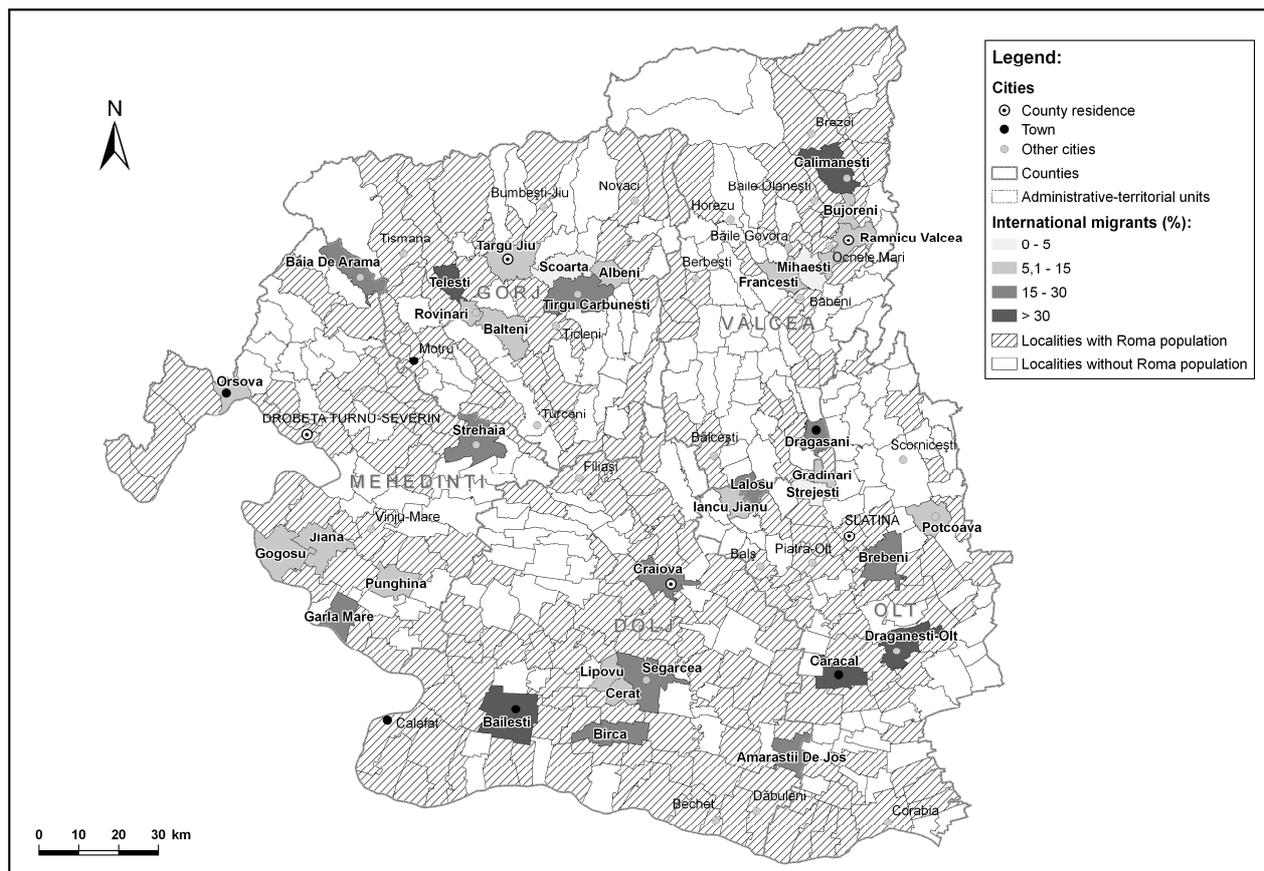


Figure 5. The share of international migrants within the Roma communities from the sample areas in Oltenia

Manifesting a preference for the migratory movements is definitely the result of the economic factors as the cultural ones have an insignificant influence, the categories which are willing to migrate are not the traditional ones, conservatory characterized by tardy nomadism (the copper-smiths).

Conclusion

To conclude, the demographic behaviour of the Roma population is influenced by their economic level. The traditional valences have nowadays an indirect influence on the fertility rate, which influences the early year at which couples get married, which doesn't not necessarily translate into an increased number of descendants especially in the case of the groups having a high economic level. The general mortality rate manifest the same specific causes as the rest of the population and the different values are given in the case of the infant mortality rate and morbidity that both present a specific causality due as well to

the economic characteristics of the Roma and not by their cultural-traditional features. The preference for international migration, perceived as a chance for better living, is limited to the financial possibilities of the ones willing to migrate and the destination is established based on the success rate of the ones that have previously migrated.

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