

SELECTED FEATURES OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC BEHAVIOUR OF ROMANIES IN SLOVAKIA

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Abstract: The aim of our presentation is to analyze some demographic particularities that distinguish the Romanies from the majority population. We deal with reliability of the statistical data about Romanies, development of the Romany settlement, spatial distribution of Romanies and natural population movement of Romanies in Slovakia.

Key words: demography, natural population movement, Romanies, Slovakia, spatial distribution

1. INTRODUCTION

Romany population represents a specific and in most cases enclosed and from the major society separated community. Compared with other Slovak population, the Romanies form qualitatively different and distinctive group that is characterized by its specific origin, language, anthropological lines, reproduction manner, way of life, standard of living, and its historical-social status. Despite the long coexistence, the majority population still sees and understands little about the Romany way of life and needs. Rather unknown is the inner differentiation of Romanies which can be seen in different demographic tendencies, social-economic status, the way of life, and standard of living. The aim of our presentation is to analyze some demographic particularities that distinguish the Romanies from the majority population.

2. RELIABILITY AND APPLICABILITY OF THE STATISTICAL DATA ABOUT ROMANIES

Statistical data about the Romany population vary in range and quality, therefore some problems concerning their comparison might appear. The latest most exact information about the Romany population in Slovakia were compiled by the census in

1980 and by special-purpose survey in 1989 organised by institutions of public administration, but in both these surveys the enumerators indicated the Romany nationality from their own opinion based on the way of life, language, anthropological features etc.

In 1991 and 2001 were also organised censuses, but the nationality and native language were surveyed by the individual decision of counted people. It is estimated that only 25% of all Romanies avowed themselves to the Romany nationality.

The data from the 1991 and 2001 censuses are considered reliable enough to characterize the structure of the Romany population since in that time the whole families avowed to the Romany nationality (Finková 2000).

The statistical data, however, are insufficient for the analysis of the population dynamics of the Romany people. In that case we can apply indirect methods, especially the research in model areas with the dominance of Romany population.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMANY SETTLEMENT AND POPULATION IN SLOVAKIA

The number of Romanies during the 20th century was gradually rising (table 1). The reconstruction of the Romany population development is based on the listing data and on the B. Vaňo estimation for the year 2001 (graph 1). According to the latest statistical data from the time of real socialism, in 1989 there lived 253 943 Romanies in Slovakia what was 4,8% of population. The number of Romany segregated settlements decreased to 278, while 230 of that were in eastern Slovakia. There were 1 973 huts with 14 988 inhabitants in these communities (Jurová 1993; Vašečka 2000).

Table 1 The development of the Romany population in Slovakia based on censuses and surveys of the Civil Service in 1893 – 2001

| Year | 1893 | 1921* | 1927 | 1930* | 1947 | 1970 | 1980 | 1989 | 1991* | 2001** | 2001* |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| Number | 36 231 | 7 284 | 62 192 | 30 626 | 84 438 | 159 275 | 199 853 | 253 943 | 75 802 | 379 200 | 89 920 |

Source: Džambazovič 2001, Horváthová 1964, Vaňo 2001b, Podolák, P., 2000, ŠÚ SR.

Note: * indicates data from censuses, the rest are from special surveys, **estimation of B. Vaňo (2001).

The number of Romanies continued to increase rapidly after 1989. B. Vaňo (2001c) estimates that in 2001 there were 379 200 Romanies in Slovakia what was 7% the whole Slovak population. This estimation is considered optimistic by the author and thus the upper limit of the number of Romanies living in Slovakia. The author considers some other publicized estimations unreal, e.g. where the number of Romanies rises to 480 000, in some of them even more than 500 000 (i.e. Liegeois and Gheorghe 1995).

Segregated Romany communities present a serious problem. The living conditions of Romanies in segregated communities are markedly worse than of other Romanies. From the end of 1980s the number of Romany segregated settlements and their inhabitants increased very rapidly. Whereas in 1988 there lived 14 988 people in settlements, in 1998 their number was estimated to 124 031. The number of settlements in 1998 was estimated 591 that are two times more than in 1989 (Jurová 2000; Vašečka 2000). The number of Romany huts and habitats rose similarly (from 1 973 in the year

1988 to 14 334 in 1997). The increase in the number of Romany habitats is often connected with Romany return to traditional forms of living because of financial insufficiency to live in towns and because of the return of some Romany groups from Czech Republic. Romany population in towns follows the same tendency in the 1990s as in the previous decade; it concentrates itself in particular streets and quarters. These areas are selected for bad payers, most of whom are Romanies. The process of ethnical segregation deepens and leads to the existence of high social pathology areas which might present potential ghettos (e.g. Košice-Luník IX, Prešov-Stará tehelnia, Rimavská Sobota-Dúžavská cesta, Bardejov-Poštárka).

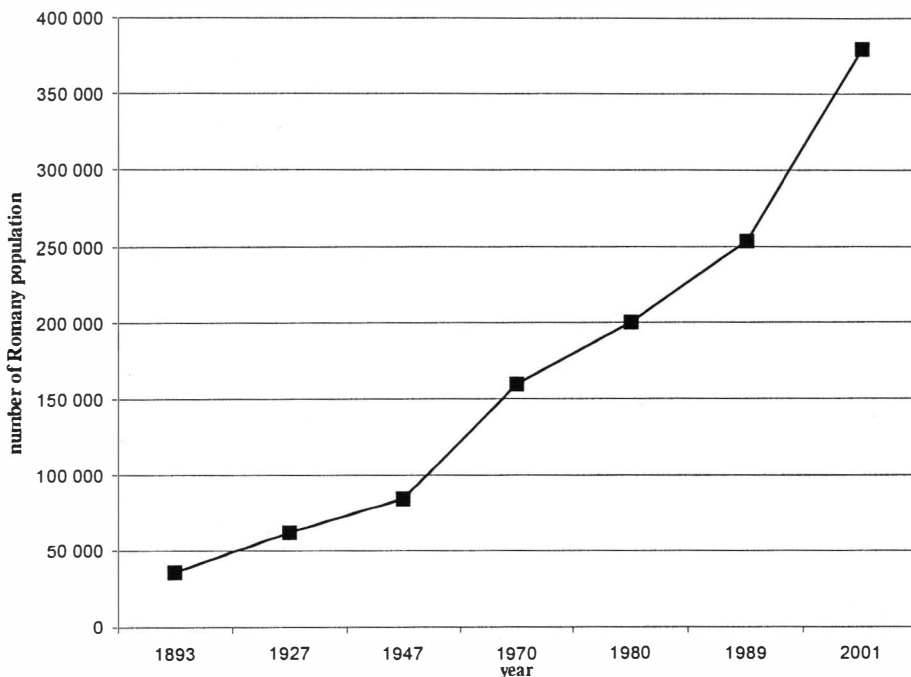


Figure 1 The development of the Romany population in Slovakia 1893 – 2001

4. SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF ROMANIES IN SLOVAKIA

Romany population in Slovakia is traditionally unevenly distributed. A significant trace in the spatial distribution development of Romanies was the rising concentration of them in southern and eastern Slovakia, where in 1980 lived 68% of Slovak Romanies. The positions of Romanies were reinforced in post-war decades in villages where the Carpathian Germans had been moved off before (mostly the villages in Spiš) as well as in areas with the decline of agricultural production caused by the liquidation of private farming and migration towards better work and economic conditions (southern Slovakia). The smallest number of Romanies lived traditionally in the north of central Slovakia,

mostly in the Kysuce and the Orava region. Romanies lived mainly in the countryside (up to 60%).

In the 2001 census 89 920 people identified themselves as Romanies, what was 1.7% of the whole population. Romanies had a considerable representation in three Slovak regions (NUTS III) – the Prešov Region (4.01%), the Košice Region (3.89%), and the Banská Bystrica Region (2.34%). In other Slovak regions was the percentage of Romanies much smaller – the Nitra Region (0.66%), the Trnava Region (0.57%), the Žilina Region (0.40%), the Trenčín Region (0.26%), and the Bratislava Region (0,13%).

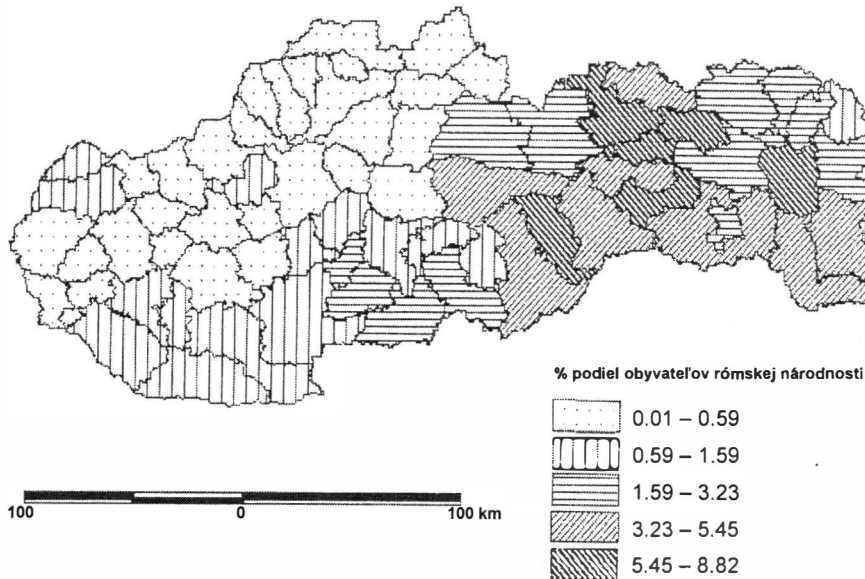


Figure 2 The share of the Romanies in the districts of Slovakia by census in 2001

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

On the district level (NUTS IV) the Romanies have a significant representation in the following districts: Kežmarok (8.82%), Levoča (7.14%), Vranov nad Topľou (6.92%), Revúca (6.84%), Gelnica (6.84%), Sabinov (6.18%), Spišská Nová Ves (5.45%), Košice-okolie (5.04%), Rožňava (4.70%), Rimavská Sobota (4.65%), Trebišov (4.45%), and Michalovce (4.03%). Absolutely highest number of Romanies was identified in the Kežmarok District (5 574). The next districts follow: Košice-okolie (5 393), Vranov nad Topľou (5 296), Spišská Nová Ves (5 100), Trebišov (4 616), Michalovce (4 399), Prešov (4 175). On the town level the most Romanies were identified in Košice (5 055).

In the 2001 census there were 154 municipalities in Slovakia where the Romany population formed 10% and more. The spatial distribution of these municipalities was not regular. Most of them were situated in eastern and southern Slovakia in the Prešov Region (65), the Košice Region (44), and the Banská Bystrica Region (40). In the Bratislava, Trnava, and Trenčín Region there is no village where the number of Romanies would reach at least 10% of population. The greatest amount of Romanies was identified in the municipality of Jurské in the Kežmarok District (84%). Here follows: the municipality of Dulovo (65.2%), Kecerovce (61.8%), Mirkovce (61.2%), Podhorany

(54%), Vtáčkovce (50.8%), and Hucín (50.1%). The highest amount of Romanies was concentrated in city of Košice (5 055).

5. DEMOGRAPHIC BEHAVIOUR OF ROMANIES IN SLOVAKIA

From the demographic point of view Romanies form a specific group of Slovak population. Their birth-rate is generally higher than the birth-rate of non-Romany population. In 1980 the Romany women, for instance, had 70% more children than non-Romany women. The fertility rate of Romany women was higher on all age levels than the fertility rate of non-Romany women. The most significant contrast was in category from 15 to 19 years old women, where the fertility rate of Romany women exceeded the non-Romany women seven times (Vaňo 2001c, p. 11). Traditionally, there persist certain distinctions in reproduction tendencies between integrated and non-integrated part of Romany population. As Vašečka (2000) writes, total fertility rate of Romany woman is 4.2 born children; and in case of undeveloped communities it is even 7.8 born children. There are also reproduction differences between Romanies living in town and Romanies in the countryside. In towns, for example, only 9.8% families had 6 and more children, whereas in village communities it was 40.7% families (Vašečka et al. 2000). It is related to the reproduction specifications of the Romany population. According to Bačová (1990), the Romany family starts with their sexual activity earlier, despite the fact that the sexual maturity of Romany boys and girls falls about 8 months behind the sexual maturity of non-Romany population. The cohabitation of Romanies starts also rather early (before the age of 18); it concerns the Romany women mostly. The cohabitation of two partners begins with a betrothal ritual called *mangavipen*. The wedding follows just after several years of free cohabitation, or the monogamous cohabitation continues in an informal regime. Therefore, the most extramarital children are born to Romany women – e.g. in 1993 it was 45.7% children (Kumanová, Džambazovič 2002). The divorce and separation rate, on the other hand, is quite low. As Z. Kumanová and R. Džambazovič (2002) mention, the divorce, as a means for ending the first marriage, was identified only in 3.7% of Romany men and 3.4% of Romany women.

It is only possible to observe the Romany mortality indirectly, through the comparison of the age structures from various time sections. Romanies, in general, show the lower crude death-rate, what is given by their young age population. The neonatal and infant mortality is, on the other hand, two times higher than in non-Romany population. The life expectancy is also shorter. Kalibová (1989) points out that in the 1980s the life expectancy of Romany men was 11.5 years and Romany women 14.4 years shorter than the life expectancy of men and women in Czecho-Slovakia. The life expectancy in Romany population grows more rapidly than in non-Romany population, and it is assumed that it is 10 years lower than the life expectancy of the whole Slovak population (Vaňo, Haviarová 2002).

The natural population movement of Romanies is similar to the natural population movement of Slovak population several decades ago. It means that the Romany population with regard to the majority population is in a phase delay in a demographic development. Certain changes in the demographic cycle are visible in socially and

culturally advanced Romany communities with a higher rate of secondary school educated persons. Typical features of such families are: lower birth-rate, lower infant mortality, and lower average number of children born to one mother, what is caused mainly by lower fertility of women after the age of 35, and by the lower number of primiparas till 18 years. The increase of above mentioned features could be mostly found in Romany families integrated in majority society. Romanies living in segregated settlements and communities show the typical traditional reproduction features (Kumanová, Džambazovič, 2002).

Table 2 Indicators of natural population movement in selected municipalities (Romany communities) in Slovakia with significant representation of Romanies in 1996 – 2003

| Municipality | District | The number of people (average rate) | Crude birth-rate (‰) | Crude death-rate (‰) | Crude natural increase rate (‰) | Age index in 2001* |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jurské | Kežmarok | 715 | 34.95 | 6.47 | 28.66 | 5.00 |
| Dulovo | R.Sobota | 187 | 34.09 | 8.02 | 26.07 | 2.63 |
| Kecerovce | Košice-ok. | 2 201 | 30.73 | 6.36 | 24.37 | 4.67 |
| Mirkovce | Prešov | 889 | 37.12 | 10.4 | 26.71 | 3.40 |
| Podhorany | Kežmarok | 1 260 | 41.76 | 5.26 | 36.5 | 9.68 |
| Vtáčkovce | Košice-ok. | 673 | 31.01 | 5.01 | 25.99 | 6.70 |
| Hucín | Revúca | 786 | 19.24 | 9.86 | 9.38 | 1.82 |
| Čičava | Vranov | 836 | 23.92 | 9.57 | 14.05 | 2.46 |
| Lunik IX | Košice | 3 817 | 38.94 | 4.85 | 34.09 | 17.16 |
| Ostrovany | Sabinov | 1 399 | 31.72 | 7.60 | 24.13 | 4.19 |
| Laškovce | Michalovce | 465 | 24.46 | 9.41 | 15.05 | 1.61 |
| Prosačov | Vranov | 167 | 29.15 | 11.21 | 17.94 | 2.60 |
| Rakúsy | Kežmarok | 1 797 | 32.13 | 3.96 | 28.17 | 6.44 |
| Žehra | Sp.N.Ves | 1 517 | 31.73 | 5.77 | 25.96 | 5.70 |
| Stráne p. Tatrami | Poprad | 1 083 | 39.7 | 4.15 | 35.54 | 10.13 |
| Sútor | R.Sobota | 370 | 26.02 | 6.42 | 19.6 | 3.84 |
| Jarovnice | Sabinov | 3 871 | 38.79 | 7.40 | 31.39 | 5.85 |
| Holumnica | Kežmarok | 775 | 17.91 | 6.94 | 10.97 | 2.90 |
| Malý Slivník | Prešov | 618 | 37.01 | 5.06 | 31.96 | 5.78 |
| Ihľany | Kežmarok | 1 231 | 19.80 | 7.92 | 11.88 | 2.53 |
| Radnovce | R.Sobota | 647 | 25.89 | 10.43 | 15.46 | 2.30 |
| Cigeľka | Bardejov | 403 | 32.90 | 9.93 | 22.97 | 2.50 |
| Bystrany | Sp. N. Ves | 2 445 | 33.33 | 5.37 | 27.96 | 5.23 |
| Lomnička | St.Ľubovňa | 1 433 | 51.72 | 3.05 | 48.67 | 21.69 |
| Rankovce | Košice-ok. | 543 | 28.33 | 9.91 | 18.43 | 2.57 |
| Varhaňovce | Prešov | 977 | 29.94 | 7.29 | 22.65 | 3.82 |
| Výborná | Kežmarok | 792 | 30.80 | 4.90 | 25.90 | 5.29 |
| Chm. Jakubovany | Prešov | 1 319 | 36.30 | 6.82 | 29.48 | 4.31 |
| Romany Settlements | | 33 215 | 33.78 | 6.44 | 27.34 | 5.18 |
| Slovakia | | 5 386 039 | 10.26 | 9.69 | 0.57 | 1.05 |

* the age index is the fraction of people at the age of 0 – 14 to people in post-productive age
Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

It is not possible to study the Romany demographic reproduction directly, because we do not dispose of the real data about the Romany population movement. The following case study informs about the natural population dynamics differences between Romany and non-Romany population. The study compares the natural movement of Slovak population with the dynamics of population in selected municipalities with high

representation of Romanies. The study also respects the worldwide context of population development processes.

The examined list includes the municipalities with more than 40% Romany inhabitants in 2001. The list has been extended by municipalities where the Romany inhabitants in 1991 and 1980 censuses exceeded 50%, in order to eliminate the reduced statement value of the data from the last two censuses concerning the number of Romanies in Slovakia. We presume that the given list of 27 municipalities and one city housing estate Luník IX where the Romany inhabitants dominate, may clearly represent the demographic behaviour of Romany population in Slovakia.

The comparison of birth-rate in Slovakia with the birth-rate in the selected list of municipalities shows that the birth-rate of chosen villages was 3.3 times higher in 1996 – 2003 than the birth-rate of the whole Slovak population. Mortality, on the other hand, was quite low in selected villages in 1993 – 2003, and consequently, the natural increase in these municipalities was in relative expression 48 times higher than in the whole Slovak population. The differences are also found within the studied municipalities; it is caused by the age structure of their inhabitants and by the integration stage of Romany communities.

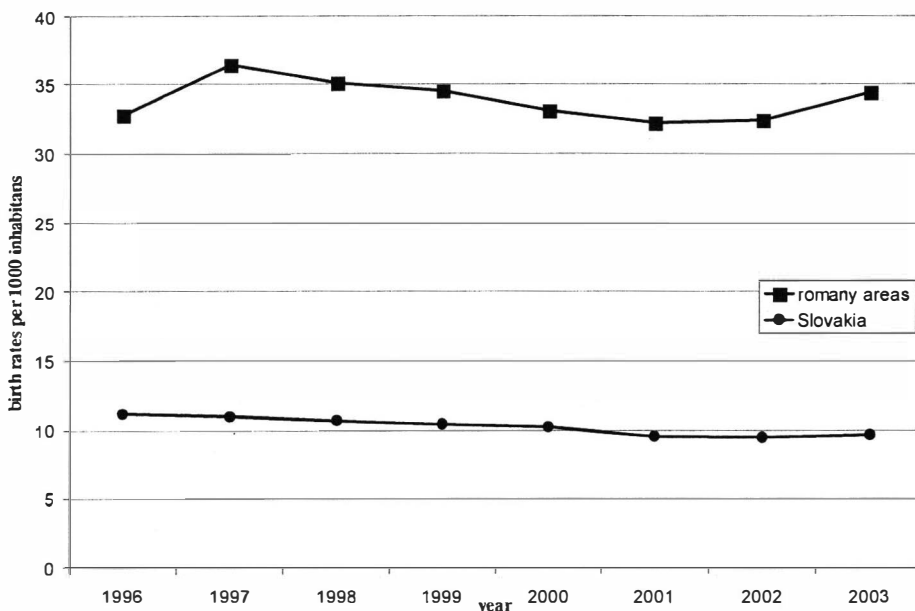


Figure 3 Comparison of the crude birth rates of selected Romany communities and Slovak population in the period of 1996 – 2003.
Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

The birth-rate in Slovakia in 1996 – 2002 was slowly descending and in the last year 2003 it started to rise in a moderate way. In the case of Romany communities, the birth-rate was rising until 1997 and then it started to descend till the year 2001. In 2002 the rise was quite moderate, but in 2003 more significant.

Table 3 Development of crude birth-rate in selected Romany communities in 1996 – 2003 (‰)

| Village | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Romany communities | 32.73 | 36.38 | 35.06 | 34.48 | 33.06 | 32.19 | 32.38 | 34.37 |
| Slovakia | 11.19 | 10.98 | 10.68 | 10.42 | 10.21 | 9.51 | 9.45 | 9.65 |

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Table 4 Development of crude death-rate in selected Romany communities in 1996 – 2003 (‰)

| Village | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Romany communities | 5.79 | 6.85 | 8.3 | 6.82 | 5.41 | 5.97 | 6.01 | 6.49 |
| Slovakia | 9.53 | 9.68 | 9.86 | 9.71 | 9.76 | 9.66 | 9.58 | 9.71 |

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

There were no significant changes in death-rate development in 1996 – 2003. In Slovak population the crude death-rate oscillated around 9.6‰. In the case of Romany communities it moved around 6 – 6.5‰. The exception is the year 1998, when after a catastrophic flood some villages (e.g. Jarovnice) recorded increased mortality. The lower crude death-rate in the selected list of municipalities is conditioned by younger age structure of their population (the age index of the selected list was 5.18 compared to 1.05 for whole Slovak population).

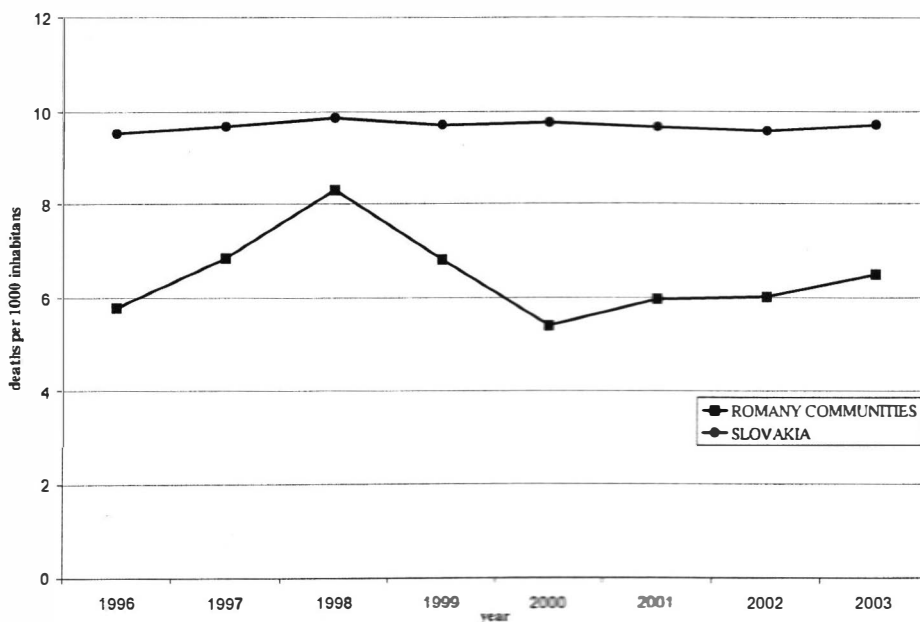


Figure 4 Comparison of the mortality of selected Romany communities and Slovak population in the period of 1996 – 2003.

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Table 5 Development of crude natural increase rate in selected Romany communities in 1996 – 2003 (‰)

| Village | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Romany communities | 26.94 | 29.46 | 26.76 | 27.66 | 27.68 | 26.21 | 26.37 | 27.88 |
| Slovakia | 1.65 | 1.30 | 0.82 | 0.71 | 0.45 | -0.16 | -0.13 | -0.10 |

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

The natural increase rate of the Slovak population was descending during 1996 – 2002 and in the last year 2003 it increased slightly. In the year 2001 it slipped into negative rates and the Slovak population started to be deficient in term of natural population dynamics. The natural increase rate of selected Romany communities persists in the long term on the high level of about 26 – 28‰.

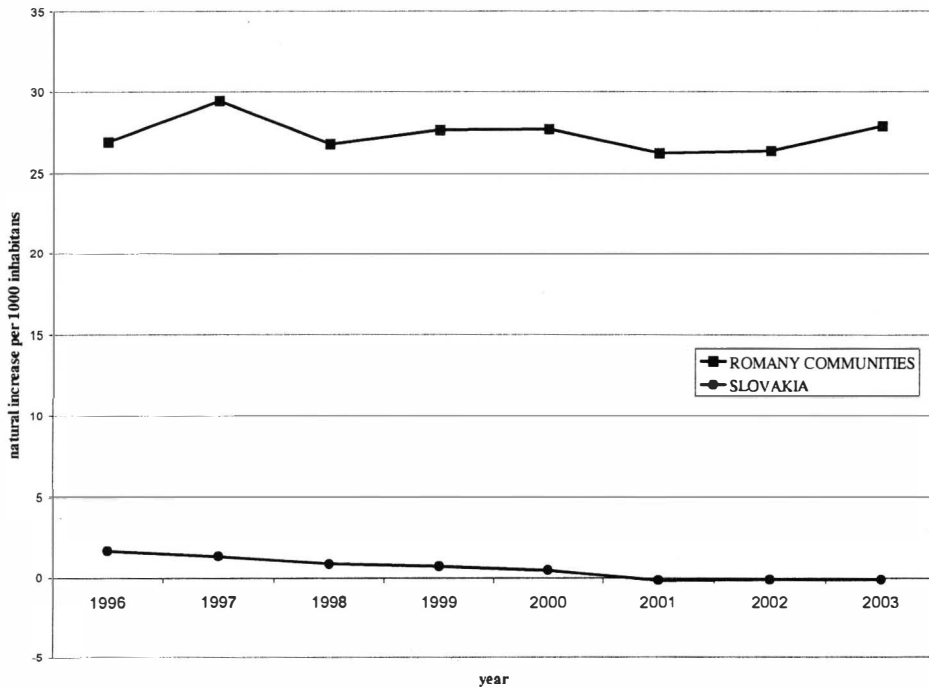


Figure 5 Comparison of the crude natural increase rates of selected Romany communities and Slovak population in the period of 1996 – 2003.
Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

It is quite interesting to compare the population processes of the selected Romany communities with some populations of the world. While in 1996 – 2003 the crude birth-rate in Slovakia reached 10.26‰, in the world in 2001 it was 21.4‰, and in the selected Romany communities in Slovakia the crude birth-rate irrupted to 33.78‰, what is such parameter as in some Latin American or African populations (e.g. Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, Bolivia, Paraguay, Ghana, Mauritania, Kenya, Gabon). The typical Romany community Luník IX with its crude birth-rate could be ranked among the above-average African countries like Togo, Senegal, Djibouti, and Central African Republic.

Considering the young age structure, many selected Romany communities have the distinction of very low crude death-rate (6‰). Fluctuation in 1998 was caused by the rise of mortality during the flood which affected mostly the Romany community in the village of Jarovnice (consequently, in 1999 the compensation phase with a high birth-rate could be identified).

The natural increase rate in selected Romany communities is extremely high, because of the low mortality and high birth-rate. While the crude natural increase rate in Slovakia in 1996 – 2003 reached the average annual level 0.6‰, in the selected Romany communities it reached 27.3‰. As an illustration, in 2001 the natural increase in the world was 12.7‰, and 23.9‰ in Africa. The natural increase in macro regions with the most active population dynamics was following: sub-Saharan Africa 23.9‰, Middle America 21.9‰, and Western Asia 20.9‰. It appears that the selected Romany communities and the city housing estate Lunik IX have the natural increase similar to that of populations undergoing the first demographic transition – e.g. Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria, Togo, Tanzania, Nicaragua, and Honduras. The Romany communities in Slovakia fall only little behind the most rapidly growing populations of the world – e.g. Marshall Islands (36.9‰), Niger (35.4‰), Palestinian territories (35.4‰), Sao Tome and Principe (35.2‰), Comoros (35‰), Chad (33.3‰), and Yemen (33‰). Even the Lunik IX community with its 34.1‰ natural increase rate would come immediately after the first five states of the world with the most active population dynamics.

The given analysis confirms the formerly published opinions on the phase delay in reproduction behaviour of Romanies in comparison with majority population. While the Romany population with its reproduction parameters goes through the first demographic transition, the majority population is already in the second demographic transition.

6. CONCLUSION

The introduced analysis of selected demographic features has proved that the Romany minority in Slovakia forms an individual and specific world within the world of majority. It is the world fragmented into numerous Romany communities and incipient segregated areas in towns. It is the world with significant inner structure. In term of natural population dynamics, the Romany minority is in a phase delay behind the majority population. The Romany population shows the features of the first demographic transition, while the majority population is characterized by the second demographic transition. The Romany population, regarding its low education and labour market discrimination, has the highest amount of economically dependent persons from all the nationalities living in Slovakia. Even three quarters of the Romany labour force were unemployed, and in some Romany communities the unemployment rate reached 100%. It all deepens the social exclusion of heft Romany population. Actual attempts of the Slovak governments to solve the given problems were only partly successful. The problem of Romany integration to the society, respecting their social-cultural specifications, would require a lot of Europe society effort.

Note

This paper is part of the scientific-technical project of the applied research entitled *A Study of Ethnic Specificities of the Romany Ethnic Group from the Anthropological, Social, Medical, Criminological and Educational Point of View*. The main co-ordinator of the project is Ivan Bernasovský. The paper is also part of the VEGA project No. 1/0367/03 entitled *Vývojové tendencie regionálnych komplexov východného Slovenska v období globalizácie a transformácie slovenskej spoločnosti a ich potenciál pre ďalší rozvoj*. The head of the project is René Matlovič.

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Vybrané črty demografického správania rómov na Slovensku

Resumé

Predložená analýza vybraných sociálnych a demografických črt ukázala, že rómska minorita na Slovensku tvorí svojrázny svet v kontexte sveta majority. Ide o svet fragmentovaný do mnohých osád a formujúcich sa segregovaných areálov v mestách a o svet vnútorne výrazne diferencovaný. Z hľadiska prirodzenej populačnej dynamiky je rómska minorita vo fázovom oneskorení za majoritou. Vykazuje znaky prvého demografického prechodu, kým majorita vykazuje znaky druhého demografického prechodu.

Rómske obyvateľstvo má vzhľadom na svoju nízku vzdelanosť, ale aj diskrimináciu na trhu práce, najvyššie zastúpenie ekonomicky závislých osôb spomedzi všetkých národností, žijúcich v SR. Až tri štvrtiny ekonomicky aktívnych Rómov bolo nezamestnaných, pričom v niektorých izolovaných osadových komunitách dosahuje nezamestnanosť až 100% úroveň. To všetko spôsobuje prehlbujúcu sociálnu exklúziu značnej časti rómskeho obyvateľstva.

Doterajšie pokusy slovenských vlád riešiť uvedenú problematiku boli len málo úspešné. Riešenie problematiky začlenenia rómskej minority do spoločnosti pri rešpektovaní ich sociálno-kultúrnych špecifik si bude vyžadovať mnoho úsilia európskeho spoločenstva.