

The Demographic Characteristics of Roma Population in Slovakia

Author: Boris Vaňo

Translation: František Bernadič

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This analytical publication characterizes reproductive behaviour of Roma/Gypsy population in Slovakia. Publication includes the estimation of members of Roma/Gypsy ethnic group living in Slovakia in year 2000.

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Introduction

Slovakia can be marked as a multiethnic state. In addition to Slovaks, also a non-negligible number of ethnic minorities are living in the territory of the Slovak Republic. According to the realistic estimates, the ethnic minorities create approximately 20% from the total population of the Slovak Republic. Mainly the geographic location of the Slovak Republic being the centre of Europe and the historical development linked to significant mobility of population are signed under the heterogeneous ethnic composition of population.

Currently, there are no official statistical data on the ethnic structure of population in Slovakia. Such data are available from different sources only until 1989. From the current standpoint such data are in the contradiction with human rights, thus, after the change of regime the tracing of them have been cancelled.

Most frequently the ethnic data are replaced by the data on the national structure of population. Unlike the ethnic data where the citizen is assigned to an ethnic group based on the judgement or the decision of a third party, the national data are based on the voluntary declaration of each individual to be a member of the particular nationality.

From the historical, demographic, urban, socio-economic and cultural standpoints, there are significant differences between particular ethnic groups. This fact is undoubtedly mostly related to the Roma/Gypsy population. In this case the mentioned differences reach such a conflicting level that we can talk about the Roma/Gypsy problem.

The Roma/Gypsy problem has several aspects and, at the same time, its solution is definitely not easy. The situation is complicated mainly by two facts. Firstly, it is the high number of Roma/Gypsies living in the territory of Slovakia. Slovakia belongs among countries with the highest share of the Roma/Gypsy population in Europe. The second fact is the bad initial situation inherited from the past. The attempt of a forcible assimilation, which has been lasting for several decades, has been fruitful in a form of distorted Roma/Gypsy traditions and natural structures, in the suppressing of a positive thinking, personal responsibility and initiative at the great part of Roma/Gypsy population as well as many prejudices on the Roma/Gypsy and non-Roma/Gypsy parts.

The Roma/Gypsy problem is not specific only for Slovakia. Several Central and Eastern European countries, where the concentration of the Roma/Gypsy population reaches the similar dimension, have similar problems. The coexistence of Roma/Gypsy population with the majority population is problematic also in advanced countries where the share of Roma/Gypsy population is incomparably lower than in Slovakia.

The history and the presence repeatedly record attempts for the solution of this problem. To simplify it, we can say that the integration of Gypsies to the society is in question. It has to be confessed that these attempts are from the global point of view not yet successful and that there is no positive example of an entirely system solution. Some successes have been evidenced either in the case where the Roma/Gypsy community is not very numerous or only partial successes are in question.

This paper is focused on the demographic characteristics of Roma/Gypsy population. Its main objective is, based on the options, which are available from the demographic statistics and demographic analyses, to characterise the reproductive behaviour of the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group and to estimate the number of Roma/Gypsies living in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The demographic characteristics cannot be done in the isolation from other aspects of the social development. The demographic processes are always influenced also by non-demographic factors and, on the contrary, the population development has a significant impact on other aspects of the functioning of society.

When solving the Roma/Gypsy problem, the remarkable factors are both the regional and integration ones. The Roma/Gypsies are not living in an integrated territory but are rather scattered within the entire territory of Slovakia. However, there are big differences in their number and concentration in particular regions of the Slovak Republic.

Regarding the degree of integration, the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group is very heterogeneous. According to the estimates, the integrated and non-integrated parts of Roma/Gypsy population are approximately of the same size. That part of the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group which has taken over all or the most of habits and customs of the majority population is to be considered as an integrated one. On the other hand, the non-integrated part of Roma/Gypsy population significantly differs by its way of life from the majority population. The non-integrated Roma/Gypsies are living mainly in the segregated

Roma/Gypsy settlements and approximately 25% of non-integrated Roma/Gypsies is scattered among the majority population.

While the members of other ethnic groups in Slovakia are usually declared the nationality in accordance with the ethnicity, the majority of Roma/Gypsies is not declared the Roma/Gypsy nationality and opts for a different nationality. Thus, the data on population of the Slovak Republic being of a Roma/Gypsy nationality do not give the real picture on the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group. As it has already been mentioned in the beginning, there are currently no ethnic data at all. Therefore, if we want to achieve the real demographic data on the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group we have to refer to estimates.

Filling in the gap in data on Roma/Gypsy population is to be considered as a main objective of this paper. When attempting to solve this task we very often encounter the objection, what it is good for? Why do we need to have information exactly on the Roma/Gypsy population? Those are citizens as anyone else. The fear from the misusing of these data is often hidden under the above-mentioned questions. The surveying of data on a particular group of population does not necessarily mean to be doubtful on the evenness of all citizens or the discrimination. For the purposes of discrimination, usually no statistical data are needed. Discrimination is carried out based on other criteria, usually a different look or behaviour are sufficient. Demographic, socio-economic and very often also the personal status of many Roma/Gypsies are nowadays significantly different from other population. In some cases the situation is such complicated that even Roma/Gypsies are not able to change it without any external help. However, the assistance cannot be sufficiently effective without requisite information. The survey on demographic and statistical data is thus not focused on the discrimination of Roma/Gypsies but rather on their benefit.

The second reason why it is so advantageous to have as precise data on the number of Roma/Gypsies as possible is the effort to preserve the rise of non-professional or purpose estimates. The Roma/Gypsy problem is very sensitive and thus its solution has to be laid in the professional level a not being misused for some partial objectives.

1. Population of Roma/Gypsy nationality in Slovakia

The national structure of population belongs to significant cultural characteristics of each country. Data on nationality are surveyed in Slovakia within census approximately each ten years. In the time period between two censuses the balance of population migration by nationality is being processed which directly follows the results of particular census. Based on this balance it is possible each year to obtain information on the number and structure of population by nationality.

Information on nationality was indirectly surveyed already in Hungary by the means of a question asking for a mother tongue. Within the first Czechoslovak censuses in 1921 and 1930 also the data on the national structure were surveyed. In 1921 it was a direct survey with the option to freely declaration of a certain nationality. Only a negligible part of the Slovak population declared those times Roma/Gypsy nationality (roughly 8 thousand people). The second Czechoslovak census had returned to an indirect surveying of nationality by the means of a mother tongue. Those days the Roma/Gypsy mother tongue was registered in case of roughly 31 thousand Slovak inhabitants.

Within the post-war censuses in 1950 and 1961 the population declared the nationality to which it feels to be internally linked. During 1970, 1980 and 1991 the formulation was even freer and it was left upon the decision of the citizen which nationality he/she would declare. The nationality had to be understood as the membership to a certain nation or nationality. In case of the post-war censuses before 1991 it was possible to declare only selected nationalities among which the Roma/Gypsy nationality had not been presented. Thus, Roma/Gypsies had to declare some of officially declared nationalities.

At the census in 1991 the procedure was based on the recommendations of UN. Traditionally a method of a so-called self-counting was used and the questionnaire contained also the question on the nationality and a mother tongue. Each counted person could choose the nationality deliberately and based on his/her conviction and was not anyhow bounded by his/her ethnic membership.

Also at the 2001 census the choice for the nationality was a free decision of each citizen without any restrictions. According to the international recommendations for census from the year 2000, the surveying of nationality has been assigned by a high priority while, at the same time, the nationality is

defined as a membership to a group of persons having the common origin, culture, language, religion or another characteristic feature that differs them from the rest of population.

At the 1991 census the inhabitants of Slovakia had a possibility for the first time after 60 years to declare the Roma/Gypsy nationality. Only less than 76 thousand people used this possibility. At the same time the data from special surveys witness on the significantly higher number of Roma/Gypsies living in Slovakia. The reasons why Roma/Gypsies do not declare the Roma/Gypsy nationality are several – from the insufficiently developed ethnic awareness which often appears as an effort to dissociate from the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group, up to the fear from the persecution and discrimination. It will be interesting to observe what change the 2001 census will bring into this situation.

Table 1. Population of the Slovak Republic by nationality as of 31 March 1991

	Nationality							Total
	Slovak	Czech	Hungarian	Roma/Gypsy	Ruthenian	Ukrainian	Other	
Number	4 519 328	52 884	567 296	75 802	17 197	13 281	28 547	5 274 335
%	85,69	1,00	10,76	1,44	0,33	0,25	0,54	100,00

Source: Population census 1991

The balance of population by nationality, being processed annually by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, is directly linked to the census data. Since 1991 these data contain also information on the population change of Roma/Gypsy nationality.

Table 2: Population change of Roma/Gypsy nationality in the Slovak Republic

Year	Population 1.1.	Live births	Deaths	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Total Increase	Population 31.12.
1991	75 355	3 542	155	3 387	262	3 649	79 004
1992	79 004	2 108	178	1 930	15	1 945	80 949
1993	8 949	1 731	99	1 632	10	1 642	82 591
1994	82 591	1 466	81	1 385	12	1 397	83 988
1995	83 988	1 156	74	1 082	3	1 085	85 073
1996	85 073	1 358	59	1 299	11	1 310	86 383
1997	86 383	1 453	74	1 379	17	1 396	87 779
1998	87 779	1 749	96	1 653	2	1 655	89 434
1999	89 434	1 910	59	1 851	-1	1 850	91 284

Source: Population change by nationality in the Slovak Republic

As it has already been mentioned, the whole change of population of Roma/Gypsy nationality in nineties is derived from the 1991 census. Thus, owing to the “ethnic” estimates, the data on particular demographic processes are also underestimated. The underestimation of the number of births is proportional to the underestimation of the number of population. In case of deaths, and it is very likely that also in case of migration, this underestimation is even higher. It seems that those women, who have declared the Roma/Gypsy nationality, are declaring it also at the childbirth (the new born child receives the same nationality as declared by the mother). A different situation occurs in case of death when the dead person is assigned by a Roma/Gypsy nationality only exceptionally (each year only a few people).

As it is visible, the data on the Slovak population being of Roma/Gypsy nationality are currently not usable when we want to characterise the number of members of the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group and only to a low extent usable for the characterisation of the reproductive behaviour of Roma/Gypsies. If we want to achieve the realistic results we have to refer to estimates, which are based on all kinds of data on Roma/Gypsies that are available.

2. Roma/Gypsy population in Slovakia

Until 1989, several federal data sources on Roma/Gypsies existed which had been based on the ethnic principle. Within all these surveys the particular persons were declared as Roma/Gypsies by other persons, usually by the creators or performers of the given survey. From the current point of view these data are in contradiction with human rights and thus after 1989 they have not been surveyed. However, these “ethnic” surveys did not cover the whole Roma/Gypsy population. Usually Roma/Gypsies living as an integrated part of a majority society were completely or at least partially missing. Some surveys were focused only on a part of Roma/Gypsy population (adults, nomadic population, problem population etc.). Despite these facts, the “ethnic” data characterise the Roma/Gypsy population more precisely and completely than the data on population of Roma/Gypsy nationality.

Integration of the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group is proceeding only very slowly. On the one hand, it is caused especially by a strong attitude to traditions and, on the other hand, by a remarkable isolation from the majority society. Due to the mentioned situation, the number of Roma/Gypsies is rapidly changing, however, their structure and territorial arrangement is changing only very slowly. Therefore many old data did not lose their actuality and in several directions are still interesting and relevant information also nowadays.

The oldest information on the number of Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia originating from the census as of the end of 18th century speaks about 20 thousand Roma/Gypsies. According to the Hungarian census from 1893, there were 36 thousand Roma/Gypsies living in the territory of Slovakia.

During the inter-war period, the register of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was established which in 1927 indicated 26 thousand Roma/Gypsies aged 14 years and more. This register was step-by-step completed and in 1938 it contained data on more than 60 thousand adults.

After the World War II several censuses on Roma/Gypsy population were carried out. The first post-war census from 1947 discovered 84 thousand Roma/Gypsies living in the territory of Slovakia. During 1966 – 1968 the federal census on Roma/Gypsy population was carried out which was performed by the Statistical Office. According to that census, more than 160 thousand Roma/Gypsies were living in Slovakia. The surveys of national committees in seventies followed the censuses in fifties and sixties carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Statistical Office; these surveys served as a basis for the payment of social support. According to these surveys, in 1989 there were 253,9 thousand Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia, which is, at the same time, the last federal figure on the number of the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group members that is available.

Within the census carried out in 1970 and 1980 the data on the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group were separately surveyed and consequently evaluated. Special methodological instructions were used in case of these surveys. The census commissar decided on the appurtenance of a citizen to a Roma/Gypsy ethnic group on the basis of the national committees’ surveys and based on his/her own judgement. When passing the judgement the following aspects were taken into account: the way of living, level of accommodation, standard of living, language, anthropological features etc.

It is likely that part of Roma/Gypsies was not included into this survey. Mainly the individuals and families being integrated into the majority population (probably mainly in bigger cities) were in question. Despite the mentioned objection these data can be considered as sufficiently reliable and objective information on the Roma/Gypsy population in the area of demographic development, economic activity, level of accommodation and the entire standard of living. Undoubtedly the most precise and detailed data on Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia, which were ever available, were in question.

In addition to censuses and special surveys carried out within the censuses, there were also some irregular or single surveys usually organised and carried out by and within the certain ministry (e.g. health-care).

Regarding the current time period we have to mention some specialised surveys usually small ones which are organised by the nongovernmental organisations and/or humanity organisations mainly within the framework of projects intended for the support and development of the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group.

The demographic characterisation of Roma/Gypsy ethnic group presented below will be based prevalently on data from 1980 census. By our opinion, those are the most appropriate data for this purpose. We are aware that these data contain practically complete information on non-integrated Roma/Gypsies and partial information on Roma/Gypsies living as an integrated part of the majority society.

By our opinion that part of integrated Roma/Gypsies, which was not included into survey in 1980, did not exceed 15% of Roma/Gypsy population, i.e. 30 thousand people. The Roma/Gypsy group, which took over the habits of the majority population, very often did not declare the Roma/Gypsy ethnic group and has a different reproductive behaviour than other Roma/Gypsies (on whom we shall speak within the framework of another characterisation), is in question. However, when processing the estimate on the number of Roma/Gypsies, the estimated number will include also this Roma/Gypsy group.

Partially integrated and non-integrated Roma/Gypsies have such a reproductive behaviour, which differs from the rest of population (even from the integrated Roma/Gypsies). Due to the slowly continuing integration also the changes in the reproductive behaviour of this population group are only slowly going on, thus, the majority of information from 1980 can be considered as a partially valid also nowadays.

2.1 Number and territorial arrangement

According to the results of census, almost 200 thousand Roma/Gypsies were living in the territory of Slovakia at the end of 1980, which represented 4% from the total number of population in Slovakia. More than a half of Roma/Gypsies (54%) was living in 1980 in the eastern part of Slovakia, 14% were living in the southern part of Middle Slovakia. From the particular regions, the highest concentration of Roma/Gypsies was in the region of Gemer, Spiš and in the surroundings of Košice. The lowest number of Roma/Gypsies was living in the northern part of Slovakia, in the regions of Orava and Kysuce.

Table 3: Roma/Gypsy population in 1970 and 1980

Region	Number		Increase 1970-1980		Share in total population (%)	
	1970	1980	Abs.	%	1970	1980
Slovak Republic	159 275	199 853	40 578	25,5	3,5	4,0
Bratislava	2 349	3 910	1 561	66,5	0,8	1,0
West Slovakia	37 158	43 373	6 215	16,7	2,4	2,6
Central Slovakia	36 089	44 214	8 125	22,5	2,6	2,9
East Slovakia	83 679	108 356	24 677	29,5	6,7	7,7

Source: Population Census 1980

In 1980 there were 2724 municipalities in Slovakia. In 209 municipalities there were more than 20% of Roma/Gypsies while in 15 municipalities Roma/Gypsies formed more than a half of inhabitants. In the majority of cases of high concentration of Roma/Gypsies, they were living separately from the rest of population in separate settlements. On the other hand, in 1271 municipalities (46,7%) there was no one Roma/Gypsy individual in 1980 (according to the census data).

Due to the fact that municipalities with the highest concentration of Roma/Gypsies belonged among municipalities with the low number of total population (in most cases those were municipalities with less than 1000 inhabitants), they do not appear among municipalities with the highest absolute number of Roma/Gypsy population. Cities are prevailing, mainly regional centres. In a descending order, in 1980 the majority of Roma/Gypsies were living in Košice, followed by Bratislava and Prešov. However, the share of Roma/Gypsies in these cities was relatively low. Only in few cities the share of Roma/Gypsies reached 10 or more percent from the total number of population (Fiľakovo, Levoča, Trebišov, Rimavská Sobota). As it is resulting from what has been mentioned, in Slovakia the majority of Roma/Gypsy population is living in the country (in 1980 it was approximately 60%).

According to the estimates, during the last 20 years the regional arrangement of Roma/Gypsy population has not significantly changed. The mobility of Roma/Gypsies is, due to their persistent problems with integration into the majority society, very low. On the other hand, it is likely that the concentration of Roma/Gypsies in traditional areas is increasing.

Table 4: Municipalities with the highest share of Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia in 1980

Municipality	District	Total population	Roma/Gypsies	Share of Roma/Gypsies (%)
Lomnička	Stará Ľubovňa	782	645	82,48
Vtáčkovce	Košice vidiek	483	359	74,33
Jurské	Poprad	500	362	72,40
Stráne pod Tatrami	Poprad	585	405	69,23
Výborná	Poprad	547	348	63,62
Radnovce	Rimavská Sobota	624	364	58,33
Rakúsy	Poprad	1 190	683	57,39
Kecerovce	Košice vidiek	1 555	877	56,40
Varhaňovce	Prešov	795	448	56,35
Jarovnice	Prešov	2 686	1 442	53,69
Sútor	Rimavská Sobota	337	178	52,82
Žehra	Spišská Nová Ves	986	518	52,54
Holumnica	Poprad	641	336	52,42
Bystrany	Spišská Nová Ves	1 662	849	51,08
Ihľany	Poprad	1 080	548	50,74
Podhorany	Poprad	802	399	49,75
Šivetice	Rožňava	347	172	49,57
Hostišovce	Rimavská Sobota	238	113	47,48
Boliarov	Košice vidiek	503	238	47,32
Hucín	Rožňava	704	330	46,88

Source: Population Census 1980

Table 5: Municipalities with the highest number of Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia in 1980

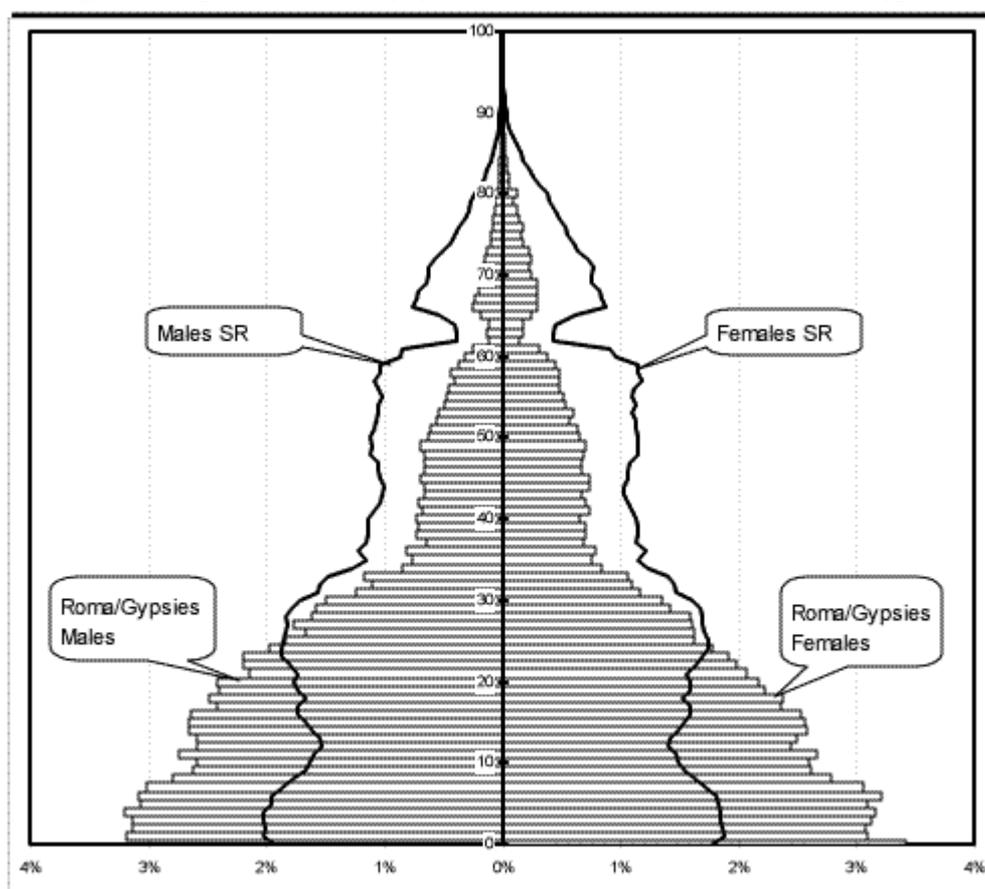
Municipality	District	Total population	Roma/Gypsies	Share of Roma/Gypsies (%)
Košice	Košice	202 368	8 681	4,29
Bratislava	Bratislava	380 259	3 910	1,03
Prešov	Prešov	71 500	2 007	2,81
Lučenec	Lučenec	26 399	1 940	7,35
Rimavská Sobota	Rimavská Sobota	19 699	1 916	9,73
Rožňava	Rožňava	18 039	1 796	9,96
Filákovo	Lučenec	10 497	1 784	17,00
Levoča	Spišská Nová Ves	11 025	1 657	15,03
Trebišov	Trebišov	14 961	1 632	10,91
Michalovce	Michalovce	29 765	1 609	5,41
Banská Bystrica	Banská Bystrica	66 412	1 463	2,20
Trnava	Trnava	64 062	1 457	2,27
Jarovnice	Prešov	2 686	1 442	53,69
Zvolen	Zvolen	36 538	1 365	3,74
Pavlovce nad Uhom	Michalovce	3 923	1 301	33,16
Nitra	Nitra	76 633	1 211	1,58
Zlaté Klasy	Dunajská Streda	3 644	1 176	32,27
Poprad	Poprad	38 077	1 172	3,08
Humenné	Humenné	27 285	1 164	4,27

Source: Population Census 1980

2.2 Structure by sex, age and marital status

The age structure of Roma/Gypsy population remarkably differs from the age structure of the rest of population. The Roma/Gypsy population has a sharply progressive type of age structure with the high share of children and a very low share of old people. It is the result of a different reproductive behaviour. Fertility and mortality of Roma/Gypsies is lingeringly substantially higher than in the rest of population.

Figure 1: Age structure of population in 1980 – Slovakia, Roma/Gypsies



Source: Population Census 1980

In 1980, children aged until 14 years formed almost 43% of Roma/Gypsy population what is nearly twofold as compared with the rest of population. At the age of 60 it was only a little bit higher than 6% of Roma/Gypsies. The consequence of such age structure was a very low average age of Roma/Gypsy population – approximately 22 years, what is lower by more than 10 years than the Slovak average. In municipalities with the highest concentration of Roma/Gypsy population the share of inhabitants in pre-productive age exceeded 50%. By the gradual change in the reproductive behaviour also the age structure of Roma/Gypsy population is changing. However, it still remains substantially different as compared to the rest of population.

Unlike the rest of Slovak population, in which women are prevailing, in 1980 men were prevailing in Roma/Gypsy population (967 women fell on 1000 men, i.e. the masculinity index was 1,033).

The age structure influences also the structure of Roma/Gypsy population by marital status. The numerous children component of population causes that the share of unmarried population is higher than in the rest of population. In 1980, single men represented 65,5% and single women 60,5% of Roma/Gypsy population. A completely different situation occurs when we compare the population aged 15 years and more. The share of married persons is here higher as compared to the rest of population.

The highest differences were exactly at young age – until 20 years. The share of married Roma/Gypsy men aged up to 20 years formed 4% of the total Roma/Gypsy population, the married Roma/Gypsy women represented even more than 14% (threefold or twofold as compared to the rest of population). The share of divorced and widowed is in case of adult Roma/Gypsy population lower than the average for Slovakia. All these facts witness the different reproductive and family behaviour of the Roma/Gypsy population.

Table 6: Age structure of Roma/Gypsy population in Slovakia in 1980

	Age group 0-14		Age group 15-59		Age group 60+	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Males	44 127	43,6	53 688	53,1	3 286	3,3
Females	42 545	43,5	50 470	51,6	4 846	5,0
Total	86 672	43,6	104 158	52,4	8 132	4,1

Source: Population census 1980

Table 7: Roma/Gypsy population aged 15 years and more by marital status in 1980 (%)

	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
Males	39,1	57,1	1,7	2,1
Females	30,4	58,9	1,9	8,8

Source: Population census 1980

2.3 Demographic reproduction

The process of demographic reproduction of Roma/Gypsy population can be characterised only indirectly, because the data on the demographic change of population of Roma/Gypsy nationality do not offer realistic results on the reproductive behaviour of Roma/ Gypsies (see Chapter 1). Thus, a deeper study of the demographic behaviour of Roma/Gypsy population is not possible. The basic characteristics of fertility and mortality can be inquired from census. With regard to Roma/Gypsy population, only data from 1970 and 1980 censuses, which were processed by using the same methodology and at the same time they contained sufficiently precise and detailed figures, can be taken into account. These results can be used for obtaining information on the level of reproductive characteristics of Roma/Gypsy population as well as for the formulation of hypotheses on their development.

The Roma/Gypsy fertility is one of the features by which the Roma/Gypsy population significantly differs from the rest of population. The highest attention is generally drawn to this difference while very often we can encounter the distorted and imprecise data. The development of fertility at developing populations shows that the decrease in fertility is related to the increasing standard of living and the growth of education. The continuous decreasing of Roma/Gypsy fertility could be observed already in seventies (by comparing data from 1970 and 1980 censuses) and can be expected also in future. This fact is confirmed also by the difference between the reproductive behaviour of integrated and non-integrated parts of Roma/Gypsy ethnic group. The slow process of integration linked to a strong attitude to the traditional reproductive behaviour is the main reason for the slow decrease of Roma/Gypsy fertility.

In 1980, Roma/Gypsy women had approximately by 70% more children as compared to non-Roma/Gypsy women (3307 children fell on 1000 Roma/Gypsy women at the average, while for non-Roma/Gypsy women it was 1945 children only).

The fertility of Roma/Gypsy women was higher at all age categories. The biggest difference was at the age category 15-19 (almost sevenfold). At the remaining decisive age categories (20-40 years) the Roma/Gypsy fertility was roughly twofold as compared to the non-Roma/Gypsy one.

Differences in fertility of Roma/Gypsy women according to the degree of integration can be partially documented on regional data. In East Slovakia, where the majority of Roma/Gypsies is living in segregated settlements, 4,3 children fell on one married Roma/Gypsy woman at the average, while in West Slovakia 3,7 children and in Bratislava 3,2 children “only”.

For the calculation of mortality characteristics of Roma/Gypsy population there are no data available. The mortality of Roma/Gypsies can be therefore characterised only indirectly by comparing the age structure in 1970 and 1980. By using this approach we obtain the estimate of probabilities of death by age and based on them we can calculate the life tables.

The life expectancy at birth complexly characterise the mortality situation of the particular generation and is suitable also for comparisons. During 1970-1980, the life expectancy at birth for Roma/Gypsy men was approximately 54 years and in case of Roma/Gypsy women it was approximately 58 years. As compared to the values for the whole Slovakia, Roma/Gypsy men lived less by 12 years at the average, for women this difference was even almost 15 years. The relatively small difference between the life expectancy at birth for Roma/Gypsy men and women, which was in seventies approximately 4 years (in case of the entire population it is more than 10 years), is remarkable.

Data on infant mortality have been traced for a certain time period in the health care facilities. According to these data sources, in 1985 the Roma/Gypsy infant mortality reached the value $34,8^{0}/_{00}$, which was nearly 2,5 times more as compared to the rest of population.

The presented data witness the high mortality of Roma/Gypsies, which exceeds the mortality of non-Roma/Gypsy population at all age categories.

Both the relatively high increases of population and a progressive age structure, which are significantly different as compared to rest of population, are the consequences of the mentioned reproductive behaviour of Roma/Gypsies.

2.4 Nationality

In the post-war censuses before 1990 the citizens could declare only selected nationalities. The Roma/Gypsy nationality was not among them and thus Roma/Gypsies had to declare another nationality. This aspect is interesting also nowadays when the majority of Roma/Gypsies does not declare the Roma/Gypsy nationality and thus a question arises what kind of nationality do they choose.

In 1980 roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of Roma/Gypsies declared the Slovak nationality, 20% the Hungarian and the remaining 5% fell on all other nationalities. It is obvious that Roma/Gypsies declared that nationality which was prevailing in the given territory. There is no reason to assume that currently it is done in a different way.

Provided that the rest of population (except for Roma/Gypsies) is declaring the nationality according to the ethnic appurtenance, after the recalculation in 1991 the resulting ethnic structure of population in the Slovak Republic will be as follows: 4 359 thousand Slovaks (82,7%), 525 thousand Hungarians (9,9%), 289 thousand Roma/Gypsies (5,5%) and 101 thousand (1,9%) will be the representatives of other ethnic groups. For the purposes of comparison, the figures on the structure of Slovak population by nationality inquired in 1991 census are presented in table 1.

3. Estimation of the number and structure of Roma/Gypsy population in Slovakia

The development of Roma/Gypsy population in Slovakia in the long-term time horizon is documented by a permanent growth of the members of this ethnic group. Because the non-Roma/Gypsy population is developing less dynamically (according to another model of reproductive behaviour), the share of Roma/Gypsies in the total population of inhabitants of Slovakia is continuously increasing.

However, it has to be mentioned that the number of Roma/Gypsies is very often inappropriately overestimated. Recently, one is talking even about 500 – 800 thousand Roma/Gypsies what are data which have to be considered as unrealistic. These imprecise estimates (also thanks to a high medial promotion) have influenced the public opinion in Slovakia and have penetrated also abroad. These

data are very often used as reliable ones. This is also one of the reasons why it is necessary to tackle seriously with the estimation of the number of Roma/Gypsies.

It is not the purpose of this work to analyse the mentioned estimates in detail. For illustration it is enough to present a simple example. We are issuing from the assumption that the figure from 1980 is the most precise figure on the number of Roma/Gypsies living in Slovakia and is slightly underestimated (by 15% at maximum). Thus in 1980, maximum of 230 thousand Roma/Gypsies were living in Slovakia. If currently 500 thousand Roma/Gypsies were living in Slovakia, it would mean that their average annual increase for the last 20 years should be 13,5 thousand persons. Because no massive inflow of Roma/Gypsies from abroad to Slovakia is known, it should be to great extent a natural increase. The total increase of population for the whole Slovakia for the same time period was 406,2 thousand persons what represents 20,3 thousand persons per one year at the average. It means that for the last 20 years Roma/Gypsies would cover 66,5% of the population increase in Slovakia. If there were currently 650 thousand Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia, it would mean that exclusively Roma/Gypsies should cover the population increase of Slovakia for already 20 years. These examples are speaking a sufficiently clear language, thus, other (even higher) estimates do not need any commentary.

The estimate of the number of Roma/Gypsies living currently in Slovakia, which is presented in this paper, was elaborated as a demographic forecast *ex post*. A component method was used for the calculation, which is a standard method when processing such kind of demographic forecast. The starting point was the year 1980, for which the most reliable data are available and which, at the same time, have a sufficiently detailed structure. The final period of forecast was the year 2000; its result is the estimate of the current number and structure of Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia.

As it has already been mentioned, the ethnic surveys indicate a substantially higher number of Roma/Gypsies than “nationality” balances, however, they either do not cover the entire Roma/Gypsy ethnic group living in Slovakia. Surveys do not cover mainly Roma/Gypsies being integrated into the majority society. When making the estimate, this fact had to be taken into account and the number of Roma/Gypsies at the starting point in 1980 had to be completed by an estimate of this group of Roma/Gypsy population. It means that the resulting estimate includes all Roma/Gypsies regardless their degree of integration.

When processing the estimate of the reproductive behaviour of Roma/Gypsies in eighties and nineties, which served as a development scenario for the forecast, all kinds of available statistical data were used. In addition to official statistical data, also the information from municipality offices and from several sociological surveys was used as a complementary data source.

When processing the development scenario of the reproductive behaviour for the last 20 years, the following assumptions were initially used:

- The reproductive behaviour of Roma/Gypsy population is slowly but definitely approaching the reproductive behaviour of the rest of population.
- Improvement of the mortality is going on approximately in the same pace as at the rest of population. Thus, the difference in the life expectancy at birth is roughly maintained.
- Despite the decrease, the Roma/Gypsy fertility remains at the substantially higher level as the fertility of non-Roma/Gypsy population (roughly twofold values of the total fertility rate).
- The external migration of Roma/Gypsies is negligible, thus, the forecast does not take it into account (a zero net migration).

From the description of input parameters as well as from the assumption on the non-inclusion of 30 thousand Roma/Gypsies into the survey in 1980 it results that the estimate can be considered as a relatively optimistic one, and thus, the number 379 thousand persons should be considered as a top boundary of the number of Roma/Gypsies living in Slovakia. It is very likely that the number of Roma/Gypsies was in 2000 moving within the range of 360-365 thousand persons. The natural increase of Roma/Gypsies is currently at the level of 5,5 thousand persons

The Roma/Gypsy population is still substantially younger than the non-Roma/Gypsy population. The ageing of Roma/Gypsy population is going on slower due to another reproductive behaviour. Since 1980, the average age of Roma/Gypsy population has increased roughly by 2 years and currently achieves the value of approximately 24 years (23,5 for men and 24,6 for women). The number of Roma/Gypsies is increasing in all three main age groups. The highest increase was in case of population at the productive age, followed by children up to 15 years and the lowest increase was in case of population in the post-productive age.

Table 8: Estimation of the number of Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia during 1980-2000

Year	Roma/Gypsies			Annual increase (%)		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1981	119 622	115 948	235 570			
1982	123 086	119 492	242 578	2,90	3,06	2,97
1983	126 743	123 221	249 964	2,97	3,12	3,04
1984	130 598	127 152	257 750	3,04	3,19	3,11
1985	134 588	131 217	265 805	3,06	3,20	3,13
1986	138 698	135 401	274 099	3,05	3,19	3,12
1987	142 782	139 573	282 355	2,94	3,08	3,01
1988	146 884	143 754	290 638	2,87	3,00	2,93
1989	151 079	148 024	299 103	2,86	2,97	2,91
1990	155 206	152 239	307 445	2,73	2,85	2,79
1991	159 401	156 522	315 923	2,70	2,81	2,76
1992	163 723	160 939	324 662	2,71	2,82	2,77
1993	168 011	165 329	333 340	2,62	2,73	2,67
1994	172 189	169 626	341 815	2,49	2,60	2,54
1995	175 658	173 252	348 910	2,01	2,14	2,08
1996	178 754	176 521	355 275	1,76	1,89	1,82
1997	181 754	179 698	361 452	1,68	1,80	1,74
1998	184 676	182 808	367 484	1,61	1,73	1,67
1999	187 480	185 811	373 291	1,52	1,64	1,58
2000	190 310	188 890	379 200	1,51	1,66	1,58

Source: VDC - INFOSTAT

Table 9: Estimation of the age structure of Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia in 2000

	Total	Age group 0-14		Age group 15-59		Age group 60+	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Males	190 310	71 386	37,5	114 292	60,1	4 632	2,4
Females	188 890	68 447	36,2	111 779	59,2	8 664	4,6
Total	379 200	139 833	36,9	226 071	59,6	13 296	3,5

Source: VDC – INFOSTAT

Conclusion

Approximately 350-380 thousand Roma/Gypsies are currently living in Slovakia. From demographic point of view, the Roma/Gypsy population belongs among developing populations, which are known by a progressive type of age structure with the high representation of children. The increase of Roma/Gypsy population is lingeringly substantially higher as compared to the increase of the non-Roma/Gypsy population. It is the result of different reproductive behaviour of Roma/Gypsies, which is designated by a higher fertility and mortality as compared to the rest of population. If we take the causalities of the demographic development into account, the demographic situation of Roma/Gypsies is not extraordinary. Such a development is at developing population quite common. Also the majority population in Slovakia has run through it. The values of reproductive characteristics, which we can currently observe at Roma/Gypsies, were recorded in Slovakia in the first half of the 20th century.

The change in the reproductive behaviour in case of developing populations is related to the change in life conditions, increase in the standard of living and the growth of the education level. The Roma/Gypsy population will certainly not be an exception. However, these changes are going on relatively slowly as a consequence of the isolation of Roma/Gypsy population. The decisive factor for

demographic features of Roma/Gypsy and non-Roma/Gypsy population in order to get nearer and nearer will thus be the progress achieved in the integration of Roma/Gypsies into society.

Based on the available statistical data it can be confirmed that the change in the development of Roma/Gypsy fertility and mortality has already occurred. Despite the increase in fertility, the age structure of Roma/Gypsy population will ensure the increase in live births also in the forthcoming years. The improvement in the health conditions of Roma/Gypsy population will bring also the fall in mortality and the extending of life. Also the entire demographic situation has to be taken into account. It can be assumed that the low level of fertility in Slovakia will recall a reaction of the government in a form of pro-population measures, which can partially modify also the development of Roma/Gypsy fertility. Despite this fact, it is likely that the increase of Roma/Gypsy population will continuously diminish, although slower than in case of the rest of population. Thus, the concerns on the fact that in 2010 there will be one million Roma/Gypsies in Slovakia and that in the course of twenty years Roma/Gypsies become the majority population in Slovakia have to be rejected as unrealistic, denying demographic theories and causalities and resulting from imprecise estimates of the current number of Roma/Gypsy population.

Undistorted information on the number and structure of Roma/Gypsy population will be necessary, if the government supports the integration of Roma/Gypsies and by concrete measures contributes to the improvement of their life conditions. The situation is in direction complicated by the lack of appropriate statistical data. Although the demographic behaviour of Roma/Gypsies corresponds to the degree of their development, it is obvious that one has to seriously rethink the fact (regardless its causes), that among the majority population is living a group of inhabitants, whose life conditions are lingeringly significantly different from the rest of population and in many cases they have nothing to do with a human dignity.

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