

Interplay between the social exclusion and reproductive behaviour of Roma population in Slovakia according to different levels of integration

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Research question:

What is the relationship between the reproductive behaviour and their cultural and economic exclusion?

Types of Roma communities:

Diffused Roma

integrated into the majority population; living in a settlement not dominated by Roma population.

Separated Roma

live concentrated in part of a village (for example in one street) or in the marginal part of the village clearly separated from the majority population. They have less contacts and interaction with the majority population compared to the diffused Roma.

Segregated Roma

live concentrated in settlements apart from the majority population and their settlements form a closed system with minimum of outer contacts.

1. economic exclusion

- is closely related to the exclusion from the labour market and it is the prime source of poverty
- Roma communities are typical with high level of unemployment, minor differences are between men and women and among the community types
- employment rates are higher among separated and diffused Roma
- one of the important factors of absence of the Roma women from the labour market is long time spent on the maternity and parental leave, which leads to problems in re-entering the labour market due to a loss of working habits and qualification

Main factors influencing the marginalisation of Roma at the labour market:

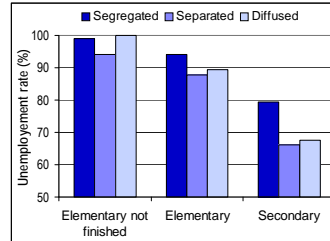
- low educational level and a lack of qualification
- a loss of working habits and skills due to long duration of unemployment
- structural factors at macro level – concentration of Roma in the less developed regions, lower demand for unqualified workers
- poor health and high prevalence of disabilities
- hidden discrimination against Roma among the employers

Data:

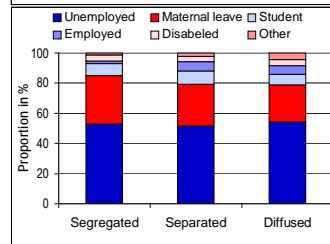
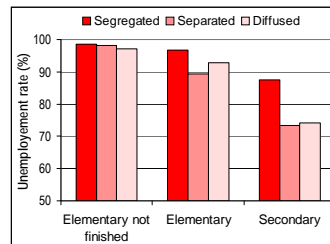
UNDP survey: Report on the Living Conditions of Roma Households in Slovakia

Data collection April-June 2005, face-to-face interviews based on structured questionnaire

Sample: proportional, 720 households (240 for each type of community); 3769 persons, 965 women 15-49



Unemployment rate of Roma men (above) and women (below)



Economic status of Roma women

Mechanisms of social exclusion of Roma communities:

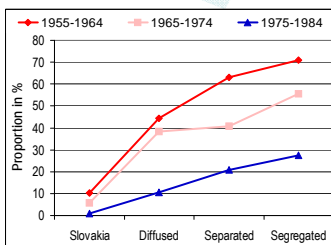
Social exclusion is an exclusion from participation in spheres and subsystems which have economic, political, social and cultural importance in the society¹. Among the experts several mechanisms of social exclusion of Roma are being discussed, however, we focus on the interplay between the reproductive behaviour and economic and cultural exclusion of Roma in Slovakia.

2. cultural exclusion

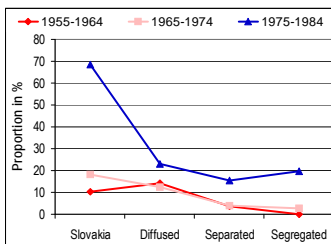
- means a denial of person's rights to participate on the culture of the society and share its cultural capital, education and culture
- one of the main indicators - exclusion from the access to education and low attained educational level

Main factors influencing the level of cultural exclusion of Roma:

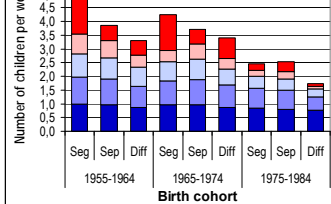
- a prime handicap for Roma children at the start of educational enrolment: use of the Roma language in combination with the language of majority population (either Slovak or Hungarian), poor knowledge of Slovak language, limited vocabulary, low enrolment in pre-school education, habits in communication
- Roma do not perceive a close relationship between the attained education and chances at the labour market (unemployment is high also among the better educated and better qualified Roma) and hence they do not motivate children to achieve a better education
- in the settlements of high Roma concentration a segregate, ethnically homogeneous schools with lower quality and demands on children emerge; due to limited finance Roma children attend only local schools and do not commute to specialised schools in more distant cities



Proportions childless (below) and women with 4+ children (above) by birth cohort



Completed fertility rates of Roma women by birth-order and birth cohort



Completed fertility rates of Roma women by birth-order and birth cohort

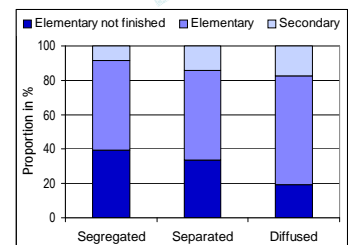
Reproductive behaviour of Roma

- Roma women are typical with early sexual debut, transition to motherhood and high fertility, which is in sharp contrast to the majority population
- Roma women do not differ in timing of the transition to motherhood, mean age of mother at first birth varies between 19-20 years among segregated, separated and diffused Roma women²
- birth of the first child is important for the status of the father and the mother within the community
- differences are apparent in completed fertility and parity composition – segregated women have highest fertility due to the large proportion of women with 5 and more children
- childlessness is very low among segregated and separated Roma women
- early motherhood negatively influences educational attainment of Roma women, since they usually withdraw from school after having a child(ren) and multiple motherhood negatively influences their labour-force participation and their chances to get employed after finishing reproduction
- diffused Roma also experience transition to motherhood in young age, however, their fertility outcomes are lower due to limitation of family size at lower number of children (only 10% have 4 and more children compared to 40% among separated and segregated Roma women)
- different reproductive behaviour and families with numerous children is perceived an integral part of the Roma "otherness" to the majority population and are a source of the social exclusion

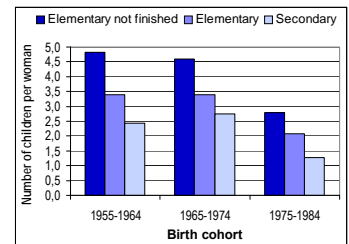
CONCLUSION

Social exclusion of Roma is a result of interplay of structural (high unemployment, low educational level) and cultural factors (low perception of the importance of education, different value of children for the community and parents, traditional role of women in the community – housework and upbringing of children, important role of older children in care for the younger siblings). Reproductive behaviour, on the one hand, effects the social exclusion and, on the other hand, is a reaction and a result of the social exclusion.

Besides the "new poverty" (unemployment, low education), the "old demographic poverty" (large number of children in a family influencing the living standard) is still important factor of the exclusion of especially separated and segregated Roma.



Educational attainment of Roma women



Completed fertility rates of Roma women by educational attainment and birth cohort

References and acknowledgements:

We are thankful to Tomáš Sobotka for the data on parity composition of women in Slovakia.

- 1 Ďžambazovič, R., Jurásková, M. (2002). „Sociálne vylúčenie Rómov na Slovensku“. [Social exclusion of Roma in Slovakia]. In: Čačipen pal o Roma. Bratislava: IVO
- 2 Šprocha, B. (2006) Populačný vývoj rómskeho obyvateľstva na Slovensku. [Population development of Roma population in Slovakia]. Master Thesis. Prague: Department of demography and geodemography, Charles University in Prague