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AGE STRUCTURE OF GYPSIES IN VOJVODINA

Abstract: Population ageing is very spread as in Serbia, so in Europe. Interests of Demographers have not often been occupying with age structure of Gypsies in Vojvodina. Therefore, explorations are focused on it. Explorations are shown that the Gypsy population is the youngest on the territory of Vojvodina Province, but indicates of ageing are growing slowly. Changes in age structure are influenced by demographic transition. Gypsies represents atypical age patterns in Vojvodina population. Attendance of tendencies in age structure of Gypsies is very important. Analysis and comparison of Gypsies according to Censuses are elaborated in this paper. With statistic methods and mathematics proceeding are compared different parameters of the level of ageing (e.g. middle age, index of ageing etc). Results might used in function of Gypsiology.

Key words: age structure, Gypsies, Vojvodina

Introduction

Djurdjica Petrovic (1992 a) tells on the bibliographies on Roma population and cites over two hundred titles of monographs and papers published in various publications of legal, ethnological, sociological, linguistic and other contents. Out of all that, in about twenty books it is said on Roma population in Vojvodina, and only three titles are of demographic content and those are over twenty years old. Of newer date is the analysis of the Ministry of human and national minority rights of Serbia and Montenegro prepared based on the Census 2002 (2004) for all the national minorities, even Roma, on the territory of Serbia. Hence, Roma population has rarely been the subject of demographic research.

Statistical documentation of Census 2002 testifies that in Vojvodina Roma population amounts to 26.9% of their total number in Serbia (Ministry of human and national minority rights of Serbia and Montenegro, 2004). In the function of completing the knowledge on Vojvodian Roma, in the Second half of XX Century, the need was imposed to analyze the number of population and

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characteristics of Roma age structure in Vojvodina. They can show the intensity of the effects of demographic transition on Roma population in Vojvodina.

Number of Roma people in Vojvodina

In the world science, it is determined that Roma were largely Nomadic Ethnic group, originating from India. In the X century, they started invading the world from Little Asia, and then spread over the North Africa, islands of East Mediterranean sea and Balkan Peninsula, and from there, all over Europe. There exists also the Northern, pro- Carpathian direction. Of their movements to Central Europe, and it is also pretty interesting from the point of view of Roma Ethnic history (Vlahovic, 1992).

Roma appeared on the Balkans and in Serbia from XIV century, at the same time of Turkish invasion. Based on their origin, language and religion, Roma can be divided into four types: a) Turkish Roma, either Muslims or Christians by religion, b) white Roma, coming from Bosnia, of Muslim religion and speaking Serbian, c) Vlachs - Roma, who came from Romania and are of Orthodox religion, and use both Serbian and Romanian and d) Hungarian Roma, with their roots in Austria (UNDP, 2005).

Vlahovic (1992) mentions the classification of Roma as per regions from which they moved to the territory of Turkey, Vlach territory, German or Banat Roma population and white Roma, a variant of Turkish.

With the survey on Vojvodian Roma, it was found that actually Roma people are not at all well informed on their own origin. Certain families in Backa migrated from Bulgaria, in Banat from Ukraine (village named Sartovo) or Romania (Ivkov, 2005).

Many of the experts in social sciences consider the statistical evidence on Roma as incomplete and unreliable, and their number in population is much larger than as shown in Census (Petrovic, 1996). However, that is not only the case in Serbia. Pursuant to the regional report UNDP, including 5 countries of Eastern and Central Europe, on the last Censuses, less than half of Roma population expressed themselves as Roma (UNDP, 2005). That problem is explained by UNDP (2005) by the fear of discrimination. Djuric (1992) writes that Roma are the nation whose life has been in the shadow of death for thousand years now. In all the countries their groups are isolated and almost forced on to have biological and social endogamy, in other words, to live within their own community strictly, no matter of the consequences that leaves on future generations

(Vlahovic, 1992). Low social and discriminated position of Roma makes it more difficult for them to become integrated in the society, and thus, they often misuse it as ethnic coverage. As in a real vicious circle, the more difficult integration conditions more frequent and larger migrations and that is again the factor of slow adaptation and integration.

Dynamic growth of Roma population in Vojvodina between 1948 and 1953 could not have been achieved by natural manner, but just through mechanical one (immigration) or by more widespread defining of people to belong to Roma ethnic group. Since there were no more significant migrations of Roma in Vojvodina in that period, it comes to the conclusion that they actually converted from other ethnic groups and their number increased (table 1). The same reasons influenced the rapid decrease in number of Roma in 1961, but that conversion was going into other direction (Kicosev, 1997).

Table 1. Changes in number of Roma in Vojvodina in XX century

Census Year	Number of Roma	Share in Vojvodina population	Basic index	Chain index
1931	7918	0.5	-	-
1948	7494	0.5	94.6	94.6
1953	11525	0.7	145.6	153.8
1961	3312	0.2	41.8	28.7
1971	7760	0.4	98.0	234.3
1981	19693	1.0	248.7	253.8
1991	24366	1.2	307.7	123.7
2002	29057	1.4	366.9	119.2

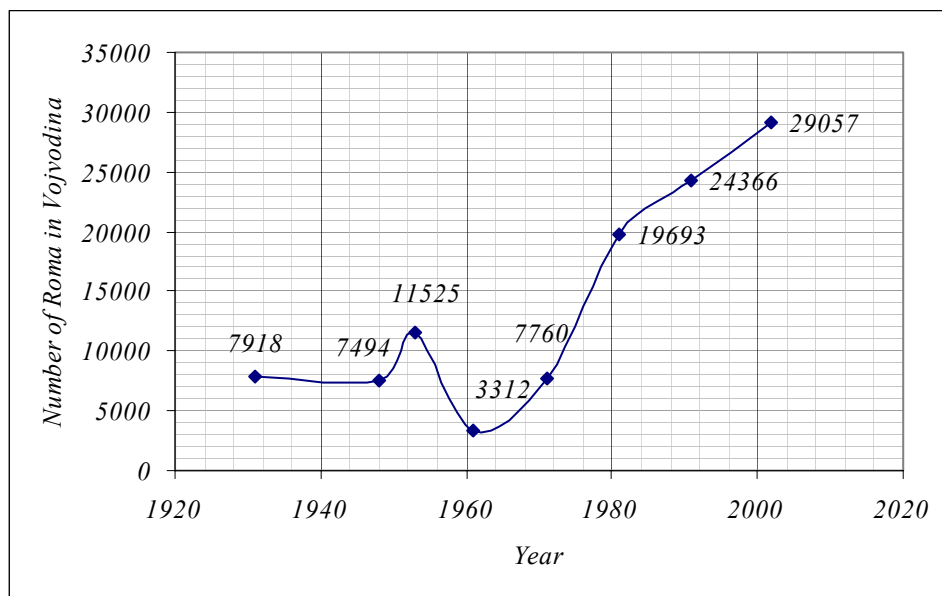
Source: (Kicosev, 1997) and (Републички завод за статистику, 2003)

On changes in the number of Roma in Vojvodina Vukanovic (1983) also states that their demographic curve of growth, that is the decrease in population, is very variable. The official statistics provides one sort of data, and the other type of information is gathered by insight, and the opinions of information and scientific nature.

After 1961, the number of Roma population was continuously growing, especially between 1971 and 1981 (table 1). By respecting and making official the decision made on the I World Congress of Roma in London, 1971, in our country since 1972 Gypsies have been named Roma (Okely, 1990), (Ivkov, 2005). The fact is that since 1970s the scientific interest, interest of politicians, and publishers for this ethnic community, that has always been on the margins of

the society has been revived and that was expressed by new qualities. The aforementioned phenomena could be put into the context of the movement among Roma themselves for the change of their status and position in society in general. For instance, from 1974 to 1977, Centre for Social Services in Subotica was doing a research on Roma people in Subotica. Provincial Institute of Social Research in Novi Sad started in 1977 a research on social problems of Roma population. Museum of Vojvodina in 1979 printed a voluminous book “Ethnological knowledge of Roma people (Gypsies) in Vojvodina”, and that represented a result of a planned research on Roma in Vojvodian settlements for years (Petrovic, 1992 a).

Other explanations of the Roma population increase are justified by decrease in mortality rate, where as the high birth rate remained the same and the awareness of their own ethnic identity was increased (Ivkov, 2005).



Graphic 1. Changes in the number of Roma population in Vojvodina, as per Censuses from 1931-2002

That growth in population number for Roma in 1981 came from one special “psychology” of Roma ethnic groups and communities, toward whom the historic past was rather cruel, and the past period of a couple of decades was not able to take out from the Roma nation soul suffering (Vukanovic, 1983).

After 1981, the number of Roma population is increasing, but at slower and slower rate (graphic 1). It is now not any more influenced by the results of Roma emancipation, that were typical for past decades but just natural growth. The proof of that thesis is to be found among age pyramids.

Age pyramids

According to Sunbarg's typology, cited by Rosset (1968), in Census 1961, Roma people belonged to the progressive type of population. However, the share in percentages of reproductive and aged population increased in the past decades. According to Census 2002, those values are arithmetic mean among the progressive and the stationary type (Djurdjev, 2001).

Friganovic (1978) analyzed the share of population in percentages, age structure from 0-19. If over 35% of population is in that age structure, population is in their "youth". If that percentage is beneath 35%, the population is at the "threshold of ageing" (Djurdjev, 2001). According to those criteria, Roma people are at the "threshold of ageing" since Census 1991.

Pursuant to Rosseau (1968), who based his model on the share of population over 60 years old, Roma belong to the type of population structure that is in its demographic youth (Kicosev, Golubovic, 2004). The line between the "demographic youth type" and the type "on the thresholds of old age" is in the 8% of the population over 60 years old. Considering that, this percentage is more and more increasing and according to Census 2002, it is pretty near 8% (table 2). According to that parameter Roma population is getting older more and more. For the increase in older population is also dues to longer life expectancy, and that was influenced by greater awareness on the importance of better life quality and health protection.

The share of the population of Roma in their reproductive age gathered from the Census 1961 was increased for 7.4% in Census 2002. Based on that, the number of population in the age structure "young" (0 - 14) could have been increased. Yet, the number of young population for those four decades actually decreased by 10.1%, and that represents one of the early signs of population ageing (table 2).

The most comprehensive way to get an insight into age structure of a certain population is age groups, and if graphically presented, those have a pyramidal shape. In order for the comparisons between Censuses to be possible, values in age pyramids are stated in percentages (Breznik, 1980).

Table 2. Age categories of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %), as per Censuses between 1961-2002

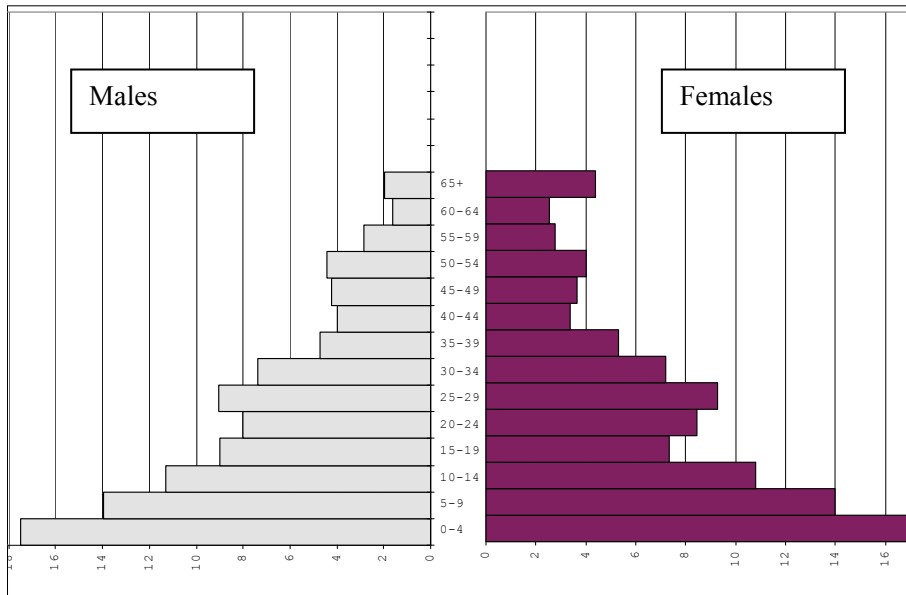
Age categories of Roma population in Vojvodina	Censuses				
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
0-14	42.4	39.9	35.1	33.9	32.3
15-49	45.4	48.7	52.1	52.2	52.8
50+	12.3	11.5	12.9	13.9	14.9
Sum	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
60+	5.3	5.8	6.1	6.6	7.9

Source: (Републички завод за статистику, 2003), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1970), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1974), (Покрајински завод за статистику, 1982) and (Савезни завод за статистику, 1993)

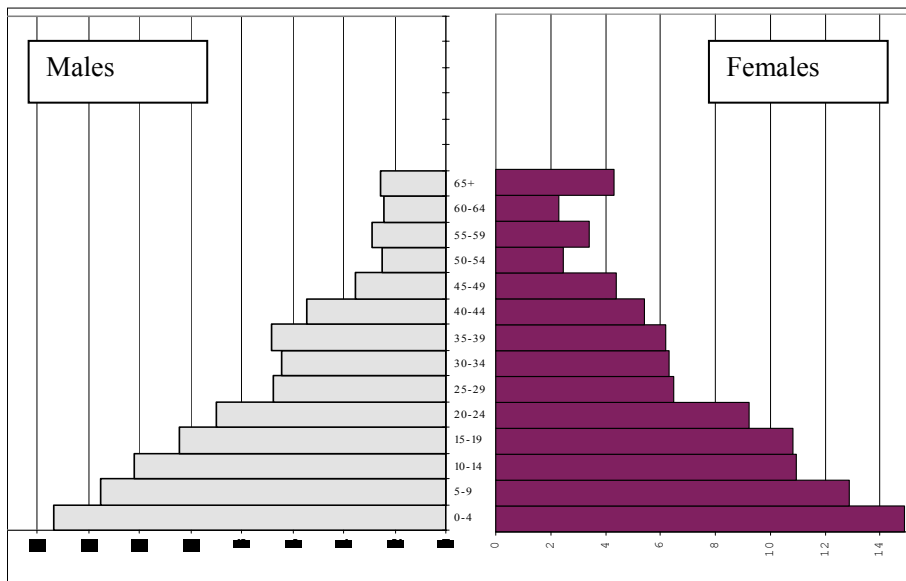
Special Way of life, high mortality rate, bad health protection, as well as high mobility rate have influenced in the past for Roma to be typical of short life expectations. On the photographs of plenty of monographs Roma people, it is noticeable there is hardly or even no older population. Even on the age pyramid of Roma in Vojvodina, Census 1961, the number of older population is the least (graphic 2).

The pyramid represents a “stable base”, consisting of generation born after World War II. Irregular narrowing on the pyramid are noticed with generations that were born during World War I or World War II. It is widely known that the Roma population was prosecuted and they had to sacrifice a lot in the course of Wars, and with no difference, all age categories were killed or wounded.

On the pyramid of Roma population in Vojvodina, as per census 1971, the basis is still stable, but the differences between the age structures are smaller. By this Census, double the number of Roma in comparison to Census 1961 was registered, and the picture of the age structure is more realistic. Irregularities on the pyramid were formed with those age groups born during the War years are smaller (graphics 3). Women are more numerous in old the age structures, except 10-14 and 35-39.



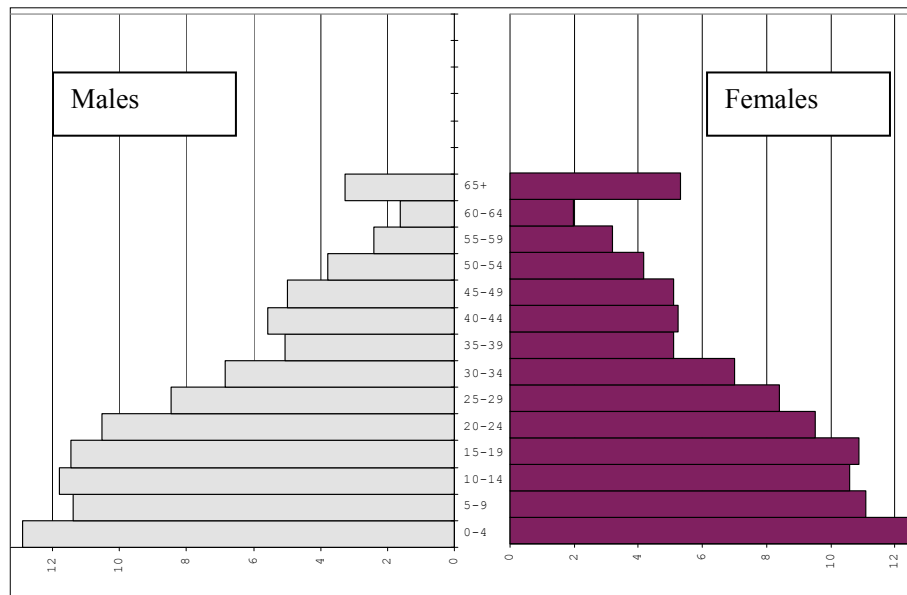
Graphic 2. Age structure of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %), as per Census 1961



Graphic 3. Age structure of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %), as per Census 1971

Pyramid based on the 1981 Census, when the number of Roma population is 2.5 times higher in comparison to previous Census, and provides the most realistic picture of Roma population after World War II. Then its shape becomes “stout” sort of, showing the trends of percents almost balancing of the sizes of age groups up to 29 years of age (graphic 4). Male population is more dominant in younger age groups, whereas female population is more numerous in older age groups, starting from 45-49. Still the smaller sizes of the so-called age groups endangered by wars can be noticed. The age group 5-9 is a bit smaller than its neighbors, showing that in the first half of 1970s smaller number of children was born. It was the time of the highest life standard in the country and Roma emancipation.

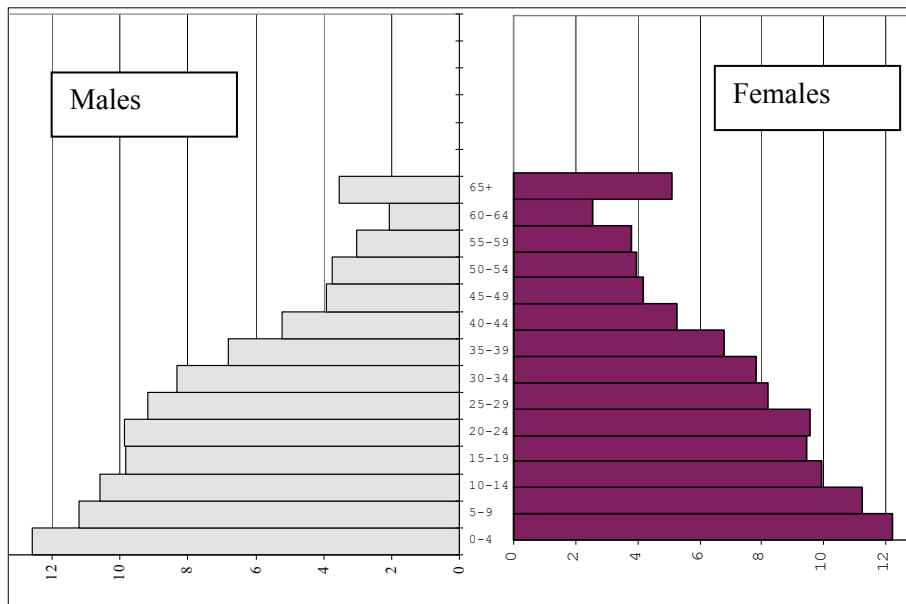
As per age structure of Roma population in Vojvodina, Census 1991, the share in percentages is lower. In the age groups of young population, and is actually higher in the age groups of older population (graphic 5). Data according to 1961 Census didn't present the older population, but last Censuses showed the age groups of over 80 years old. In order for the comparison of age pyramids to be possible, the last age groups had to be defined with the value of over 65 years old. With the age pyramid of Roma population in Vojvodina from 1991, it turned out to be a disadvantage. Namely, the size of the age group (65 and over) exceeds the two previous groups with men and even four with women. It would be more comprehensible for the pyramids to contain more age groups. As it is obvious, the life cycle was prolonged for Roma in Vojvodina just for a couple of decades. It is interesting for female population even according to 1991 Census to become more numerous than the age group 45-49. This phenomenon is explained by the lower quality of life with male population that is not only present with Roma, but with other population as well. Thus, the intensive physical labor, smoking and drinking alcohol are the causes of plenty of diseases that shorten the life cycle.



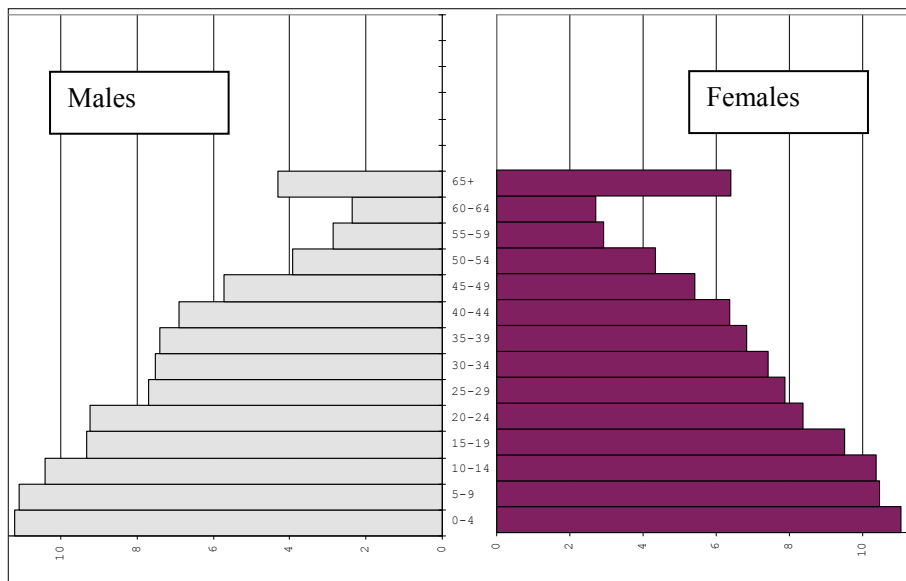
Graphic 4. Age structure of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %), as per Census 1981

Prior to the analysis of age pyramid with Roma in Vojvodina, based on Censuses from 2002, it was necessary to determine the number of Roma who migrated from the territory of ex-Yugoslavia. Just 311 Roma refugees were registered, and that adds up to 1.07% of Roma population in Vojvodina. Out of that number, 46.9% were men (Ministry of human and national minority rights of Serbia and Montenegro, 2004 a). Hence, the influence of Roma who were seeking for shelter from the territory of ex-Yugoslavia was just symbolic.

Age groups of the generation that were born in the course of World War II, according to Census 2002 belong to the category 55-59, and thus, do not affect the shape of the pyramid. The pyramid still looks regular and is progressive, but the transformation toward the stationary type can be seen. Age groups of are similar in numbers. Women are more dominant only in the age group 50-54. Generations born in the first part of 1990s would have been more numerous if there hadn't been for political and economic crisis. (graphic 6).



Graphic 5. Age structure of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %), as per Census 1991



Graph 6. Age structure of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %), as per Census 2002

Pyramids show that the share of the youngest age groups is more and more decreasing. The age group from 0 – 4 years old came down from 18%, which was its share in 1961 Census, now decreased to less than 12%, according to last Census. The age group with the oldest population, of over 65 years old increased its share from 2% to over 4%, with male population and from over 4% to over 6% with female population.

Average population age

Calculating the average population age is very important from the standpoint of its reproductive capacity. For example, it is a well known fact that the reproductive period with women is until 45. The average age value with female population in Vojvodina already seems highly alarming as it amounts to 41.3. However, the average age of Roma women is 28.9. Their average age is higher in comparison to Roma male population (table 3). The increasing trend is not high, and thus, it can be concluded that in the course of the last thirty years the average age is mostly about 27 and 28 years old (table 3). That value is in average about 1.4 times less in comparison to Vojvodian population.

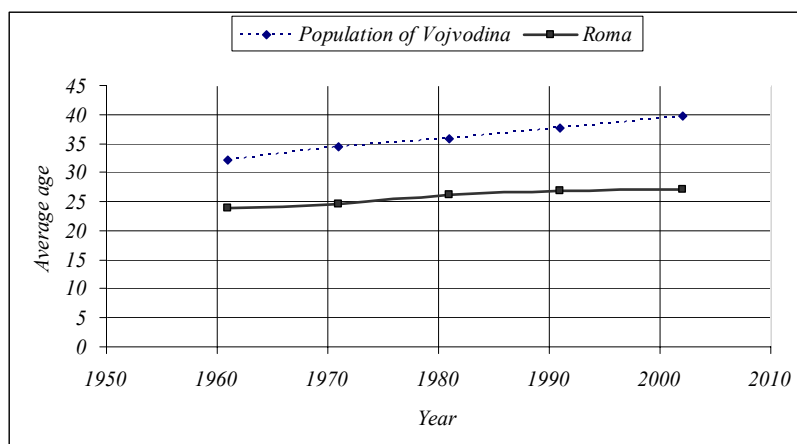
Table 3. Average age of Roma population in Vojvodina, based on Censuses, as per Censuses from 1961-2002

	Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002 ⁶
Sum	Population of Vojvodina	32.2	34.4	36.1	37.7	39.8
	Roma	23.9	24.6	26.1	26.8	27.2
Males	Population of Vojvodina	31.2	35.4	34.9	39.0	38.3
	Roma	23.0	23.8	25.1	26.1	27.7
Females	Population of Vojvodina	33.2	33.3	37.4	36.3	41.3
	Roma	24.8	25.3	27.1	27.6	28.9

Source: (Републички завод за статистику, 2003), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1970), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1974), (Покрајински завод за статистику, 1982) and (Савезни завод за статистику, 1993)

Generally speaking, the average age of Vojvodina, as well as Roma population has been increasing for decades. Roma population is ageing at a slower pace in comparison to Vojvodian one (graphics 7). Roma is still a young population.

⁶ Data for 2002 are assumed (Републички завод за статистику, 2003).



Graphic 7. Average age of Roma population in Vojvodina, as per Censuses from 1961-2002

Median of ageing

Median is the best and more frequently used age indicator than the arithmetic mean age, as it is not affected by the extreme values of certain 5-year age groups (Djurdjev, 2001). As per 1961 and 1971 Census, the median age of the Vojvodian Roma didn't change. It is even decreased in the category of female population (table 4). It can be connected to the doubling of Roma population in Vojvodina as according to that Census. Based on the last three Censuses, average age has increased as among Vojvodians, and also with Vojvodian Roma population. The difference is that the median age of Vojvodina population based on 2002 Census is 1.6 times higher and the dynamics of its increasing is faster. Hence, Roma population is ageing more slowly in comparison to Vojvodians.

Table 4. Median of the age of Roma population in Vojvodina, as per Censuses from 1961-2002

	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Population of Vojvodina					
Sum	30.0	38.2	34.6	37.4	40.3
Males	28.9	32.1	33.2	36.0	38.6
Females	31.2	34.8	36.4	38.8	42.0
Roma					
Sum	19.7	19.7	21.3	23.1	24.7
Males	18.7	19.1	20.2	22.8	24.2
Females	20.6	18.3	22.3	23.6	25.2

Source: (Републички завод за статистику, 2003), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1970), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1974), (Покрајински завод за статистику, 1982) and (Савезни завод за статистику, 1993)

Index of ageing

Comparing the ageing index of Roma with the ageing index of Vojvodina population, a significant difference is notes that could be defined in the following manner: If the ageing index is below 0.4, the population is still young and if it above that value, than the population is showing the signs of ageing (Rancic, 1980). Vojvodian population showed the first signs in its Census 1971, while the Roma population doesn't have even the half of the index value needed to show the signs of ageing (table 5). According to those criteria, Roma is a young population in Vojvodina. However, the ageing index value is constantly increasing. It is important to emphasize that the ageing index of Vojvodina population increased 2.7 times and it almost doubles for Roma in Vojvodina if the values resulted from 1961 and 2002 Census are compared. As per last Census, the ageing index of Vojvodina population is five times higher.

Table 5. Index of ageing of Roma population in Vojvodina as per Census 1961-2002

Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Population of Vojvodina	0.36	0.49	0.55	0.73	0.97
Roma	0.10	0.12	0.13	0.15	0.19

Source: (Републички завод за статистику, 2003), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1970), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1974), (Покрајински завод за статистику, 1982) and (Савезни завод за статистику, 1993)

Coefficients of old age and youth

The ageing coefficient is the straight indicator of the ageing of a certain population. Once that coefficient reached 120%, it is considered that the population started to get older demographically (Kicosev, Golubovic, 2004). Also, in accordance to that parameter, population in Vojvodina has been ageing older since 1971, and Roma in Vojvodina still represent a young population (table 6). Their ageing coefficient, as per last Census, was 2.8 times lower in comparison with that coefficient for Vojvodina population. Considering that in 1961, the coefficient was about 2.3 times lower it means they are ageing more slowly.

Table 6. Coefficient of ageing of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %) which is based on Censuses 1961-2002

Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Population of Vojvodina	119.0	147.8	152.3	187.5	218.6
Roma	52.8	58.4	60.9	66.3	78.5

Source: (Републички завод за статистику, 2003), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1970), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1974), (Покрајински завод за статистику, 1982) and (Савезни завод за статистику, 1993)

Table 7. Coefficient of youth of Roma population in Vojvodina (in %) which is based on Censuses 1961-2002

Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Population of Vojvodina	332.3	300.2	267.5	257.1	226.4
Roma	504.8	505.3	462.6	435.1	417.1

Source: (Републички завод за статистику, 2003), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1970), (Савезни завод за статистику, 1974), (Покрајински завод за статистику, 1982) and (Савезни завод за статистику, 1993)

Youth coefficient is decreasing faster with population in Vojvodina, in comparison to Roma population (table 7). Thus, its values were similar in 1961 and 1971, and in each of the next decades it was decreasing. Decreasing showed lower values and from 1971 to 1981, the difference was 42.7% then from 1981-1991 it was 27.5% and from 1991 to 2002 the youth coefficient decreased for 18%.

Conclusion

With the analysis of the parameters of the structure of all the nationalities in Vojvodina, different age models would be provided, and they could be used for educational purposes. Those would identify the oldest ethnic communities, which would be useful with preparing the population policy. Strategy would among other, have the goal to create the stimulating measures for getting a younger population and preserving all the nations in Vojvodina. It is well known what wealth both in the sense of being civilized and in the quality of life the multi-ethnicity has brought to Vojvodina, and how valuable is the exchange of all the different experiences rooted in the traditions of its nations. By ethnic mixing, also the population characteristics mix, and thus the population are enriched. Roma is the youngest ethnic group in Vojvodina. Demographic transition changes also their typical features. From the viewpoint of age structure, Roma is a young population that started to acquire the characteristics of the rest of the population in Vojvodina and thus, it is also ageing slowly.

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