

CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY IN DOLJ COUNTY

CARACTERISTICI DEMOGRAFICE ACTUALE ALE COMUNITĂȚII DE RROMI DIN JUDEȚUL DOLJ

Costela IORDACHE⁴

Abstract: The current paper aims at presenting the demographic elements of the Roma community within Dolj county, according to the statistical data from 2011 census. The main hypothesis of the study was that Roma form a national minority with a peculiar demographic behaviour, different from that of other minorities. The analysis of the demographic characteristics of the Roma community within Dolj county focused on the following elements: territorial distribution, population growth during the 1992-2011 period, the share of Roma persons in the total population, the age and gender structure, economic activities, education level and religious adherence.

Key-words: *Roma community, Dolj county, demographic characteristics.*

Cuvinte cheie: *comunitatea de rromi, județul Dolj, caracteristici demografice.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Community can be defined as a group of persons that are in contact with each other, that occupy and share a limited area, with the aim of inhabiting and production of goods that cater to the common needs, generated by living together and which have some characteristics social relationships. The community is the smallest spatial system that gather the characteristics of the human society (Erdeli et.al., 1999). According to the Romanian Dictionary (1998), the community (deriving from the Latin word *communitas*) is a group of people with common interest, faiths and living norms. According to the same dictionary, the term *roma* is synonymous with *gipsy*. Kali (2001) defines the Roma community as a group of individuals that belong to the ethnic group of Roma – either auto or –hetero-identified, that have the same interests, are facing the same problems, have the same traditions and culture.

According to the statistical data from the 2011 census, Roma community represents 3.3% of the total population living in Romania. Although they are found throughout the entire country, almost half of them (47.6%) are found in the four regions from the southern part of the country. Oltenia South-Western Development region gathers 10.3% of the Roma, the counties having various shares, from a

⁴ University of Craiova, Geography Department, costelaiordache@yahoo.com.

minimum 1.1% in Gorj and Vâlcea to a maximum of 4.8% in Dolj. With 29,839 Roma people, Dolj county is ranked the third at national level, following Mureş and Bihor, where they account for 7.6% and 5.6%, respectively.

II. DATA AND METHODS

The current study uses the statistical data referring to the Roma ethnic minority at LAU 2 levels at the 2011 census, as well as data provided by the Regional Statistics Directorate from Dolj county and from the civil registry from Bârca, Lipovu and Cerat communes. We used the statistical analysis, comparison and graphic methods.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Territorial distribution

From the point of view of territorial distribution, the Roma are found in all the towns of the county, as well as in almost a third of the communes. There are three main areas where there were no Roma registered at the census: the first one lies in the north-eastern part of the county, is somewhat larger and compact, made up of communes such as Argetoaia, Secu, Cernăteşti, Greceşti, Gogoşu, Seaca de Pădure, Brabova, Vela, Verbiţa etc. In the north, there is a smaller area, represented by Bulzeşti and Murgasi communes, and another one in the East, with Robîneşti and Drăgoteşti communes.

The largest Roma communities are found in Craiova (5291 persons), Băileşti (1629), Cerât (1440), Sadova (1400), Amărăştii de Jos (1223), Bechet (1193), Cetate (918), Negoii (911), Calafat (887), Sălcuţa (827), Segarcea (816), Catane (803) (Fig. 1).

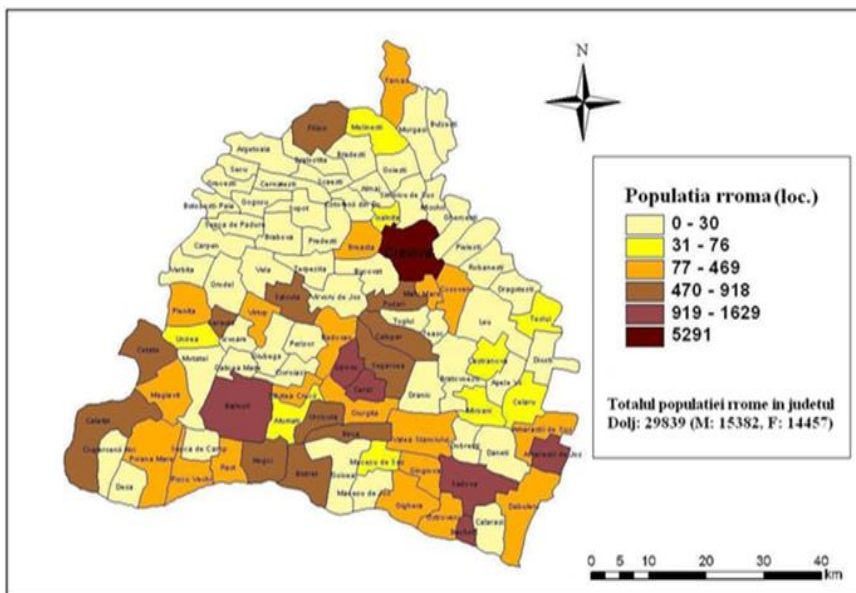


Fig. 1. Territorial distribution and dimension of the Roma community

However, if we analyse their share in the total population of the territorial-administrative units, then some communes are worth mentioning as having an important share: Catane (43.8%), Negoii (40.8%), Sălcuța (35.7%), Cerăt (34.1%), Lipovu (33.8%), Bechet (32.6%), Caraula (30.5%), Coțofenii din Față (27.8%), Vârtop (27.5%), Amărăștii de Jos (22.2%), Bârca (20.4%), Urzicuța (20.1%).

3.2. Population growth

In Dolj county, during the 1992-2011 period, the number of Roma increased by more than 18,000 persons, accounting for a balance of more than 11,800 persons, i.e. an increase for 65.4%. During the first analysed decade, there was a positive increase, of 13,507 persons (74.9%), followed subsequently by a slow decrease of 1705 persons, accounting for 5.4% decrease (Table no. 1).

Table no. 1. Roma population growth during the 1992-2011 period

Location	1992		2002		2011	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
DOLJ	18,037	2.4	31,544	4.3	29,839	4.7
Urban	6,358	1.5	13,320	3.5	10,733	3.2
Rural	12,566	3.2	18,224	5.1	19,106	6.2

The same evolution was registered in towns, with an increase of 4375 persons (68.8%) during the entire period, the population more than doubling during the first period (109.5%), while later on decreasing by 19.4% (Table no. 2).

Table no. 2. Roma population growth within the towns in Dolj county

Urban settlement	1992		2002		2011	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Craiova	3,601	1.2	8,820	2.9	5,291	2.0
Băilești	814	3.6	1,463	7.3	1,629	9.3
Calafat	427	2.1	777	4.1	887	5.1
Bechet*	828	21.0	187	4.9	1,193	32.6
Dăbuleni*	59	0.4	169	1.2	158	1.3
Filiași	359	1.9	891	4.7	759	4.5
Segarcea	270	3.1	1,013	12.6	816	11.6
TOTAL	6,358	1.6	13,320	3.4	10,733	3.1

* Towns since 2004.

As for the rural settlements, there was also an upward trend during the entire period, with an increase of 6540 persons (52%), steeper during the first period (45%) and much more moderate during the second period (882 persons - 4.2%). The Roma population within the ten most populous communes increased on

average by 1.6, while some communes registered significant augmentations Cerăt (2.4 times), Sălcuța (2.2), Catane (1.8) and Negoii (16.3 times) (Table no. 3).

Table no. 3. Roma population growth in the 10 most populous communes

Rural settlement	1992		2002		2011	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Cerăt	608	15.9	1,171	30.0	1,440	34.1
Sadova	1,310	16.7	1,660	19.8	1,400	17.6
Amărăștii de Jos	855	14.1	1,079	18.2	1,223	22.2
Lipovu	890	27.0	1,158	36.6	1,120	33.8
Cetate	686	10.9	1,018	17.1	918	17.1
Negoii*	56	2.4	251	10.6	911	40.8
Sălcuța	379	13.9	858	34.0	827	35.7
Catane*	439	22.9	629	31.5	803	43.8
Bârca	552	11.8	912	20.7	754	20.4
Caraula	659	24.0	745	28.2	738	30.5
TOTAL	6,434	15.4	9,481	23.0	10,134	26.1

* Formed Negoii commune until 2004

Data source: NSI Dolj

3.3. Age and gender structure

Regarding the age structure, the Roma population in Dolj is quite young, as 33% of the population is less than 15 years old, while 59.5% are adults and only 7.5% are old (Fig. 2).

Compared to the average value registered at county level, young people are more or less distributed equally in the countryside and urban settlements. The youngest roma communities are found at Segarcea (where they account for 38.1% of the total population), Calafat (37.1%), Băilești (36.7%), while at Craiova, Filiași and Bechet they form more than a third of the population (Fig. 2).

The youngest rural communities are those from Unirea and Valea Stanciului, where the share of young people amounts to 47.4% and 40.4% of the Roma population. There are also numerous communes where more than a third of the population is less than 15 years old, such as Catane (37.7%, Fig. 2), Bistreț, Urzicuța, Negoii, Bârca, Podari, Sălcuța, Mârșani, Măceșu de Sus (Fig. 2), as well as Lipovu, Radovan, Calopăr, Ostroveni, Rast, Cerăt, Cârna, Amărăștii de Jos, Coșoveni, Coțofenii din Față și Poiana Mare. Somewhat lower shares are registered at Caraula, Vârtop, Cetate and Sadova, but here they still form a quarter of the population.

The share of adolescents, people aged 15 to 19, is around 9% at county level, with some oscillations between 8.8% in the rural area and 9.3% in the urban area. Referring only to towns, the situation is a bit different, the maximum being at

Dăbuleni (13.3%) and 7.1% at Calafat. Craiova and Băilești have values higher than the county average, while at Bechet is similar, the remaining towns having shares below the average.

The analysis of this indicator in the rural area, it is worth noticing that the communes with a numerous Roma population have a lower share, while in the communes with fewer members of the Roma community, the share of adolescents is much higher (Urzicuța 10.5%, Coțofenii din Față 9.5%), as a result of high birth rates.

The global index of progressivity (the number of persons aged 0-4 divided by 100 people aged 5-9 years old) has an average value of 100.2%, while in the rural area it reaches 104.5% compared to only 93.2% in the urban area. Much higher values are found at Catane (126%) and Bârca (181,1%), while the lowest are found at Cerăt (87.9%), a fact which points once again to the differences in birth rates.

The share of the old persons varies between 7.4% in the urban areas and 7.6% in the rural one. Somewhat higher values are found at Dăbuleni (8.9%) and Băilești (8.7%), while Calafat, Bechet and Filiași have lower values (5.9%, 6.6% respectively). In the rural area, the extremes are found at Cârna (8.2%) and Urzicuța (1.4%). They have a somewhat larger share at Negoii, Caraula, Vârtope, Gângiova and Bistreț, while in Catane, Cerăt, Coțofenii din Față, Sălcuța they represent less than 3%.

Out of the 85 territorial administrative units where Roma population is found, only in 32 there were 62 persons aged 85 and older, which means only 2.8% of the old population. Most of them are women (62.9%) and live in rural settlements (64.5%).

The demographic ageing phenomenon, which severely affects the Romanian rural population, is still a foreign notion for the Roma population. Using the classification proposed by Vert (1995), all the units where the Roma population accounts for more than 15% of the population have a very young population (up to 36%). It is a common reality, considering the high birth rate characteristic for this minority.

Compared to the county mean of 18%, Urzicuța has only 6.2%, while Caraula 29.5%. Among the urban settlements (25%), higher values are registered at Dăbuleni (28.4%), Craiova and Filiași (26.8), followed by Băilești (25.5%), Calafat having the youngest Roma population. In the rural area, where the average is 11% lower than that in the urban area, there are steep differences among communes (Sălcuța and Catane less than 10%, while Negoii and Vârtope have more than 25%).

The index of age dependency, determined as a rapport between the population younger than 20 and those older than 60 on the one hand and the adult population on the other hand, reflects the pressure of the young and old generations, i.e. the inactive ones, on the adult and active population. In Dolj county, this index has a value of 83.1%, reaching 89.5% in the urban area. Higher values are registered at Segarcea (106.9%), closely followed by Băilești and

Dăbuleni, while at Filiași is only 78.3%. at Craiova and Bechet, this index is somewhat lower than the urban average, but a bit higher than the county average.

In the rural area, on the average 80 young and old persons depend on 100 adult persons, with higher values in Bistreț (96.2%), Negoii (95.8) and Ostroveni (91.2%), a fact which causes some social and economic problems that are difficult to deal with. The pressure is much lower at Caraula (55.6%), Cetate (68.2%), Coțofenii din Față (68.4%), Vârtop (68.8%), Sadova (69.5%) etc

The communes with the most severe age structure of the population are those where the Roma communities are small, such as Goiеști, Seaca de Câmp, Mischii, Apele Vii, Scaiești, Drăgotești, Șimnicu de Sus and Călărași.

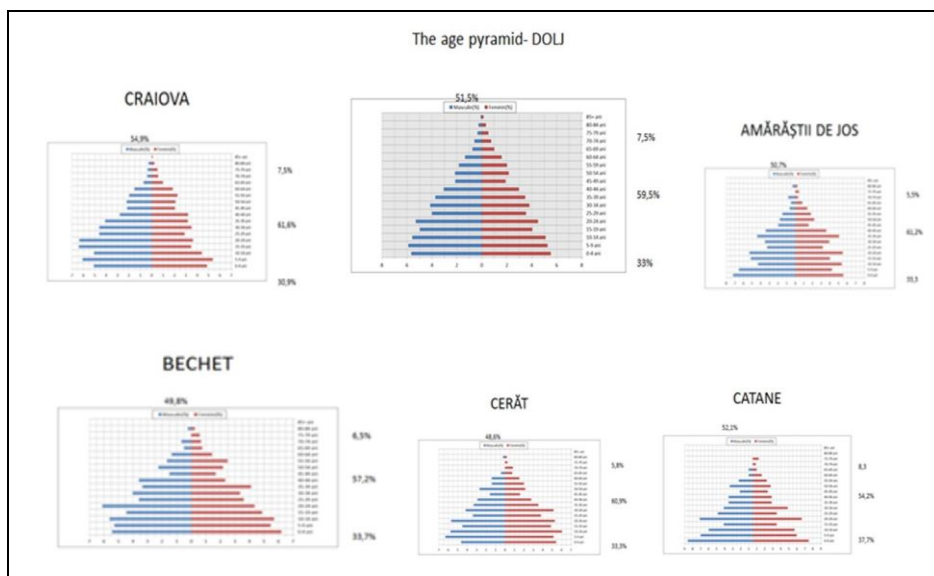


Fig. 2. Age pyramid for Dolj, Craiova, Bechet, Amărăștii de Jos, Catane, Cerăt (2011)

(Data source: NIS, General census of population and housing 2011, Dolj county)

The gender structure of the Roma population indicates that men are more numerous than women (51.5%), no matter the urban (51%) or rural (52.6%) area. Except for the towns of Segarcea and Bechet, men form the majority, peaking at 55.7% in Dabuleni and Craiova 54.9%. in the rural area, Calopăr and Vârtop are ranked higher (53%), followed by Ostroveni, Bistreț și Catane (over 52%), Caraula and Bârca (over 51%), while the lower shares are found at Cerăt (48.6%), Urzicuța and Negoii (less than 50%).

It is worth mentioning that there are communes with fair shares, such as Goiеști, Galiciuica, Întorsura, Măceșu de Jos, Terpezița, every one having small Roma communities (less than 10 persons). There are also commuens with larger communities, such as Cetate and Coțofenii din Față or smaller (Bratovoiești, Cioroiași, Cârcea, Castranova, Desa, Măceșu de Sus, Orodol etc.) (Fig. 3).

If we refer to the surplus/deficit of men in the total population, there are positive values at county level (3.1%), much higher in the urban area (5.2%) compared to the rural one (1.9%). More men are found at Dăbuleni (11,4%), Craiova (9,8%), Calopăr și Vârtop (more 7,5%), Bistreț și Catane (over 4%), Caraula (3,5%), Bârca (2,7%). Among the larger communities with a significant men deficit, it is worth mentioning Cerăt (-2,8%) and Urzicuța (-2,6%).

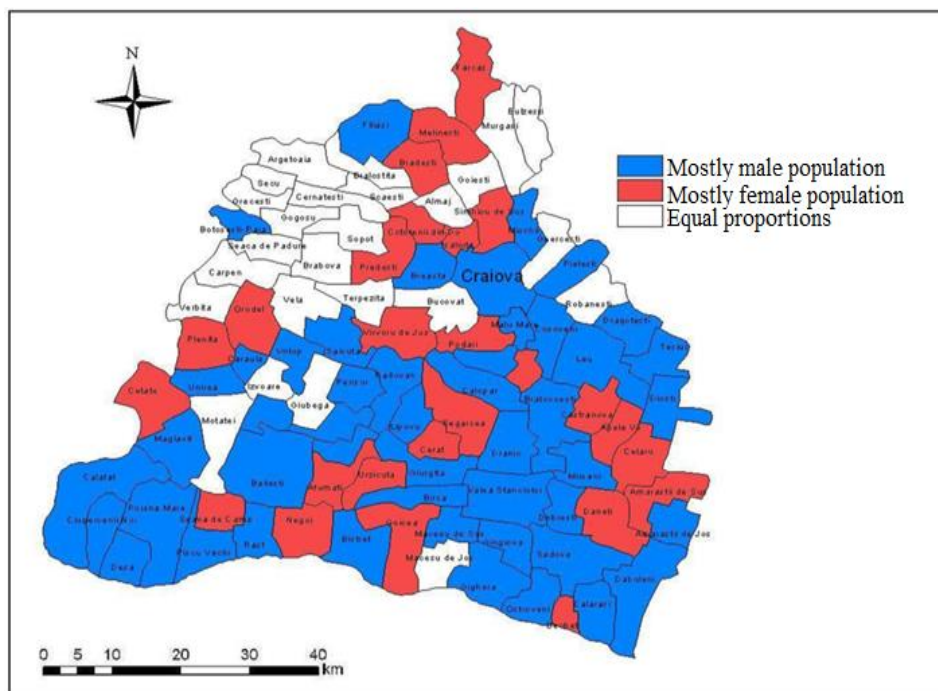


Fig. 3. Gender structure of the Roma population

3.4. Economic structure of active population

According to the occupation status, the Roma population within Dolj county has the following characteristics (Table no. 4).

Table no. 4. Roma population according to occupation (2011)

Locat ion	Total Roma community		Active population						Inactive population			
			Total		Employed		Unemployed		Total		Of which retired	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
DOLJ	29,839	100	7,175	24.0	5,726	79.8	1,449	20.2	22,664	76.0	1,452	6.4
Urban	10,733	36.0	2,980	27.8	2,167	72.7	813	27.3	7,753	72.2	584	7.5
Rural	19,106	64.0	4,195	22.0	3,559	84.8	636	15.2	14,911	78.0	868	5.8

The potential offer of workforce, rendered by the active population, numbered 7175 persons at county level, which is just a quarter of the Roma population, with some differences in the activity rate: 22% in the rural area (the maximum being in Lipovu, 33.3%) and 27.8% in the urban area (42.3% in Bechet) (Fig. 4).

The highest activity rates were in Calafat (32.1%), Băilești and Filiași (over 28%), Segarcea being the only town with a lower rate than the county average.

Among the rural settlements, it is worth mentioning Negoii, Malu Mare, Caraula and Bârca (exceeding 30%), followed by Sadova, Amărăștii de Jos, Urzicuța și Cetate (more than 20% active population). However, there were seven communes (Bratovoiești, Călărași, Cioroiși, Galicea Mare, Goicea, Leu și Mischii), with less than 10 Roma people, where there was no active population.

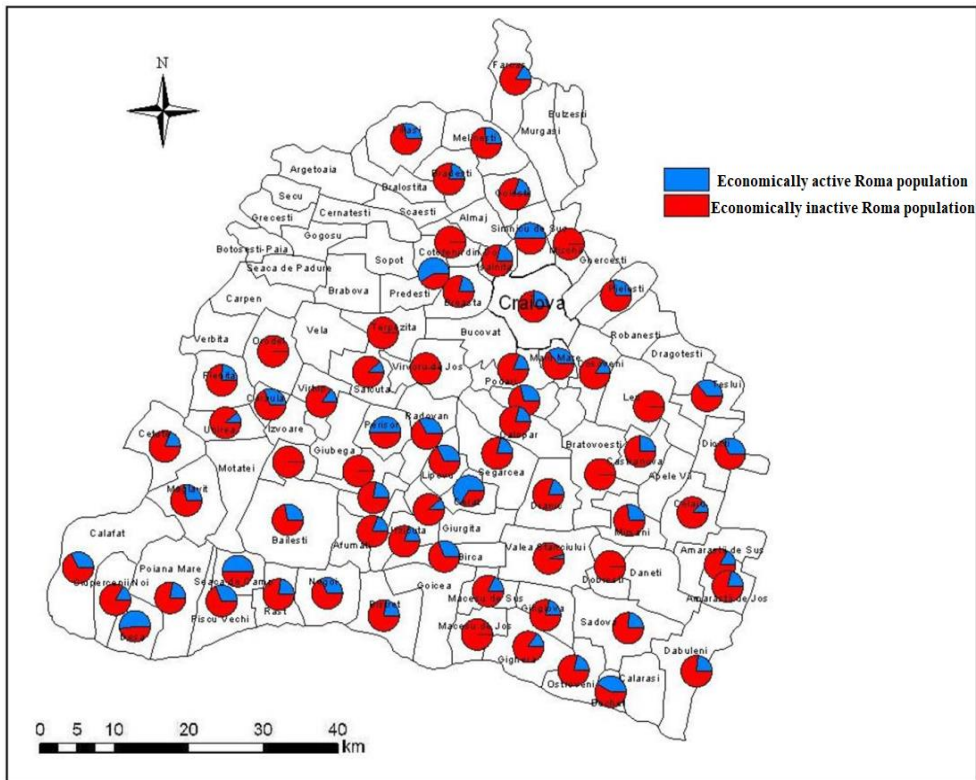


Fig. 4. Disparities of the economically active and inactive population

The employment rate of the active population (15-64 years old) reached 79.8%, which means that the unemployment reached 20.2%. Still, compared to the average urban employment rate, only Bechet registered a higher value (89.3% of the active population is employed), Segarcea ranking the last (56.4%). In some rural settlements, the employment rate is rather high Negoii (96,3%), Amărăștii de

Jos (93,7%), Lipovu (91,9%), Bistreț and Caraula (90,4%) compared to communes such as Coțofenii din Față, Cerăt, Sălcuța (less than 70%).

Unemployment is a frequent phenomenon among the Roma community (Table 4), especially for the urban population, where the unemployment rate is 12% higher than in the rural area. Except for Bechet (where the unemployment reaches 10.7%), all towns are characterised by higher shares of the unemployed, the maximum rates reaching 43.6% in Segarcea, followed by Filiași (37.2%), Dăbuleni and Craiova (30% each).

In the rural area, the maximum values were registered at Coțofenii din Față (37.7%), while the lowest were at Negoii. Communes such as CERăt (31.9), Sălcuța (30.1%), Sadova (26.9%), Podari (23.7%) have rates higher than the county average.

The inactive population has a high share, reaching 76 at county level. Higher values were registered at Segarcea (78.9%), Dăbuleni and Craiova (over 75%), while Bechet and Calafat had much lower values (57.5% and 67.9% respectively).

In the rural area, the percentage of inactive population is much higher, reaching 95.5% at Valea Stanciului, exceeding 80% at Sălcuța, Giurgiuța, Coțofenii din Față, Vârtop, Coșoveni, Gighera, Cerăt, Catane, Podari, Cetate, Urzicuța and Calopăr (Fig. 4).

3.5. Structure of population according to the education level

According to the census data, there were 23,186 persons aged over 10, which means 77.7% of the total Roma population, most of them living in the rural area (64.3%). Higher values are registered in Cetate (83.2%), Caraula (82.7%), Coțofenii din FAță (80.3%), Sadova, Calopăr, Lipovu, Cerăt. In the urban area, the maximum is found in Craiova (78.6%) and the minimum in Segarcea (72.1%).

Most of them (80.5%) have attended some level of education: 38.5% primary education, 32.6% gymnasium, 5.2 highschool, 3% vocational schools and only 0.8% higher education (189 persons, three quarters of them living in the towns from the county, Craiova being ranked first, with 57% of the university graduates. Out of the 27 rural communities with higher education representatives, we mention Breasta (5 persons), Bârca and Podari (3 persons each).

The vast majority of the population has only a low education (82.9% with only primary, secondary or no school), while 2729 persons were illiterate.

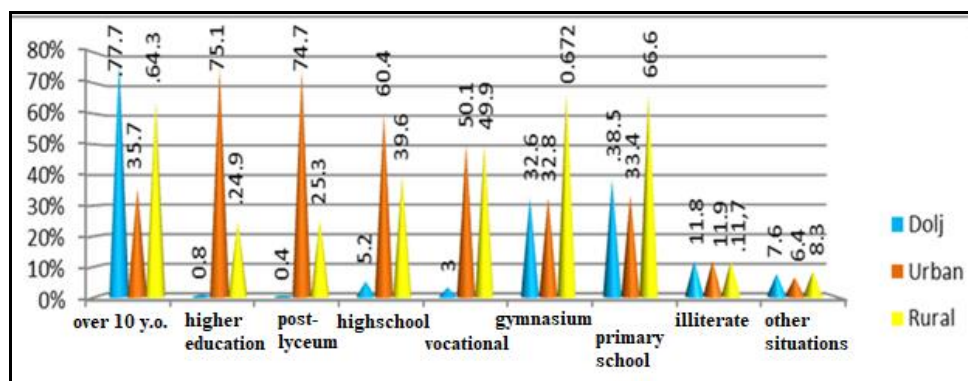


Fig. 5. Population aged 10 years and over according to education level

3.6. Religious affiliations

The analysis of the number and percentage of religions indicates that most of the Roma people are Orthodox (96.3%), they are widely found in the rural area and all the towns (where they account for more than 90% of the population, except for Dabuleni. A smaller number (595 persons – 1.7%) are Penticostals, most of them living in Băilești, Filiași, Calafat, Sadova and Gângiova (more than 50 persons each). There are only 156 Baptists (0.5%), living only in Băilești and Sadova, where the majority are found (67.3% of the Baptist Roma people in Dolj county), Rast, Fărcaș, Maglavit, Cetate, Calopăr and Călărași. There are 130 Roman-Catholic persons, 88.4% living in Coșoveni commune, the remaining in Craiova, Filiași, Segarcea, Cerăt and Rast.

There are also 108 Adventists, 59.3% living in Băilești, as well as in Sălcuța, Întorsura, Sadova and Podari.

Much lower shares have other religions, as well as those without any religion and agnostic persons (0.7% of the Roma community).

The analysis of the religious affiliation on urban and rural area indicates that:

- The Orthodox as well as most of the other religions are found mostly in the rural settlements;
- The share of the Orthodox and Penticostal people in the rural settlements is similar to the county average;
- Among the Neo-Protestant cults, the Baptists are found almost exclusively in the rural area;
- Roman-Catholic are found predominantly in the rural area;
- Adventists are four times more numerous in towns than in villages;
- The towns with very different religious affiliation are Craiova, characterized by a high heterogeneity and Dăbuleni, marked by the presence of Orthodox people (99.6%) and Adventist.

The fact that Roma people are characterised by a high degree of religious homogeneity is also underlined by the frequency of the Orthodox people in the rural area. Thus, 50 communes, accounting for almost 60% of the total settlements where Roma live, are entirely Orthodox, such as Bârca, Urzicuța, Coțofenii din

Față, Giurgița, Breasta, Malu Mare, Plenița, Ostroveni, Radovan, Amărăștii de Sus; in another 22% of the settlements, the Orthodox represent 95 – 99.9% Lipovu, Negoii, Vârtop, Podari, Calopăr, Caraula, Bechet, Cerât, Cetate. The only communes where there are no Orthodox are Călărași and Teasc.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

According to their own declarations, the Roma community in Dolj county represents 4.8% of the total population, which means that the county ranks third in Romania, following Mureș and Bihor. The largest shares of the Roma community are registered at Bechet (32.6 %) and Segarcea (11.8%), as well as Cătane (43.8 %), Negoii (40.8%) and Sălcuța (35,7%).

Among the demographic characteristics of the Roma community, we mention higher share of men (51.5%), very high share of the young people (33%) and low share of the elderly (7.5%); less than a quarter of the population is active, while 20% were unemployed. Most of them have low education, while 10% are illiterate; the Orthodox are above the national average. Based on these demographic elements, there are some differences at territorial level, most of them generated by the community dimension.

REFERENCES

- ABRAHAM D., ANDREESCU VIVIANA (1994), *Investigarea și evaluarea relațiilor interetnice*, în *Sociologie Românească*, nr. 2-3/ 1994, Editura Academiei Române, București
- ACHIM V. (1998), *Țigani în istoria României*, Editura Enciclopedică, București
- AMZA T. (1994), *Țigani, o lume a contrastelor*, Editura Georgiana, București
- BĂDESCU I., ABRAHAM D. (1994), *Conlocuirea etnică în România. Aspecte teoretico-metodologice*, în *Sociologie Românească*, nr.2-3/1994, Editura Academiei Române, București
- BĂLĂȘESCU A. (1997), *Romii-constructie identitară. Cazul comunei Cristian, județul Sibiu*, în *Revista de Cercetări Sociale*, nr.3/1997, IMAS SA, București
- BEREVOESCU IONICA, CACE S., DAN A. N., SIMA-COSTIN DANA, STĂNESCU M., STROIE SIMONA, SURDU M. (1998), *Situația socială a rromilor din județul Buzău*, în *Revista de Cercetări Sociale*, nr. 3-4/1998, Editura Academiei Române, București
- BOBU N. (2000), *Carte despre romi. Cutuma justitiară – judecata de pace a romilor*, Editura Gorjeanul, Târgu Jiu
- BURTEA V. (1997), *Șansele populației de rromi*, în *Revista de Cercetări Sociale*, nr.3/1997, IMAS SA, București
- CHERATA L. (1997), *Istoria țiganilor: origine, specific, limbă*, Editura Z, București
- CREȚAN R. (2006), *Etnie, confesiune și opțiune electorală în Banat*, Editura Universității de Vest, Timișoara
- ERDELI G., CÂNDEA MELINDA, BRAGHINĂ C., COSTACHIE S., ZAMFIR DANIELA (1999), *Dicționar de geografie umană*, Editura Corint, București
- FRASER A. (1998), *Țigani*, Editura Humanitas, București
- KALI Z. (2001), *Diseminarea experiențelor proiectelor pentru romi*, <http://www.edrc.ro/romaproject/pdf/cap2diseminarea.pdf> accesat la 09.05. 2017

- NECULAU A., FERREOL GILLES (1996), *Minorități, marginali, excluși*, Editura Polirom, Iași
- ROMANESCU VASILE ANCUȚA, ANDREESCU VIVIANA (1994), *Stilul și modul de viață al rromilor din unele comunități urbane și rurale*, în *Sociologie Românească*, no. 2-3/1994, Editura Academiei Române, București
- VERT C. (1995), *Analiza geodemografică. Manual practic*, Editura Mirton, Timișoara
- ZAMFIR C., PEDA M. (2002), *Romii în România*, Editura Expert, București
- *** (1998), *Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române*, Editura Universul Enciclopedic, București
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316189663_INDICATORII_PRIVIND_COMUNITATILE_DE_ROMI_DIN_ROMANIA accesat la 09.03. 2017
- *** Direcția Regională de Statistică Dolj