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Maja  
ŠTAMBUK

THE FEATURES OF  
ROMANI FAMILIES –  
HOUSEHOLDS



Just as there is no unique type of family, there is no unique definition of it. This especially applies to the contemporary family, although there were many variants in the past. In some societies, it is still the foundation unit; in others individualism has pushed the family into the background.

As much as the family, definitions, social order, and immediate social environment have changed, Romani society has maintained the family as a fundamental (and) organisational unit. Apart from providing an emotional and social community of parents and children as well as other close relatives, the Romani family remains the base of Romani social organisation. In this way, the Roma differ from other nomadic groups. Perhaps some “delays” towards integration of the Roma into mainstream society is due to the strength of these preserved traditional families, particularly in relation to most of its functions (including socialisation/education). Accordingly, the family has preserved a high degree of autonomy, independence and even economic independence although a high dependence on the social welfare system has been noted. Thus, when poverty appears as one of the main socio-cultural elements of Romani (self)identity, the family succeeds to preserve its traditional meaning. Or perhaps it is because of this. Like in other social milieus, the family changes. It remains an emotional link between members, but it also can be realised “at a distance”. The economic interdependence of family members is perhaps that which sticks the family together. *It seems that among the Roma a type of economic activity adaptation and sources of income up to a point are at work, which do not disrupt the existing family system.* Activities that include a larger number of family members, from the youngest to the oldest, including women are chosen. This hypothesis, due to its probability, needs to be kept in mind when planning measures for the improvement of quality of life among the Romani population.

In addition, it needs to be noted that the Roma like to live in big families with lots of children. They like to socialise so a great importance is given to family events such as weddings, christenings, and funerals. Researchers have agreed that the home (among sedentary Roma) is the *only* point of stability, a place where the family meets (Coupry, 1999). Moreover, it is desirable that the immediate social environment, the area beyond, belongs to relatives.

### Size of households

A big family is almost the rule in Romani tradition. Some authors think that a large number of children is a remnant from times when the mortality of children was high. And in Croatia, the Romani family is large; most probably with the highest averages. It should be noted that the process of nuclearisation (married couple with children) is evident in the Romani population. Namely, a third of all households have up to 4 members. Differences were noted in counties.

The least number of small households (with up to 4 members) can be found in the County of Istria (all in all, 17.3%). Similarly, only 18.8% of households in the County of Primorje-Gorski kotar are small. Averages were found in Counties of Slavonski Brod-Posavina (29.0%), Varaždin (32.6%) and Međimurje (32.8%) while above average representation of small households was found in County of Sisak-Moslavina (36.4%), in the City and County of Zagreb and surroundings (38.4% and by far the largest share in the County of Osijek-Baranja (57.0%).

**Table I**  
 Households according to  
 number of members (%)

Number of members	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
1	2.7	1.0	1.3	2.2	5.0	4.0	0.0	1.4	4.0	2.3
2	5.4	9.4	10.0	1.1	6.0	19.0	5.1	8.3	6.7	8.0
3	9.8	12.5	6.3	12.2	4.0	11.0	5.1	8.3	12.0	8.9
4	20.5	13.5	15.0	3.3	14.0	23.0	7.1	14.8	16.0	14.4
5	16.1	21.9	13.8	18.9	12.0	17.0	26.5	15.7	17.3	17.5
6	17.0	17.7	8.8	23.3	24.0	12.0	7.1	12.0	13.3	14.8
7	11.6	11.5	18.8	18.9	15.0	3.0	15.3	14.8	16.0	13.8
8 and over	16.9	12.5	26.3	19.9	20.0	11.0	33.6	24.6	14.6	20.5

Source: Field study 2004

It is easy to read the other indicators – on large families and the counties in which they are represented to a smaller or larger degree.

## Composition of households

Data on the composition of households shows that the process of reducing the family to a married couple with unmarried children has already “spread to” the Romani sphere. Nearly 53% of the households in this sample have this type of family structure. This process has affected a smaller number of Romani families in the Counties of Osijek-Baranja (37.8%), Istria (38.7%) and in the County and City of Zagreb (42.3%). In other “Romani” counties, this share is much larger (e.g., 71.2% in the County of Primorje-Gorski kotar).<sup>1</sup>

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Medimurje	Other	Total sample
Single households	2.7	2.1	1.3	3.5	5.1	16.3	1.1	5.2	4.1	4.8
Married couples without children	4.5	5.3	7.6	2.4	4.0	10.2	2.2	6.6	5.5	5.5
Married couples with unmarried children	42.3	46.3	67.1	71.8	62.6	37.8	38.7	55.9	56.2	52.9
Single-parent households	9.9	5.3	10.1	8.2	3.0	11.2	16.1	6.1	2.7	7.9
“Complete” extended households	10.8	10.5	1.3	10.6	10.1	19.4	9.7	4.7	8.2	9.1
Incomplete extended households	6.3	1.1	5.1	0.0	5.1	3.1	32.3	3.8	1.4	6.2
Other extended households	23.4	29.5	7.6	3.5	10.1	2.0	0.0	17.8	21.9	13.6

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 2**  
 Households according to composition (%)

All other types of households are small in number. It needs to be emphasised that there are an insignificant share of single households (the largest share in the County of Osijek-Baranja – 16.3%, and the least in the County of Istria – 1.1%) and that there are few married couples without children (again the most in the County of Osijek-Baranja and the least in the County of Istria). There are a larger number of complete extended households (at least two married couples, with or without children), and the remaining extended households (in which there does not have to be close or any type of relative). Incomplete ex-

tended households (lacking at least one marital partner from at least two married couples in the household), was found in large numbers in the County of Istria. In the main, a small number of extended households in the Romani population can be attributed to the relatively small number of old Roma.

### Composition of households by sex

**Table 3**  
 Households according to  
 number of female  
 members (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
No female members	3.6	1.0	1.3	2.2	3.0	2.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.8
1	22.3	22.9	25.0	14.4	18.0	38.0	7.1	19.8	26.7	21.3
2	22.3	26.0	12.5	24.4	29.0	29.0	33.7	26.7	30.7	26.2
3	24.1	27.1	23.8	24.4	21.0	16.0	23.5	24.0	29.3	23.6
4 and over	27.7	22.9	37.7	34.5	29.0	15.0	35.8	21.6	27.6	27.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

Households without female members are rare, so we cannot expect them in a larger number among the Roma. Especially when we bear in mind that Romani households are on average large. Moreover, the number of single households is insignificant among the Roma. (Single households are prevalently female in most populations.)

**Table 4**  
 Households according to  
 number of male  
 members (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
No male members	1.8	1.0	1.3	2.2	3.0	7.0	1.0	2.8	5.3	2.8
1	12.5	17.7	26.3	10.0	13.0	20.0	9.2	14.7	14.7	15.1
2	28.6	34.4	27.5	16.7	28.0	34.0	28.6	26.3	25.3	27.7
3	33.9	28.1	18.8	37.8	21.0	27.0	19.4	20.3	24.0	25.1
4 and over	23.3	18.7	26.4	33.3	35.0	12.0	41.8	36.0	30.6	29.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

The largest share of households without male members is in the County of Osijek-Baranja. It should be re-

membered that a very high share of single households are in fact (and only) in this county. This county with its autochthonous Romani population shows more similarity to the majority population. A more detailed analysis would undoubtedly show this as well as a comparative analysis of other socio-demographic features.

### Composition of households by age

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The Romani population is younger. There are at least two reasons for this:

1. they give birth to a larger number of children (compared to the rest of the population)
2. the lifespan of the Romani population is shorter than the lifespan of the surrounding population.

In view of the aims of this study, it is important to stress precisely this fact. Namely, without enquiring about the health status of the population, medical check-ups, inclusion of children in vaccination programmes, tests on the level of hygiene in everyday life, specifics of work activity, quality of food, habits of hygiene and similar it is not possible not to mention the housing conditions in which the Roma live. In addition, this includes the level of equipment and facilities of dwellings, the technical and social infrastructure of the settlement that are all important (and deficient) prerequisites for a longer life. Thus, data on large numbers of youth, somewhat fewer numbers in the active (employment) age group and almost absence in the over 60 age group in this study on Romani households shows a generally complex picture of the Romani population.<sup>2</sup>

Like elsewhere, here it is shown that it is almost *impossible to circumvent the mentioned Romani picture of poverty and concentrate on one (given) problem in a research sense*. With regard to this population, everything is really related and it is pointless to look for a solution in one quality of life aspect. This also applies to the level of active participation to improve the life of the Roma.

Returning to the data and their eventual variation depending on the county – most households have **mostly young members**, in the age group under 18 (4 and over). These households are mostly found in the Counties of Međimurje and Varaždin (46.1% and 43.9% respectively).

Households **without young persons** from the age of 18 onwards can mostly be found in the County of Osijek-Baranja (32.0%) followed by the County of Slavonski Brod-Posavina (22.0%) and the County of Sisak-Moslavina (14.6%). It is worth noting that these spaces were de-

stroyed the most during the Homeland War. A more detailed analysis would surely reveal other reasons. In any case, these households, precisely because of a smaller number of younger persons are the oldest Romani households in Croatia.

**Table 5**  
 Households according to  
 number of members aged 18  
 and over (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
None of these	13.4	14.6	10.0	10.0	22.0	32.0	8.2	11.5	13.3	14.8
1	18.8	18.8	7.5	16.7	9.0	13.0	17.3	11.5	12.0	13.7
2	25.9	10.4	25.0	14.4	17.0	25.0	12.2	14.7	20.0	17.9
3	17.9	20.8	13.8	22.2	15.0	14.0	24.5	16.1	22.7	18.2
4 and over	24.1	35.4	43.9	36.6	37.0	16.0	37.6	46.1	32.0	35.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

Most of the households (60.5%) have two members of the working age group between 19–59 years. The Counties of Sisak-Moslavina, Međimurje, Varaždin and Osijek-Baranja have an above average number of these households. Households with a larger number of members in this age group (4 and over) are mostly in the Counties of Istria, Primorje-Gorski kotar, Slavonski Brod-Posavina followed by Zagreb and the City of Zagreb. In the main, these are richer counties, with more employment possibilities and other opportunities for this population.

**Table 6**  
 Households according to  
 number of members aged  
 between 19 and 59 years (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
None of these	3.6	3.1	7.5	3.3	4.0	9.0	0.0	5.1	5.3	4.5
1	4.5	4.2	7.5	8.9	3.0	4.0	1.0	8.8	5.3	5.6
2	54.5	69.8	67.5	44.4	50.0	63.0	48.0	68.7	73.3	60.5
3	14.3	14.6	11.3	11.1	11.0	13.0	12.2	9.7	5.3	11.4
4 and over	23.2	8.3	6.3	32.2	32.0	11.0	38.7	7.8	10.6	17.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

Lastly, to complete this short overview of the age structure of Romani households, with a look at the popu-



lation aged over 60, it can be said once again that older Roma are a rarity. All in all, 11.2% of households in the sample have a member that is aged over 60 and most often this is one member (6.9%). The difference between counties is not large according to this indicator.

	Zagreb	Šisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
None of these	82.1	90.6	90.0	93.3	85.0	83.0	86.7	92.2	96.0	88.8
1	7.1	5.2	6.3	4.4	13.0	8.0	8.2	6.0	4.0	6.9
2 and over	10.7	4.2	3.8	2.2	2.0	9.0	5.1	1.8	0.0	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 7**  
 Households according to number of members over 60 years (%)

Most households with members aged over 60 were found in the Counties of Zageb, Osijek-Baranja and Slavonski Brod-Posavina. Fewer of these households with an elderly member were noted in the Counties of Primorje-Gorski kotar and Međimurje.

### The socio-economic features of Romani households

Many will think that the Roma do not work and that they live “without an income”. It is correct that few are employed in full-time jobs with exact working times among them. They can be seen on the streets at any time of the day. However, it is not true that they do not work. Often these jobs are not carried out in the places where they live; they are often outside of regular working times and in non-standard locations. Today they differ, as a rule, from the traditional frameworks. Traditional socio-professional structures included:

1. different trades (makers and “service persons” of metal containers or copper-smiths, knife sharpeners, umbrella repairers, basket-makers, producers of straw items, cane and similar);
2. musicians, dancers;
3. horse breeders; some still remember the bears that the Roma trained and exhibited at fairs.

Researchers of the Roma mainly agree that modernisation processes in the surrounding mainstream society (with emphasis on industrialisation and the significance of education) created larger differences at the socio-profes-

sional level between the Roma and majority population. Thus, traditional trades have gradually died out (at least in Croatia) and many Roma have abandoned their dominant nomadic lifestyle. A strong influence of tradition remains in all spheres of life but one that is not adaptable to new times, which additionally socially, culturally and economically burden the Romani group (Štambuk, 2000).

Today's work activities have little to do with tradition. Old trades are rarely found. Many are involved in the following:

1. collection and sale of raw materials (metal, materials);
2. some are involved in trade (which are often on the margins of the black market) although not in their own shops but at fairs close by or in the distant surroundings;
3. sale of souvenirs during the summer in tourist areas (at the seaside).

It is probable that the extinction of traditional occupations, which presupposed movement of those who provided these services is one of the reasons why the Roma have become sedentary.

The usual classification of the population into active working population, dependent population and persons with income was applied to members of the Romani household. The 'working active' is a group that are involved in some occupation and in this way earn a living. According to the definition, they are persons who work but do not receive a wage and those who temporarily do not work for various reasons (unemployed, sick, doing army service, etc.). Thus, working active is related to the professional status of the individual (whether that person works or not) (Štambuk, 2000).

Considering the low level of education and the low skilled competency of the Romani population, unemployment is high. However, there is also a large diversity of sporadic, temporary, seasonal activities that provide some income. The type of activities and the eventual amount of income is difficult to establish in this type of research so the researcher has to rely on the honesty of the respondent. And this is disputable when it comes to this data. Of course, this is the case in other populations that are researched.

Temporarily inactive members of the population, housewives and children are usually involved in work. This activity is almost impossible to precisely establish. It is relatively widespread and includes children, even younger ones in some suitable jobs. However, it is difficult to obtain precise data on their activities and eventual income.

For this reason, it could be said that the presented data is more illustrative than precise.

### *Active members*

The central problem of the Romani population is their lack of education. Whatever is spoken about, planned, organised with them is confronted with this problem. Many Roma are aware of this problem. Few Roma can come to terms with the fact that after eight years of primary school, children do not have a qualification of any kind. Everything seems to be a reason not to go to school and that everything else is more important than school.<sup>3</sup>

The situation is constantly alarming. On the one hand, the best solution is sought and in the end social benefits are the only way out. This is spent, and possible long-term solutions are always at the beginning.

*The basic issue, the issue of all issues is education among the Romani population. And two very specific sub questions: Why do the Roma avoid school so much (when they are aware that any social and economic shift for the better is almost impossible without education) and why isn't the state in a position to implement its law on compulsory primary schooling when it comes to the Roma.*

For this reason, a number of Roma families remain outside the economic life of the country as they do not have quality connections to this sphere. The number of potentially active members is large; many are young but because of the mentioned reasons they remain marginally utilised. Few are employed in full-time jobs, they wander from job-to-job and do not succeed not even informally (through experience) to specialise in some of these jobs. When they do work, it is often in jobs that are poorly paid, which additionally does not stimulate personal effort to advance in a job. On a scale of values, schooling and professional competency evidently are not highly valued and in this sense there is no great motivation to advance among the Roma.

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Medimurje	Other	Total sample
No employed	79.5	80.2	76.3	37.8	76.0	90.0	33.7	89.9	93.3	74.9
1	14.3	19.8	18.8	50.0	18.0	6.0	44.9	8.8	5.3	19.2
2 and over	4.5	0.0	5.0	12.2	6.0	4.0	17.4	1.4	1.3	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 8**  
 Households according to  
 number of employed (%)

Even though, the interviewers were recommended to additionally consider every member that has been working actively for a longer period throughout the year as employed, i.e., who is not formally employed but does not exclusively work seasonally or temporarily, the number of employed persons is still disillusioning. At the level of the entire sample, 75% of all households do not have an employed person. The share of Romani households without an employed person is around a third only in the Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski kotar. In households that have an employed person, this is most commonly one person.

### *Dependent members*

Members without an income (child endowment is not calculated as income) are supported by persons who work or in another way obtain an income. Most of the dependent members are children. This is followed by housewives and other adults who do not have an income.

35% of the households in the entire sample do not have preschool children. In comparison, there is by far an above average representation of households without preschool children (59%) in the County of Osijek-Baranja. On the other hand, there are considerably less households without preschool children in the Counties of Varaždin and Međimurje (26.3% and 27.2% respectively).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 9**  
 Households according to  
 number of pre-school  
 children (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
Without	40.2	33.3	26.3	31.1	43.0	59.0	33.7	27.2	28.0	35.2
1	24.1	27.1	17.5	41.1	21.0	18.0	28.6	20.7	24.0	24.2
2	23.2	22.9	23.8	11.1	17.0	17.0	16.3	29.5	21.3	21.4
3	9.8	11.5	22.5	10.0	11.0	5.0	12.2	16.6	14.7	12.8
4 and over	2.7	5.2	10.1	6.7	8.0	1.0	9.2	6.1	11.9	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

46.5% of the households in the sample are without children in primary school. 17.5% are with one pupil in primary school, 19.4% with two while 16.5% are with three pupils.

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
Without	60.7	44.8	43.8	46.7	53.0	52.0	33.7	41.0	46.7	46.5
1	20.5	27.1	12.5	14.4	17.0	17.0	14.3	16.6	17.3	17.5
2	10.7	13.5	20.0	24.4	23.0	24.0	33.7	13.8	20.0	19.4
3 and over	8.1	14.5	23.9	14.4	7.0	7.0	18.3	28.4	15.9	16.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 10**  
 Households according to  
 number of primary school  
 pupils (%)

94.2% of the households in the sample are without children in secondary school. In view of the number of children in Romani households, it is easy to conclude that the number of secondary school students is too small. Nevertheless, there are some differences between counties: as many as 10% of households have one or more children that attend secondary school in the Counties of Primorje-Gorski kotar and Osijek-Baranja. An above average share of households with secondary school students can also be found in the Counties of Istria and Međimurje.

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
Without	95.5	95.8	96.3	90.0	96.0	90.0	92.9	93.5	100.0	94.2
1 and over	4.5	4.1	3.8	10.0	4.0	10.0	7.1	6.5	0.0	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 11**  
 Households according to  
 number of secondary school  
 pupils (%)

### Composition of households by educational attainment

Considering the (low) inclusion of Romani children in the formal education system that has been shown so far, it can be expected that data analysis on the level of education of all members of the Romani family (besides those who at the time of the survey go to school) will reflect a depressing situation.

Members without schooling were found in nearly 70% of all households.<sup>5</sup> The differences between different counties, according to this feature, are almost insignificant. The households in the Counties of Varaždin and

**Table 12**  
 Households according to  
 number of members with no  
 schooling (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Medimurje	Other	Total sample
Without	32.1	24.0	20.0	27.8	31.0	38.0	34.7	38.7	30.7	32.0
1	33.9	30.2	25.0	20.0	34.0	25.0	34.7	21.7	33.3	27.9
2	20.5	21.9	21.3	14.4	15.0	27.0	17.3	20.7	22.7	20.1
3 and over	13.4	23.9	34.0	37.7	20.0	10.0	13.2	18.9	13.3	19.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

Sisak-Moslavina have a higher percentage of uneducated members, i.e., less members with schooling than elsewhere. Thus, it seems that the educational opportunities are more difficult in these counties. 28% of all households have one member without one grade of primary school while more than 20% have two members with no schooling. 20% of the surveyed households have three and more illiterate members.

Even if someone went to school, but did not finish, this can mean something relatively positive in the Romani population. However, we wanted to primarily gain more information on those persons that succeeded to finish primary school in a quite discouraging Romani milieu. Therefore this data (about unfinished primary school) can be read as a chance to note every attempt to go to school rather than a level of schooling.

32.6% of households have one member that started primary school but did not finish, 24% have two and 12.4% have three. In 30.9% of all households we did not find members with unfinished primary school (either they all finished or no one started).

**Table 13**  
 Households according to  
 number of members with an  
 unfinished primary school  
 education (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Medimurje	Other	Total sample
Without	47.3	31.3	37.5	25.6	21.0	28.0	31.6	28.6	28.0	30.9
1	26.8	43.8	28.8	25.6	41.0	33.0	30.6	30.4	37.3	32.6
2	14.3	21.9	22.5	24.4	21.0	33.0	22.4	27.2	26.7	24.0
3 and over	11.6	3.1	11.4	24.3	17.0	6.0	15.3	13.9	8.0	12.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

In nearly two thirds of all households not one member finished primary school. Most often one member of the household is like this. County differences are significant. On the positive side, one person has finished primary school in nearly 70% of all households in the County of Istria. This is followed by the Counties of Primorje-Gorski kotar, Osijek-Baranja, etc. A particularly dramatic situation in terms of education was noted in Counties of Međimurje and Varaždin.

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
Without	56.3	67.7	78.8	48.9	58.0	51.0	30.6	82.9	90.7	64.3
1	20.5	27.1	17.5	21.1	27.0	35.0	46.9	13.4	8.0	23.2
2	15.2	2.1	3.8	17.8	13.0	8.0	10.2	3.2	0.0	7.9
3 and over	8.1	3.1	0.0	12.2	2.0	6.0	12.2	0.5	1.3	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 14**

Households according to number of members with a primary school education (%)

The base for recruiting young persons who will continue with their schooling is evidently very “thin”. Thus, the number of secondary school or tertiary students in the Romani population is in accordance with this.

In 12.4% of all households, some child attends secondary school.

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
Without	75.0	90.6	92.5	82.2	84.0	86.0	85.7	93.5	96.0	87.6
1 and over	25.1	9.4	7.5	17.8	16.0	14.0	14.3	6.5	4.0	12.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 15**

Households according to number of members with a secondary school education (%)

Most of the households that have secondary school students are in Zagreb and its surroundings, followed by the Counties of Primorje-Gorski kotar, Slavonski Brod-Posavina and Istria, etc. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons is that there is easier accessibility to secondary schools in these counties (the sample included more urban than rural households in these counties). Moreover, these are richer

counties in which accessibility to employment or potential sources of income are greater than in other counties and this is a significantly influential variable at the level of school education.

**Table 16**  
 Households according to  
 number of members' tertiary  
 education (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
0	99.1	99.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.0	95.9	100.0	100.0	99.3
1	0.9	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

Finally, there are almost no members with a higher education in Romani families, except in the County of Istria (4.1%). This naturally does not mean that there are no highly educated Roma. However, in the introduction, we mentioned the problem of resistance towards integration among most of the Romani population. Thus, it seems that all members of the Romani minority who wish to join the working, educational, and social systems of the majority are in a way obliged to change their immediate life milieu and ethnicity.

### Ethnic composition of the households

The Roma live in exclusively ethnic surroundings. Of course, there are Roma that move to non-Romani settlements or areas, but they are rare. This is clearly shown in the census. There are Roma in other counties besides the ones where this research was conducted, but they (those who declare to be Roma) are small in number and spatially dispersed.

Like others, the Roma like to live close to their country people, so they move in smaller-larger numbers to a particular territory. It needs to be mentioned that there are a relatively small number of settlements in which the Roma are considered as an autochthonous population. Most of them moved to where we found them during this study. Thus, this is not about a classical concept of home, as a place where they have deep roots. This is about a chosen home: and this is where they feel (relatively) good.<sup>6</sup> There is an expressed self-containment of the Romani population towards other nationalities in some counties (Counties of Varaždin, Međimurje and Istria) which can partly explain (we did not research this) the reserved relation of the majority population towards the Roma in these parts.



Table 17

Households according to ethnic composition (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
All Roma	88.4	91.4	96.3	91.1	85.0	86.0	95.9	96.3	94.5	92.0
More Roma	7.1	1.1	0.0	1.1	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.9	1.4	2.4
Equal number of Roma and other	0.0	1.1	2.5	2.2	9.0	8.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
More of the other	4.5	6.5	1.3	5.6	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.9	4.1	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

The most ethnically mixed households can be found in the Counties of Slavonski Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja and Zagreb as well as the City of Zagreb.

### Religion of household members

The Roma are of different religions. Without thorough investigation into their religious behaviour, it is difficult to talk about their belonging to particular churches, what religion means to them and how they practice their religion. From field experience, which can be imprecise, it seems that their religious behaviour is not particularly important. But without any additional explanation, they differentiate religiously. There are only a small number of households in which members do not belong to any religion (4.1% all in all). Moreover, members of different religions live together only in a small number of households. It is difficult to conclude why this is the case. Possibly religion is an important criteria of marital partner choice and it also possible that they do not dramatise a change of religion.

Table 18

Households according to religion of members (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
Mostly Catholic	14.4	51.0	97.5	.0	5.0	52.5	1.0	91.7	100	49.1
Mostly Muslim	69.4	0.0	0.0	97.8	6.0	0.0	96.9	0.5	0.0	27.7
Mostly Orthodox	5.4	39.6	0.0	1.1	73.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.6
No one belongs to any religion	6.3	4.2	2.5	0.0	6.0	3.0	1.0	7.9	0.0	4.1
Members belong to different religions	4.5	5.2	0.0	1.1	10.0	11.1	1.0	0.0	0.0	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

Almost half of the Roma are Catholic. This is followed by Muslims (27.7%) and Orthodox (15.6%).

### Knowledge of Romani and Croatian languages among household members

Without analysing the quality of Croatian that is spoken among the Roma in Croatia, it is important to stress that most claim to speak Croatian. Based on this, it can be concluded that it should not be a problem for the Roma to communicate with the rest of the population. The counties with the largest share of households in which no one speaks Croatian are the Counties of Istria (a relatively “fresh” migration from Kosovo) Međimurje and Varaždin. The percentage of these households is not high, but indicates some possible communication blockades. Besides, knowledge of the spoken language, it is important to know how to read and write in contemporary communication. It is precisely in this segment of communication (not to mention computer literacy) the Roma significantly lag behind.

**Table 19**  
 Do members of the household speak Croatian? (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
All speak	97.3	93.6	91.3	96.7	96.0	100	88.7	87.9	100	93.8
Only some speak	0.9	6.4	8.8	3.3	4.0	0.0	11.3	10.7	0.0	5.7
No one speaks	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 20**  
 Do members of the household speak a Romani dialect? (%)

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
All speak	48.2	85.4	93.8	34.4	54.0	65.0	89.8	98.1	68.0	73.6
Only some speak	22.3	8.3	6.3	22.2	16.0	20.0	9.2	1.9	0.0	11.1
No one speaks	29.5	6.3	0.0	43.3	30.0	15.0	1.0	0.0	32.0	15.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

There are more Roma that do not speak a Romani language than Croatian. One form of Romani language is spo-

ken by all in 73.6% of all households. The differences are evident at the county level: there are a significant share of households in which all members speak a Romani language in the Counties of Međimurje, Varaždin and Istria. In comparison, households in which no one speaks a Romani language could be found in the Counties of Primorje-Gorski kotar (43.3%), Slavonski Brod-Posavina (30.0%) and Zagreb and its surroundings (29.5%).

### The autochthony of household members

In 41.6% of all households in the sample, all members were born in the place where the research took place. It was mentioned in the introduction of the study that research was exclusively on sedentary Roma and not Roma travellers. This can be seen from the data. Along with mentioned households, in which all members are born in place of living, the second largest group comprise households in which most of the members were born in their place of living.

	Zagreb	Sisak-Moslavina	Varaždin	Primorje-Gorski kotar	Brod-Posavina	Osijek-Baranja	Istria	Međimurje	Other	Total sample
All here from birth	20.5	56.3	62.5	15.6	39.0	48.0	3.1	53.7	73.3	41.6
Most are here from birth	29.5	31.3	27.5	55.6	21.0	20.0	46.9	32.2	17.3	31.5
Most have moved	25.9	5.2	6.3	23.3	14.0	12.0	31.6	10.3	5.3	14.8
All have moved	24.1	7.3	3.8	5.6	26.0	20.0	18.4	3.7	4.0	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field study 2004

**Table 21**  
 Have the members of the household moved to the settlement or are they here from birth? (%)

Statistically significant differences were established between particular counties. Most households in which the majority or all members moved are in the County of Istria and the City of Zagreb and its surroundings (50% respectively). Following, according to this indicator, are the Counties of Slavonski Brod-Posavina (40% of all households), Osijek-Baranja (32.0%) and Primorje-Gorski kotar (28,9%).

The least number of households with migrant members were found in the Counties of Varaždin (10.1%), Sisak-Moslavina (12.5%) and Međimurje (14.0%).

Thus, the most autochthonous Romani population settled in northern Croatia as well as parts of central Croatia. In all other counties, most Roma have migrated. As we did not investigate migration routes, we cannot make any further detailed interpretations of the causes and reasons. Of course, larger towns such as Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek and Pula with their economic and social advantages are more appealing to migrants and to the Roma as well. It is a well-known fact that migration is a selective process. But this is related to the individuals. The more capable, more ambitious and more entrepreneurial migrate. The extent, to which this rule can be applied to the Roma, remains to be researched because the Roma most often migrate in family groups, not individually.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this county, research was conducted in a few locations within the City of Rijeka. The Roma in other, especially in the rural parts of the county do not declare themselves as Roma. For this reason, we did not interview them. This is not only a problem in the County of Primorje-Gorski kotar. In other counties there is quite a number of Roma who do not declare their Romani heritage.

<sup>2</sup> In Spain, in 1990 it was established that the life span of “their” Roma is shorter by 8–9 years compared to the majority population. Thus, only 2% of Roma are over the age of 65. A large number of Roma live in Spain (estimates are between 650 and 800,000) (Gustierrez, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Children often do not attend class for up to a month because together with their mother, they accompany their father who works outside their place of living. These are not isolated examples.

<sup>4</sup> As expected there is further strong pressure on Romani children at primary schools in these counties.

<sup>5</sup> We construed a positive attitude about the necessity of primary school education at least when household members attempted to hide information about the level of illiteracy in the household.

<sup>6</sup> The Roma themselves say that they leave areas that are not doing well.