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<http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/migrom>

Pilot survey of birth rates and age at first birth among the community of Roma from Romania in Manchester

In the summer of 2014, the MigRom project carried out a pilot survey of 44 Roma women from Romania between the ages of 17-49 living in Manchester. The women originate from Arad, Bistrița, Brăila, Bucharest, Cluj, Mărășești, Sălaj, Țândărei, Tecuci, Timișoara, and Urziceni, with the group originating in Țândărei being the largest (16, or 36%). They arrived in the UK between 2002 and 2014. The women are Orthodox and Pentecostal, with one belonging to Jehova's Witnesses. Of the total number of women surveyed, 84% have had children. The average total fertility rate (TFR, or number of births per woman) is 2.7 (in line with the World Bank's calculation method, this does not include ongoing pregnancies). This compares, according to World

Bank figures for 2012, with 1.5 for Romania, 1.9 for the UK and the US, 2.5 for India, 2.8 for Egypt, 3.0 for Israel, and 6.0 for Uganda, to name just some examples. The rate is notably lower than the average TFR for Muslim women in the UK, which is 3.0. It is noteworthy, however, that when Pentecostal women are excluded from the sample, the TFR is 2.0, and when women from Țândărei (all of whom are also Pentecostal) are excluded, the TFR is even lower, at 1.9, and equivalent to the average TFR in the UK and US.

The TFR of Pentecostal Roma women from Țândărei is significantly higher than the average among Roma women from Romania, at 4.0. It is noteworthy that the average age of women in

the sample is consistently 29, whether Pentecostal women and those from Țândărei are included or excluded, as well as within the group of women from Țândărei itself, and so age cannot be considered to be a skewing factor. The TFR for Pentecostal Roma women from Țândărei is comparable with (though still lower than) World Bank figures for Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq (4.1), the West Bank and Gaza (4.1), and Yemen (4.2). It is significantly lower than the TFR found among some other strict religious minorities that constitute tight-knit communities in developed countries, such as Orthodox Jews in the UK (6.9) and Amish in the US (6.5), and it is also significantly lower than that of most African countries.

Nearly two thirds of women in the sample (59%) had their first child at the age of 19 or younger (World Bank and WHO indicator of 'adolescent pregnancy/ birth'), with the overall average age at the birth of the first child being 18.5. Among the Țândărei Pentecostals, however, all the women had their first child before the age of 19, and the average age at the first birth is 16.7. When excluding the Țândărei Pentecostals, less than half of the women in the sample (47%) had their first child before the age of 19.

There is a slight rise in the average age at first birth among women aged 25 or younger who arrived in the UK after 2008 (average age at first birth being 17.6), compared to those of the same age group who arrived in or before 2008 (average age at first birth being 16.4).

Despite the rather small size of the relevant sample, this seems to indicate a gradual shift in attitudes toward early marriage and childbearing. The results are partly influenced by the fact that all women from Țândărei considered in the sample arrived in or before 2008, while among the sample excluding those from Țândărei, around half arrived before and the other half after 2008. Disregarding the group from Țândărei, the average age at the time of the first birth among

women of all ages who came to the UK in or before 2008 is 18.7, while among women of all ages who arrived after 2008 it is 20.0.

In conclusion, we see that on the whole Roma women from Romania generally tend to have children at a young age. However, the number of children that they have is not significantly higher than that of other populations, and even when including the Pentecostal sector it is still lower than that of other minorities in the UK, most notably Muslims and Orthodox Jews. The pattern of both early and frequent childbearing is distinctive of the specific community of Pentecostal Roma from Țândărei, who make up a significant part of the Romanian Roma population in South Manchester. Overall, however, there is evidence that a change in attitudes is underway, with a noticeable tendency to postpone childbearing. The two extreme figures are that for Pentecostal Roma women from Țândărei who arrived in the UK before 2008, who on average had their first child at the age of 16.7, and non-Pentecostal Roma women from other parts of Romania who arrived after 2008, who on average had their first child at the age of 20.0.

All this is well in line with recent

findings of the MigRom partners at the University of Granada, who have examined fertility patterns in the population of Romanian Roma migrants in Spain, many of whom also originate in Țândărei (see MigRom year one report -- University of Granada).

On the basis of these findings, we expect that growing diversity within the Roma community itself, growing external influences, and a growing number of job opportunities (following the removal of restrictions on employment for Romanian citizens) will continue to reinforce what already appears to be an internal development within the community toward later and less frequent childbearing.

Source/References

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN> (World Bank comparison of birth rates)

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/article/?id=7715> (Orthodox Jews in the UK)

<http://blogs.channel4.com/factcheck/factcheck-will-britain-have-a-muslim-majority-by-2050/13690> (Muslims in UK)

<http://amishamerica.com/how-fast-are-the-amish-growing/> (Amish in US)

<http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/migrom/docs/Granada%20Project%20report%201.pdf> (MigRom Pilot Survey Report, University of Granada)

Data overview

	Place of Origin	Age	Age at birth of first child	Number of children	In the U.K. since	Religion
1	Bucharest	30	20	3	2010	Orthodox
2	Bucharest	26	21	2	2010	Orthodox
3	Bucharest	20		0	2012	Orthodox
4	Tecuci	22		0	2014	Pentecostal
5	Sălaj	30	14	4	2002	Orthodox
6	Sălaj	26	18	2	2013	Orthodox
7	Tandarei	22	15	3	2002	Pentecostal
8	Urziceni	29	23	1	2009	Orthodox
9	Timișoara	28	21	2	2013	Orthodox
10	Cluj	19	18	1	2013	Orthodox
11	Cluj	21	19	1	2008	Orthodox
12	Cluj	26	18	3	2008	Orthodox
13	Bistrița	43	21	3	2007	Orthodox
14	Arad	40	21	3	2005	Orthodox
15	Bucharest	38	23	4	2011	Pentecostal
16	Țândărei	22	19	1	2003	Pentecostal
17	Țândărei	19	15	3	2007	Pentecostal
18	Țândărei	22	15	4	2007	Pentecostal
19	Țândărei	27	17	8	2002	Pentecostal
20	Țândărei	42	17	4	1999	Pentecostal
21	Țândărei	18	17	1	2008	Pentecostal
22	Țândărei	25	15	3	2002	Pentecostal
23	Țândărei	42	16	8	2000	Pentecostal
24	Mărășești	40	20	3	2013	Jehovah's Witness
25	Țândărei	39	19	5	1999	Pentecostal
26	Țândărei	49	16	7	2002	Pentecostal
27	Țândărei	27	19	1	2005	Pentecostal
28	Urziceni	22	18	2	2012	Orthodox
29	Urziceni	26	24	1	2013	Orthodox
30	Țândărei	33	19	1	2007	Pentecostal
31	Brăila	35	18	3	2010	Orthodox
32	Bucharest	49	17	5	2010	Orthodox
33	Bucharest	30	23	2	2010	Orthodox
34	Țândărei	26	16	5	2008	Pentecostal
35	Țândărei	20	16	3	2008	Pentecostal
36	Cluj	43	20	4	2005	Orthodox
37	Sălaj	41	19	3	2007	Orthodox
38	Sălaj	33	18	2	2007	Pentecostal
39	Țândărei	31	17	8	2004	Pentecostal
40	Cluj	21		0	2005	Orthodox
41	Bistrița	22		0	2007	Orthodox
42	Arad	19		0	2005	Orthodox
43	Buzau	22		0	2010	Pentecostal
44	Cluj	17		0	2008	Orthodox

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