

# ***Come Closer***

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***Inclusion and Exclusion of Roma  
in Present-Day Romanian Society***



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## *Inclusion and Exclusion of Roma in Present-Day Romanian Society*

*Edited by Gábor Fleck and Cosima Rughiniș*

*Bucharest 2008*



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for Community Development



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Roma Center  
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and Studies

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## **AUTHORS**

### **Gábor Fleck**

*(chapters 4.4, 8, 9, 11.1; co-author for chapters 2, 9, 13, Concluding Remarks)*

### **Ioana Florea**

*(chapters 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 6, 7.1, 10.1; co-author for chapters 2, 13, Concluding Remarks)*

### **Dénes Kiss**

*(co-author for chapter 9)*

### **Cosima Rughiniş**

*(chapter 1, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 5, 7.2, 7.3, 10.2-7, 11.2, 11.3, 12, 14;  
co-author for chapters 2, 13, Concluding Remarks)*

## **RESEARCH TEAM**

*Research Coordinator: Gábor Fleck*

*Senior Research Expert: Cosima Rughiniş*

*Research Assistant: Ioana Florea*

*Contributors: Daniel Arpinte (Survey Analysis), Elisabeth Ringhofer (Qualitative Analysis)*

## **DATA COLLECTION**

*Local Authority Research Data Collection: Operations Research, Bucharest*

*Survey Data Collection: Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance,*

*Centre for Advanced Research in Sociology, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj*

*Community Fieldwork Management: Operations Research, Bucharest*

# Preface

The research on the “Inclusion and Exclusion of Roma in present day Romanian Society”, developed under the umbrella of the PHARE project “Strengthening Capacity and Partnership Building to Improve Roma Condition and Perception” implemented by the General Secretariat of the Government, has set out ambitious goals, one of which is to provide relevant data for further policy making on the social integration of Roma. The document is of particular importance as there is a lack of accurate data regarding the number and the needs of the Roma in Romanian society.

It is difficult to appreciate the real number of Roma people living in Romania, as the official census cannot deliver a reliable real figure based on self-declaration of ethnicity, and therefore Roma ethnicity is under-represented. Each new pertinent study on this topic is welcome and appreciated as it complements the official but defective data, as well as the unofficial estimates of the Roma in Romania. The survey of 2000 households (1000 Roma and 1000 non-Roma living in close proximity to the Roma households), together with the country-wide Local Authorities survey and the 36 community studies which are part of this research, have provided for an in-depth study of the subjects of the research which is of great relevance to the specific needs of Roma citizens.

The focus on the specific needs of the Roma represents the added value of the research. Nevertheless, the current study sheds some light not only on Roma communities but also on the non-Roma population living in their close proximity.

In the wake of these findings we consider it will be easier to evaluate the real situation and to adjust the current spending, outcomes, programmes and policies conducted by the Romanian Government for the improvement of the condition of the Roma. We express our confidence that the data provided by this study will benefit both Romanian policy makers as well as international ones.

*Victor GIOSAN*  
State Secretary  
General Secretariat of the Government

# Preface

The National Agency for Roma, in its capacity as a specialized unit of the central public administration for issues concerning the Roma, and also beneficiary of the programme, welcomes the completion and publication of this research report which is more than necessary for substantiating Roma-targeted public policies and identifying the necessary resources for their implementation.

Being the first important piece of research on Roma communities promoted by the Romanian Government through the PHARE programme, this socio-economic analysis of the situation of Roma communities presents clear and quantified arguments which raised awareness and concerns about the social exclusion which the Roma experience day-to-day.

This piece of research covers the acute need which public institutions and other organizations have for reliable data in order to plan, establish and implement policies, programmes and projects meant to improve the situation of the Roma and, as such, increase the wealth of the society as a whole.

The National Agency for Roma, as the beneficiary of this programme and of the results of the research, will disseminate these results in various ways nationally and internationally and will use them as an advocacy instrument at the European level for a European policy on the social inclusion of Roma.

In order to implement social inclusion policies, the National Agency for Roma has a special interest in the necessity of documenting the situation of Roma communities in Romania, and will ensure the dissemination of the data to different national and international structures, including through the Social Observatory.

*“Nothing for the Roma without the Roma”*

*Gruia Ioan BUMBU*  
President  
National Agency for Roma

# Foreword

For the past sixty years, ever since the discovery of the death camps operated by the Nazis and their allies and the clear association that emerged linking the practice of mechanised killing with the pre-war rise of racist social analysis, open expressions of racial thinking have been totally unacceptable in anything one would hope to call polite society. Today, in Europe at least, to talk in terms of 'races,' 'biological destinies' or 'the genetic capacity of the nation' is to cast oneself to the outer reaches of the political universe. And yet many of the basic ideas behind early 20th Century racialism have not truly gone away.

One of the most disturbing developments in public discourse in the former communist countries in the years since 1989 has been the emergence of a new kind of 'explanation' of what is misleadingly called 'the Gypsy question' or, worse, 'the Gypsy problem.' Through a strange alliance of cultural relativists, politicians seeking to excuse the failures of their policies as well as some misguided Romany activists, a whole new rhetorical strategy for representing the 'difference' between Roma and non-Roma has come to dominate the field. I refer to those approaches that stress, in one form or another, the fundamental and in some sense irreducible otherness of the people commonly referred to as Gypsies. When, as a result of ill-thought-through educational conservatism, the 'average' Romany child systematically fails to progress as fast and as satisfactorily through primary and secondary school as the 'average' Romanian child, we find voices telling us that the problem lies in Romany way of life and "the uneducable Gypsy child" that this culture produces. Likewise, when in the newspapers and electronic media we read of a rising tide of petty crime and affronts to public decency we are introduced to a supposedly new sort of criminality, characteristic not of a social but an ethnic milieu, 'Gypsy criminality.'

The authors of such phrases do not see themselves in any way as bearers of the legacy of racist thinking. They are, after all, talking about 'cultural differences' and contrasting communities of value, not races or other biological units. And yet, look closer, listen more carefully, and you will see that here culture (and its proxy, 'ethnicity') stands in for race. Culture has become a hard, fast-closed, well-bounded and clearly identifiable set of properties that marks out populations with all the (supposed) rigidity and inflexibility of differences between biological species. Culture has, in brief, become a pseudo-biological property of social groups. No longer referring to the endlessly open, reflexive, strategically oriented cultivation of similarities and difference, culture comes to stand for a marker of irreducible otherness and incompatibility.

And, as I said above, it is not just those who seek excuses for the failure of their initiatives, or to whitewash their total lack of initiative in the schools which have become the site where ethnically absolute differences are established and constituted, who resort to the discourse of incompatibility. All those whose current employment and public positions depend on their perceived ability to mediate between these two supposedly irreconcilable worlds have an interest in promoting this Manichean vision. And hence among the ethnic entrepreneurs we find the complement of a hostile cultural racism that focuses on ineducability and criminality in 'positive' and 'celebratory' discourses that presents a pastoral idyll of the 'Romany family' as a haven of nurturing love and care. At the same time these social workers, mediators and activists naturalise and homogenise the great diversity of Romany family forms in a cultural representation as crude and reductive as the phantom image of the un-teachable, wild Romany child.

By contrast with these dangerously simplifying and homogenising discourses of the 'ethnic relations industry' that seeks to deny and bury the real diversity of Romany lives in Romania, what you have in your hand now in this report, ably organised and edited by Gábor Fleck and Cosima Rughiniş, is as clear a statement as exists today of the sheer diversity of the lives of Romany



peoples in Romania. The synthetic study draws on two sorts of data: an impressively conducted national survey of Roma communities and their administrative regions and 36 local studies carried out by sociologically and anthropologically trained researchers who lived in Roma settlements for a period of weeks in the summer of 2007. In a report of this sort it is necessary, of course, to construct the fictional figure of 'the average Roma.' And, in so far as a government wishes to pursue a policy targeted at Roma in general, this kind of artificial construction has its uses.

You will discover that official statistics about the proportion of the population *de facto* treated as Roma by the local administrative, educational, health and public order authorities is in a range of four to ten times greater than the census (or self declaration in that) would leave you to believe. It turns out quite clearly that Romany is not the preserve of the poor and isolated Roma, but also the mother tongue of the significant middle class. And in all, two thirds of Roma would like to see all Romanian children learning about Romany history and culture (compared to a smaller but still significant minority – 33% – of Romanians who would be happy with such a deepening of the national history curriculum. Perhaps most striking, we find out that a full 34% of the households surveyed (and the survey focuses on those who live in areas of high Romany residential concentration and so in general on the poorer Roma) have family members of Romanian ethnicity. Where is the ethnic closure here?

For those who delve deeper into this fascinating national portrait, there are the equally important facts of radical inequality and discrimination under which many Roma suffer. An astonishing 60% of Romany respondents report that someone in their household went to bed hungry in the past month (against 12% in the non-Roma sample). Only 53% of Romany children have a winter coat (against 87% of non-Roma).

But it would be a grave error if the reader or policy maker stopped there. For while these figures capture the position of those Roma who fall in the mid-range on any score in the sample of their communities, a closer look at the data shows just how wide the range is. The 'average' Roma may only complete the basic years of school but 9% of Roma have been to high-school and a small but yet incredibly important 2% have completed university (thanks in large part to the pioneering project – that has no equivalent any where else in Europe – in which reserved places are offered only to Romany students). And while kindergarten enrolment in small towns may be a lamentable 33% it rises to 55% in villages (sadly mostly for reasons of keeping nurseries open in the face of demographic collapse).

And in a series of powerful local studies that this project commissioned, we learn what this diversity means in practice on the ground and how a one size fits all 'Roma policy' makes absolutely no sense at all. To take just one example, in the town of Târgu Mureş, one of the researchers reports on three completely different patterns of interaction between Roma and non-Roma. In one impoverished settlement the inhabitants are seen by outsiders as more or less untouchables and openly scorned as social inferiors. These Roma households are restricted to collecting scrap if they are lucky and working with domestic rubbish most of the time. But just a few steps away, the researcher finds an only slightly less poor set of families who are treated as a reliable and convenient source of labour power by their non-Gypsy neighbours. Members of these households find work on the farms, in the gardens and also the houses of their employers. And finally, scattered through the same town we find wealthy trading families the more successful of whom bring in incomes of € 3000 or more a month. What kind of 'Roma policy' could possibly address the needs of such diverse families?

In an earlier, pioneering cross national survey two Hungarian sociologists, Iván Szelényi and János Ladányi, argued that in certain crucial respects the ethnic barrier preventing access to public resources was weaker in Romania than in Hungary. The average Romanian found it harder to determine with certainty the ethnicity of another Romanian than the average Hungarian – allowing Roma to avoid being identified as such and thus, one suspects, greater social mobility. And indeed the data the reader

will find in this report also suggests reasons for some small degree of optimism about the future of Romanian Roma. 6% percent of non-Roma are business owners, but it emerges that 4% of Roma are the same: a suggestively small difference – in some areas social closure does not seem to operate. And in comparison to the first few years after the system change, when violent conflicts between Roma and other Romanian citizens rapidly increased in frequency, today in comparison with its neighbours, Hungary or Bulgaria for instance, the attitude of the majority of Romanians towards this least loved and respected minority seems mild. Of course, the economic boom in Romania and the long term stagnation of its western neighbour no doubt promote indifference and hostility respectively. But I for one see in the great dynamism of Romanian democracy and its relative openness to outside influences and models considerable hope for the future.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in the long term will come from those governments and political forces that, believing the so-called Gypsy question can never really be solved, or not for many generations, want to take this particular hot potato off the national menu and kick the offending item ‘up’ into the European level. We can see this today in bodies like the Council of Europe where strenuous efforts are made to try and define a ‘European wide’ Roma policy and to create a supposed European Roma leadership. And the first signs of this emerge too in some currents within the European parliament. The danger with this approach is clear. This is the sure route to political passivity on the part of the governments that actually have the resources and means to act at the level where policy takes effect. And it is the certain road towards a disastrous ethnicisation of a series of social and economic problems that are only feebly understood under the label, ‘the gypsy question.’ And, behind this ethnicisation lies precisely the kind of racial thinking about culture that I identified above. This excellent and comprehensive report demonstrates the kind of solutions that suit the Romanian context in all its complexity – solutions that cannot be generalised to the European level because they confront the particular history of different populations that have been labelled ‘Gypsy’ in Romania.

*Dr. Michael Stewart*  
University College London and  
Central European University

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## PART I



## INTRODUCTION





# 1 Introduction

The main focal points of the research were the consequences of economic transition on Roma communities, the different forms and aftermath of social exclusion, and its mechanism in local societies in the present-day Romanian society. The main aims of the research were:

- To compare the socio-economic situation of the Roma with that of the other citizens of Romania living in similar localities and neighbourhoods (see the discussion on the survey sampling);
- To highlight present-day circuits of social inclusion and exclusion of the Roma citizens;
- To provide policy-relevant data concerning social inclusion and exclusion of the Roma.

To this aim, we used three different kinds of research methods:

- Representative survey with a Roma and a non-Roma sub-sample;
- Community Studies in 36 different Roma communities;
- Local Authorities survey.

This complex methodology, using different methods at the same time, is suitable for examining the detailed situation of people living at risk of, or in the situation of different aspects of social exclusion. Such reciprocal control of different methods should also reduce the possible errors of sampling in the final conclusions.

## 1.1 Research Perspectives

This research report includes data from three empirical research projects conducted within the Research Component of the PHARE (2004) Project “Strengthening Capacity and Partnership Building to Improve Roma Condition and Perception”, implemented by the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government and having as beneficiary the National Agency for Roma. The chapter on “Methodology” presents these three projects in more detail. In the following lines we will try to position this research report within the general picture of current sociological research on Roma issues.

Mărginean et al. (2001) has analysed quantitatively 160 research publications on the Romanian Roma/Gypsy people, thus creating an overview of the main research perspectives and topics. The authors identify three main perspectives:

- The identity perspective, focusing on traditions, history and the specificity of the Roma population, accounts for 43 % of the publications included in the analysis;
- The socio-economic perspective, focusing on Roma poverty and standard of living, accounts for 41 % of the publications;
- The perspective of relationships with public authorities, focusing on institutionalized discrimination of Roma people in accessing public services and in their relationships with authorities, accounts for the remaining 16 % of publications.

A proportion of 83 % of the studies discussed issues related to ethnic identity; 75 % discussed relationships with the other ethnic categories of population; 64 % discussed quality of life, 52 % discussed social integration, 31 % addressed the number of the Roma population, 23 % discussed delinquency and 9 % addressed linguistics topics (percentages do not add up to 100 % since some studies addressed several topics).

It is easy to position this report in relation to the main research topics, since it also addresses the most frequent ones: ethnic identity, interethnic relationships, quality of life and social integration. It is more difficult to affiliate this research to one of the three perspectives discussed above. The broader perspective that we used to interpret data can be best understood as a social interaction perspective: we have discussed ethnic affiliation and the construction of ethnic identity by focusing on (the lack of) interactions between Roma people and the non-Roma – mostly ethnic Romanians or Hungarians. Processes of ethnic classification, ethnic affiliation, social distance, and social exclusion are understood as different aspects and consequences of interaction patterns between individuals, communities and institutions.

## 1.2 Research Subjects

All three research projects mentioned above have been focused on the social exclusion of Roma people. For methodological reasons discussed below, the individuals that this report speaks about are those Roma people who live in Roma communities. All three research projects have relied, to some extent or other, on the identification of Roma communities as a first step towards selecting the Roma people to be portrayed/being portrayed. Therefore, those Roma ethnic persons that live dispersed among non-Roma neighbourhoods, and who do not belong to what is publicly visible as a Roma community, are not “subjects” in this report. In the qualitative research we have also selected communities which were more affected by various processes of social exclusion, thus under-representing the more affluent or socially inclusive communities. Within these communities we have paid equal attention to people in all social conditions and situations. The quantitative survey and the Local Authorities survey include all types of communities, but it is probable, due to the common practice of local authorities and research operators to focus more on the impoverished communities, that these could be over-represented.

We can therefore summarize by saying that our research addresses the social situation of Roma people living in mostly poor Roma communities.

## 1.3 Agents of Change

In writing this report we had in view its policy implications. The pervasive question we have tried to address in all chapters is: which are the agents that will bring about change in the social situation of the Romanian Roma people? The possible list of candidates which we had in view included broad forces such as sharing in the national economic development, education, religion and political emancipation.

National and local authorities also have a powerful influence on the Roma situation – either directly, by specific interventions in Roma communities, or indirectly, by means of structural changes in the Romanian society and economy. Direct interventions are discussed in the sections on mediation structures between Roma communities and local authorities. Case studies and survey data do not include enough relevant information to evaluate other development programmes and initiatives. Indirect influences are discussed implicitly in sections on various aspects of living, such as employment, health, education and segregation in education, or migration.

There are many possible direct and indirect effects of the general economic development of Romania on the situation of the poor Roma. Among these, our research includes a chapter on financial coping strategies, more precisely on migration and credit, as well as discussions on

employment and income and expenditures. The research also includes an extensive chapter on education, a section on religious affiliation and a section on local mediation structures.

Without entering into a detailed discussion here of these topics, it is important to underline the main conclusions, providing an interpretation frame for the entire report.

Among all the agents of change discussed in the report, the most powerful one is, as expected, the Roma people themselves, and their main strategy of emancipation is finding work abroad (see the sections on migration). Nevertheless, the sections on credit, employment and income and expenditure point out that Roma people are far from having a share of the benefits that economic growth has brought to other Romanian citizens. Further research may also explore the role of increasingly available technology (such as mobile phones or computers) in creating and reducing inequalities between the quality of life of the Roma and the non-Roma (see the section on long-term consumer goods).

Local mediation structures, such as local leaders, health and education mediators or experts on Roma issues, are also visible social actors and often agents of change. The chapter on health issues focuses especially on what seem to be the limitations of these structures, these being of particular relevance for policy discussions.

Political emancipation also refers to the situation of legal acknowledgments of national and local citizenship by means of civil status and Identity documents, land ownership and residential contracts. The issue of illegal housing is discussed in the two sections on property rights.

Religious organizations, especially the neo-protestant ones such as the Pentecostal and the Baptist churches, are visible forces of change in Roma communities. The non-Roma and the Roma themselves are aware of this, and usually this influence is celebrated by both sides. Still, it is important to pay attention to the complex changes that religious conversion introduces into the lives of any person or community. It is ironic, for example, that the “civilization” benefits of the neo-protestant affiliation are sometimes praised by the same people who fear the “demographic danger” of the Roma birth rate.

The school institution, although it has in theory an ambitious mission of shaping pupils into autonomous human beings, has only a barely visible influence on the life trajectories of the people this research speaks about. In comparison to other forces that contribute to the development of Roma children into adults, the school is all but absent.

## **1.4 Definitions of Poverty and Exclusion in Roma-focused Research Programmes**

The issue of social exclusion is not the same as the issue of poverty. It rather belongs to the complex discussion on social stratification. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative indicators is of special relevance here. Household incomes or expenditures, labour market positions, education, housing, spatial and geographical positions, information circuits, social relations as indicators of social position are all useful quantitative indicators. In the case of social exclusion these indicators can also be used as qualitative ones, and it is necessary to use some special indicators to point out processes of social exclusion. If we want to understand the character of social exclusion, it is necessary to understand the differences between being poor, or on the bottom of the economic structure, or being outside the society. To be excluded from society may have various relative meanings, but social exclusion is usually defined as more than a simple economic phenomenon: it also has consequences on the social and symbolic fields. Social exclusion does not necessarily entail poverty – although in stratified societies poverty nearly always leads to social exclusion. Therefore, poverty is not a good indicator of social exclusion; it is neither sufficient on its own, nor necessary, although it is true that the two are empirically correlated. “Social exclusion is about the inability of

our society to keep all groups and individuals within reach of what we expect as a society. It is about the tendency to push vulnerable and difficult individuals into the least popular places, furthest away from our common aspirations. It means that some people feel excluded from the mainstream, as though they do not belong” (Power and Wilson, 2000).

Ethnic categories, from this perspective, are not only target groups of social exclusion but they may be actual results of the very processes of exclusion and inclusion. There are social contexts in which being *Țigăni or Rom*, as identified by the majority population, means being excluded.

For the purpose of this report, we can consider the Romanian society as a two-layered structure. There is a formal or mainstream society, and a second structure of the socially excluded from the mainstream. This is not just a theoretical argument. If economic differences are rather more quantitative, social exclusion is a quantitative and a qualitative issue as well. While poverty is the question of “how much”, social exclusion is somehow the question of “how and why”. This assertion means that different measures, research methods and indicators are necessary in order to study it.

Our hypothesis is that Roma poverty is different from the poverty of non-Roma people in Romania. And exclusion is not just, and not necessarily about poverty, but also about symbolic boundaries, social networks and their rupture points, institutional and interpersonal discrimination, access to services and information, possibilities of participating in the formal economy, geographical distances from working opportunities, etc Social exclusion is a complex problem of people living excluded from the mainstream society symbolically and/or economically. All of these factors may have influences on ethnic and other community identities.

### 1.4.1 Indicators of Poverty and Exclusion

There have been multiple attempts to construct operational definitions and indicators for social exclusion, in order to better understand living conditions in Roma communities.

Dumitru Sandu (2005) defines an index for community poverty in Roma communities (IPRC) by a structure of six indicators:

*Table 1–1. Index of poverty in Roma communities (IPRC).*

Dimension	Indicators	Values	Total value
Accessibility	Marginal location in relation to the locality	1 = yes 0 = no	1 if any indicator has value 1
	Modernized access roads (paved with stones or asphalt)	1 = yes 0 = no	0 otherwise
	Location next to a garbage dump	1 = yes 0 = no	
Infrastructure	More than 50% of community households lack a source of potable water	1 = yes 0 = no	1 if any indicator has value 1
	More than 50% of community households lack connection to electricity network	1 = yes 0 = no	0 otherwise
Income sources	Main income source for more than 50% households is social assistance (Minimum Guaranteed Income) and/or occasional activities	1 = yes 0 = no	1 if yes 0 if no

*Source: Sandu 2005, p. 23*

Sandu defines poor communities as having at least two poverty indicators out of three. The research data indicate the following distribution of Roma communities and estimated Roma population:

*Table 1-2. Distribution of poor Roma communities and estimated Roma residents*

Community type		High probability Roma population			
		Communities %	Rural areas %	Urban areas %	Rural and urban %
No problem indicators		10	13	16	14
One problem indicator		31	25	44	33
<b>Poor Roma communities</b>	<b>Two problem indicators</b>	45	46	31	40
	<b>Three problem indicators</b>	14	16	9	13
Total percent		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number		848	162994	111860	274854

*Source: Sandu 2005, p. 27*

In a more detailed research on poverty, Emil Teşliuc, Lucian Pop and Filofteia Panduru define two poverty thresholds: the poverty line and the extreme poverty line (Teşliuc et al., 2003). The research data is based on consumption figures recorded by (1) the Romanian Household Budget Survey for the period 2001-2002, (2) the Integrated Household Survey (AIG) for the period 1995-2000, and (3) the 2002 Living Conditions Survey. The authors make use of the following methodology:

“The food component of the poverty line is determined as the cost of a food basket preferred by the individuals from the second and third quintile, priced at the unit values faced by this group, with quantities scaled up proportionally to give a caloric intake of 2550 calories per adult per day. (...) The resulting food component of the poverty line, expressed in Dec-02 urban prices, was 872 005 ROL<sup>1</sup>. (...) The extreme poverty line is determined by summing up the food component of the poverty line with the monthly amount of non-food and services typically consumed by those whose total consumption equals the food requirement. If households that can cover only their food requirements gave up on food for other consumption items, these items should be necessities. Thus, the extreme poverty line is the sum of food and other non-food necessities. Individuals will be classified as extreme poor if their consumption per adult equivalent will be lower than the extreme poverty line. The extreme poverty line, expressed in Dec-02 prices, is 1 060 658 ROL. The total poverty line is determined by adding to the food component the amount spent on non-food and services by those households whose food consumption equals the food component of the poverty line. In this variant, the definition of non-food necessities is broader. Individuals will be classified as (total) poor if their consumption per adult equivalent will be lower than the total poverty line. The total poverty line, expressed in Dec-02 prices, is 1 535 570 ROL<sup>2</sup>.” (Teşliuc et al. 2003, pp. 5-6).

Using the census auto-identified ethnic affiliation, which indicates a 2.5% total Roma population in Romania, the World Bank Poverty Assessment Report of 2003 estimates that “until 2002, Roma people had 2.7 times more chance of being poor than the rest of the population, and 5 times more chance of living in extreme poverty. In fact, three out of five Roma people live in extreme poverty and only one of five is not poor” (Teşliuc et al. 2003, p. 28).

<sup>1</sup> Based on December 2002 currency rate, 1 EURO = 33330 ROL.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1

### 1.4.2 Defining “Roma Issues” as Ethnic or Social Issues

As discussed in the section above, research data (Sandu 2005, Teşliuc et al. 2003) indicate that Roma people have a considerably higher risk of living in poverty than non-Roma people; the difference is even higher if we consider those living in extreme poverty. A data interpretation issue that emerges in several studies on the Roma is whether rejection of the Roma is due to the qualitatively inferior socio-economic status of a large segment of the Roma people, or whether it is associated with the ethnic classification in itself.

Some scholars on the Roma people in Romania have stressed the difference between the “ethnic rejection” and “social rejection” of the Roma people, indicating that Roma are mostly confronted with socially-grounded negative attitudes. For example, Zamfir and Zamfir (1993) write that “The problem that most urgently worries the Romanian society is not the problem of Roma as Roma ethnic. It is not, therefore, an ethnic problem. (...) This problem refers indeed to the Roma, but only to a segment of the Roma population, the size of which is difficult to estimate, and it focuses especially on social and economic issues than on ethnic issues” (p. 156).

Other analyses indicate that attitudes towards Roma may reflect various types of intolerance. Sandu (2003) distinguishes between a generalized intolerance towards ethnic groups other than one’s own, and a specific intolerance directed at Roma people only. The author concludes that specific intolerance tends to be a superiority complex of people who have recently improved their material situation. Therefore, ethnic prejudice and asserting socio-economic status both play a part in creating social distance and intolerance towards the Roma.

Stănculescu (2004a) analyzes perceptions on poor neighbourhoods among various members of a locality, mostly professionals in public institutions, and concludes that they usually define the poor Roma neighbourhoods as unworthy of being included in a study, because the Roma are responsible for their situation and even taking advantage of it.

Kligman (2002) notices that in post-communist Eastern Europe poverty and spatial concentration are increasingly important criteria in hetero-identifying<sup>3</sup> the Roma: “The local transformation of attributing ‘Gypsy identity’ to those who claim not to have been so identified before the collapse of communism seems to be largely the consequence of two interrelated factors: worsening poverty levels and geographical segregation. (...) Categories of classification such as ‘Roma’ are not fixed or immutable; they may be expanded or contracted to include or exclude. Hence, many of today’s poverty stricken have been metaphorically ‘Roma-fied’, regardless of how they self-identify” (pp. 73-74). Therefore, the author suggests that the stigma of the Gypsy identity takes precedence over the stigma of extreme poverty, and in some cases the poor actually become classified as Gypsy. Woodcock (2007) also believes that *Tigani* ethnic label is the bearer of stigma, being the trigger for strong rejection attitudes.

Our research also addresses the issue of social distance between the Roma and the non-Roma; still, we believe that quantitative and qualitative data support the hypothesis that attitudes towards Roma people include a strong ethnic prejudice. In other words, it seems that among two people of similar socio-economic status, the one which is seen as a *Tigan* will experience significantly stronger rejection. This interpretation is supported by empirical findings on the stigma of the *Tigan* category, and on the social distance of the non-Roma towards the Roma (see discussions in Chapter 4 on stereotypes and social distance). Qualitative and quantitative data bear witness to the power of the *Tigani* label, together with its embedded explanations of behavioural differences in terms of stable cultural or personality traits, and with its family of additional uses in related words, proverbs or metaphors.

<sup>3</sup> Hetero-identification = to be identified by “the others”, cf. auto-identification (self-defined identity)

## 1.5 Strategies of Roma Identification

The *Țigani/Rom* ethnic identity still bears the burden of social stigmatization, in Romania and also, in its local versions, throughout Europe. Roma people are perceived through the lenses of negative stereotypes, and social distance between them and the non-Roma is significantly larger than in the case of other ethnic groups. Under these circumstances, Roma people sometimes choose to identify as non-Roma in public or official contexts, in an attempt to escape possible reactions of aversion. At the same time, the introduction of affirmative actions or special programmes for the Roma has made possible, although on a far smaller scale, the reverse reaction: non-Roma people may choose to identify as Roma in official contexts in order to access some desirable benefits – such as, for example, reserved places in high schools or Universities.

*Table 1–3. Relationships between self-identification as Roma in private and public contexts*

The respondent...	..self-identifies as Roma in private contexts	..self-identifies as non-Roma in private contexts
.self-identifies as Roma in public contexts	Consistent Roma identification	(Seems to be negligible) Offensive identification strategy
.self-identifies as non-Roma in public contexts	Defensive identification strategy	Consistent non-Roma identification

The number of Romanian citizens who declared a Roma ethnic identity in the 2002 census has slightly increased compared to 1992; even so, it is widely considered to be an underestimate, due to the reluctance of Roma people to present themselves as such in front of an official interviewer.

*Table 1–4. Number of Roma people in Romania according to census data, 1930–2002*

Year	Total population	Ethnic groups								
		Romanian	Hungarian	Roma (Gypsy)	Ukrainian	German	Russo-Lipoven	Turkish	Tatar	Serb, Croat, Sloven
1930	14 280 729	11 118 170	1 423 459	242 656	45 875	633 488	50 725	26 080	15 580	50 310
1956	17 489 450	14 996 114	1 587 675	104 216	60 479	384 708	38 731	14 329	20 469	46 517
1966	19 103 163	16 746 510	1 619 592	64 197	54 705	382 595	39 483	18 040	22 151	44 236
1977	21 559 910	18 999 565	1 713 928	227 398	55 510	359 109	32 696	23 422	23 369	43 180
1992	22 810 035	20 408 542	1 624 959	401 087	65 472	119 462	38 606	29 832	24 596	33 769
2002	21 680 974	19 399 597	1 431 807	535 140	61 098	59 764	35 791	32 098	23 935	29 570

*Source: National Statistical Institute*

### 1.5.1 Hetero-identification of Roma People

Patricia Ahmed et al. (2001) and Iván Szelényi and János Ladányi (2002) conducted a research project focused on the processes of hetero-identification of Roma people, using interviewers as classifiers in omnibus surveys<sup>4</sup>.

Ahmed et al. (2001) draw the following conclusions related to interviewer hetero-identification of Roma people:

<sup>4</sup> An omnibus survey is a method of quantitative research where data on a wide variety of topics is collected during the same interview, usually undertaken on behalf of several clients.

- almost all people who self-identify as Roma are hetero-identified as Roma;
- self-identified people are a subset of the hetero-identified people: around 10% of respondents who self-identified as non-Roma in Romania were still designated as Roma by interviewers;
- external characteristics of the individual affect the probability of being hetero-identified as Roma: residence in a (perceived) majority Roma/Gypsy settlement, low level of education (elementary or less), number of people in the household and low income all increase the probability of being defined as Roma. Residence in a Roma neighbourhood increases this probability twelve times, lack of education around three times, and poverty and agglomeration each around one and a half times.

These features are unique to hetero-identification of Roma people, as they differ when it comes to processes of identification of Hungarian people, for example. Specifically, living standard and education does not influence attribution of Hungarian identity, for example.

Iván Szélenyi and János Ladányi (2002) prove furthermore that interviewer classification of Roma identity is highly inconsistent in Romania and Hungary (but not in Bulgaria). They took the sub-samples of people that the first interviewer classified as Roma during the screening process (in the omnibus surveys). This was a “blind” classification, since these surveys did not contain any question regarding the self-identification of the subject. Subsequently, during the research survey on the Roma sample, the second interviewer to speak with the subject would also classify her, taking also into account information from her self-identification. Table 1-5 indicates that, for example, in Hungary and in Romania around one third of subjects included in the sample on the basis of screening classification were not considered by the second interviewer to be Roma. Even more, “about two-thirds of those who were classified as Roma during the screening process in Hungary and Romania do not regard themselves as Roma” (idem, p. 86).

*Table 1–5. Inconsistencies between blind screening classification and informed survey classification*

	Bulgaria	Hungary	Romania
Second (survey) interviewer was certain	87.2	48.5	37.5
Survey interviewer was not certain	6.5	16.3	34.2
Classified as non-Roma by survey interviewer	6.3	35.2	28.3
Total subjects classified as Roma by first (screening) interviewer (5)	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sub-sample size	524	481	368

*Source: Szélenyi and Ladányi (2002), p. 85*

## 1.6 Finding the Roma People: Sampling Issues

Qualitative research in Roma communities or with Roma people poses relatively little problems for the researcher concerning the issue of finding Roma respondents and partners. Given the nature of the relationship between the qualitative researcher and the population included in the study – relationships which are rather informal and based on familiarity – Roma people are not reluctant to self-identify as such, after the initial research stage. The difficulties are considerably greater in quantitative research, for several reasons:

- Roma people may not be included on voting lists, due to lack of ID, and therefore they will not be included in the sample;
- interviewers may be reluctant to enter a Roma neighbourhood, replacing the subjects with people from the reserve list more often than people in non-Roma neighbourhoods;
- faced with an unknown interviewer in a short interaction, Roma respondents may prefer to identify as non-Roma.



Usually, individuals who define themselves as Roma in nationally representative samples are a very low proportion of the sample, which does not even allow for frequency analyses on key variables.

*Table 1-6. Inclusion of Roma respondents in several Romanian samples*

Survey	Data Collection Agency	Residence	Total cases	Roma respondents (%)	Roma respondents (N)
Domestic violence survey 2003, Open Society Foundation	Institutul de Marketing si Sondaje IMAS	Urban and rural	1806	1.7	30
Extremism Survey 2003, Institutul pentru Politici Publice (IPP)	The Gallup Organization Romania	Urban and rural	1500	0.9	13
Rural Barometer 2005, Open Society Foundation	Metro Media Transilvania	Rural and small towns	1995	1.9	37
Urban Romania Survey 2005, Open Society Foundation	The Gallup Organization Romania	Urban	2195	1.3	28

Therefore, in order to conduct quantitative research on Roma individuals, Roma people must be overrepresented in the sample, or included in a separate sample.

Ahmed et al. (2001) and Iván Szelényi and János Ladányi (2002) used a Roma subsample that included respondents who had been previously hetero-identified as Roma by interviewers in omnibus surveys. The use of hetero-identification in sampling is based on specific research objectives backed by conceptual and empirical justifications.

Empirical justifications refer to the fact that the error of exclusion is negligible (Ladányi and Szelényi 2002, p. 84). Therefore, the author starts from the assumption that self-identified Roma people are a subset of hetero-identified Roma people. Moreover, if one further differentiates self-identification from expert hetero-identification (classifications of teachers, social workers, doctors, etc) and interviewer classification in surveys, it is likely that the three can be represented as three concentric circles (idem, p. 81).

The main conceptual justification for studying hetero-identified Roma people is that “all of the above systems of classification are ‘real’, tell us something important about the people who are classified and who do the classification” (idem, p. 80). Furthermore, the authors add what we may term the Thomas Theorem justification: people who are hetero-identified as Roma by interviewers or experts are generally treated as Roma in the broader society, with significant personal and social consequences.

*Table 1-7. Errors in hetero-identification sampling the Roma population*

The respondent...	..self-identifies as Roma in private contexts	..self-identifies as non-Roma in private contexts
..is hetero-identified as Roma in public contexts	Correct identification	<b>Error of inclusion</b>
..is hetero-identified as non-Roma in public contexts	<b>Error of exclusion</b>	Correct identification

The main question for quantitative social research has been whether to include hetero-identified Roma respondents in analyses that purport to give data about the Roma population. There is no doubt that hetero-identification is necessary if one studies the process of hetero-identification itself, as Ladányi and Szelényi (2002) or Ahmed et al. (2001). Still, is it justified if the research aims to study the Roma population?

Up until now, concrete research programmes have come up with two main answers to this question. Authors like Zamfir and Zamfir (1992) or Zamfir and Preda (2003) accept samples that include hetero-identified, non self-identified Roma respondents, based on the probability that these people would still

identify as Roma in a private context. The errors of over-inclusion are seen as just an additional, non-essential type of error in the survey, besides sampling errors, question bias, etc.

A second approach in sampling (such as the one used in the Roma Inclusion Barometer, Open Society Foundation, November 2006) is to use hetero-identification in the first stage of sampling, but then to use only the data from respondents that self-identify as Roma in the actual analysis. This approach has the benefit of using a non-equivocal indicator of Roma ethnicity, but it has the disadvantage of errors of exclusion and the added cost of filtering hetero-identified respondents according to their public self-classification.

In order to overcome the debate of self-identification versus hetero-identification, D. Sandu (2005) defines the operational concept “people with high probability of Roma self-identification”, which can be targeted by various sampling means. The “Roma Social Mapping” research, conducted in 2005, used local key informers to identify compact local communities larger than 19 households and then to estimate the proportion of Roma residents within them. The number of people who probably self-identify as Roma within each community was computed by weighting the total community population. This method uses key informers, both Roma and non-Roma, to identify Roma communities, without attributing ethnic identities to individual respondents. The author argues that, since self-identified Roma people participate in the process of community identification, possible errors of over-inclusion are diminished. A significant shortfall of the method, as the author acknowledges (pp. 11-12), relies in the inherently political implications of listing and counting Roma communities in an official survey, as local authorities and key informants may hope to receive help or other types of assistance from the central authorities. Such a bias in identifying Roma communities and especially their problems can be reduced by a subsequent step of verification. For example, the resulting list of communities from the “Roma Social Mapping” research has been validated by subsequent surveys (when it was used for sampling the Roma population), since no errors have been reported.

### **1.6.1 Sampling Roma Communities Versus Roma Individuals**

Another difficulty in sampling the Roma population concerns those Roma individuals that do not live in compact communities. The approach most used in sampling has been to start from the Roma communities, which are easier to pinpoint, and then to search Roma individuals within them. Such an approach has the risk of underestimating the number of dispersed Roma residents.

A sampling methodology such as the one used by Ladányi and Szelényi (2002) is theoretically immune to this problem. Still, if we take into account the reluctance of interviewers for commercial surveys to enter compact Roma neighbourhoods, it may be the case that segregated Roma residents were in fact under-represented in their sample.

### **1.6.2 Comparability of Roma Samples**

The differences in sampling methodologies discussed above can have significant consequences on the distribution of Roma respondents on variables such as:

- respondents’ residence in compact communities or in mixed areas;
- probability of respondents being hetero-identified as Roma by an outsider;
- ethnic self-identification of respondents.

This is why comparability between different samples should only be assumed with caution. When several research results are consistent, this inter-sample agreement may provide additional reassurance for the correctness of the estimate.

## 1.7 Political Correctness and Public Definition of Roma Issues

Public debates and policies on the Roma issues have taken place over the last 17 years prior to this research and it is clear that they have shaped, in one way or another, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Research data on social distance supports the conclusion of an increase in ethnic tolerance, especially if considering data on tolerance of Roma neighbours by non-Roma respondents.

For example, M. Voicu (2007) presents data from four surveys regarding the proportion of the total adult population of Romania which do not accept Roma neighbours (p. 56). The declining tendency is clear: 72% in the European Value Survey 1993, 60% in World Value Survey 1997, 49% in European Value Survey 1999, and 37% in the Roma Inclusion Barometer 2006. M. Voicu concludes that “the degree of intolerance on behalf of the majority population against the Roma has decreased very much since 1990/decreased very much after 1990. (...) There are multiple causes for this change. On the one hand, an improvement in the economic situation. On the other hand, we can say that during this transition period Romanians have learned the rules of the democratic game, of tolerance and inter-ethnic respect. Not least, one should mention institutional causes, legislative change and the development of programmes that aim to stimulate social inclusion of the Roma” (idem). The quantitative survey data on social distance in this research also indicates that 37% of non-Roma respondents in the comparative sample would refuse Roma neighbours (see the chapter on social distance).

It is difficult to discern the independent impact of possible causes for this change in survey answers. It is plausible that at least one reason is the growing awareness of politically correct and incorrect answers – part of the rules of the democratic game mentioned by Voicu. The relevance of this factor is supported by the constant level of non-Roma respondents who refuse to accept a Roma person in the family: 76% of the national sample in the Barometer of Interethnic Relations 2002 (apud Jderu 2002), and 82% of the non-Roma respondents in the comparative sample (see Table 4-2). This could be the case because acceptance as a family member is the most personal choice possible, and any selection criteria is seen as potentially legitimate, since it is largely a matter of taste. Refusing to consider a *Țigăn* as a marriage partner is probably seen as less discriminatory and more publicly acceptable as refusing to have a *Țigăn* as a neighbour.

The question remains, whether a tendency to give politically correct answers to survey questions is only the result of wanting to be socially acceptable, or that this awareness itself leads to less discriminatory behaviour in inter-ethnic relations.

Community researchers mention in different contexts the issue of political correctness. M. Goina (2007) discusses the conflict between the apparent neutrality of language and subjacent attitudes reflected by other remarks, while Pantea (2007) also identifies political correctness as a barrier to honest communication with local authorities, a barrier that gradually subsides as the conversation develops.

### ***Quote 1-1. Ambiguous attitudes to ethnic statistics in Timișoara\****

*I realized that statistics on ethnic composition of population create a certain ambiguity. Among Roma movements it is admitted the need for them (as they can define needs and public policies have to be implemented), but at the same time statistics on ethnicity represent a fear of ethnicizing or racializing general phenomena such as poverty. This impact may lead to strengthening racism against Roma regarding “genetics”, “Roma blood” and “Roma culture” as mere causes of poverty. Among non-Roma this data is meant to show their political correctness (“we don’t ask our patients/clients/employees*

\* See Table 16-1 for a list of the localities, which also shows the county in which each locality is located.

*if they are Roma or not, they are all treated as equals.” Or: “They don’ t want to integrate and behave like us”, affirmations showing the importance of ethnic identification. It is obvious, that ethnicity matters for those people, who declare themselves neutral towards one’ s ethnic identity). (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 1-2. Political correctness in Local Authorities in Oșorhei**

*It should be stated from the beginning that none of the representatives of the local authority (except one of them) wished to be recorded during the interview. They all spoke with great precaution about the “Roma issue” and had, at the beginning, a speech that was politically correct. As the discussion continued the non-Roma representatives began to express their own opinions, less correct. They didn’ t want these parts to be written down or they said so after the completion of the interview. The reason might be that the media from Oradea warned several times about the critical status of the Roma in Oșorhei and Chieriu. (Oșorhei, Pantea 2007)*

At the same time, the experience of M. Goina (2007), which is also reflected in Rughiniș (2004), indicates that prejudiced discourse is not necessarily accompanied by hostile or discriminatory actions against the Roma. Paradoxically, it is possible that any professional, whether a teacher, social worker, priest or local official, could display a racist attitude against the Roma and at the same time be personally involved in systematic actions to help particular Roma people or a community.

**Quote 1-3. Prejudiced discourse versus empathetic action in public professionals in Curtici**

*The discourse of most Romanian intellectuals and public officers proves a racist attitude, full of prejudices towards Roma people. Nevertheless, the same public officers and intellectuals prove to be much more involved in the problems of Roma people with whom they interact and try to do their best in order to help them. For instance, one of the high school secretaries, leaving aside all the bad words she said about Roma people, seemed to be sincerely preoccupied by the fate of children who abandon school due to various reasons. One of the family physicians seemed determined to go in the community and offer assistance for new-born babies regardless of the lack of interest that the parents were showing for their children. The school director goes to convince a grandmother to allow her granddaughter at least to complete the 8th year of her studies. (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)*

Still, at the same time one should not neglect the direct and indirect effects and costs of prejudiced discourse at personal and social level, even when it is espoused by helpful and empathetic individuals. Prejudiced discourse and attitudes contribute to the stigma associated with the *Țigan* label, and thus prevent significant change from happening at a broader social level. Insofar as such discourse becomes public, it can contribute to increasing social distance and to experiences of shame and humiliation on behalf of the Roma, with serious consequences.

Therefore, it is important to have in mind how prejudiced discourse is hidden by the increasing awareness of the need to provide politically correct answers, and also how it relates to behaviour and attitudes at personal and community levels.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 The Survey Research

#### 2.1.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire has three parts:

1. Questions about the household, addressed to the head of the household;
2. Questions about all members of the household, addressed to the head of the household;
3. Opinion and life experience questions, addressed to a household member selected randomly.

#### 2.1.2 The Samples

The survey research uses two samples:

1. The Roma sample:
  - It includes households with self-identified Roma heads of household;
  - It is projected as a representative sample, at national and regional levels. The sample is stratified according to locality type and historical regions.
2. The Comparative sample:
  - It includes households with non-Roma heads of household in the same localities as the Roma sample; respondents were also selected in the surrounding areas to the Roma neighbourhoods;
  - It is not representative at national level, since it does not include residents from localities without a Roma population, and it selects respondents who live close to Roma neighbourhoods;
  - It provides a basis for comparison of data from the Roma sample.

Both samples have the same list of localities. Localities were selected on the basis of having had at least 10 people who identified as Roma in the 2002 Census. Within each locality (comună) we selected the village with the largest Roma community.

The comparative sample therefore indicates the situation of the non-Roma population who live in the vicinity of Roma neighbourhoods. Given the selection procedure, it is likely that, on average, the households included in the comparative sample have a slightly lower socio-economic position than the national average. This is confirmed, for example, by contrasting data from the Comparative sample with data from the National sample of the Roma Inclusion Barometer 2006 (see, for example, the summary tables in the sections on Access to Main Utilities, Long-term consumer goods, or Educational level).

The validity of the sampling methodology is supported by similar findings on key indicators with other research projects on the Roma population, such as the UNDP 2004<sup>5</sup> or the Soros Foundation RIB 2006<sup>6</sup>. Comparisons across research projects are included throughout the following analysis.

Our methodology asked survey operators to identify the Roma neighbourhoods in each locality and to select two of them randomly. Within each community, households were initially selected by the random route method. The operator asked who was the head of the household, and finally conducted interviews only when he or she self-identified as Roma. The respondent for the second

<sup>5</sup> Available on the UNDP site at URL <http://roma.undp.sk/>

<sup>6</sup> The report is available on the Soros Foundation site at URL <http://www.osf.ro/ro/program.php?program=16>; the database is also available on request.

section of the survey was selected randomly in the same household, as the adult member who had the most recent birthday.

As is usually the case with Roma surveys that rely on operators’ selection of Roma neighbourhoods, it is probable that Roma people who live in non-Roma neighbourhoods are under-represented. It is also probable that some operators avoided the neighbourhoods which were most remote, difficult to access or perceived as dangerous. Still, this does not affect the comparability of the data with other Roma surveys who deployed a similar methodology, such as the UNDP 2004 or the Soros Foundation RIB 2006.

2.1.3 Categories for Analysis

The two samples were selected according to the ethnicity of the head of the household. Consequently, the Roma sample includes only Roma heads of household and the comparative sample includes only non-Roma heads of the household. Still, since the individual respondent was selected randomly from the household, his or her ethnic identification may not coincide with that of the head of the household. Households were selected in the sample only if the head of the household self-identified as Roma, though the randomly selected member of the household could be non-Roma. Given the fact that both samples include random respondents of various ethnic groups, questions from the individual part of the questionnaire are analysed by four categories. The first two are the main object of analysis: the non-Roma subjects in the comparative sample, and the Roma subjects in the Roma sample. The remaining two are presented only for comparison purposes, as there are relatively few individuals in these categories: Roma subjects in the comparative sample and non-Roma subjects in the Roma sample. For the sake of simplicity, when it is not otherwise specified, we shall use the expression “Roma respondents” to refer to the Roma respondents in the Roma sample, and “non-Roma respondents” to refer to the non-Roma respondents in the comparative sample.

We have included in the category of Roma respondents all people who have indicated that their first or second ethnic affiliation is Roma.

Table 2-1. Distribution of individual survey respondents by ethnicity and sample type

	Nr of cases	Percent
Roma subject in Roma sample	1070	50
Non-Roma subject in comparative sample	954	44
Roma subject in comparative sample	59	3
Non Roma subject in Roma sample	72	3
Total	2155	100.0

The combination of two samples (Roma and non-Roma) with the format of the survey instrument following the philosophy of an integrated household survey provided the unique opportunity for two types of comparability:

1. Between Roma and the local majority living in neighbouring areas;
2. Between Roma and the status of the average population of the country (reflected in national household and labour force surveys).

Given a major sampling constraint —uncertainty of the number of the Roma population (due to the diffuse border between ethnic groups) —the data (and thus all possible comparisons) has certain limitations. The survey does not provide the answer to questions like “How many Roma live in poverty?” or “How many Roma have completed secondary education?”, but it helps estimate answers to questions such as “What proportion of Roma live in poverty?” and “What

proportion of Roma have completed secondary education?” We must still take into account that the survey refers especially to residents of Roma communities, and not to dispersed Roma.

Such answers are comprehensive enough for policy purposes because they outline the distance between various groups and provide clues to the reasons why disparities exist.

## 2.2 The Qualitative Research

### 2.2.1 Community Studies

The tradition of Community Studies is not a sub-discipline of sociology, or of ethnography or social or cultural anthropology, but rather a research method on the edge of the mentioned social sciences. In the United States the tradition of Community Studies came from the qualitative sociology of the Chicago school. In Eastern Europe sociography had come before sociology was developed. But modern Community Studies, mostly based on the Western European and American traditions, has a very strict methodology, mostly focusing on cultural changes of ethnic communities, the reproduction of ethnic identities and influences of local and national policies. “Community studies are characterized by an eclectic methodology: some elements are chosen and their connection and interaction with each other is observed, while focusing on certain communities and neighbourhoods, which are relevant for the analysis of the research topics beyond the question of locality. Moreover, the method is able primarily to point to group behaviours, and it generally creates theories starting from empirical data, rather than from theses” (Kovács 2007, p. 11.)

In our research project in-depth qualitative research was conducted in 36 communities with a high risk of social exclusion in order to clarify the different mechanisms that lead to this social process, in different situations. This type of research allows for a more detailed understanding of the local problems and a better view on local opportunities and suitable solutions/improving strategies.

The criteria used for the selection of the 36 localities were:

- Census information and information provided by the Local Authorities Research, that indicated a high risk of social exclusion;
- Sub-ethnic group of Roma communities: the selection procedure aimed to maximize the diversity of *neamuri*;
- Availability of a field researcher willing to spend four weeks in a given community;
- Previous research experience of the field researchers in a given community: preferences of field researchers were given priority in the selection process;

Using these criteria, we assembled the list of communities (see Table 16-1).

The researchers we worked with had the following qualifications: university level studies in either sociology, anthropology, ethnography, social work or other social sciences; experience in Roma communities, experience in disadvantaged communities or in qualitative community research.

Each field researcher was expected to live in the locality where the community belongs, or, when possible, in the community itself, for a minimum of three weeks (with weekends). The researcher was expected to produce the data and the community reports, based on his/her direct experience.

The following research instruments, to facilitate the work of the researchers, were used:

- A General Guideline, with an introduction to the method of the fieldwork and way of collecting and recording data;
- A short guideline about how to behave in the field;

- Format and instructions for the field diary;
- Observation guideline with focus points for observation;
- Semi-structured interview guidelines for the in-depth interviews;
- A list of documents and other materials to be collected/copied.

Research targets were:

- Roma families;
- Non-Roma families living around Roma inhabitants;
- Local institutions and organizations that have or should have official relations with the Roma inhabitants;
- Schools, kindergartens to which Roma pupils go;
- Roma and non-Roma NGOs in localities.

The focus points of the qualitative fieldwork were the following:

- main problems and needs as defined at local level;
- access to utilities and infrastructure;
- access to social services;
- access to income sources;
- identity and property papers;
- relations to the institutions and authorities;
- working experiences (position in formal and informal labour market), experienced labour-market inequalities ;
- experiences in school, with teachers (in the case of parents, both their own when they were students, and currently as parents), experienced inequalities in school;
- aspirations;
- coping strategies;
- migration potential and migration experiences;
- geographical mobility inside the country (ways and reasons);
- representation of interests at local and county levels;
- social relations inside the community;
- inter-ethnic relations, ethnic affiliation and self-definition.

Researchers conducted an average of 15-20 interviews, which were distributed as follows:

- Roma and non-Roma Local residents, including people who have problems with birth, ID or property papers (6-10 interviews);
- Mayor or Deputy Mayor;
- Local councillor;
- Proximity policeman;
- Medical doctor;
- School, kindergarten director and/or teachers;
- Officer for Population Registration;
- Social Worker;
- Expert for Roma Issues in Local Authority;
- Other Roma leaders and experts.



## 2.2.2 Data Types in Community Studies

The qualitative fieldwork research provides several types of data, which are incorporated into the community research report and its annexes. Field researchers have submitted:

1. Statistical data at local level, provided by local authorities and social service providers;
2. Interview transcripts for the most informative interviews (selected by the field researcher), and audio files or abstracts for the other interviews;
3. Their own research report, including:
  - a presentation of the most informative field data;
  - their own research conclusions;
  - a research journal.
4. Audio-visual materials: photographs, brief films, etc;
5. Other annexes, such as newspaper articles or other documents available on the locality, other data, etc

The field researchers have a socio-anthropological background and/or experience, and therefore their reports are not only collections of primary data, but also include their field experiences and their understanding of the situation on the ground. Field experiences include information on the personal history of encounters with local authorities and with the inhabitants, the ease or difficulty of obtaining information, the sense of being welcomed or mistrusted, and so on. The researchers' conclusions cover topics such as local cultural practices, standard of living, forms of social participation or exclusion from different institutions, ethnic discrimination.

Therefore our report is to some extent a meta-analysis of the field-reports, which are in themselves pieces of sociological research. The conclusions of the field researchers are interpreted in the light of statistical, interview and audio-visual data from the locality, and integrated into the broader context of the other reports. We also evaluate the credibility of the conclusions drawn by field researchers, taking into account the diversity and coherence of data that refer to their assertions.

## 2.3 The Local Authorities Survey

The Local Authorities self-applied questionnaire was designed in order to:

1. Obtain recent data at locality level about Roma communities (focusing on the compact, segregated ones);
2. Assess the perception of local governments on the Roma inhabitants in their localities (focusing on the Local Authorities' perception of the lack of ID cards, property papers and education issues);
3. Compare the data provided by local governments with the data from the 2002 Census.

The research instrument was a 4-page long self-applied questionnaire, with 23 questions (including tables and open questions). The questionnaire was intended to be sent with a letter to all local governments, for self-completion and return to the Technical Assistance Research Team.

We sent the questionnaires to all 3177 local governments in Romania by mail and, when it was possible or required, by fax or e-mail. The final response rate was around 56% (1770 answers received).

A frequent problem encountered at local level was that some local government representatives did not want to contradict the 2002 Census data on the number of Roma people in the locality, although they believed that the real situation of the Roma communities was different. For example, in some cases local governments did not want to indicate in the questionnaire Roma communities whose residents did not declare their Roma ethnicity in the census, even if they actually considered and declared themselves of Roma ethnicity in less formal contexts.

We conducted the analysis of the descriptive statistics together with the comparative analysis of the Census data and of additional indicators from the annual data collection of the National Institute for Statistics.

When using a weight variable, the Local Authorities survey data is representative on regions and types of locations<sup>7</sup>.

## 2.4 The Report

This report combines the findings from the qualitative and the quantitative research, and it also includes a chapter on the data from the Local Authorities Survey (see chapter 13). Quantitative data is used to discuss the frequency distributions of relevant variables and to identify the most relevant influences, by multivariate and univariate analysis. Qualitative research is used to illustrate concepts used in the quantitative research, and to highlight the connections between numbers and the real lives of Roma and non-Roma people.

The report is integrated at chapter level, while sections rely dominantly either on qualitative or on quantitative analysis. Since each type of data requires a certain mindset to interpret it, we hope that this structure will facilitate reading.

The questionnaires for the Survey research and for the Local Authority research are available on the project website: [www.sper.org.ro](http://www.sper.org.ro)

### 2.4.1 Ethnonyms Used in The Report

In this report we have used various ethnonyms related to the Roma people, such as Roma, Gypsy, *Țigan* or more specific ones such as *Căldărari*, *Ursari*, *Gropeni*, and others. For each person, the proper ethnonym is the one she or he uses, and ethnonyms are most often difficult to translate because part of their meaning has been lost. However, since this report is based on qualitative and quantitative data on thousands of Roma people and dozens of communities, it is impossible to use in each case the specific ethnonym by which these people and groups define themselves.

We have used the name “Roma” to designate the various groups and individuals that refer to themselves as *Romi*, *Țigani*, *Ursari*, *Căldărari*, *Țigani romanizati*, *Rudari* and any other ethnonyms commonly subsumed under the label of Rom. We chose to use “Roma” and not “Gypsy” as the generic term because the first is less charged with moral, emotional, explicative and descriptive assumptions. Gypsy is commonly translated as *Țigan*, and we also wanted to maintain a distance towards stereotypes of the *Țigani* and the stigma of being a *Țigan*. Therefore, we have only used the ethnonym *Țigan* in the analysis, marked in italics, when referring to the perspective of non-Roma people in Romania on the Roma.

We have used specific ethnonyms, such as *Lingurari*, *Gabor*, and so on, in all contexts in which the specific affiliation of a person or a community was known and when this information was relevant for the topic under discussion.

When writing about people with other ethnic identification than Roma, we have used the terms “non-Roma” and *Gadje* interchangeably, as a succinct reminder of the Roma perspectives on the outside society.

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<sup>7</sup> This means that in the database the proportion of localities by (development) regions and the rates of localities in different categories of type of location (municipality, town, commune) is the same as in the national database (Census 2002)

## 2.4.2 Presentation of Statistical Information

In the following pages, survey data is most often presented as frequency distributions, in tables or charts. The distribution of a certain variable, such as the language spoken in the household, is also presented as a function of other traits of the respondents – such as education, income, urban or rural residence, etc. It is always possible that a given association between two variables, for example a better rate of school success of pupils in towns compared to rural localities, to reflect the effect of another variable, such as income, since urban households are wealthier on average. In order to see, for example, whether differences in school success can be attributed to residence or to household wealth, one can use a regression model which tests both correlations simultaneously. While linear regression models attempt to describe the variation of a given variable as a function of several variables, logistic regression models describe the odds of a given event (the probability of its occurrence divided by the probability of it not happening) as a function of several variables. In this report we have used regression models mainly in order to identify the main predictors and thus possible influences on a given feature. Therefore, the chapters include presentations of relationships between pairs of variables, while background exploratory regression models are included in the annexes.

When available, we have included data from the Roma Inclusion Barometer RIB 2006 (Bădescu et al. 2007), for comparison purposes.





## PART II



## ETHNIC AFFILIATION AND CLASSIFICATION



### 3. Who Are The Roma?

The Roma population is in a process of complex differentiation, influenced by structural changes in the Romanian society and economy, as well as factors with a more focused influence. The wealth extremes are the ones that influence the most the public representation of the Roma: the very rich and the very poor. The “Roma tradition”, the *manele*<sup>8</sup>, and the stark contrasts brought about by rapid change are frequent subjects of emotionally-laden discourses about the *Țigani*. Besides this representation of the Roma culture focused on its “exotic” and most distinctive features, there is little public awareness of the commonalities and the differences in worldviews and experiences between the two sides of the “*Țigan*” divide. This chapter uses information from qualitative and quantitative surveys to discuss the ethnic affiliation of the Roma against the background of more general information on the diversity of Roma people and communities.

There are multiple perspectives which we could deploy to answer the broad question “Who are the Roma”? One such perspective could be methodological – namely, focusing on the Roma people that are portrayed in this research, on the criteria that led to their selection and their influence on the emerging picture. The issues of sampling and community selection have been discussed in the first part of the report. To summarize, our research is based on information from a variety of communities, and it mostly refers to Roma people who live in more or less distinct Roma communities. We have gathered little information on Roma people who live among non-Roma neighbourhoods. This is usual in sociological research, due to common sampling practices. However, it is important to have this community-centered selection in mind when interpreting the results from a broader perspective.

A second perspective starts from the researchers’ understanding of Roma people’s lives – of the main forces that lead to their similarity and variation, and of those experiences that are more often found in the life tracks of the Roma, compared to the non-Roma. In this chapter we use qualitative and quantitative data to explore the diversity of Roma communities, the issue of tradition, their attitudes and expectations, their experiences of extreme poverty, religious affiliation and the age of motherhood (see sections 3.1 to 5.4).

A third perspective refers to the ethnic affiliation of the Roma people themselves: how do they define their ethnicity? What do they mean by “being Roma”? What emotions are associated with this identity? How does it influence their choices in relating to people in other ethnic groups? This is the type of approach we shall pursue in the section 3.5 on “Survey Analysis of Ethnic Affiliation”.

A fourth perspective refers to the *Țigani* and *Romi* stereotypes shared by the Roma and non-Roma population of Romania, and the emotions, attitudes and practices that are associated with these stereotypes. We explore this perspective on the Roma people in the chapter on “Stereotypes, Social Distance Attitudes and Inter-ethnic Contact”.

#### 3.1 Diversity of Roma Communities

Observed from different points of view the perceived, presented, represented, reclaimed diversity of the Roma communities gives us certain clues to the mechanisms of social/cultural exclusion and how these are confronted by the people themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Manele = Musical style, with Oriental-type tonalities, performed especially by Roma artists, highly popular with segments of the Roma and non-Roma public, while at the same time heavily criticized by other segments of the public, especially for the content of its lyrics.

### 3.1.1 Levels of Differentiation

This section starts with a fourfold distinction of classifications and differentiation of the Roma people and communities:

1. Self-differentiations employed by the Roma themselves, in order to identify as opposed to “other” Roma, such as the Roma from neighbouring localities or the most marginalized Roma from the same locality/ settlement.

An eloquent example of how “the other” Roma are built up as a mirror-representation can be found in the case of Cetate: the interviewed Roma differentiated themselves from the Roma who live in the neighbour localities and who are perceived as a self-segregated Roma community, with a high rate of unemployment, wood-stealing and other law infringements. At the same time, the Roma from the nearby village are perceived as new-comers, migrants from the Moldavia region and, therefore with a lower social status. Another category of “other” Roma are the families living in the social housing block (the poorest and the most excluded from the socio-economic networks of the locality) – who are perceived as inferior because they are new-comers to the locality.

Another example is the sub-ethnic group of *Gabors* – present in the studied Oșorhei, Sîntana de Mureș, Târgu Mureș settlements – who consider themselves the only real Roma, speaking the only real Romani, with the noblest blood of all Roma. They consider all other Roma as inferior, thus exogamic marriage with non-*Gabors* is highly undesirable and banned. Moreover, the “inferior” Roma are treated as servants and perceived as the “trouble makers” who generate the discriminatory attitudes among the non-Roma – the reason for which the *Gabors* use the same discriminating stereotypes as the non-Roma towards the “other Roma”.

2. Hetero-differentiations employed in the discourses of the non-Roma. The main categories used by the non-Roma subjects were “our Roma” – the Roma from the locality or the Roma they have a certain amount of contact with – and “other Roma” – Roma from other localities or who are absent from the socio-economic networks of the non-Roma subjects.

3. Researchers’ classifications of the Roma in case studies add to this multiplicity of perspectives. Some of these classifications closely mirror the common stereotypical distinctions, while others are more useful as analytical instruments.

**Quote 3-1. Researcher’s categorizations of Roma in M. Kogălniceanu**  
*Roma can be categorized in this respect, as well: there are the orderly, with tidy homes, and there are the very filthy, unkempt. Children relieve themselves on the street, run around naked, have very many cats and dogs. In large families, hygiene rules are more precarious, as well, because the mother does not have time for all the children at once. (Mibail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

4. Last but not least, we can discuss the diversity of the Roma community patterns from the broader perspective provided for us by an overview of all community reports.

### 3.1.2 Self-differentiation Strategies

Self-differentiation strategies refer to how Roma perceive and present each other within one settlement, be it within family groups or as neighbours, both near and more distant.

As observed in most of our case studies, the “new-comers”, even if already settled for a long time, have a lower status. Thus, the length of the period of settlement in one locality is used as a resource granting status and also priority in accessing further resources and welfare.



**Quote 3-2. Status and the period of settlement in Cugir**

*With regard to integration in the Cugir community, it seems that the least active group is the “corturar” community – which is probably due to their inadequate standards of living, but also to the fact that these Roma are among the last ones arrived into town. As a matter of fact, with regard to Roma’s arrival in Cugir, 3 large stages can be identified: before the ‘50s in the 20th century; the 1968-1989 period; the years after 1990. These results in appreciations they make about themselves or their neighbours: “...we are all ‘barabe’ / ‘vinituri’ (newcomers, intruders), but some are more ‘newcomers’ than we are” (baraba and vinitura are words used in popular Romanian language to indicate someone’s alien origins). (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

In Sântana, there is a strongly claimed difference between the “old elite”, who used to practise traditional occupations around the region – the leather and feather merchant families, practising these occupations on a regular basis in the ‘40s – and the other “old” Roma families, who never had a regular or traditional occupation in the past. The status differentiation functions even today, many years after these occupations collapsed. One has to acknowledge that in the ‘40s these regular/traditional occupations gave an economic and social advantage to the ones performing them, by bringing them into more stable socio-economic networks with the non-Roma and also by offering a sense of protection/security during spatial mobility.

In the communities where there are certain opportunities for economic mobility, the status is reclaimed – and granted – according to the position of the houses toward the non-Roma houses.

**Quote 3-3. Status differentiations and the position of the houses in Curtici**

*During the process of advancement of the Roma and withdrawal of the Romanians towards the centre, some richer families within the Gropeni group managed to buy houses in the Romanian neighbourhood. Just as recently, richer Roma buy houses in Romanian neighbourhoods. Just the way one may see specific “palaces” in the very centre of Curtici town. It is obviously a status matter to own a house in the Romanian neighbourhood, or closer to the centre. A woman of around 50, told me proudly: “see how far from the community I live...”, then she explained that since her sons are working in France they were keen on buying a house in the Romanian neighbourhood. There is evident a continual process of the well-off individuals moving from the outskirts areas to the central ones and outside the Gypsy ghetto. (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)*

In some of the more compact Roma communities it seems that, despite these internal differentiations, all the children are treated as if all the adults were their parents. There were several case studies which reported that the babies are sometimes fed by women other than the mother, and that children are allowed in all houses and when they are inside they are treated and fed as if they were household members.

**Quote 3-4. Child care and “community behavior” in Dolbasca**

*I have seen that it is quite frequent and normal for women other than the biological mother (or her sister) to nurse a baby. (...) Ms M. told me that once she was even helped by a Romanian family living in “the valley”, and that this was not exceptional. (Dolbasca, Lazăr 2007)*

Exceptions to this “community behaviour” were observed in the urban “ghetto communities”, living in the crowded blocks of flats – where the children often become reasons/ pretexts for

conflicts among the grown-ups. What the researchers noted about these exceptions is that the settlement/neighbourhood cannot be actually considered a “community”.

**Quote 3-5. Children as reasons for conflicts in a Roma “pseudo-community” in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**  
*“It is from the children that all fights start, from the children and from money. There are no other reasons” (G.M., Roma woman aged 21, Zăbrăuți, quoted by Țircă 2007)*

### 3.1.3 Hetero-differentiation

The differentiation “our Roma” – “other Roma” is charged with moral and emotional meaning as “our Roma” tend to be seen as better and nicer people, who could enter the social networks of the entire locality, while “the other Roma” – who were never the subjects of direct interaction – are perceived as capable of infractions of the law and as worthy of the negative representation of the Roma. We will discuss further this dichotomized view in chapter 4.3.

It is on the background of this differentiation that the social distance and the social stereotypes are constructed.

An important aspect of hetero-differentiation is related to the geographical differentiation of the Roma settlements – names such as “pe vale” (from the valley), “din deal” (up the hill), “Viitorului” (neighbourhood name), “Byron” (street name). In the same locality, with more than one Roma settlement, some settlements are perceived, in general, as dangerous; others are perceived as friendly, others are perceived as neutral. The geographical differentiation indicates levels of physical distance as well as structures of social maps, employed by the non-Roma. Thus, the geographic differentiations correspond to levels of social exclusion and to levels of welfare within the Roma settlements.

### 3.1.4 Different Community Patterns

The Qualitative Research performed in the 36 Roma settlements showed not only a high inner heterogeneity and diversity within the settlements, but also a wide variety of community patterns. There were some in which the inhabitants had similar problems, similar coping mechanisms and were involved in and connected through tight social networks:

In the case of Lupeni, in the “Revolutiei” neighbourhood, the strong social networks are a reason for the families to remain in the community and, as the researcher suggested, the main resource for fighting poverty. It is worth noting that this pattern is common in the rural areas and the urban areas with houses.

**Quote 3-6. The “community” as a resource – the social capital, in Lupeni**  
*An important way to survive is relying on kinship. One of my days in the field everyone was washing carpets by hand, until one borrowed a sprinkler from a cousin. One of the women I made interview with stays all day long at her sister to help her with children; local people would be completely lost in this web of institutions unfamiliar to them without relatives’ help. A woman takes water daily from her daughter and takes care of the grandchildren in return. Employees of cleaning company have better access to wastes and they can also arrange transporting collected materials with the firm’s car, thus his family members have these possibilities, too. Once I tried to visit a man, who wasn’t at home, as he left for a funeral where the grave was dogged by relatives. Local people have never mentioned they can rely on an acquaintance, as they have no relations with people outside the family. But there*

*are also opposite situations: once a woman decides to leave her home and move to this district, she loses all the support from her family. (Lupeni, Geambasu 2007)*

Besides these examples, which can be granted the term “community”, there were observed some which do not bind the people into tight networks or similar mechanisms for coping with problems and exclusion.

Indeed, in certain case studies, the researchers mentioned that the Roma inhabitants – self and hetero-identified – can hardly be considered a “community” – in the sense of consciously having a group identity and/or developing strong social networks. The field studies performed in urban areas or in areas where the main dwelling form is the block of flats offered a divers image of “pseudo-communities”:

1. The “transit community” of the Zăbrăuți ghetto from Bucharest – where the people forge temporary relationships and networks, while at the same time trying to find the means to move out as fast as possible, to a better place. The connections and differentiations are defined mainly according to the “hang-out” groups (“anturaj”) and the temporary channels of communication, build on momentary needs.

***Quote 3-7. Temporary social networks of a “pseudo-community”, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest***

*There are some communication networks in the neighbourhood: on the one hand there are those networks based on family relationships, then the groups of people who spend time together socializing in front of their blocks, in entrance hallways or on the only little bench in Zăbrăuți, the groups of teenagers who gather at various points of the neighbourhood as well as big groups of children who improvise a playground within the neighbourhood. Overall this there’s also the relationship between the informal leaders and the rest of the community. (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

2. Iris, the “dispersed urban vicinity”, with a rural aspect, from Cluj, where the people are united only by the school, the Pentecostal church and the community centre (not an institution, but a small square, a meeting place) (Plainer 2007).

3. Lupeni, the “Viitorului” neighbourhood of social housing blocks, “the refugee community”: where the inhabitants have strong links among members of the same family, living in the neighbour apartments, but hardly ever develop relations with other families.

***Quote 3-8. Strong family ties versus weak community networks in the “Viitorului” neighbourhood, Lupeni***

*The social capital, the relation with the relatives and the extended family, is the most valuable resource for these people. This is shown through the fact that the locals have no contacts (or relatives) outside the district, and relations with colleagues are completely missing; but contacts among families from the same block are very strong... (Lupeni, Geambaşu 2007)*

### 3.1.5 Researchers’ Classifications

The researchers’ use of classifications was an instrument for organising their fieldwork. When the locality had several Roma settlements, the initial categorizations they made in the field had the function of identifying those one or few communities to focus on. The community researchers used the geographic limitations, as well, in order to reflect on the perceived social maps of the

localities. They explored the sub-ethnic differentiations employed by the Roma themselves and used in self-differentiation strategies.

In each community report, this classification was presented in the first chapter. This shows again the well-known fact that classifications and categorizations are a useful instrument, especially if used properly – just as in everyday life.

Only a few of the researchers chose to add judgments of moral value to their classifications and chose to represent the different Roma groups through the perspective of the non-Roma and the hetero-differentiation.

**Quote 3-9. Researcher's categorisation and moral judgments, in M. Kogălniceanu**  
*(...) Muslim Gypsies themselves could be grouped under 2 categories, as there are the Roma petty retailers, full of gold, wearing heaps of rings, normal or larger, ornate, bulged, and neck chains, are far more cleaner and more concerned about their physical appearance and hygiene, and then there are poorer Muslim Roma. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

In addition to all this, the general research project relied on different levels of classification of Roma settlements: first, when survey samples were designed, as presented in sub-chapter 1.1; secondly, when the 36 communities were chosen, according to the characteristics presented in sub-chapter 1.2; third, when different characteristics of communities or settlements were referred to in order to indicate different patterns of social exclusion and “typical” cases of social exclusion.

## 3.2 Traditional and Non-traditional Roma

In recent decades, the use of the concepts “tradition” and “culture” has become quite controversial within the field of sociology and anthropology. It has been argued that the traditions are a social construction, in permanent change and adaptation according to social contexts or simply in order to actual interests (such as political or discursive manipulation)<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, “culture” is not something that people are born with, but is a social construction, a certain behavioural or attitudinal answer to specific realities and wider contexts, which groups of people facing those specific realities employ or used to employ<sup>10</sup>.

It is important to keep these aspects in mind, while addressing the topic of Roma culture and traditions, particularly because the term “tradition” generates emotional reactions and discrepancies between different uses of the symbolic meanings – what is valuable for some, can be stigmatized by others.

For example, there are two main views on Roma traditions shared by the non-Roma and Roma alike. One view is that the real Roma are only the traditional ones and all the others are a fake form of Roma, who, being out of normality (nor Roma nor *Gadje*), are open to anti-social behaviour. The alternative view is that the Roma are facing a precarious living and exclusion because of their culture and traditions.

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<sup>9</sup> Since 1983, with the publication of the book “The Invention of Traditions”, by Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terrence, Cambridge University Press, there has been an entire current of social thought and scholars sustaining this argument.

<sup>10</sup> Recently, this acknowledgement has been introduced even in the Council of Europe debates on Intercultural Learning and Dialogue – through Gavin Titley’s assesment “Plastic, Political and Contingent: Culture and Intercultural Learning in Department of Youth and Sport Activities”, 2005.

**Quote 3-10. Social representations of Roma, according to cultural patterns, in Timișoara**

*Public perception of local Roma is structured by two impressions which mix and, when generalized, nurture negative stereotypes. One refers to the “rich Roma” who have built “palaces” for themselves in the city centre and, as people say, “believe they can buy anything with their (dirty) money. The other refers to the “poor Roma” who live in shacks at the margins of the city and, according to majority opinions, “bring shame to the city”. This is how Timișoara Roma have become unwanted elements either by their wealth, or by their poverty. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Still, empirical data does not support any simple causal relationship between cultural traits and poverty. Attitudes, values and patterns of behaviour are negotiated answers to difficult questions posed by life, and they reflect the problems they solve.

On the other hand, the issue of identity and self-definition is always a complex one, for any person – bearing in mind that identity is constructed through reciprocal social interactions and complex life situations, as the classic sociological concept of “looking-glass self”<sup>11</sup> implies. The process of using tradition/giving up tradition/changing or adopting a “new tradition” – as a term of reference for one’s identity – should be analysed from this perspective. This perspective is also relevant for understanding the processes of social exclusion, as they reflect in the construction of self-representations: self-representations of Roma are also built as an answer to the negative stereotypes used in the dominant discourses, by the non-Roma.

The Roma who self-declare as Roma and give importance to their ethnic identity may use several ways related to tradition, in order to construct and self-represent themselves, such as: speaking Romani language, reference to the past, practice of the occupations of the parents, adhering to an extended family unity, keeping the dress code and keeping the marriage customs. At the same time, they may use none of the above and still affiliate to a Roma ethnic identity.

### 3.2.1 The Past and the Legendary Past

Stories of the past are told in order to build up not only identity, but also status, as opposed to “others” – Roma who have a less “honourable” past or who are new-comers in the area and also the non-Roma who judge these identities and status.

One of the methods the Roma employ in this sense is to highlight stories of an honourable past, in which they had good relations with the noble or high-ranked non-Roma and they were involved in social networks with them (even if these networks were economically based or even based on slavery). These stories are also used to prove the long-time settlement of the Roma in the area/locality, in order to legitimize the presence of the Roma and their right to live there – as an answer to the rejection attitudes of the non-Roma and the banning threats, present in the public non-Roma discourse in Romania.

**Quote 3-11. Being the oldest inhabitants in the locality: Sântana, Cetate and Colțău**

*Historically, the Gypsy community of Comlaus is perhaps the oldest in the region. When asked ‘what kind of Gypsies they are’ all my respondents told me that they are “bastinasi” – that is autochthonous Gypsies, or “vatrari” using the radical “vatra” (hearth) to underline that they belong to the place. (Sântana, C. Goia 2007) They differentiate themselves from the others in Budacu de Sus and Ragla, who are said to come from Moldova (being also called “moldeni”). (...) Old family photos, as well as interviews with elderly Roma people prove that local Roma have adopted*

<sup>11</sup> Central concept in social psychology to define the process of building identity through social interaction – reflecting in the others, who reflect in one-self. It was created by Charles H. Cooley in 1902.

*clothing and traditional Saxon customs. Wedding customs, New Year celebrations, and traditional local entertainment practices are all Saxon in origin. This fact proves that the claims of Roma residents of being “Saxon Gypsies” and actually the oldest residents in the locality are somehow well grounded. (Cetate, Isan 2007)*

*“It has been discussed plenty of times: who was here first – Roma or Hungarians? We have nothing, neither land nor property; they came after us and have them all. We’re used by them... without being very liked by them. (K. O., Roma, 37 y. o., Colțâu, quoted by Iorga 2007)*

Another method to build identity and status by using traditional cues is to highlight a romantic past or a certain celebration that refers to the romantic past of the Roma ethnic sub-groups.

**Quote 3-12. Memory and celebration of a romantic past in Curtici**

*We are not called Căldărari, (they) are to be found above, we are called Cortorari, our ancestors travelled with their tents.... So we are called Cortorari, there you go, we are two different Roma nations, for example, Corbei are Gypsy by speak no Gypsy.... (C.I., 57, Curtici, quoted by M. Goina 2007)*

**Quote 3-13. Memory of past traditions in Dolbasca**

*The Gulia community is not a traditional one, it has not preserved its clothing customs and ancient practices are increasingly influenced by cohabitation with Romanians. When asked about old celebrations and customs, people tell only about the Green Thursday, a traditional event and a key moment in the calendar, for which even those who are away in the country or abroad come back. This is celebrated in the week after the Easter, a delay which can be explained in the same way as the practice of having weddings on Thursday instead of Saturdays: on Easter and on week-ends the Roma sing for other people’s celebrations. (Dolbasca, Lazăr 2007)*

**Quote 3-14. Collective memory in Oșorbei clan**

*The collective memory says their migration began 8-10 generations ago from a family called Gabor, from Târgu Mureș, who went to Transilvania, Valabia and Hungary. Under these circumstances one may speak about a Gabors’ clan, just like the Scottish clans, with certain nostalgia for the mythic place of origin left by the predecessors. They all speak Romani, Hungarian and Romanian. (Oșorbei, Pantea 2007)*

### 3.2.2 Romani Language

Romani language as the mother tongue and the use of Romani in the household was presented in many interviews as an identity trait, marking the “real Roma” as opposed to the non-Romani speakers who are sometimes considered inferior.

**Quote 3-15. Romani language as a mark of Roma authenticity, in Curtici**

*“Roma in Curtici are split into two communities. Each of them is known under several names. According to their own viewpoints, Căldărari<sup>1</sup>, Cortorari<sup>2</sup>, or Roma is whoever speaks Romani and that defines himself as Roma, or rather Gypsy, in relation to the others who are denied the affiliation.” (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)*

**Quote 3-16. The lower status of non-Romani speakers in Curtici and Sântana**  
*They define themselves as “Romanian Gypsy”, as they speak Romanian among themselves.”Our ethnic group is dubbed Casbtalei by the other Gypsy. There is no such ethnic Gypsy group, we are Baiasi, Lingurari, Rudar, but no Casbtalei, this is for disdain, a moniker“(V.S., 52 y. o., in Curtici, quoted by M. Goina 2007)  
 Everybody speaks Romani in the neighbourhood. I’ve met at least two newcomers, a man who married into the community in the 90’s and a woman who married in the community in the late 50’s, neither of whom spoke Romani before – as they belonged to other Roma communities – who had to learn Romani in order to be accepted. (Sântana, C. Goina 2007)*

The use of Romani is also seen, especially by the public service professionals, as a factor that maintains the disadvantage of the Roma by hindering communication:

**Quote 3-17. Romani mother tongue and the risk of exclusion, in Nuşfalău and Timișoara**  
*You have children who don’t know anything, but anything, those who speak only Romani. And I have to use an interpreter to communicate with them, because there are a few among the others, class-repeaters (who have had to repeat their class) who have already learned some Romanian, and they help me and translate. And it is very difficult, to understand them, to learn some words in Romani. But they learn the language very quickly, if they would attend regularly, they could learn very fast. (Romanian teacher, Elementary school from Nuşfalău, quoted by Toma 2007)  
 When they come to me, and I see they’re poor, they have no money, no insurance, some can’t read and speak Romanian (...) I go with them and help. (Health mediator from Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

### 3.2.3 The Marriage – What is Traditional and What is Not

The early age of marriage of the Roma is quite a controversial matter. Teachers, local authorities representatives, doctors, the media use this social behaviour as an argument to blame “the culture” and “the mentality” of the Roma for their vulnerability to severe socio-economic problems.

In fact, the early age marriage is not always an assumed tradition. Early marriage is defined as part of the “tradition” and valued as such especially in the communities of the wealthier *Gabori*, *Căldărari* or *Corturari*, where the arranged endogamous marriages have the social function of managing the family wealth and heritage. However, there are only few such wealthy households – an observation supported by survey data on income and on long-term consumer goods ownership. In other cases, the family strategy of early marriage is not motivated by an acknowledged “tradition”. In these situations, marrying young may be a result of the lack of other attractive options for their future. Young people follow the common path of the community in their family-life, without defining it as a “tradition”, due to the scarcity of alternative trajectories.

For example, in the Mimi community in Ploiești, the gymnasium girls perceive love and marriage as a possibility to escape the extreme poverty conditions in which they live, to escape the high density households in which they take care of their younger brothers, sisters, cousins and to build their own family, in which they could expect to work less hard (as they confessed to the researcher, who is also the Romani teacher in the neighbourhood school).



In this context of scarce alternatives, the immediate affordable solution of marrying (starting from the beginning and then settling down with one's own family) finally leads into a trap: of low social mobility and the perpetuation of precarious living, with very few alternatives for themselves and for their children.

The non-Roma people living in poor conditions, in the segregated neighbourhoods with a high rate of Roma population, in ghettos or in poor rural areas, have similar marital/ family planning behaviour.

**Quote 3-18. Early marriage as an indicator of precarious opportunities, in Curtici**

*When speaking with several Romanians with a modest income level, I was surprised to find out that they, too, get married at similar ages. V. I, 56, raised without a father in a family with many financial problems got married at the age of 16 and her son got married at 18. I realized that early marriages do not characterize only Roma people from Curtici, but also Romanians, and this early age could be an indicator of the social class rather than of the ethnicity. The fact that early ages for marriage are also practiced by wealthy Roma people underlines, in my opinion, that local tradition and certain features of the cultural identity change at a slower pace than the economic situation. (Curtici, M. Goina 2007).*

Qualitative data indicates that in some Roma communities the family pattern is passing through a process of change: the age of the first marriage is increasing and the number of children is decreasing, with the growing access to information on family planning. The same happens for similar groups (young non-Roma families, with low social mobility and scarce opportunities), living in the same poor rural areas or urban poverty enclaves as the studied Roma.

**Quote 3-19. Change of pattern in the young families, in Dolhasca and Sântana**

*In recent years young couples prefer to have fewer children. For example, although they were raised in large families, with many siblings, several young women told me that it is best to have two children, to be able to provide for them and to give them an adequate education. (Dolhasca, Lazăr 2007)*

*One of the 'health mediators' told me that initially women were reluctant to use their services, and especially reluctant to use contraceptive methods. Now, they often go to Arad with groups of women who either need gynaecological consultations, or, more often still, are there to receive the 'sterilet' as a contraceptive device. At my questioning whether the husbands approve of such measures the 'health mediator' told me that it is not always necessary that men know everything, and that Gypsy women are very voluntary (...) even some fervent Pentecostal women came for contraceptive help after having two or three children. (Sântana, C. Goina 2007)*

At the same time, explicitly traditional rules of early marriage are still present in some of the studied communities, especially the wealthy ones. It is interesting to see how in these cases the interventions of Romanian authorities have become a currency for negotiations within the traditional system, rather than the agent of change which they are supposed to be according to their mandate:

**Quote 3-20. Traditional marriages in Babadag**

*One example in this sense is the marriage of a young girl, A., aged 14. One year ago, the young girl had been promised by her father to his nephew, his brother's son – that*



is, the girl's first cousin – for the amount of 100 million lei. The amount had not been paid, so the daughter had remained in her parents' house, until the in-laws were going to collect the amount and the wedding could take place. Unfortunately, one night, meanwhile, the girl is kidnapped from her house by another cousin of hers from Tulcea, underage as well, assisted by some people. From her account, she had been taken to a hotel in Tulcea, where she had been kept for almost two weeks and she had lost her virginity in the traditional way. After this, the young boy's family had contacted the girl's family, in order to negotiate about purchasing her. Obligated by the circumstances, the girl's father accepts the price of 90 millions, out of which he gets an advance payment of 40 millions. With the deal done, for sanctifying, they shake hands and the girl stays in Tulcea. At this moment, however, the first suitor intervenes, stating that he feels cheated, that he would accept the girl even if she was not a virgin – moreover, he was ready to pay 120 million for her. Caught in the middle and convinced by the considerable amount involved, the girl's parents quickly work out a solution: they complain to the police about the girl having been kidnapped and they ask that he is brought home. After the girl is recovered, she is taken right away to the house of her uncle – her first suitor, under the formal claim that she would receive better protection than in her parents' house, from where she had been kidnapped before. No one gets arrested and no fine is written following the investigations. The police continue to state that there is no evidence to file the deed as kidnapping or rape, and they mediate the conflict between the girl's family and the Tulcea family; the Tulcea family is recovering their golden jewellery that they had given to the girl as a present, but they lose the 40 million advance payment, which is kept as a compensation for the girl having lost her virginity. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)

Traditional marriage practices also rely on endogamy in the selection of partners, based on *neam* affiliation.

### **Quote 3-21. Endogamy rules in Curtici Căldărari community**

Mixed marriages between Căldărari and Cashtalei are not allowed in the community in Curtici. Căldărari further say that they don't mix with any other nation and that they get married only among themselves, between neighbouring Căldărari communities. Asked whether they have any relations with the Vatrari community from the neighbouring Comlaus, located 15 kilometres away from Curtici and speaking Roma they said they didn't, because they are not Căldărari : "Us Căldărari, we're only marrying Căldărari (...) Here in Curtici, Siria, Covasanti, Sambateni, we are Căldărari... relatives, kins... even the accent of our speaking.... Comlausul is not part of us, it is of different kin. Ourselves, our kin, we're not giving them our girls, neither taking theirs (emphasised.) (G, C, 42). These regulations which are "formal" and inflexible at a discursive level, have their generalised exceptions. In the field we met mixed marriages between Căldărari in Curtici and the Vatrari community in Comlaus, at a three generations level. Grandmother, A. G., 56 years old, just as R., 13 years old told me that each has a sister married in Comlaus. Still, I only met with one mixed marriage, of a respectable age, between a man in the Gropeni community and a Căldărari woman. Romanian Gypsies seem to be affected by this separatism "they don't get married to our girls, though they bring Romanian Gypsies from other parts (that is, they accept marriages to other Gypsies that don't speak Romani), their church is separated from ours, our neighbourhood is separated from theirs, we're only greeting each other, that's all..." (D.P, 42). (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)

### 3.2.4 Tradition and Exclusion

Practicing traditional crafts still brings wealth for some Roma families. Arranged marriages still preserve wealth among some richer Roma families. But, in the long run, these practices may inhibit social mobility – especially by hindering educational and professional/occupational mobility – and they may create vulnerability to the structural changes in the wider macro-social context.

***Quote 3-22. The traditional Gabors' vulnerability***

*The Gabors' situation is very different. They may be considered integrated from some points of view: economic, residential, and even in respect to their status. Still, their position is paradoxical: they are integrated precisely because they are looking after their autonomy; their peculiar "life-style" allows them to preserve their economic and to a certain extent their social independence, but it also makes their position fragile: with their low level of education and social isolation they cannot fully participate in the collective decisions and may be easily subjected some law enforcements and regulations they are not aware of. Therefore, some of them may be wealthy, respectable people but still marginal and excluded in many ways that are proper to a modern society. In fact, they manage precisely because they are not modern people, but preservers of an archaic way of life. Whether they can remain unchanged in the longer run is questionable. (Sântana de Mureș, Troc 2007)*

On the other hand, maintaining certain traditions or customs is a way of maintaining self-esteem and the symbols of status, even in declining economic situations or while experiencing marginalization.

***Quote 3-23. Customs and self-esteem of the poor Roma***

*I have encountered an intriguing aspect with the Mustafa's, a family of Muslim Roma, who, albeit very poor, think that, according to tradition, a child's consecration ceremony should always take place with great pomp, with musicians. The price of such a celebration is allegedly higher than 1000 RON. For this reason, they must still raise money for two of the children who are still to be consecrated, but they will spare no expense, they say. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

## 3.3 Attitudes and Expectations from Life

### 3.3.1 Attitudes Towards Socialization

Most of the case studies showed that socialization is not something chosen, but something imposed by the specific living situations: it can be the housing segregation, it can be the negotiation of trust and the networks of familiarity, it can be the opportunities to meet/ encounter/ get to know "the others", or it can be the adherence to a restricting tradition (as it is in the case of *Gabors*). Social capital is one of the main resources people have in order to cope with social exclusion or precarious living. So, socialization is a vital resource and, as such, can provoke competitiveness. As the restrictions on it increase, so also do the resulting social exclusion mechanisms.

In the context of segregated or compact (homogenous) ethnic communities, either rural or urban enclaves, people are forced to interact with each other, even when they wouldn't in the

normal course of events. The scarcity of social space and the lack of buffer-spaces inhibit intimacy, worsen communication, and strengthen the fight for a privileged status.

**Quote 3-24. Forced socialization in an urban ghetto, such as Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*Socializing in Zăbrăuți is often unpredictable. (...) Field observation prompted me into reaching the conclusion that living in a ghetto does not enable one to choose who to socialize with; freedom is very much restricted in this respect and is reinforced by one's relatively reduced mobility towards other places or social spaces in town. Their education in what is meant by socializing is the following: 'We all live here together and we have to deal one with the other whether we want it or not, because we have no other choice'. The Ghetto does not provide one with a very high-level kind of socializing, it does not even allow one to delimit their group of acquaintances, it is rather a fight for prestige, power and respect and having an important position within the community. Often, socializing includes faked aggressiveness, swearing words used as greetings, and jokingly employed threats, functioning according to totally different social codes than the ones we are accustomed to (or at least the ones I was accustomed to). (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

**Quote 3-25. Socialization as a negative influence, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*The first time I entered this neighbourhood I was six, this was 10 years ago, and I didn't know any swear words back then, I didn't know anything about cigarettes nothing at all, but when I entered this ghetto I also joined an entourage and started swearing, and taking drugs and inhaling from the bag, I used to go away from home for days and begged, I used to like this entourage here, but I grew not to like it that much anymore... I saw my cousins that kept coming after me and I saw that things did not turn out well, that substance almost killed me twice (C.I., 16 y. o. girl, Zăbrăuți, quoted by Tîrcă 2007)*

On the other hand, in such contexts, family and kinship become the most valuable network capital – especially since other networks of support (such as colleagues, or commercial services such as credit or baby-sitting) are not available. According to the qualitative data, dependency on the extended family networks is associated with experiences of social exclusion, at the network capital level.

**Quote 3-26. Extended family dependency in Lupeni**

*A dominant preoccupation for these people in shaping their decisions is not to depart from the rest of the extended family – the reason which usually shapes the decisions of families living in poverty. (Lupeni, Geambașu 2007)*

### 3.3.2 Entertainment

A common stereotype is that Roma are culturally (if not genetically) dedicated to entertainment. This goes even further and become a judgment that Roma are loud, lazy, liars about their poverty or indifferent to their poverty.

Scholars in cultural anthropology consider entertainment and “escape strategies” as a social behaviour embedded in the very core of our lives<sup>12</sup>. The entertainment practices – whether this means looking at TV, listening to music, hanging out, playing games or sports, etc. – reveal

<sup>12</sup> The theory of “structure and anti-structure” balancing each other within the society, conceived by Victor Turner since the late '60s, established this acknowledgement in the field of anthropology and sociology.

themselves more to analysis if considered from this perspective, rather than just through a rigid interpretation of Maslow's "pyramid of needs" paradigm.

Magyari-Vincze (2007) situates the use of entertainment in a more political framework, following Day et al. (1999). In this perspective, living in the present is a strategy of active protest and resistance, gestures that create not only joy but also freedom. For those in control of their lives, it may seem a form of self-limitation, but for those who are disempowered focusing on today is a strategy to deal with their invisible imprisonment.

It is sometimes noticed by researchers and by non-Roma respondents that some Roma households living in severe poverty own a TV set or that Roma families living in high density one room houses accept the offer of a cable company to connect to a satellite dish (for example, in the Iris, Zăbrăuți and Mimiș ghettos). This empirical observation suggests that indeed needs are not experienced in a strict hierarchical order – for poor and wealthier households alike. Such investments, directed at making the living a little bit more bearable or cosy, are understood to be important or even vital by the household members, even those living in conditions of severe poverty, taking into consideration the options/action alternatives accessible to such persons/ households.

***Quote 3-27. Entertainment items which make living cosier, in Lupeni***

*I suppose that each researcher that studies marginal, impoverished communities has some key moments which define their fieldwork. One of these, for me, is that in which I discover modalities that people use to design and arrange their homes so that they provide, as much as possible, the highest feeling of familiarity. Living conditions that for an outsider could be at best temporary, a transition state, are part of what these people call their home. These are places where people are going to live in the long run. The inside of their homes reflects these attempts: small objects that were bought, and the order, and all elements that defy poverty and give the visitor the feeling of "being at home". (...) People do not want and they cannot invest in their homes. This is a perfectly rational attitude, given that they cannot buy them. Still, they buy equipment and accessories that ease their lives. After 13 years of hard work in urban cleaning services, a man has decided to buy a TV set, a DVD player and a freezer. "Well, my father took the credit. He brought a freezer, a TV set and a DVD. We pay a million monthly, for four years. We said, at least, if he works for this company for so long, at least now he can take a credit; it is the first time since he started working that he took one. So he pays a million monthly (Lupeni, Geambasu 2007)*

On the one hand, many inhabitants in the Roma settlements, especially the youngsters, complained about the lack of entertainment alternatives: in the urban ghettos (such as Zăbrăuți in Bucharest, Byron in Cluj) the people can only afford to hang out in front of their blocks, without having access to the social life of the city. On the other hand, the researchers noted that the few rich Roma households (recently richer or with a longer history of welfare) households adopted consumerist behaviour noticeable in Romanian society: from buying more fashionable clothes than needed, buying high-tech electronic equipment, and spending more money than needed on food or design decorations.

### **3.3.3 Children's Dreams of the Future**

While in the field, the researchers collected short "essays" from the children in the communities they studied. The children were asked to write about themselves and how they imagine themselves in the future. These short essays illustrate the events and dilemmas that they experience in everyday life or that strongly marked their childhood. At the same time, they illustrate the adult talk that they manage to catch and from which they interpret in their own vision.

**Quote 3-28. Children reproducing adult advice about marriage and family, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*“As for children, I want to have them cured of diseases, I want them to receive medical prescriptions, then when I’m about 32 I’ll start a numerous family and I’ll take care of my children, I’ll see to it that they get enough food and money, then I’ll go to work so as to feed them I would like to respect their wishes, I would like for them and their mother to be beautiful, their mother should be also hardworking and should work so as to get food so that we can live happily ever after; and I would like to send my children to school so that they can work when they grow older, and I want them to be lawyers” (M.A., 4th grade, Bucharest, quoted by Tîrcă 2007)*

**Quote 3-29. Children reproducing adult talk about policemen and unemployment, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*“When I grow up and finish school I would like to join the special forces so as to catch burglars and to do what my boss commands me. I want to have my own family, with my own kids and wife. But what if they fired my or my wife? If they fired me, I would become a fiddler, or a taxi driver or I could work for a farm or a butchery or in many other places. What would my wife do if they fired her?” (R.R., 4th grade, Bucharest, quoted by Tîrcă 2007)*

The similarities of “essays” written by children from the same community show the precarious opportunities they have for the future and the few reference points that mark their everyday life. Such references are the example of their parents – as undesirable patterns of future development – and other kin, especially the ones working abroad – as desired patterns of personal evolution. As the researchers observed, the visions of the future are a mixture of moments well grounded in the social reality, fantasies that have no real basis and the desire for change and “going further”.

**Quote 3-30. Brothers’ failure as reference point in structuring the youngsters’ dreams, in Veseuş**

*For some of the children, the appearance and choices of the family members seem to work as landmarks and structure the field of possibilities for themselves: what the brothers, sisters or parents have chosen to do in their lives and where I am, as compared to them. This kind of relating is expressed explicitly by a 14-year old girl who had just been accepted at the Economic High School in Blaj, and who gives us an extremely pragmatic description of the alternatives that a teenage girl has in Veseuş: either she studies and she goes to the Arts and Trades School or the high school, or she gets married and she grows the vine, just as her parents did. (Jidvei, Silian 2007)*

**Quote 3-31. Parents’ life as reference point, in Veseuş**

*Whether expressed directly or deduced from the children’s concern in comparing their chances with those of other members of the family, everyone’s ideal for when they are grown up is to live a better life than their parents’: “So, all I want is to have a future that would make me feel satisfied, better than that of my parents”. (16) And the path to a better life is always through learning some trade that is easier than farming: “My dream for a better future is to graduate and then go on to some school and learn a trade, as nice as possible”. (Roma girl, 14 y. o., Veseuş, quoted by Silian 2007)*

**Quote 3-32. National exams as reference point in structuring the future, in Veseuş**

*For all children, the turning point in life, the threshold that sets the alternatives and dictates which paths to be taken is the proficiency examination. They all take full responsibility for the national tests; their success or failure depends entirely on themselves. The parents play no part in this result and no child complains about the resources that are insufficient to pay for private classes: "What I want most when I am in the 8 form, I want to be able to study very well so that I can pass the exam and go on to school." (Roma child, 13 years, Veseuş, quoted by Silian 2007)*

**Quote 3-33. Dreaming of an un-material happiness, in Veseuş**

*In spite of the differences in age and school forms, the children's compositions sound very similar – the most striking similarity is that each of these compositions describes and is structured as an imaginary pathway, a clear progression from their current status to achieving their ideal in life. Except for a 13 years old girl, who says: "I want to own a computer", none of the children mentions any reference to owning material goods or builds lists of items that would materialise the idea of a "future better than the parents' ". Nothing about houses, cars, clothing or furniture. Which does not mean that the youngsters or their parents do not talk about these things. On the contrary! Just that none of the children sees these as a mean or purpose in the equation of happiness. In exchange, every composition describes a story of individual growth, identifying even the turning points, the results of which shape the imaginary life paths. (Jidvei, Silian 2007)*

**Quote 3-34. Distance between dreams and means to access them, in Veseuş**

*The trades that children go for are quite varied, and so are the motivations for their choices. Except for the situations when children want to become sales people or accountants, because this is what they imagine the Blaj Economic High School generates, the other cases present rather fantastic choices and the children do not know which education institutions exactly they would have to go to, in order to see their dreams come true:*

*"My dream is to become a judge because I like that justice be done". (11 y.o.)*

*"I would like to become a railway worker, receive the travel tickets and pinch them, and fine those who have no tickets. At the same time, I would like to become a doctor, so that I can heal the people who have all sorts of diseases". (12 y.o.)*

*"I would like to be the Chief of Police". (14 y.o.)*

*"When I grow up, I would also like to become a sales woman or a maths teacher". (13 y.o.)*

*"My dream is to become a police woman, I like this job because I like action". (14 y.o.)*

*"I would like to become a skilled engineer/accountant." (16 y.o.) (Jidvei, Silian 2007)*

Not only that is there a gap between what the children/ youngsters dream about and their means and knowledge to fulfil these dreams, but there is also a gap between their dreams and what the others think/ imagine that these youngsters could aspire for. On the one hand, it is the parents' distrust in their children's capacity to choose the right way for the future, on the other hand, it is the teachers' view about the children's motivations.

**Quote 3-35. Gap between children's dreams and teachers' understanding, in Veseuş**

*The image that the teachers I talked to have about their pupils' aspirations is quite far from what the children have described in their compositions: "Their lives are pretty simple. No demands, no motivations, why strive to do anything when you can live like this just as well. Examples in the village... most of them live on that social welfare,*



*they go and clean the ditches alongside the road, at least. (...) But they do come to school and they can be taught civilised behaviour, even though they don't study. You can get them out of their Gypsy condition!" (Teacher in Veseuş, quoted by Silian 2007)*

### 3.3.4 Attitudes and Expectations Towards Social Intervention and Mass-media

During the field research, some of our researchers had to face the suspicions and the scepticism of the subjects. The sceptics were the ones who had been interviewed already, on previous occasions and were hoping to see a change in the mean time; or the ones who were promised benefits by certain social projects which never reached their target; or the ones who were politically manipulated in electoral periods; or the ones who encountered the press and were used as characters in scandalous articles; or simply the ones who, without really understanding the mechanisms realized that other people – experts, researchers, self-proclaimed representatives – often gain profits from the visits to their community or household.

This reaction is a combination of real disappointment and loss of hope – due to the failure of certain promises or improper interventions – with low access to information about social projects, and lack of actual participation and decision making in these projects.

***Quote 3-36. Suspicion towards social interventions, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest***

*Another, relatively new thing, is the fact that the inhabitants of the neighbourhood have become aware of the social projects and they have begun to understand the underlying mechanisms on which the foundations and associations function, and especially, those mechanisms which involve money. This resulted in a certain type of attitude: people complain that they are being used as guinea pigs for other people to make money at their expense; they claim that whoever comes into the neighbourhood with various proposals or simply to implement projects, is actually out to make money 'at their expense'; they have high expectations concerning the help they should get and on top of that, they share the deeply rooted belief that they should be getting this help without giving anything back. One can understand such attitudes up to a certain extent because people's suppositions have a basis in reality and NGOs and foundations often make money from lavishly financed project which have, however, too little impact on the less favoured communities. (Bucuresti, Tîrcă 2007)*

The stereotypical bias in media presentations of the *Țigani* aggravates the distrust of mass information media among the Roma people. Lack of money, time and background experience and knowledge on the aspects of the institutions from which they are largely excluded also discourages a critical consumption of the multiple media sources, and thus decreases access to quality information among the impoverished and marginal people.

***Quote 3-37. The lack of social balance in media representations, in Timișoara***

*"Who can be blamed for the seriousness of Roma problems? Television also highlights negative features, in a conflict between Romanians and Roma the latter are presented in a negative manner and the Romanian is the victim. It is also said that Roma destroy the image of Romania in Europe, they then being the black sheep. But how many Roma have opened bank accounts, stolen millions of dollars and are thoroughly corrupt? These people were baggers in Romania and they bag outside, too. We have our rests, too, but not like this ... Why are they begging? They have to live from something. Why do they collect iron? How many kilograms should make out one*

*million? They can't do anything else, they do day work. Can children do something different from what parents do?" (MP, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

People and groups who cannot represent themselves are usually represented by the media in a biased way, following stereotypes and the opinion of the dominant majority (economic and cultural). This is also the case with the Roma, whose portrayal in the media often stresses the negative features of the *Țigani* stereotype. Secondly, the (sometimes self-declared) representatives of the socially excluded tend to lose contact with the ones they represent, as they gain a public image.

The researcher Enikő Magyari-Vincze actually witnessed such a process while performing a field study in Timișoara, when a Roma was murdered and another one severely injured by a Romanian. At the same time, an international Romani culture festival was being organized. On the one hand, the media presented distorted stories about the murder, allowing chauvinistic declarations to emerge and to gain popularity. On the other hand, the Roma representatives at the festival avoided having to take an attitude towards the murder, as the event was supposed to be a positive and placatory one.

Still, the Roma who found access to consuming media products began to be suspicious about this institution and its way of portraying the entire ethnic group.

***Quote 3-38. Awareness of the negative media stereotypes, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest***

*People are also aware of the fact that the media have presented and will present their community from a very negative standpoint. People from Zăbrăuți are aware that external views are negative and the TV channels and the press contribute to this negative perception. (Bucharest, Țircă 2007)*

The subjects of interviews and group interviews tended to have low expectations of the political parties as the mistrust and disappointment seem to be high. Attitudes towards the local authorities and their duty to ensure decent living conditions for all, oscillated from great complaints and blame, to distance and refusal to ask for help.

The poorest and most excluded communities in Iris, Cetate, Grădinari, Sîntana de Mureș (to mention only some of them) complained about the local authorities (which they are dependent on) because of the impossibility of accessing any other resources but the social benefits. Others, for example the *Rudari* from Grădinari, do not apply for social benefits, declaring that they have their pride – which shows the stigma attached, after all, to a social right.

***Quote 3-39. Expectations of support from external actors, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest***

*People living in Zăbrăuți generally declare that they have no expectations from the government or from the political parties. They say that the latter only visit the area during election time when they give away food. People mainly have expectations from the Town Hall in the district, especially those whose names are on the lists, waiting to receive their social allowance. (Bucharest, Țircă 2007)*

### 3.3.5 Attitudes Towards Work

Attitudes towards work differ between communities and within communities, depending on local opportunities for employment and income-generation. For example, in the same locality, two groups of Roma employ different attitudes towards the external intervention for improving their living conditions. While the “din vale” community (the poorest community in Grădinari, mentioned above), expects direct and material help from the local authorities, the “la stradă” community (better-off Roma, suffering from less housing segregation) employs entrepreneurial



attitudes, attempting to improve the situation from within – in the form of economic networks and trade. This has to do with access to different coping strategies and to different work opportunities.

The stereotypes of lazy and work-shy *Țigani* are often in direct contrast with the work practices of the people whom they purportedly describe. In some cases the so-called laziness may be linked to the fact that Roma are generally informally employed on a daily basis, mostly in unqualified occupations, which require hard physical work, but which are stigmatized as “temporary”, inferior occupations. In other cases the stereotype is just overwritten on visible working habits, as an overgeneralization. The structural context and mechanisms which block access to formal work are blurred in the dominant discourse by the “blaming the victim” strategy.

**Quote 3-40. “Inferior” work perceived as laziness, in Colțău**

*“The Roma go and we pay them... This is what bothers me – we always say that the Roma are lazy. I say that they are not lazy as long as they dig for you from 7 o’ clock in the morning to 7 in the evening, no matter how hot or what weather it is. If they do this and you don’t do it, this means that they are not lazy. It is rather that you cannot appreciate them, since they work, for 200 or 300 thousands (EUR 6-9) more than you. Then I say that they are not lazy... they are being used. Some people do not even give them anything to eat. If Hungarians went there to work, then they would be give something to eat and coffee and cigarettes, but like this, maybe they are even paid less, but they have no other choice. And we call them lazy.” (21 years old Hungarian, Colțău, quoted by Iorga 2007)*

In the studied communities it was revealed that the Roma not only performed hard work, but also important work for the local employers and for the maintenance of the local enterprises. Still, the fact that they were employed on a daily basis, informally and unqualified, was considered enough of an argument for the non-Roma not to appreciate this work.

**Quote 3-41. “Inferior” work perceived as non-work, in Nușfalău**

*Although the Brazilian Roma have participated in these structures for a long period, these activities were never considered economic activities. It was obvious and natural that the Roma are there when somebody needs their work. For example, although the Roma women provide mushrooms and woodland-fruits for the village, the Gadje (a Hungarian woman) say: “yeah, big deal picking up fruits; you go to the woods, you take a walk, and you get money for nothing”. (Nușfalău, Toma 2007)*

Another aspect contradicting the common view of work-shy Roma is the desire to migrate abroad (see also the survey data on migration intentions, in the section 0) and the appreciation of the hard work (mostly in construction) performed abroad (for example in Mihail Kogălniceanu, with high migration abroad).

**Quote 3-42. External and internal contradictory views about work, in M. Kogălniceanu**

*The whole idea of work has a different connotation for the Roma – it is not viewed as a source of gratification or torment, but rather as a sporadic necessity. Work is perceived, first of all, as a source of income: when money is needed, one should go out and work. A career is never even considered. Apart from that, the feeling of comfort and the fear of novelty are things that make many stay at home. Most of the time they (Roma from M. Kogălniceanu) tend to sleep late, until around noon.*

*“Question: How do you find the life abroad?”*

*Man: Better, much better.*

*Q: For what reason?*

M: You can find work there, it's more beautiful, you have more money there.

Q: Where did you stay?

M: Valencia. Right in the capital...

Q: And what did you work in?

M: As a daily worker.

Q: What does that mean?

M: In construction."

(Interview in Roma community) (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)

In addition, the qualified or the professional occupations, such as being a musician or a farmer, are associated with a strong sense of dignity and self-esteem, which is worth enduring economic hardship for or a lifetime of learning and studying.

**Quote 3-43. Work as a source of pride and self-esteem, in Cugir**

*The players from there are the examples to follow: they are people who were playing in the band, but also working the fields or having other jobs; musicians with not too much school, but with great talents, people who found in music a support for better living, especially in the recent decades. Indeed, for a long time, music lovers had a very hard life; the massive exodus looking for jobs (like in the case of those who had come to Cugir) was driven by economic crisis or by the wish to stop repeating the drama or the tragedy of the ancestors ("my great-granddad was playing the 'fly trumpet', and there is one thing I am sorry for – poor guy died of hunger; the famine in '46" N.S., Roma, 25 years old, trumpeter). (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

**Quote 3-44. Work as a source of pride and self-esteem, in Curtici**

*"We are Roma, Căldărari, and we are working, we're not on the dole... we're not begging, we're more into agriculture (...) we own many plots of land, which were inherited." (Roma family in Curtici, quoted by M. Goina 2007)*

### 3.3.6 Attitudes Towards the Past

We mentioned before the nostalgia admitted by some of the interview subjects towards the interwar, "legendary" or romantic past (see also section 3.2.1), in which they or their predecessors were respected, rich or simply happy.

This nostalgia enhances even more case of the families that still practice traditional crafts and have to witness the degradation of their occupation, in the context of recent economic development. This nostalgia can materialize in the form of contempt towards new occupations or trade practices.

**Quote 3-45. Nostalgia and change in occupation patterns, in Oșorhei**

*The Gabors from Oșorhei are aware of the fact that the market they used to have 20 years ago is rapidly getting smaller. The request for tin pipes has been significantly decreasing and they do not have the technology required for making plastic pipes. Because they do not have a stable income the banks won't grant them loans for purchasing the tools. Therefore, their situation becomes more and more dramatic. At least the moment they travel to rural areas, to families who can only afford tin pipes. (...) Lately the traditional tinsmith craft has been losing ground in favour of businesses. Depending on the interviewed subject businesses can be considered favourable or unfavourable by the families of Gabors. (Oșorhei, Pantea 2007)*

Attitudes towards the communist past are also diverse. On the one hand, there is nostalgia for a time when work was more available for the masses of unqualified people, and when social polarization was less visible and less experienced in daily life. These personal feelings are usually associated with a less clear understanding of the wider context and the wider implications of the former regime and of the new one. On the other hand – in much fewer cases – there is clear understanding of the communist oppression and forced assimilation practices.

**Quote 3-46. Communist nostalgia in a mining community, Lupeni**

*“Man: If Ceaușescu was alive, he would never close the mine. I was a miner for 21 years, and I was fooled, too, as I wasn’t told about this amount of pension I have to raise my kids from. I make ends meet very hard. But I don’t beat and steal.*

*Woman: my husband was working in the mine, and it wasn’t bad then, not at all.*

*M: Yes, it was good.*

*W: We had a good life then, as we had money and children were in school. Because there was a school made for children not to become vagabonds, as they can become today. We sent them to school, telling them to learn to make a better life. But now it is hard for us.*

*M: Communists, these country burglars, made many factories in the whole country, and then all were sold out.” (Woman and man, 49, respectively 53 years, Lupeni, quoted by Geambașu 2007)*

**Quote 3-47. Memories of communism through a woman-worker’s eyes, in Iris**

*She recalls state-communism period when “everything was fine because people had work and money”. In Cluj they were working at Șantier 1, 2 and 4, engaged with building blocks of flats from Mănăstur and Mărăști. In her memories men and women had the same work to do except cleaning the newly built block which went exclusively to women. In that period there was a separated brigade of Roma workers just because, as she said, they were from the same village and liked to work together. For her, state communism was also a period when many social events took place: birthday parties, weddings with music and dances. They frequently left for Sărpatak in order to participate at family reunions, but they also had celebrations in Cluj: she butchered 10 chickens for her sons’ birthday once. (Roma woman, 51 years, in Iris, quoted by Plainer 2007)*

**Quote 3-48. Awareness of the communist violent assimilation policy, in Curtici**

*“Before the 90s there was discrimination, we were not granted our rights, but what can I say (...) there was no law of the CC (Central Committee) to say that Roma had to be marginalised, isolated. Here in Curtici we were not allowed to build houses (in the town centre), that was not allowed, Romanians came with bottles (incendiary)... (somebody) intended to buy houses in the centre and they were forced to give up from... buying; Since the revolution it is better, around 92, 95, everybody stopped bugging us, we used to be beaten up, abused by the police, town hall, when we went to down town we were beaten, arrested, when they saw groups... now they have precise information, if they know somebody is messing about they are fining them.... but they’re not beating them up anymore...” (P.D., 42, local leader Curtici, quoted by M. Goia 2007)*

**Quote 3-49. Awareness of the segregation policy before 1990, in Curtici**

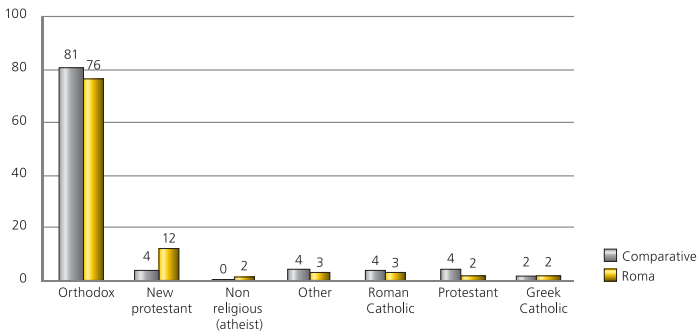
*“My father told me that he went to work, tying bunches, and when he came back from work he saw that (the town hall) had flooded their houses, so from that place, next to the railway station, they were moved here...so that’s how we moved here.” (Roma in Curtici, quoted by M. Goia 2007)*

### 3.4 Religious Affiliation

#### 3.4.1 Survey Estimates

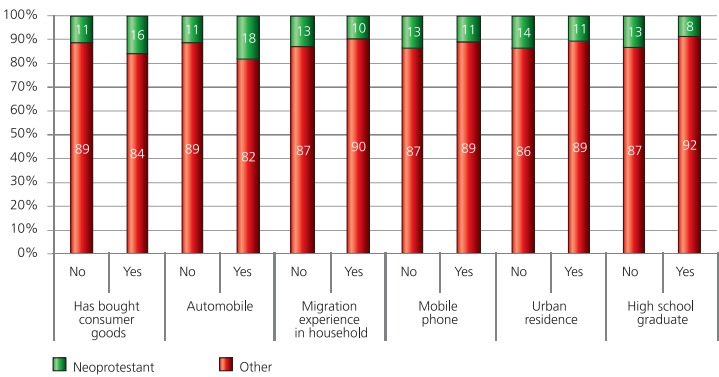
A distinctive feature of the Roma people regarding religious affiliation is the large proportion of the members of Neo-protestant churches (see below). If we take into account all adult household members, 12% of the Roma sample household members are Neo-protestant, compared to 4% of the comparative sample household members.

Chart 3-1. Distribution of religious affiliations, by sample type (percentage)



In Table 16-3, in the annex, we can see a binary logistic regression model for Neo-protestant affiliation of the Roma people. The odds of being affiliated to a Neo-protestant church are higher for members of the better off Roma households (owning an automobile, or having bought recently a long-term consumer item), but at the same time are lower for members of more modern, mobile households – with experience of migration abroad, or owning a mobile phone. The probability is also lower among the urban residents and the high school graduates (see Chart 3-2). The use of Romani language and the affiliation with a traditional sub-group is not significantly associated with a Neo-protestant affiliation.

Chart 3-2. Neo-protestant affiliation by type of household and education (percentage)



### 3.4.2 Influences of Religious Affiliation on Family and Community Life

Religious affiliation is used by Roma and non-Roma alike in their interactions. The Roma may use it to improve their self-presentation (see Quote 3-50), while the non-Roma use it to differentiate among the Roma people.

**Quote 3-50. Pentecostal affiliation among the Babadag Roma**

*Three neo-Protestant denominations have appeared in the 90's alongside the Muslim religion prevailing in the community: Adventist, Baptist and Pentecostal. The latter is extremely active and has great influence in the Turkish Gypsies' social life. One of the most significant achievements of the Pentecostals is the 'Children's club', exclusively dedicated to Roma children, located on Vlad Tepes street – that is, in the centre of the Bendea neighbourhood. The activity at the club is sustained by two young women 30 and 33 years old who have lived in Babadag since 2004 and are extremely visible in the Turkish Gypsy community; they attend various events, get involved in settling conflicts or offer their assistance when necessary.*

*Even though the horabai Gypsies are very tradition-oriented and the Muslim religion has a strong positive value for them, they have nothing against a member of the family receiving the Christian christening, whichever one – Orthodox, Baptist, etc. Among the young ones, almost all have a Christian name as well, which they acquired as a result of their christening, or just borrowed and use it to introduce themselves to people outside the community. The parties accompanying the boys' Muslim baptism – manifested with the circumcision – are quite frequent in Bendea neighbourhood. It is also a wish that has to do with every family's status – to throw impressive parties, attended by many guests, either on weddings or baptisms. Such a party would last approximately three days, and it starts with the close friends and relatives on the first day. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

Baptism to a Neo-protestant church is seen by the non-Roma as a positive, “civilizing” influence on the *Țigani*. The Neo-protestant churches, especially the Pentecostal and the Baptist churches also have visible social projects in Roma communities and they are active organizations, mobilizing people's participation. However, community researchers point out that this influence on people's lives is complex and also limited (see also Quote 3-19).

**Quote 3-51. Baptist affiliation in Nușfalău**

*“Most of the Roma of Nușfalău used to be of Reformat religion (the remaining part Orthodox), but in the last 10 years a Baptist Church began its activity in the village and managed to attract a considerable part of the Roma from Brazilia. (...) According to the interviews taken in the community and in the village almost all out of 441 Baptist people are Roma from Brazilia. All the representatives of the authorities and school representatives in a way welcomed this new tendency which emerged among the Roma to adhere to the Baptist Church. Every interviewed person expressed his/her hope that this way the Roma of Brazilia will be shown a good example of conducting their life: to think about their future and not to spend money on luxury products (as alcohol and cigarettes), not to steal and to be more serious about their children's education.” (Nușfalău, Toma 2007)*

Pentecostal churches presented in the community reports require believers to give up alcohol, smoking, but also music, jewellery and dancing. It has contributed to legalizing civil status, including marriages, and it opposes family planning measures.

**Quote 3-52. Pentecostal influences on local life in Curtici**

*The rules of the Neo-protestant church were the first to address the problem of identity documents, as they asked for the legalization of marriages. The Neo-protestant church is seen as the institution which generated the Roma integration, while the State ranks second in contributing to this achievement: “no one was able to do for us, Roma people, what the Church did.” The interesting fact is that, although the church asks its parishioners to give up an important part of their cultural tradition, such as music, dance or wearing jewellery, these rules are accepted with no resentment. When I suggested that it would be a pity to lose the traditional wedding customs, with music and Gypsy dances, the community members did not seem concerned. (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)*

**Quote 3-53. Strength and limits of Pentecostal influences on family practices in Oșorbei**

*Roma women are confronted with a dilemma as to their commitment to have children. On the one hand they are aware of the poor economic status, which diminishes their wish to have many children. On the other hand, the Neo-protestant churches that most of them converted to, forbid abortion and the use of contraceptive methods. The condom is seldom used because of the retrograde mentality of the men. The general practice is the use of contraceptive methods after the birth of 4-5 children. The most common methods are the intra-uterine contraceptive device and the “injection” (based on hormones), procedures performed at the Maternity of Oradea (...) The major problem faced is the marriage of the 12-14 year old girls. According to the rite, they are baptised when they come of age. Therefore, at this age the girls are not baptised and thus the religious ceremony may not be celebrated as well. From the point of view of the Pentecostal Church, these girls live “in sin”. (Oșorbei, Pantea 2007)*

At the same time, religious conversion may not succeed in changing the practice of early marriage, despite the fact that that it is considered immoral, or in unifying the segregated *neamuri* into a single religious community.

**Quote 3-54. Segregation of two *neamuri* in Pentecostal communities in Curtici**

*Although both communities (Romanized Roma and Corturari) are mostly Pentecostal, each community has its own church. I tried to attribute this separation to the different language used by the two communities. I asked if the service is delivered in the Roma language and I was told that in both churches they use Romanian, even if some explanations are given in Roma. Some leaders of “Romanian gypsies” say this separation is the result of disagreements between them, while others view it as a part of the Căldărări attitude of “avoiding them” and mention it with resignation and regret. (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)*

## 3.5 Survey Analysis of Ethnic Affiliation

The following sections explore the ethnic affiliation of the Roma, considering the following dimensions:

1. Specificity: affiliation to sub-groups (‘*neamuri*’) and use of Romani language

2. Pride of ethnic affiliation, measured directly by the favourable attitude towards teaching pupils about Roma language and history (see the analysis of these attitudes in section 4.2.3)
3. Closure: experience of ethnic-based discrimination, and refusal to allow a Romanian ethnic into the family (see the analysis of ethnic closure in the family in section 4.5.4).

Ethnic affiliation is thus understood as a combination of life experience – including being a member of a community and/or being rejected by other communities – and personal choice, informed by previous experience. For each dimension we have explored the influence of three types of variables:

1. Socialization institutions: school education, employment, family and friends, close neighbourhood (ethnic segregation) and larger neighbourhood (urban/rural);
2. Ethnic specificity (as defined above);
3. Other socio-demographic control variables: gender, age, and household wealth measured as the number of long-term consumer goods.

*Table 3-1. Operational definitions of variables in the study of ethnic affiliation*

Variable	Indicators
Affiliation to sub-groups	Whether the respondent declares that s/he is a certain type of Roma
Use of Romani language	Whether Romani is used as a main language at home
Pride of ethnic affiliation	“How proud are you of the following aspects in your life” ... “I am Roma/Gypsy”
	To what extent do you agree with the following? “Roma children should learn Romani language in school” “All pupils should learn about Roma history and culture in schools”.
School education	Whether the respondent has graduated high school
Employment	Whether in the last month the respondent has received a wage in a private or state-owned organization
Family	Whether there are Romanian or Hungarian ethnic members of the family
Friends	Whether among the best three friends of the respondent at least one is Romanian or Hungarian ethnic
Close neighbourhood	Whether the operator estimates that in the close neighbourhood all or almost all families are Roma
Larger neighbourhood	Urban or rural locality

For each dependent variable we have first computed exploratory regression models which are included in the annex; the following sections only present bi-variate associations with significant factors by using cross-tabs and charts (see also section 2.4.2).

### 3.5.1 Specificity

#### *Ethnic affiliations of the Roma*

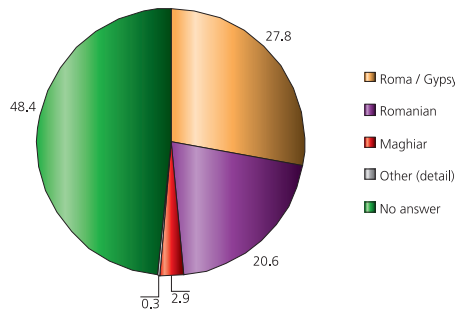
We asked all respondents in the quantitative survey for two ethnic affiliations: the most important one and a secondary one, with a semi-open question<sup>13</sup>.

Of all the randomly-selected respondents who declared themselves Roma in the Roma sample, around 21% consider their second ethnicity to be Romanian, 3% consider it to be Hungarian, 0.3% other ethnicity, 28% state Roma/Gypsy also as their second ethnic affiliation and the remaining 48% offer no second ethnic identification at all.

<sup>13</sup> Semi-open question is an open question with categories written in the questionnaire. After answers were given, operators need to categorize them (in this case chosen from a list including “Roma”, “Romanian”, “Hungarian”, “German”, and “Other – specify which one”).



Chart 3-3. Distribution of second ethnic affiliations



Among 719 respondents whose first mother tongue is Romani, in both samples, only 7 consider themselves of non-Roma ethnicity. This indicates a very strong connection between mother tongue and ethnic affiliation in adult years.

Only 44% of the Roma respondents also identify with a sub-group, in an open-coded question. The main sub-groups (as they resulted after recoding the answers given by the respondents) are listed in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2. Affiliation to Roma/Gypsy sub-groups

	Nr of cases	Percent		Nr of cases	Percent
Căldărari	28	3	Domnesti	6	1
Ciurari	5	0	Romi maghiari	29	3
Cortorari	13	1	Rostas	9	1
De vatra	31	3	Rudari	32	3
Gabori cu paralie	18	2	Spoitori	36	4
Geambasi	11	1	Ursari	85	8
Lingurari	9	1	Other	42	4
Romi romanizati	48	5	Total affiliations	448	44
Romi romanesti	35	3	No affiliation	567	56
De matase	11	1	Total	1015	100.0

In order to use sub-group affiliations as an explanatory variable, we have classified them according to several criteria: use of Romani language, education, average age at first birth and acceptance of Romanians as family members. We have grouped the affiliations that had very few cases, and we have included in an exploratory analysis those *neamuri* or classes of *neamuri* with around 30 members or more. Of course, proportions of such few cases can only be used with caution. Still, one can discern a certain pattern (see Chart 3-4):

- The *Rudari* have extreme values for three out of the four criteria: they speak least frequently Romani (13% of the *Rudari* use it at home), they have the highest proportion of high school graduates (22% of the *Rudari*) and the highest age of first birth (20.9 years). It is also relevant that in many situations the *Rudari* do not consider themselves properly Roma (see for example Quote 3-58), but Romanians, or a different ethnic group;

- The *Romi romanizati*, *Romi românești*, *Romi de vatră*, *Romi maghiari* and the residual affiliations (labelled as “other” in the database) have a lower use of Romani and higher level of education, higher age of first birth and higher acceptance of Romanians as family members.



Table 3-3. Exploratory classification of sub-groups (*neamuri*)

	Nr of cases	Romani at home (row percent)	High school Graduates (row percent)	Average age at first birth for women (years)	Accept Romanians as family (row percent)
Rudari	32	13	22	20.9	38
Romi romanizati	48	27	13	18.5	56
Romi romanesti	35	34	6	19.6	77
De vatra	31	42	19	18.3	50
Romi maghiari	29	45	11	16.9	54
Other affiliations	42	62	18	18.5	69
ciurari and other less frequent affiliations	82	77	5	17.9	51
Căldărari	28	82	4	17.7	33
Ursari	85	91	6	19.1	45
Spoitori	36	97	9	17.0	14
Total	443	62	10	18.4	49
Respondents with no affiliation	567	46	12	19.1	53

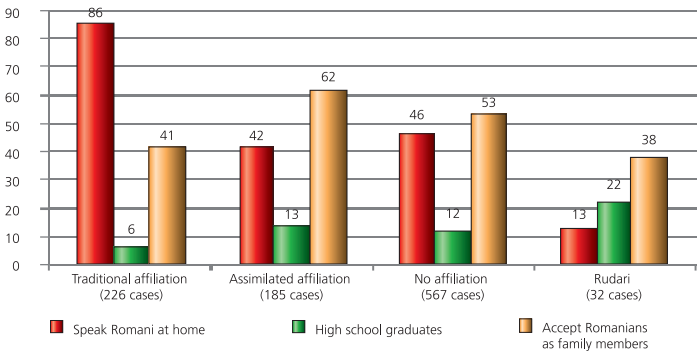
Therefore, we can distinguish four main types of sub-group ethnic affiliations:

1. Respondents who choose only the main identity of Roma, but no sub-group;
2. The *Rudari*;
3. Respondents who choose an assimilated label – such as *Romi românești*, *Romi romanizați*, *De vatră* or *Romi maghiari/unguri*; we have included here also the residual category “other”, grouping the infrequent affiliations, and we have labelled them the “assimilated affiliations”;
4. Respondents who choose traditional sub-groups – such as *Căldărari*, *Ciurari*, *Cortorari*, *Spoitori*, etc. We have labelled such *neamuri* the “traditional affiliations”.<sup>14</sup>

The global category of “traditional affiliation” includes 22% of the Roma-ethnic respondents in the opinion questions in the Roma sample.

<sup>14</sup> *Căldărari*, *Ciurari*, *Cortorari*, *Gabori cu pălărie*, *Geambaș*, *Lingurari*, *Romi de mătase*, *Romi domnești*, *Rostaș*, *Spoitori*, *Ursari*

Chart 3-4. Proportion of people who speak Romani, who graduated from high school and who accept Romanians as family members (percentage within affiliation category)



It is important to underline that this classification of “*neamuri*” in “traditional” and “assimilated” is meant as an exploratory statistical instrument, since it is built on the basis of several broad quantitative indicators. It is possible that there is considerable variation in world views and life trajectories within these classes, and indeed within the *neamuri* themselves. Still, this variable does reflect a dimension of ethnic affiliation, and it can be useful for exploring patterns of behaviour.

3.5.2 Use of Romani Language

Around half of the Roma respondents use Romani language in the household: 47% mention it as the first and 3% as the second language. 34% of the Roma respondents use Romani as the main language in their interaction with friends and acquaintances, while an additional 6% use it as a secondary language in these circles. When it comes to interactions with other, more distant people, 17% of the Roma use it as the main language and 6% use it as a secondary language.

It is important to mention here that the 2002 Romanian Census includes 535,140 people of Roma ethnicity, of which a proportion of 44.4% (237,570 people) have Romani as their mother tongue<sup>15</sup>. The Roma Inclusion Barometer indicates that 40% of the *Romi românizați* and 55% of the other Roma people have learnt Romani as their mother tongue (Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 8).

57% of the randomly selected respondents have learned Romani as their first mother-tongue, and an additional 10% learned it as a second mother-tongue.

Table 3-4. What are the main languages your household members use... (percentage)

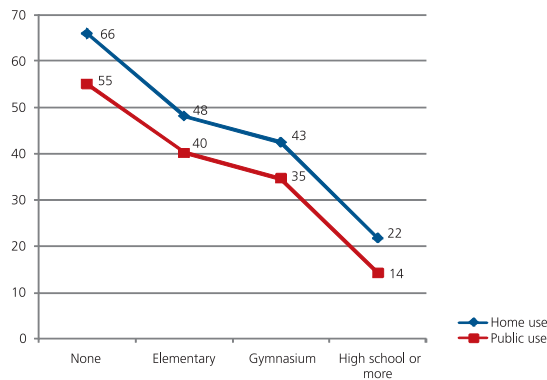
	... at home		... with friends		... with other people	
	Roma sample	Comparative sample	Roma sample	Comparative sample	Roma sample	Comparative sample
Romanian	50	88	64	90	81	92
Hungarian	3	10	4	9	5	7
Romani	47	1	32	1	14	0
Other	0	1		0	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

15 See the Census data on the site of Jakabffy Elemér Foundation, Asociația Media Index: <http://recensamant.referinte.transindex.ro/>

Within the households which use Romani language at home, one third use Romanian language in conversations with friends, and more than two thirds use Romanian in conversations with other people. Of course, not all people who use Romani at home also use it in public contexts, and vice-versa. There are around 12% of households in the Roma sample in which members speak mostly Romani in all three types of situations, while the others only use it frequently in one or two types of interactions.

The use of Romani language decreases with education (see Table 16-5).

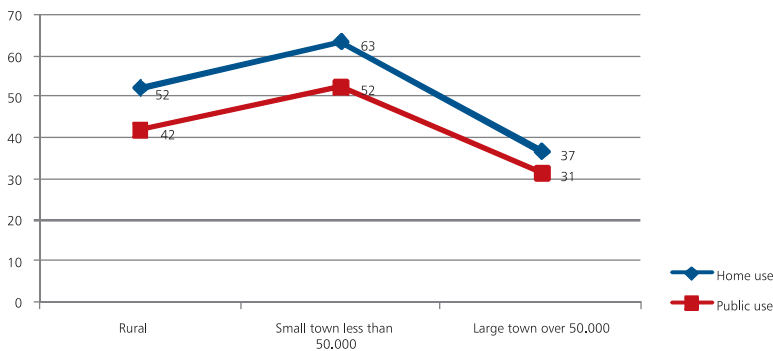
*Chart 3-5. Household and public use of Romani language by education categories (percentage)*



There is also a strong influence of family ethnic structure: 60% of respondents with no Romanian or Hungarian family members use Romani at home, compared to 30% among those with mixed families.

There is no linear relationship between the locality size and the use of Romani language: it seems that small towns encourage its use, while large towns offer the strongest incentives to use other languages, in public and in private encounters.

*Chart 3-6. Home and public use of Romani language by locality type (percentage)*



The Roma families which do not speak Romani at home have on average more appliances, with the only exception being the car, which is more frequently owned by Romani speakers (see Chart 3-7). For example, 43% of the Romani-speaking households have a refrigerator, and 15% own a car. This indicates that modern living styles are more frequently met within households that use of

Romanian or Hungarian as the main family language. The exceptional situation of the car is possibly due to the higher proportion of traders in traditional Roma communities. Of course, this does not indicate a causal relationship between language and access to resources, since probably both aspects are shaped by particular life trajectories, adapted to local opportunities.

The use of Romani language within the household is related to a U shaped subjective standard: the better off and the worst off use it more frequently than the households in the middle. For example, around 50% of the households with a decent living standard and also the ones with a lower than minimal living standard use Romani internally, compared to around 40% of the ones who have enough just for the minimum necessities. The consistent use of Romani language (at home, with friends and with other people) is inversely related to subjective well-being (see Chart 3-8).

Chart 3-7. Household appliances by main language spoken within the household (percentage)

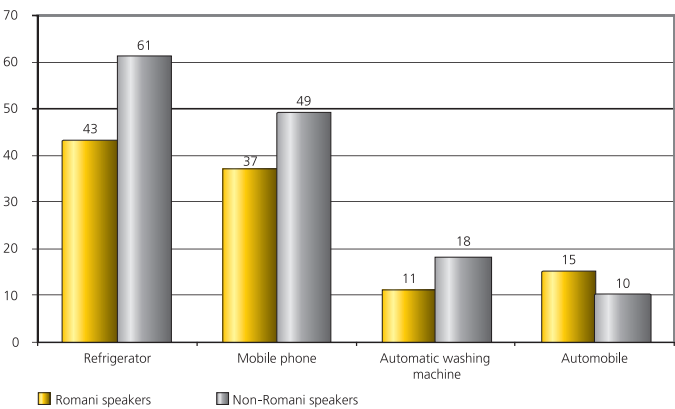
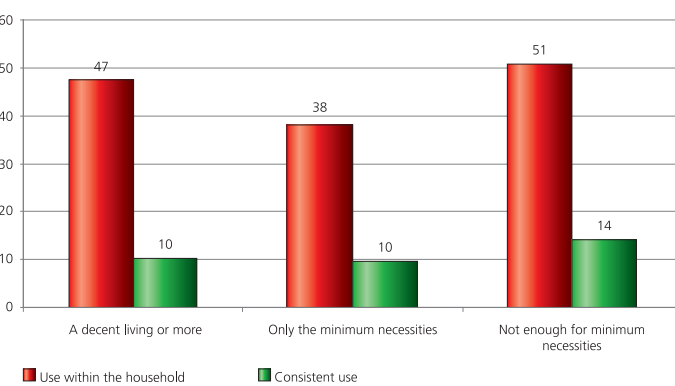


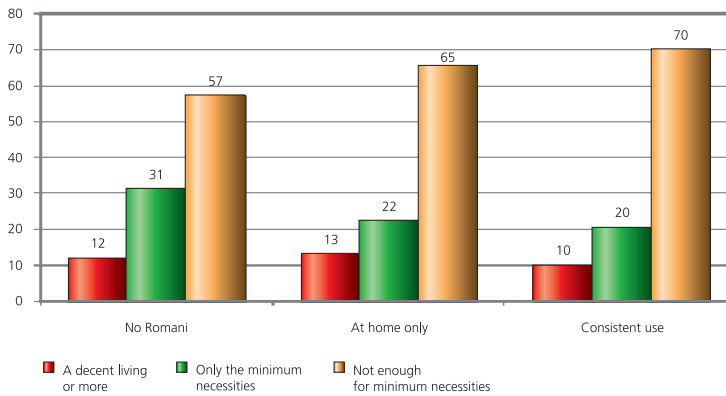
Chart 3-8. Use of Romani language by subjective standard of living (percentage)



Data indicates that households that use Romani language have less access to material resources than households that use other languages. For example, 25% of households in the comparative sample have bought durable goods in the last year, compared with 20% of the Roma households who do not speak Romani and 10% of Roma households who speak Romani either at home, or in both private and public situations.

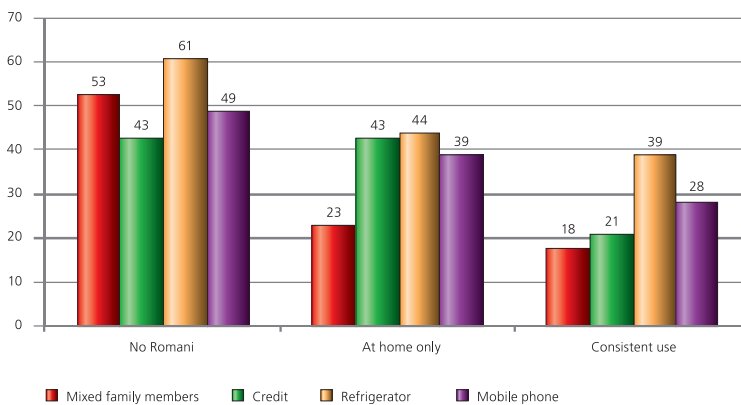
This general observation is also illustrated in Chart 3-9 and Chart 3-10. Both charts indicate that people who use Romani language consistently (at home and in public places) are more impoverished than the ones who use it only at home.

*Chart 3-9. Evaluation of living standard by type of language use, Roma sample (percentage of language categories)*



The difference between family Romani speakers and community Roma speakers is largest in relation to access to credit. Roma families mostly have access to credit from private creditors and family members. However, among households that use Romani language in public places, even accessibility of this type of credit is much lower. On the contrary, the difference between family Romani speakers and non-Romani speakers is erased in the case of credit.

*Chart 3-10. Access to resources by type of language use, Roma sample (percentage of language categories)*



### 3.5.3 Pride of Roma/Gypsy Affiliation

#### *Pride, shame and ethnic affiliation*

In the common language of the non-Roma, the label of *Țigani* and its associated words, such as “*țigănie*” or “*a se țigăni*” has long been a stigma. This is reflected not only in the meaning of the words, but also in their asymmetric use (see Silian 2007 below).

#### **Quote 3-55. “*A țigăni*” – a lexical innovation in Veseuș**

*At a lexical level, there was a word that I found striking, used to describe situations implying inter-ethnic relationships: to ‘gypsy’ (a țigăni) someone – a word I never heard in the vocabulary of Romanians in Transylvania or elsewhere. On the other hand, the phrase ‘to make the Gypsy’ (a se țigăni) is frequently used by Romanians to describe an insisting, annoying behaviour. The procedure is rather transparent: a type of behaviour is seen as specific to all the members of an ethnic group, so it is described by turning the name ‘Gypsy’ into the verb ‘to gypsy’. However, it would be tautologous to say about a Gypsy that he is ‘making the Gypsy’, so the verb is used to warn a non-Gypsy that they bargain too much or ask for something too insistently that they risk resembling the Gypsies to a dangerous extent. However, when we cut to the chase and overtly use invectives such as crow/Gypsy, with all the usual attributes that come along – dirty, stinky, slimy, etc – we are actually ‘gypsyng’ someone (a țigăni or a cioroi). Indeed, as we practise this action, we are not aware that our action has a name, but those who are targeted by it describe their experience in this way: he gypsied me. Whether you are accusing someone that he makes the gypsy or you gypsy them, it’s an asymmetrical, power-based relationship: the reproach that you resemble the Gypsy or you are a real Gypsy comes from a moral position of superiority. Maybe this is the reason why there are no verbs derived from the names of other ethnic groups: you say that someone is making the Gypsy, but not that he’s making the Romanian; we ‘gypsy’ someone, but we don’t ‘romanianize’ anyone. (Veseuș, Silian 2007)*

The introduction of the “Rom” ethnonym after 1990 has generated a still lively debate on the proper identification of the Roma people, fuelled especially by the Romanians’ strong negative feelings about its phonetic similarity with the “Romanian” ethnonym. The “Rom” ethnonym has functioned as a spontaneous experiment, testing and supporting the definition advanced by F. Barth of ethnic distinctions as boundaries among people, irrespective of inventories of cultural traits (see Barth 1969 and Wimmer 2007). Indeed, the most powerful aspect of the “Rom” label is that it fails to perform its boundary-making functions, and it blurs the much-wanted difference between the Roma and the non-Roma. The practice of using the “Rom” ethnonym is another strategy to mark the ethnic difference.

Given this debate, the emotions associated with ethnyonyms as “*Țigan*” or “*Rom*” have become more diverse, as various groups and individuals choose to affiliate with one, another or none, and to experience shame and pride accordingly. This multiplicity of affiliations is reflected in the experiences of field researchers (see Quote 3-56).

#### **Quote 3-56. *Rom/Țigan affiliation***

*We should mention one more thing – most of them refuse to avoid using the name ‘Roma’ when referring to themselves, and they prefer to say, ‘man, I am Gypsy...’. Unlike the formal variant, the word ‘Gypsy’ is used frequently with a double meaning in the community; sometimes they would say ‘țigănie’ in a pejorative sense – or ‘sa nu ne țiganim’ (let’s not be like Gypsies) – but also ‘we are Gypsies and*

*we are not ashamed of that'. An interesting thing is that, for some, the bonds within the group are generated by something else, besides the 'ethnic origin': "Roma... Gypsies, who knows what we are... we are miserable people, that's what we are..." (P.R., 67 years old, Roma) (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

The ethnic affiliation of the Roma has always been a differentiated process, because of identification with various sub-groups (*neamuri*) – some of whom, such as the *Rudari*, sometimes do not even consider themselves *Țigani* (see Quote 3-57 and Quote 3-58).

**Quote 3-57. Public acceptance and rejection of Țigani affiliation in various *neamuri***

*Thus, when an attempt is made to approximate the size of the two large Mureș Roma communities, we can take the official figures (3759) as being representative mainly for the Gabor Roma sub-group; the information we got from people in the community is that a great number of the settled Roma declared themselves as Hungarians in the 2002 census. On the other hand, the 'Gabor' Roma recognize their (Roma) identity to a much wider extent, and the first indications of this are the traditions and costumes they preserve. "If you ask a Gabor what he is, he will tell you he is Gypsy, they have no shame. They talk Gypsy language in the church as well – in their Baptist church. They have no shame, those ones." (J.L. 48 years old, Rom de vatra). (Țargu Mureș, Cengher 2007).*

**Quote 3-58. On "*Rudari*" identification**

*The first Roma I met (a young man aged around 20) directed me towards a person he knew was dealing with "such things" – after I explained the purpose of my arrival in the locality. He insisted on telling me that he and the other Roma (sic) who live in the locality "are neither Țigani nor Romi, we are Rudari". He said there are a couple of families who are Argintari Roma (the second type of Roma who live in the locality) who, in contrast to them (the Rudari), are speaking Romani. I tried to explain that in fact Rudari are Roma too, even if they do not speak Romani, but then I realized that he also knew that they are Roma, but he would not admit to calling himself Țigan or Rom and be preferred to call himself Rudar – a situation which I encountered with many other Roma families during my stay in the locality. (Modelu, Feraru 2007)*

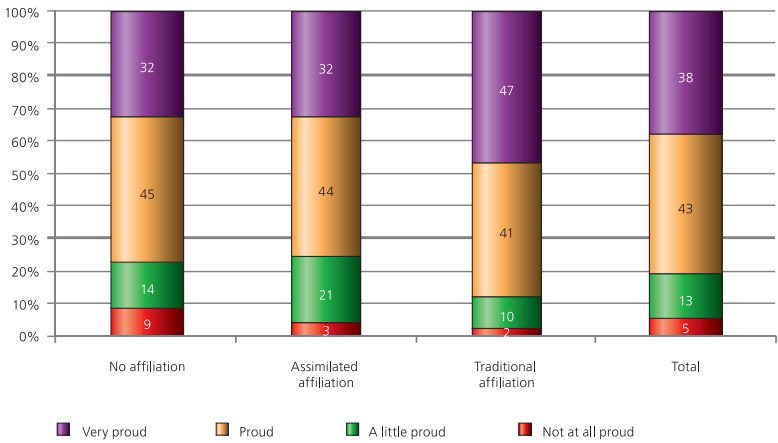
The field researcher's discussion of *Rudari* identification illustrates a common reaction: non-Roma often deny the claim of hetero-identified Roma/*Țigani* not to be *Țigani*, either on theoretical considerations, such as the one in the Quote 3-58, or on other assumptions. Hetero-identification of the *Țigani* is, in this regard, not easily falsifiable.

*Variations in Ethnic Pride Among the Roma*

Except for local identity, all other types of identity elicit the same feelings of pride among Roma respondents. The same is true for the comparative sample. Differences among Roma and non-Roma respondents are significant only for ethnic pride and for pride in being a Romanian citizen (see Chart 16-1).

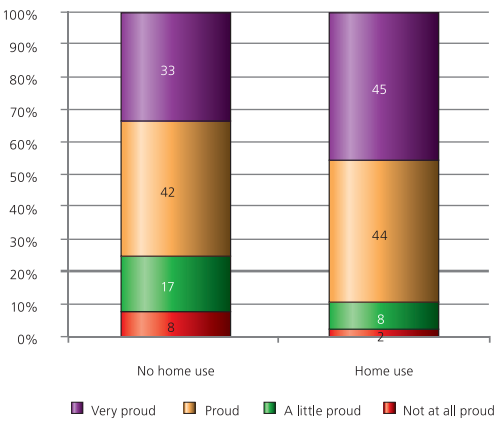
It is interesting that the members of more traditional ethnic sub-groups feel more often proud or very proud of their Roma/Gypsy identity than those with no affiliation or those in assimilated affiliations. There is no statistical difference between the latter two.

Chart 3-11. Pride of ethnic affiliation, by type of ethnic sub-group affiliation (percentage)



The use of Roma language is also a significant positive influence on pride of Roma affiliation. The chart below indicates that 45% of respondents who speak Romani at home are very proud of their Roma ethnicity, compared to 33% of those who do not speak Romani.

Chart 3-12. Pride and use of Romani language at home (percentage)



Surprisingly, the level of education does not influence ethnic pride, although one might expect the higher educated to have less pride in a socially stigmatized ethnicity. However, a logistic regression model indicates that the probability of being “very proud” of the Roma/Gypsy ethnicity is only influenced by sub-group affiliation and use of language, and it is not affected by education, age, type of residence or gender (see Table 16-6 in the Annex).



### 3.5.4 Experience of Ethnic Discrimination

Roma respondents have experienced ethnic discrimination much more frequently than the non-Roma respondents. One third of the Roma subjects declare that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic identity, compared to only 6% of the non-Roma.

*Table 3-5. Experience of ethnic discrimination by individual respondent category (percentage)*

"Have you ever been treated worse than another person, because you are... (ethnic affiliation of the respondent)?"	Non-Roma subject in comparative sample	Roma subject in Roma sample
No	95	67
Yes	5	33
Total	100.0	100.0

It is probable that this discrimination is simultaneously ethnic and economically based. For example, Grigoraş and Surdu (2004) notice that the extremely poor residents of poor urban areas are much more probable to feel discontented with the way they were treated by local authorities than the average urban resident, and to report the use of small bribes to receive attention (p. 371). More than half of the respondents that reported cases of discrimination remembered these incidents to have taken place at the local authorities, in the street, in schools, medical facilities, on public transport and at the police. This indicates that discrimination most often occurs in interactions with the public authorities and social service providers, on the one hand, and the general public on the other hand. Employment and commercial relationships are mentioned by about 25 – 50% of respondents, while the church is mentioned by around 20%. Other cases occurred in interactions with the military, abroad or at border crossing points.

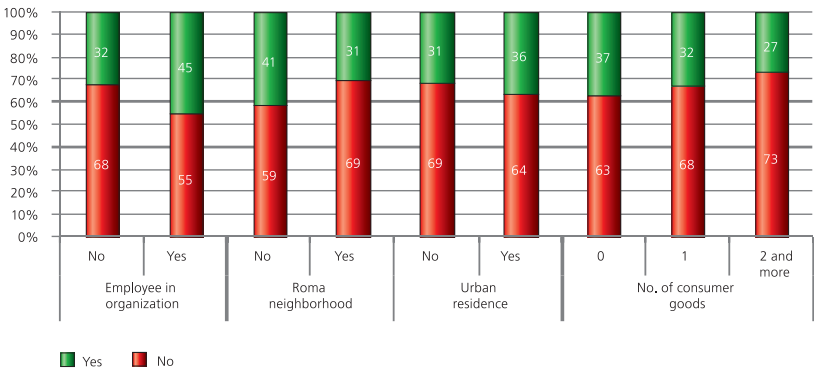
Nevertheless, the frequency of discrimination reports reflects not only the presence of discriminating practices, but also the frequency of interactions: the less often one interacts with a particular type of agent, the less likely it is that discrimination will occur. From this point of view, it is to be assumed that the lower level of reported discrimination in employment, for example, is partially due to the less frequent contacts with employers and colleagues than with local authorities or service providers – a situation which is, at least partially, a consequence of discrimination in the labour market.

*Table 3-6. Where have you been treated worse than another person, because you are Roma? (percentage from the total of 326 Roma respondents in the Roma sample that answered "Yes" to the question ...). Multiple answers were possible.*

	Percent of affirmative answers		Percent of affirmative answers
At the local authority	67	From the neighbours	36
In the street	64	At workplace from colleagues	30
In school	60	At workplace, when layoffs were made	25
During medical services	61	In the church	20
On public transport	55	At workplace, when wages were established	18
At the police	52	In the army	14
When you applied for a job	49	Abroad	14
In the shop	43	At border crossing points	12
At places of entertainment	42		

We have explored the experience of ethnic discrimination in two logistic regression models. The first one only included socio-demographic variables, of which the only significant influences are urban residence and household welfare. Education, measured either as graduation from the gymnasium or as from the high schools, has no influence. In the second model, we have added variables that indicate inter-ethnic contact, such as working in an organization, having Romanian or Hungarian family members or residence in a Roma neighbourhood. People who work in an organization and residents of mixed neighbourhoods are more likely to remember an experience of discrimination. In this model household welfare continues to have a significant negative influence, but urban residence is no longer significant (see Table 16-10 in the annex, and see also Chart 3-13 for bi-variate analysis).

*Chart 3-13. Experience of ethnic discrimination by employment status, type of neighbourhood, residence and wealth (percentage)*



The influence of household welfare on experienced ethnic discrimination indicates that, indeed, economic discrimination against the poor enhances the ethnic discrimination of the Roma. However, there is no reason to conclude that Roma people are confronted solely with economic discrimination, since the better off Roma have still experienced differential treatment. For example, 51 of the 190 respondents living in households with 4 or more long-term consumer goods declare that they have been discriminated against (27%).

### 3.5.5 Summary of Influences on Ethnic Affiliation

The overall picture of influences on ethnic affiliation is summarized in Table 3-7. It is very interesting that school education only influences the use of Romani language, with no other statistically significant association with ethnic affiliation variables. It does not influence pride in, or evaluation of, Roma culture, and it does not influence experiences and opinions of ethnic closure. We can infer that the institution of school is largely absent in the constitution of the ethnic identity of Romanian Roma people.

Language use and traditional affiliation seem to be at the core of ethnic affiliation, as they are associated with each other and with ethnic pride. Ethnically mixed families and friends do have a negative influence on specificity, and a mixed family increases the probability of ethnic openness towards Romanians, at least.

Paradoxically, wealth and a homogenous Roma neighbourhood have the same influence on experienced discrimination, although it is probable that the causal circuits are very different. It seems

plausible that a segregated residence lessens the degree of discrimination experienced by reducing the opportunities for inter-ethnic contact, while wealth reduces discriminatory attitudes of interaction partners – thus, as popular wisdom says, *baina face pe om* (“clothing defines a person”).

Table 3-7. Summary of influences on ethnic affiliation

Variable	Trad. Aff.	Language use	Education	Organization employment	Mixed family	Mixed friends	Roma neigh.	Urban	Wealth
Traditional affiliation		+				-			
Language use	+		-		-				
Feeling proud	+	+							
Favorable evaluation of Roma culture (see section 4.2.3)	+	+					+ (polarization of attitudes towards Romani language)		
Experience of discrimination				+			-	+ (due to ethnic interaction opportunities)	-
Acceptance of Romanian family members (see section 4.5.4)		-	+ (due to ethnic interaction opportunities)	+	+				

### 3.6 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

#### *Points to highlight*

- Around 25% of Roma people also have a second ethnic affiliation. Around 21% consider their second ethnicity to be Romanian, and 3% consider it to be Hungarian.
- 50% of Roma use Romani in their homes, 40% use it with friends and acquaintances, and 23% use it in interactions with more distant people.
- If we take into account all adult household members, 12% of the Roma sample household members are Neo-protestant, compared to 4% of the comparative sample household members.

Qualitative and quantitative data alike supports the already common observation that Roma people and communities have widely differentiated strategies of defining themselves in relation to their ethnicity, history, traditions and practices of daily life.

What may seem the very same behaviour for an external observer, such as speaking Romani or a strategy of early marriage, can be lived and understood very differently from one community or

family to another. For example, it can be experienced as an instrumental choice, as a symbolic identification of one's community, or both of them to some extent. It can be a reason for shame or for pride, or simply irrelevant for emotional affiliation with one's community.

Ethnic classifications are done and undone with fine distinction by Roma people, who often distinguish between several types of Roma, and with a less finely-tuned distinction by the non-Roma. Individual or collective claims of being of non-Roma ethnicity are often denied by people who also consider themselves of non-Roma ethnicity. Ethnic distinctions are used as powerful moral instruments, in order to judge people and allocate merit and blame.

Traditional affiliation, the use of Romani language in the household and pride of Roma identity are mutually reinforcing. There are several visible forces of systematic change in the area of ethnic affiliation and the construction of one's identity in relation to others. Education decreases the use of Romani language and creates more opportunities for social interaction with non-Roma, which leads to increased tolerance towards inter-ethnic families. Wealth decreases the experience of discrimination.

A future line of investigation may be to study how the experience of migration leads to reshaping ethnic definitions and classifications, as the inter-ethnic interactions diversify, social networks are consolidated and income increases. Survey data cannot capture these changes now, as they are yet incipient.



## 4 Stereotypes, Social Distance Attitudes and Inter-ethnic Contact

This chapter explores the beliefs and attitudes of the non-Roma about the Roma and, as they are often identified in Romania, about the *Țigani*. Of course, the labels of Roma and *Țigani* do not refer to the same social reality, since the label used to identify them also projects stereotypes, activates attitudes and indicates which people properly belong to the group and which do not. While in survey questions and in our discussions we often use the ethnonym “Roma”, it is important to keep in mind that this is still contested in Romanian society, also by Roma people themselves, and *Țigani* is still widely used by Roma and non-Roma alike – although with different meanings and connotations. We can distinguish between several types of usage for the *Țigani* ethnonym:

1. Self-identification as *Țigan*; for example, within the sample of the Roma Inclusion Barometer a proportion of 45% of Roma respondents consider themselves “Rom românizat”, 23% consider themselves “simply *Țigan*”, and the remaining 32% affiliate themselves with various sub-groups (*Rudari*, *Căldărari*, *Ursari*, etc)<sup>16</sup> (Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 8).
2. The use of *Țigan* in relation to a specific person or community who self-identifies as such (by Roma or non-Roma observers) (an “emic” use of the term, to use the emic/etic anthropological distinction)<sup>17</sup>
3. The use of *Țigan* in relation to unspecified people, whose self-identification is either multiple, different or unknown (an outsider’s use of the term, though not “etic”, insofar as it is not based on inside knowledge and systematic reflection).

We can say that the Roma people are often (un)seen and (mis) perceived through the *Țigani* lenses (see for example Quote 4-6).

This chapter uses qualitative information to discuss the stereotypes surrounding *Țigani*, the poverty-focused understanding of the Roma as “problem people” and the public invisibility of the Roma culture (see sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). We then use quantitative information on social distance attitudes to sketch a map of the relative proximity felt by various ethnic groups to one another (see section 4.4). Qualitative community reports illustrate how these attitudes are shaped by and in their turn contribute to shaping opportunities for inter-ethnic social contact (see section 4.5).

### 4.1 The *Țigani*

The stereotype of the *Țigani* is a powerful moral and social label, defining rather clearly the expected personality of the person and the appropriate attitudes and interactions towards it. It is used mostly by the non-Roma, but not only. It may also be used by Roma people in a community against other Roma communities (see Quote 4-1).

#### *Quote 4-1. Uses of the Țigani stereotype in Nușfalău*

*The Roma of Bakos use exactly the same stereotypes and exhibit the same attitudes towards the Roma of Brazilia, Boghiș and Valcău. Roma from Bakos consider the Roma of Brazilia as dirty, uncivilized, thieves, alcoholics, lazy and so on. (Nușfalău, Toma 2007)*

<sup>16</sup> This distribution of affiliations to ethnic sub-groups may vary from one sample to another, according to the criteria of selecting Roma communities in the randomly chosen localities.

<sup>17</sup> “Emic”: understanding a culture from “inside”, from within its own frame of reference, from experiencing it as a participant; “Etic”: the phase in one’s study of a particular culture – having experienced it and participated in it first-hand – of “stepping back” and evaluating the experience. The point at which an “emic” experience is “interpreted” into explanatory terms in one’s own culture.

### 4.1.1 What Sort of People are the *Țigani*?

Ethnic stereotypes about the *Țigani*, also transferred to the *Romi*, are common knowledge among citizens and authorities and they may be easily and voluntarily communicated to benevolent strangers, without malice (see Quote 4-2). As for the year 2007 in Romania, the “politically correct” filter against expressing ethnic prejudice is not very powerful.

#### **Quote 4-2. The *Țigani* label**

*“The biggest problem for our locality is represented by that (Gypsy) community where aprox. 350 people live. Their attitude towards work and life is pretty negative. They have already spent on drinks yesterday what money they will get today. They don’t think about anything. (...) They learn from each other that particularly untidy way of life all the time, they are born into this life, and they continue to live their lives this way.” (Official, Hungarian man in Nușfalău, quoted by Toma 2007)*

The contemporary *Țigan* image is in contrast not only with the *Român* or *Maghiar*, but also with the past *Țigani*:

#### **Quote 4-3. The Romantic Gypsy in Nușfalău**

*“We can still find a romanticized view of the Roma, mostly among the old Gadjo. They still remember the great Gypsy musicians from Nușfalău, who were well-known both in the country and abroad. The Gadjo remember the traditional occupations of the Roma from Nușfalău: musicians, brick-makers, smiths. The strong solidarity of the Roma is positively mentioned in almost every case. The respect and attention of the younger Roma towards the elder is another positive feature, besides the care that the Roma show towards their children. In the narratives of the Gadjo, these images are valid for the entire Roma community in general, without differences between a Roma from Brazilia and one from Bakos. But the subjects declared that these Old Gypsies already belong to history. Such Roma do not exist nowadays. Only the poverty and misery remain constant; even if there are musicians in the community, they have no money to buy new musical instruments, and anyway the greatest musician has died, and the others cannot even be compared with him” (Nușfalău, Toma 2007).*

Development or charity projects destined for Roma people also contribute, unintentionally, to the cognitive and emotional content of the *Țigani* label. For example, assistance for Roma may be seen as undeserving and discriminatory (see Quote 4-4), or as indirect proof of their ethnic deficiencies (see Quote 4-5).

#### **Quote 4-4. Perceptions of discriminatory assistance in Colțău**

*According to a common local belief, conveyed by one of my Hungarian interlocutors, non-Roma consider unjust all that help (allowances, projects for them, people coming to see their lives) Roma get, because they have no lands and don’t work. Meanwhile Hungarians who are busy raising animals and cultivating plants have no one to help them. In this view all good things are given to Roma, “which may lead to their superiority in this Hungarian village.” (I., Hungarian, 44 y. o., Colțău, Iorga 2007)*

#### **Quote 4-5. The “Baia socială pentru romi” (“Social Bathroom for Roma”) in Cugir**

*Many find strange the set up of the Social Bath “for the Roma”, when the entire town lacks hot water. (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*



The stigma borne by the labels of *Țigani* and *Țigănie* is independent of the actual lifestyles of the people who are identified as such. It may be that attitudes towards the *Țigani* that do not display the stereotypical marks of the *Țigani* are more tolerant – but these particular emotions do not lead to a redefinition of the *Țigani* category itself.

**Quote 4-6. Definitions of Țigani and Țigănie in Veseuș**

*Out of the three villages with Roma population, Veseuș is the only one where the number of Roma who declared themselves as such with the 2002 census matches the numbers in the Mayoralty's records.*

*Many of the Veseuș Roma could be easily taken for Romanians. Even at the end of my stay in the village, had I not known the people already, I could have thought that most of them were Romanian. My host was telling me a similar story, when she took one of the girls to enrol in the Blaj Economic High School. The secretary had asked her a few times, in order to make sure she was really Roma: "Yes, my lady, you think we are lying? You want me to speak Gypsy language?" The same when she was looking for a room to rent for her daughter in Blaj – she told the old lady that they were a Țigan family from the very beginning, being afraid that, should the woman learn about that later, she could create problems. After they had spent some time chatting, the old woman had taken the child aside and gave her wise advice: "Your mother is not really sane – to say that she is Țigană, like that. She sounds like she is proud of it! Don't ever say you are a Țigană again!" There is no one in Veseuș who doesn't have one or two stories like this one. The attitude people would display towards me was 'understanding' – invariably, they would try to show their tolerance for my assumed reluctance towards the Roma and, with some compassion for me having to be there, they would ask: "How do you feel in Veseuș? How do you like Veseușul?" And before I got a chance to answer, they would continue: "It could be nice if there wasn't so much of a Țigănie, right?" (Veseuș, Silian 2007)*

#### 4.1.2 Explanations of Behaviour Variations

The Roma people and their problems are often seen, by the general public and by authorities, as one entity, because the people are considered to be the source of the problems. This causality is defined in moral terms as personal responsibility for one's own situation. This responsibility is not seen in the broader context of different opportunities and constraints faced by people. Institutional arrangements that encourage a certain behaviour and discourage others are also neglected, in favour of a minimalist conception of liberty, in which all people are equally free to do what they choose. This conception also has the advantage of being ethnicity-blind at face value, which gives it additional legitimacy.

This people-centered understanding of social problems seems to be common among local authorities (see Quote 4-7 and Quote 4-8).

**Quote 4-7. Face-value neutrality in ethnic stereotyping**

*"- We have to learn that all consumptions have to be paid. All. If you have running water, you have to pay for it.*

*- Do you find this a solution for Roma's problems?*

*- We are still beating about the bush here. There are no special Roma problems, but problems of inhabitants in general. There is no such category as Roma. Have you ever heard about particular Romanian problems? In order to integrate anyone, let it be Roma or Romanian, we ourselves need to adapt to a way of life.*

- Do you find it a coincidence that people with a darker complexion are living on the peripheries of the town?

- It wasn't their choice, ask them. I, for instance have lived in the same apartment at '79. Ask them, how many apartments they had till they get there. It isn't about complexion, but about the way you organize your resources." (Local authority, Lupeni, quoted by Geambasu 2007)

**Quote 4-8. Local authority view of Roma people**

*I go again to the Town hall, where I meet the mayor. He does not want to give an interview, but he tells me his own opinion of the Roma. According to him, Roma are too much a focus of attention and, since discrimination against Roma has become an issue, they play the victims. There are lots of available jobs in the locality but they are not interested. He is very upset that, when they do apply for a job, they only stay for one week and then they leave. (From a researcher's non-public field note)*

Common explanations for the behaviour differences between the Roma people and the non-Roma, such as the differences in school behaviour, include two main factors: the economic and the cultural.

**Quote 4-9. Economic and cultural explanations of school failure in Cugir**

*School abandonment among Roma children – and not only them – is another issue; as far as the Roma population is concerned, the justifications are economic, as well as traditional, in the teaching staff's opinion ('they do not value education'). School abandonment among non-Roma children also has economic grounds, as entire families are away, working abroad. (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

These two may also be seen as interrelated into a "culture of poverty". This type of explanation construes the Roma people's life strategies as somehow self-contained, with no rational connection to the outside context (see Quote 4-10). References to poverty, while they may seem contextual, are actually not, since it is not in the power of local decision makers to significantly alter this. Contextual variables that could be potentially altered – such as organizational practices, communication processes – are not taken into account in common explanations.

**Quote 4-10. "Culture of poverty" explanations for school failure, Nusfalău**

*"(...) they don't attend regularly. It is useless to come one or two days and after that he/she is missing a month...because that's nothing. And the worst thing is that they don't want. And I am angry with them because of that. They simply don't want to break that situation in which they are. Although they could do that, now they really could do that. Because they receive social aids, they receive anything, still they don't want...I don't know. (...) ...and they are satisfied, children learn this way of life, so... they see this..." (teacher in elementary school, Hungarian section, Nusfalău, quoted in Toma 2007)*

Overall, explanations of school failure focus on the demand side of education, and less on the supply side. Pupils and parents are seen as the only focus of attention for understanding why Roma children drop out of school and little attention is given to school itself. Even in cases where alternative educational organizations succeed, this success is not seen as an indication that organizational change is required – or it may even be seen as a potential disadvantage (see Quote 4-11).



**Quote 4-11. “Demand side” and “supply side” explanations for school failure in Nusfalău**

“...they constructed a more bigger building, they are many people...and it is good...and the (Roma children from Brazilia) go there in the kindergarten. There is one...Almost all the “tanya” is “believer”...they go there in the kindergarten...now is vacation, but they go, and they receive some food, the school age children go there as well, there is a room where they can write their lessons, there is somebody who helps them to learn....it is very good...but I don’ t know how long will be like this...yes, yes, there are more children attending the school now, thus when somebody is working with them a bit more, they become a bit different... it is a very good thing, I think...because at home the parents doesn’ t really care about them...poor of them, they go to school, because they receive some food, during the winter even clothes, shoes...it is good. From one point of view is good that they receive, but from the other point of view it’ s not good, because they learn this...they learn that they receive without making some effort, and they will expect this all the time, you know. And this is not good. Not at all. Because they receive all the time aids...I don’ t want to say that they don’ t need this. Because they are very poor, but they will be used to receive things just for nothing, and in my opinion this is not good. We have to help them, because it’ s necessary, because – God help us – there are cases where there are children of 8-9, have no jobs, they receive only the children’ s allowance and the social aid, are not able to find work, and they need this little help. But...they won’ t receive this help all the time. And... it is not good when people don’ t care about things to get fixed... no... ” (Roma, reformat woman, Nusfalău – Bakos, quoted in Toma 2007)

The influence of organizational factors on motivation structures is also exemplified by the informal electricity connection system in Colțău. Despite the widespread stereotype of the Roma people as lacking discipline with invoice payments (*rău-platnici*), alternative organizations manage to be sustainable economically (see Quote 4-12).

**Quote 4-12. Payments for electricity - Colțău**

*The mutual help system of electricity provision is, in most cases (even when it involves relatives) a profitable one for the one who supplies it. For example:*

- *In the first situation: if someone receives electricity but does not give it away to somebody else, either the bill is divided by half or it is entirely paid for by the receiver.*
- *In the second situation: if someone receives electricity and passes it along, the one that provides pays nothing and the others divide the bill among themselves, or (very rarely) bills are divided among all beneficiaries, including the supplier. (Colțău, Iorga 2007)*

However, there are also respondents who understand the logic of what their Roma acquaintances and neighbours are doing, and who seek possible improvements for them (see Quote 4-13).

**Quote 4-13. Infrastructure necessities and cleaning practices in Colțău**

*“Electricity and running water would be the first to be installed, I guess, because people here have a few wells. We just say they’ re dirty and make no cleaning, but believe me, when making social investigations I found some houses of theirs cleaner than ours. Although they have no water to wash in, or money for washing powder they are still cleaner than Romanians or Hungarians. This is it. They’ re staying at home all day long and care for they houses. They take care of the insides as they have no possibility to take care for the outside look of the house. And the insides look good.” (Hungarian woman, aged 21, Colțău, quoted in Iorga 2007)*

Another concept widely used in explaining patterns of behaviour for Roma people is dependency on aid. Material or financial aid to Roma families is widely understood as counter-productive, encouraging a passive attitude towards work (see Quote 4-14).

**Quote 4-14. Attitudes towards aid in Târgu Mureş**

*In the successive discussions I had with the institution's employees, they expressed their disagreement regarding any form of direct support granted by foundations, except for extreme cases – because such gestures only maintain this perception of the Roma's dependence and marginal, inferior existence. (Târgu Mureş, Cengher 2007)*

## 4.2 The Invisibility of Roma Culture

The *Țigani* are most often not seen as bearers of culture, but as bearers of poverty and social problems. This “culture of poverty” understanding of the Roma people's world view is shaped, on the one hand, by the powerful stereotypes about the Roma, and on the other hand by the folkloristic understanding of popular culture – based on the idealized images of the “traditional peasant”.

**Quote 4-15. The poverty-focused definition of Roma in Veseuş**

*As any other Romanian not specializing in sociology, I placed ‘considerable Roma community’ and ‘social problems’ as equal terms in an equation. Later on, I came across the same interpretation in the pages of the General Landscape Development Plan<sup>18</sup>, mentioning the following warning under ‘Dysfunctions’:*  
*“A larger part of the Roma population in some villages (of Jidvei commune) will generate specific social issues and thus require assistance and support programmes. The Roma population is characterized by a demographic behaviour that differs from that of the majority population, and by high levels of poverty”. (Veseuş, Silian 2007)*

### 4.2.1 Defining “Culture” and Defining the “Roma”

“Culture” is often commonly understood as a set of past dances, costumes, ancient poems, and the omnipresent “traditions”. This folkloristic and nostalgic view of popular culture excludes the current meaningful practices of the non-Roma and the Roma population alike. Even so, the Romanians (and other ethnic groups such as the Hungarians, the Germans, etc) have easier access to this museum-like display of dances and carols. Such a limited unbalanced understanding of culture carries a lot of force for the Romanians – but even more powerful for the Roma. The stigma of *Țigani* and the discrimination that goes along with it is reinforced by – and reinforces the “a-cultural” definition of the Roma people.

**Quote 4-16. The Gypsy culture in school festivities in Veseuş**

*On two occasions, the children from Veseuş school were invited to attend the 1st of June and the Christmas celebrations and participate with Gypsy dances and carols; both festivities took place at the Jidvei cultural house. At Christmas, the transport that the Mayorality had provided to take the children in the morning did not show up until around noon. The children, dressed up in new suits and gowns, got to the festivity when it was about to end and then someone announced on the stage that the Veseuş and Bălcăciu children are not going to sing carols, because they were not wearing folk costumes. They were offered a*

<sup>18</sup> General Urbanism Plan. Landscaping Plan – Jidvei commune. 2005. p. 34.

*compromise: to sing outside, in front of the Christmas tree, not on the stage, so that they have a chance to get presents from Santa Claus. The school facilitator refused. She thought it was too much of a coincidence that the children excluded from performance were from both schools populated with mostly Roma children. She said she was sorry no one had told her in the evening, so she could come up with ten costumes from the people in the village. Moreover, as they got there when the festivity was almost over, there was not much to see on the stage either, for the Veseuş children. The children had rehearsed a lot and the parents “had spent money on new clothes, so that people could see the children”. “They didn’t go there for those presents; after all, every child spent 50,000 lei in Fidei for soft drinks and sweets, and all that amounts to more than the packet they received”. (Veseuş, Silian 2007)*

Another frequent idea about culture developed in Europe and mainly articulates the inequalities between different nations and societies (originally the European societies and societies in their colonies), identifying culture as civilization in contrast with nature. Based on this concept one can classify a nation as “more civilized”, and others as less civilized, but closer to nature.

If Roma people are to be seen as culture-bearers, they are expected to adopt the pre-existing image of the romantic Gypsy as an exotic, wild man or woman – even if it has no relevance to their local history and life:

**Quote 4-17. Roma children in “Gypsy” disguise in Veseuş**

*“The girls were wearing long skirts and scarves, their hair plaited with marbles, like the Gypsies. Although we don’t have any costumes in the village – that’s how it was.” Even though they are Roma and their costumes are different, they were expected to wear Romanian folk costumes at Christmas. (Veseuş, Silian 2007)*

## 4.2.2 Opinions on Teaching Roma Culture, Language and Education

Two thirds of the Roma believe that all children should learn about Roma history and culture in schools, compared to one third of the non-Roma respondents who agree with this (see Table 4-1). This distribution of answers probably reflects the current invisibility of the Roma culture and history in the Romanian public discourse, from school textbooks which completely ignore the history of Roma people in Romania, to mass-media reports which often portray Roma people as “social problems”.

A majority of respondents agree that Roma pupils should learn Romani in school. There are statistically significant differences between Roma and non-Roma respondents. For example, 65% of the Roma respondents agree with Romani as a school discipline for the Roma children (20% “rather agree” while 45% “totally agree”), while around 50% of the non-Roma respondents agree with the same assertion.

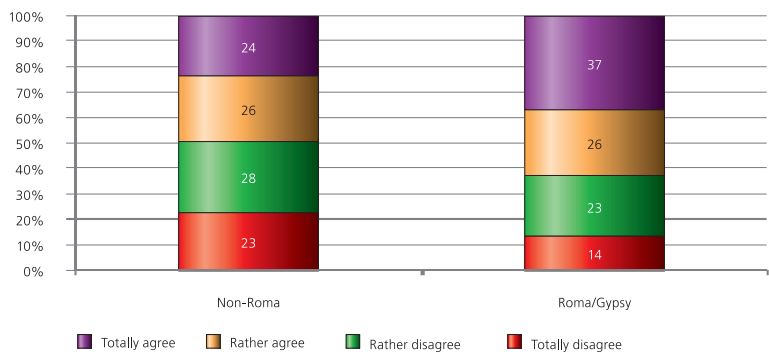
*Table 4-1. Opinions on educational reform (percentage)*

	Roma children should learn Romani language in school		All children should learn about Roma’s history and culture in school		It is necessary to have reserved places for Roma at high school admission	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Totally disagree	20	32	15	42	13	28
Rather disagree	14	19	19	24	10	24
Rather agree	20	24	24	19	30	27
Totally agree	45	25	43	14	47	20
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Differences of opinions between Roma and non-Roma respondents are statistically significant for all questions (Chi Square test) for  $p=0.01$ .*

The same distribution of answers was indicated in the Roma Inclusion Barometer of the Open Society Foundation, November 2007 (see Chart 4-1).

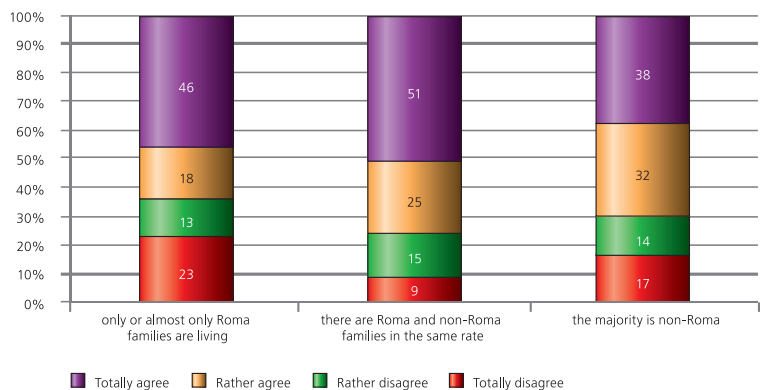
Chart 4-1. Opinions on learning Romani in school, by ethnic affiliation (RIB 2006) (percentage)



It is interesting that the opinion on whether Roma pupils should learn Roma language in school is only marginally influenced by the current use of Romani language in home conversations. People who actually speak Romani and people who don't have, on average, very similar opinions. It seems that Romani language is not evaluated according to its usefulness for the respondent, but according to its perceived cultural value and dignity as a school topic.

The education of the respondent has no significant influence. Living in a dominantly Roma neighbourhood (as perceived by the operator) has a mixed influence: strong agreement and strong disagreement both increase, leading to a more polarized public opinion.

Chart 4-2. Distribution of answers to the question about teaching Romani language to all Roma pupils, by neighbourhood composition (percentage)



The same pattern of associations can be found on opinions regarding teaching Roma history and culture to all pupils (see Table 16-8).

### 4.3 The Roma, “Our Roma” and “Other Roma”

As social-psychological literature on stereotypes has shown, counter-stereotypical information may not necessarily lead to changes in the stereotype (Cernat 2005, pp. 177-196). A visible stereotype-maintenance strategy in case of the Roma is a sub-type construction, by using the distinction between “our Roma” and the “other Roma”. Therefore, counter-stereotypical information on “our Roma” may leave the general Roma stereotype unaltered.

**Quote 4-18. “My Roma”, “our Roma” and the “other Roma” in Nuşfalău**

*We could identify three dimensions in Nuşfalău: the image of Roma from Romania in general, the Roma of Nuşfalău in general, and in the relationship between the two. The Hungarians, comparing the ethnic situation in their village with that of Romania, consider that their village has a model-value. The people of Nuşfalău have not experienced interaction with other Roma groups from other regions of Romania. They know about Roma in general from the mass media – which is never neutral and presents the Roma of Romania mostly in negative terms. Their experiences with Roma however are different and this is the second dimension. The minor swindles of the Roma from Nuşfalău cannot be compared to the criminality of other Roma groups. Nevertheless, in the local context, these swindles have become the community’s biggest problem. The third dimension is that of interpersonal relations. It is interesting that the existing stereotypes applied in the context of the whole community are not applied in interpersonal relations.*

*Finally, “my Gypsy” is trustworthy, hard-working, civilized. Yet, the social distances and the behavioural intentions exhibited in interpersonal relations correspond to those of the entire community (the second level). The Gadjo avoid close interactions with Roma. Of course, there are exceptions – in the case of economic relations, the number of interactions is very high. The presence of Roma in a formal institution also increases the number of interactions (e.g. teacher in the local school, the health mediator in the sanitary centre, etc). (Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

For example, several community reports stress that respondents believe that local Roma are exceptional, because they are not violent. Personal knowledge is therefore not used to inform a stereotype, instead it is made compatible with it (see Quote 4-19). Even in localities where there are no records of violent conflicts researchers have encountered violent stereotypes against Roma (see Quote 4-20).

**Quote 4-19. Perceptions of Rudari people in Modelu**

*From what the head of the Modelu police says, “rudari” Roma appear to be very peaceful and they don’t make any problems to him – he even thinks that they are more peaceful than the Romanians. No big conflicts have been seen – only minor incidents generated by alcohol consumption. It’s from him that I also learned that there are no people without Identity documents, and if there was such a case, the police authority would take the legal measures required to establish legality. In his opinion, crime rates are decreasing and they are very low compared to Roma communities in other areas. (Modelu, Feraru 2007)*

**Quote 4-20. Prejudiced discourse against Țigani in Colțău**

*The Roma in Colțău are friendly, hospitable and tolerant. They enjoy life and they enjoy other people’s presence, no matter who they are. I was told that they do not steal*

*and I can go there relaxed. (...) On one of my nights spent in the local bar two young Hungarians (18 and 21) expressed vividly their views on Roma, labelling them ugly and dirty and expressing their wish to see them outside the village. This powerful racism lacking every argument was based on the lack of experiences with Roma, because, as they admitted, they had no encounters with them. On the contrary, another young man (28) declared, when he was working in a working house close to a Roma area, he had to pass by their places and felt no danger. They were greeting each other and that was all. (Coltău, Iorga 2007)*

## 4.4 Social Distance Attitudes

### 4.4.1 Measures of Social Distance

From a Roma viewpoint, Romanians are the most favourably accepted ethnic group besides the Roma/Gypsy. We have also asked people about their attitudes to a fictitious ethnic group, called “Pirez”. The “Pirez” group suffered the most intense rejection levels: almost 20% of the Roma respondents would not accept Pirez to be Romanian citizens. The situation is rather similar for the non-Roma respondents, with the obvious exception of the social distance towards Roma (see Table 4-2).

A proportion of 18% of non-Roma would accept Roma family members, while among the Roma 54% would accept Romanian family members and 29% would accept Hungarian family members. Only 10% of non-Roma have Roma relatives, while 34% of the Roma have Romanian relatives.

A proportion of 42% of non-Roma respondents would accept a Roma as a friend. Among the Roma, 89% would accept a Romanian as a friend, and 45% would accept a Hungarian as a friend.

Around 20% of Roma and non-Roma respondents alike would accept a person of (fictive) Pirez ethnicity as a family member. Around 30% of both Roma and *Gadje* would accept as Pirez as a friend.

*Table 4-2. Social distance of Roma and non-Roma respondents towards various ethnic categories, including a fictitious one (percentage)*

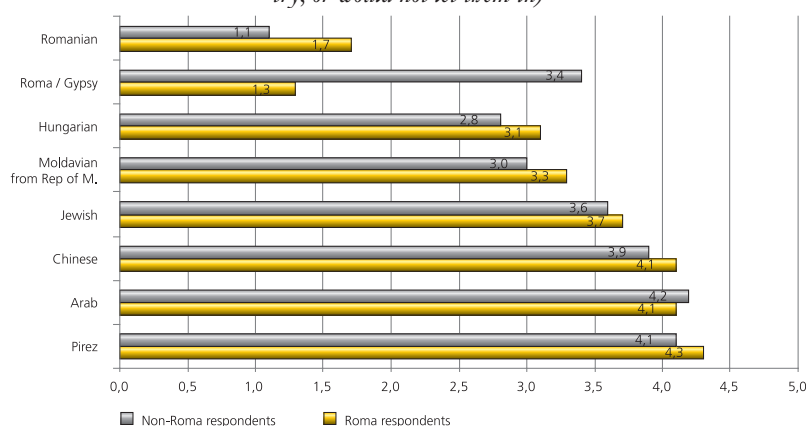
	Romanian		Hungarian		Roma/ Gypsy		Jewish**		Chinese		Pirez**		Arab**		Moldavian (from Rep. of M)	
Respondent's ethnicity*	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR
would accept as family member	54.1	92.3	28.5	37.7	87.0	17.9	20.4	24.4	17.9	19.7	19.7	21.8	20.5	19.9	24.9	29.4
would accept as friend	89.3	98.6	44.9	56.7	92.6	42.0	32.2	35.4	27.6	31.2	29.8	32.8	30.3	30.9	39.2	51.0
would accept as neighbour	95.3	99.5	64.6	68.7	96.0	63.2	45.1	49.9	38.7	40.4	38.9	41.6	39.8	38.6	56.1	63.9
would accept as colleague	97.1	99.6	72.9	77.6	96.7	69.6	59.8	63.6	48.5	54.2	44.8	49.3	47.1	46.3	67.9	72.5
would accept as the citizen of the country	99.0	100.0	83.0	86.0	98.2	80.6	75.6	77.9	65.8	71.8	58.3	64.0	62.4	62.9	83.1	85.0
would accept as a tourist in the country	99.5	100.0	92.9	94.4	99.2	84.4	91.8	92.3	92.6	93.7	80.9	85.1	85.0	85.9	95.5	94.6
would prefer to ban them from the country, or would not let them in	0.5	0.0	7.1	5.6	0.8	15.6	8.2	7.7	7.4	6.3	19.1	14.9	15.0	14.1	4.5	5.4

\* R = Roma respondent, NR = Non-Roma respondent

\*\* No significant differences between Roma and non-Roma respondent's answers

On a social distance scale from one to seven, on average, Roma people are confronted with slightly more rejection than the Moldavians from the Republic of Moldova, while at the same time experiencing less rejection than the Jewish, Chinese, Arab or “Pirez” groups (see Chart 4-3.). This average masks the fact that the Roma have the lowest score on acceptance as family members: less than 18% of non-Roma would agree to a Roma family member (see Table 4-2). Their average score is higher because of the more frequent disposition to have them as friends or neighbours.

*Chart 4-3. Average social distance from various ethnic groups, for Roma and non-Roma respondents, mean score (1=would accept as family member, 7= would prefer to ban them from the country, or would not let them in)*



Data from the Roma Inclusion Barometer of the Open Society Foundation (see Table 4-3) indicates also that around 63% of non-Roma respondents from the nationally representative sample would prefer not to have Roma neighbours, a figure which is concordant with the social distance information from Table 4-2.

*Table 4-3. Comparison with other social distance information of non-Roma respondents from the Roma Inclusion Barometer, Open Society Foundation (2007) (percentage)*

		Roma- nian	Hunga- rian	Roma /Gypsy	Jewish	Chines e	Pirez	Arab	Moldavian (from Rep. of M)
Would accept as neighbours or closer	Inclusion 2007 survey, non- Roma in comparative sample	99.5	68.7	63.2	49.9	40.4	41.6	38.6	63.9
	RIB database, non-Roma in national sample*	-	76	63	77	-	-	-	-

\*Source: [http://www.sfos.ro/en/comunicate\\_detaliiu.php?comunicat=22#](http://www.sfos.ro/en/comunicate_detaliiu.php?comunicat=22#)

#### 4.4.2 Influences on Social Distance Attitudes

Roma respondents who use Romani as their primary mother tongue maintain a greater social distance from all other ethnic groups in comparison with those whose mother tongue is not Romani, except for the social distance towards Roma/Gypsy people, where the correlation is reverse. We can suppose that behind the fact of using Romani as a primary mother tongue there is a stronger connection with traditions. In other words, those whose primary mother tongue is

not Romani are more assimilated; traditional communities are more closed off towards any other ethnic groupings, while those being more assimilated are prone to be more open, while at the same time maintaining a greater distance from other Roma. Those whose primary mother tongue is other than Romani are presumably more assimilated and maintain a greater social distance from other Roma: 77% of them would accept another Roma as a family member, while among the more traditional ones this rate increases to 94 percent, and for those who would ban all other Roma from the country the rate is eight times as high (1.6 versus 0.2%).

*Table 4-4. Social distance of Roma respondents to various ethnic groups, by mother tongue of the respondents, percentage*

	Romanian		Hungarian		Roma/Gypsy		Jewish		Chinese		Pirez		Arab		Moldavian (from Rep. of M)	
Respondent's mother tongue*	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR
would accept as family member	44.1	67.0	22.5	36.0	94.3	77.1	15.8	26.5	13.7	23.4	15.9	24.6	16.7	25.4	18.8	33.0
would accept as friend	86.1	93.2	40.4	50.7	98.2	84.9	28.7	36.9	25.0	31.1	28.2	32.0	27.8	33.7	34.4	45.7
would accept as neighbour	94.2	96.6	60.5	69.9	98.9	92.2	41.4	50.1	37.7	40.3	38.5	39.7	38.5	41.5	52.8	60.4
would accept as colleague	96.2	98.1	71.6	74.9	99.2	93.3	55.0	66.2	46.7	51.0	43.1	47.1	45.4	49.2	66.0	70.4
would accept as the citizen of the country	98.6	99.4	80.8	85.7	99.8	96.0	67.7	85.5	63.5	69.2	54.0	64.0	60.1	65.5	78.9	88.6
would accept as a tourist in the country	99.5	99.6	92.3	93.7	99.8	98.4	88.1	96.4	91.9	94.0	77.4	85.1	85.1	85.0	93.7	97.8
would prefer to ban them from the country, or would not let them in	0.5	0.4	7.7	6.3	0.2	1.6	11.9	3.6	8.1	6.0	22.6	14.9	14.9	15.0	6.3	2.2

\* R = Respondent's mother tongue is Romani; NR = Respondent's mother tongue is not Romani

Based on results from previous research on this topic, our hypothesis claimed that the higher the level of education, the smaller the social distance of the respondents to various ethnic groups. In some cases we could validate our hypothesis but in most cases our data shows a different picture. Roma respondents' answers towards Romanian, Jewish, Chinese and Pirez were influenced positively by their level of education, meaning that the higher the level of education, the smaller was the distance to these groups. Non-Roma's social distance to Hungarians and Jewish is also in a clear inverse ratio to the level of education. The most interesting fact is that both Roma and non-Roma respondents' social distance increases in correlation with the level of education. In the case of the Roma we could explain this as a consequence of forced assimilation policies.



*Table 4-5. The average social distance to different ethnic groups, by ethnicity and the level of education of respondents, mean score*

	Romanian		Hungarian		Roma/ Gypsy		Jewish		Chinese		Pirez		Arab		Moldavian (from Rep. of M)	
Respondent's ethnicity*	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR	R	NR
Total	1.7	1.1	3.1	2.8	1.3	3.4	3.7	3.6	4.1	3.9	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.2	3.3	3.0
No school	1.8	1.1	3.2	3.2	1.1	3.1	4.0	3.9	4.3	4.0	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.4	3.8
Incomplete primary	1.7	1.1	3.1	2.9	1.3	3.1	3.8	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.3	3.4	3.0
Completed primary	1.6	1.1	3.1	2.8	1.3	3.3	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	3.9	4.2	3.1	3.0
Completed secondary or higher	1.3	1.1	3.0	2.7	1.8	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.2	3.0

\* R = Roma. NR = Non-Roma

Opinions of non-Roma respondents are significantly influenced by the opportunity of everyday contact with Roma people. The ethnic composition of the neighbourhood, as estimated by the head of a household, has a significant influence on social distance coefficients towards Roma people. Around 23% of residents in Roma neighbourhoods would accept Roma people in their family, compared to 17% of residents living in non-Roma neighbourhoods. Moreover, less than 10% living in a Roma area would ban them entirely from the country, compared to more than 15% of those living in a neighbourhood largely inhabited by non-Roma families.

*Table 4-6. Social distance of non-Roma respondents to Roma, by the ethnicity of majority in respondent's neighbourhood, percentage*

	Ethnicity of majority in respondent's neighbourhood		Total
	Roma	Non-Roma	
would accept as family member	22.9	17.4	18.4
would accept as friend	51.0	42.3	43.9
would accept as neighbour	78.4	61.9	64.9
would accept as colleague	80.4	69.3	71.3
would accept as the citizen of the country	87.6	80.7	82.0
would accept as a tourist in the country	90.2	84.7	85.7
would prefer to ban them from the country, or would not let them in	9.8	15.3	14.3

The social distance of non-Roma respondents to Roma people strongly differs depending on the type of location of the respondent's residence. There is a clear tendency here: acceptance of close bonds with the Roma population decreases considerably according to the size of location, i.e. starting from the capital to the smallest places. In Bucharest this rate amounts to 40, while in other villages it is less than 10% (see Table 4-7). At the same time though, if we analyse those who would prefer to ban the Roma entirely from the country, the highest rate can also be found in Bucharest, as well as in 'other villages'. In the county capitals and the main villages there are slightly lower rates of intolerant non-Roma, while the lowest rates are to be found in other cities.

*Table 4-7. Social distance of non-Roma respondents to Roma by the type of location (percentage)*

	Type of location					Total
	Bucharest	County capital	Other city	Main village	Other village	
would accept as family member	40.0	23.3	18.8	16.1	9.5	17.9
would accept as friend	55.6	44.5	38.0	43.0	39.2	42.0
would accept as neighbour	73.3	59.6	65.4	62.3	62.7	63.2
would accept as colleague	75.6	66.4	75.0	68.4	66.5	69.6
would accept as the citizen of the country	80.0	73.3	89.9	79.8	77.2	80.6
would accept as a tourist in the country	80.0	82.9	92.8	82.5	80.4	84.4
would prefer to ban them from the country, or would not let them in	20.0	17.1	7.2	17.5	19.6	15.6

If we check the average distance of non-Roma to Roma by type of location, Bucharest seems the most tolerant or open type of location towards the Roma. At the same time though, it should be borne in mind that this average also masks the fact that Bucharest equally hosts the highest rate of intolerant people (see Chart 4-4). In other villages non-Roma maintain the biggest distance to the Roma population.

*Chart 4-4. Average social distance of non-Roma respondents to Roma, by type of location, mean score*

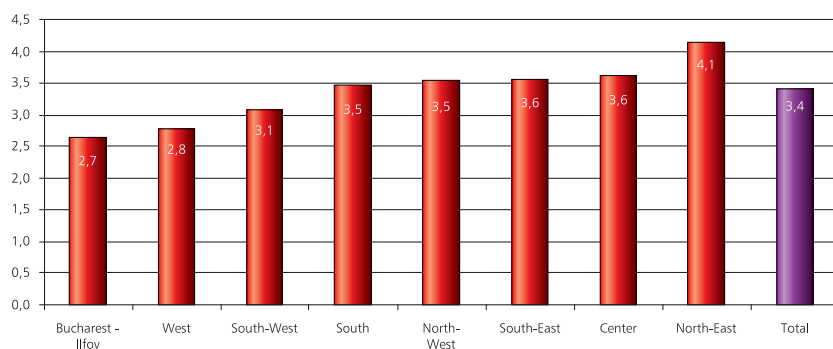


Non-Roma's social distance to Roma also differs geographically. In Bucharest we can find the highest rate of those who would accept Roma as family members (twice as high as the country's average). Equally important in Bucharest, the level of those who would rather ban the Roma from the country is somewhere in between the country's average figures. In the South we find the lowest rates of 'open' non-Roma towards the Roma, less than one third of the country total; in the South-West the level is less than half. A very extreme anti-Roma attitude is also rarest in the West, followed by the South-West. From this viewpoint we find the most intense rejection towards Roma people in the North-Eastern region, where more than 20% of non-Roma respondents would ban Roma from the country – almost one and a half times higher than the country total.

*Table 4-8. Social distance of non-Roma respondents to Roma by regions (percentage)*

	Regions								Total
	North-East	South-East	South	South-West	West	North-West	Centre	Bucharest - Ilfov	
would accept as family member	16.1	28.6	5.1	9.6	26.7	20.4	18.8	36.7	17.9
would accept as friend	27.4	40.3	39.1	40.7	51.1	44.5	38.2	66.7	42.0
would accept as neighbour	40.3	54.5	67.4	75.6	75.6	59.2	58.1	80.0	63.2
would accept as colleague	50.0	59.7	72.5	82.2	80.0	66.5	66.0	81.7	69.6
would accept as the citizen of the country	74.2	79.2	82.6	88.9	91.1	75.9	77.0	85.0	80.6
would accept as a tourist in the country	77.4	81.8	86.2	94.1	97.8	80.6	80.1	85.0	84.4
would prefer to ban them from the country, or would not let them in	22.6	18.2	13.8	5.9	2.2	19.4	19.9	15.0	15.6

If we now analyse the average scores according to regions, the picture remains almost the same: the North-East scores highest for the widest social distance, Bucharest is the most open part of the country for having closer relationships with Roma people, while the average score of the Western region also comes quite close to that (see Chart 4-5). We need to highlight the fact that these scores mask very important differences between these two regions. Even though seven times as intolerant of Roma, the non-Roma of Bucharest would accept Roma as friends, or closer, as would the non-Roma of the West with their only slightly lower rate of intolerance (see Table 4-8).

*Chart 4-5. Average social distance of non-Roma respondents to Roma, by regions, mean score*

## 4.5 Inter-ethnic Contact

Community reports indicate that inter-ethnic contact is profoundly differentiated among individuals: some Roma are much more often in contact with non-Roma, and vice-versa. At the same time, there is visible imbalance between communities, as Roma are much more familiar with non-Roma neighbourhoods than the reverse.

### *Quote 4-21. Asymmetric contact in Colțău*

*The Roma community's geographical setting means that there is an exit from it only through Colțău's centre, necessitating interactions with local Hungarians. These*

*two groups usually greet each other, and sometimes have a chat in the street. It is interesting to mention that Roma do know the Hungarians quite well, while the latter have less knowledge of them. (Coltău, Iorga 2007)*

At the same time, the informal contacts are usually limited to kin and close neighbours.

**Quote 4-22. Social exclusion and social contact in Babadag**

*Young people are probably the group that feels the problems of social exclusion and discrimination most acutely. Whether it's about sad daily occurrences – swearing, offending appellations such as ‘crow’, the impossibility of socialising with other young people in a bar in the city – or long-term experiences – such as the impossibility of finding a job – the social context leads the young Roma originating from Bendea neighbourhood towards the old ways of action, thus perpetuating the existing status quo. No doubt, one may say, it is almost impossible for a young Turkish Gypsy to learn any other social roles than the ones passed over to him by his family. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

#### 4.5.1 Discrimination

Attempts to avoid any interactions with the Roma lead, in some cases, to community-wide discriminatory practices (see also the survey data on experienced discrimination, in section 3.5.4).

**Quote 4-23. Discrimination in commercial relationships in Babadag**

*Gypsies are forbidden to enter a number of shops in the city, especially the self-service shops, for the reason that they would steal and that they have been caught stealing quite frequently. Also, they are forbidden access on the minibuses passing from Babadag towards Tulcea or Constanța, and the reason invoked is their poor hygiene, so they would use their own cars or the train to go to other cities. Another place where Gypsies have no access is the bars in the city – they are resented for their uncultured, noisy behaviour which annoys other clients. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

Field researchers distinguish between two types of discrimination affecting the Roma people: economic discrimination and ethnic discrimination. Economic discrimination occurs when unequal treatment is applied to people based on their economic situation – for example, when public policies such as infrastructure improvement are shaped to benefit only the more affluent neighbourhoods. Romanian and Roma people alike can be affected by economic discrimination.

**Quote 4-24. Economic vs. ethnic discrimination in Cugir**

*As there is no neighbourhood exclusively inhabited by Roma, it would be too far-fetched to assume that the negative social aspects in those areas only belong to their communities. On the contrary, problems related to sewers, bad roads and access to utilities such as heating are challenging all the citizens of Cugir. During a visit in Riul Mic, I heard complaints about these things coming both from Roma and from their Romanian neighbours, and all the criticisms were directed against the City Hall. Indeed, the neighbourhoods on the outskirts are in bad condition, while other areas in the centre, where the ‘villas’ are, are much better in all respects, including access roads. (Stoianovici, Cugir 2007)*

Still, since Roma people are often significantly poorer than other people, they are simultaneously affected by both – or by a combination of the two. Tracing the distinction between them is a difficult issue.

**Quote 4-25. Discrimination in labour relationships in Colțău**

*Among people I spoke with today, V, the wife of a local leader, spoke about how Hungarians discriminate and how they ask the Gypsies who go to their shops to speak Hungarian. Still, when Hungarians ask for them to work for them they speak to the Gypsies in Romanian. Also, they mock the daily Gypsy workers with their food, and Hungarians have a very bad opinion of the Gypsies which they don't even know. This is why they can afford to mock them, believing that they are dirty and can eat anything. She also said that everybody should speak Romanian in shops, in Town hall and everywhere: "we are living in Romania, not somewhere else". (Colțău, Iorga 2007)*

**Quote 4-26. Evaluating ethnic discrimination in Cetățeni**

*In the last period of the fieldwork I started to have a distinctive feeling, more and more powerful, that the situation of ethnic discrimination (a concept which I would prefer to replace with the expression "ethnic difference") is not exactly as Roma or Romanians see at first sight. As the locals here say, "here one makes no difference". I have started to feel this change after contacting local officials, the teachers, the Police officers, the town hall officials, the doctor. (...) These interviews display certain duplicity, sometimes not fully conscious, towards the Roma and their problems. They admit that the Roma are confronted with social problems, because they cannot deny it, since they are obvious. They also assert that they have been involved in finding solutions by means of different projects, but they still do not understand why there are so many projects, so many efforts, research, etc for the Roma: what purpose do they serve? They do not understand the usefulness of positive discrimination, or they believe it is not positive for society as a whole. They would prefer a policy of assimilation since, for example, what use is there for learning in Romani since the world tends towards globalization, as a teacher told me. (...) On the other hand he said that the Roma have their way of living and of being, and their abilities and that nobody can change them. Therefore (the professor was contradicting himself), because they are not the same, because they do not live like the majority population, they cannot be completely assimilated in the majority. The respondents did not believe in the idea of assimilation because of a specific theory, but because of their self-centred thinking. (Cetățeni, Isan 2007)*

At the same time, awareness of discrimination may lead to attempts to reduce it:

**Quote 4-27. Strategies for equal treatment in Babadag**

*However, we should also mention the local administration's attempt to keep a balance between the Bendea neighbourhood, inhabited by the Turkish Gypsies, and the other neighbourhoods in the city. From what the mayor says, but also based on our personal observations, the mayoralty's strategy is to start works to improve and/or replace the water piping, public lighting grid, roads, etc in the rest of the city and in the Turkish Gypsy neighbourhood at the same time, actually in order to prevent the potential criticisms from both sides (when the research was conducted, construction works were ongoing in parallel on two roads, one of which was in Bendea). (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

An interesting situation is discussed by Silian (2007) in Veseuş, where Roma people face the virtual impossibility in finding employment outside the community. Rumours and more or less direct assertions as well, point towards an agreement between the local patron, who benefits from

their workforce, and other patrons and the local authorities – a strategy that is seen as benevolently paternalistic but, if true, is exploitative and discriminatory:

**Quote 4-28. Confinement strategies in Veseuş**

*However, all villagers share the suspicion that the weak involvement of the authorities in pouring the concrete road has nothing to do with the electees' incompetence. On the contrary, they believe this is some agreement between the owner of the wine-making company and the mayor: "My lady, others are building kilometres of concrete roads! Kilometres! Becali alone built villages and put a sign at the entrance, with "Becali" written on it! And here – they can't build 6 km of concrete road!? What happened, we ran out of bitumen and rocks? Or he prefers not to build the concrete road, because the owner is afraid his workforce would leave Veseuş? That's how I see it!". The people's suspicion is also strengthened by other rumours about the owner's interventions with other road construction contractors, asking them not to hire people from Veseuş. In a manner that I would call paternalistic if it weren't even more cynical, the commune's mayor explains how he had 'made' the Veseuş Roma isolated in the village: "Moreover – not that it's beneficial, because I can't say it's beneficial, but the fact that the infrastructure up to the village where we deployed this costly project (it's a Phare project to set up a basket-twining shop) is rather poor. The road is difficult, almost impossible to take, so I somehow made them stay in the village mostly and do this – twine baskets and so on." (Veseuş, Silian 2007)*

#### 4.5.2 Kinship and Family

Family relations are one of the most restricted areas for inter-ethnic contact – confirmed by survey data on social distance (see Table 4-2): the percentage of non-Roma people who would accept Roma family members is lower than for any other ethnic group included in the study.

**Quote 4-29. Closure of family relations in Coltău**

*Inter-marriages between Roma and Hungarians are seldom, usually despised by the latter. "It is never accepted for a Hungarian to stay with a Roma. I don't know. In my opinion there is a greater gap between Roma and Hungarian than Roma and Romanian. So these marriages are disapproved of." (G.A. Hungarian 21). (G.A., Maghiar, 21 years) (Coltău, Iorga 2007)*

**Quote 4-30. Inter-ethnic marriages in Valea Mare**

*There are cases of mixed marriages, between Romanians and Gypsies, but there was always a transition towards the Roma family because they believe that a Romanian can survive peacefully among the Gypsies, but not the reverse. (Valea Mare, Turcitu 2007)*

**Quote 4-31. Informal relations in Nuşfalău**

*The Gadjo have no informal relations with the Roma. Their interactions are limited to economic relations. The institution of godfather, the only one that can be interpreted as informal, gained a new interpretation among the residents. Even if initially the Gadjo accept this relationship by virtue of an ethical and religious consciousness, this relationship is gradually redefined in terms of informal economy. This way, the institution of godfather has become a more subtle form of economic relationship between Gadjo and Roma, or, in some cases, a consequence or condition of the same. (Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

The Roma are much more open towards inter-ethnic marriages than the *Gadje*. However, this openness is not unrestricted. Some Roma communities prefer endogamous marriage among their own *neam* (see for example Quote 3-21), while others would just avoid the *Gadje*. Silian (2007) illustrates the multiplicity of reasoning chains that take part in such a preference (see below).

**Quote 4-32. Opinions on exogamy in Veseuş**

*As most of the time I was unhappy with the answers to my rather general questions about the relationships between the Roma and other ethnic groups, I tried to bring the discussion to a more specific field. As for sociologists, marriage is one of the classic points windows on inter-ethnic relationships. I asked the Roma about mixed families: Didn't you happen to love a Romanian boy, when you were young? Would you let your child marry a Romanian woman/man? And if he/she brought a Romanian bride/groom, would that be a problem? The answer never shows any doubt that the Romanians could make good husbands – on the contrary, a mixed marriage is a sign that the Roma can get as high as the Romanians: "Of course we would be happy, because we are civilised too, it's just that Romanians should also want to marry Gypsies. They are young and they get together. I mean, there are Roma that you cannot distinguish from the Romanian children – who are educated and come from nice families. There are! There are quite enough of them (marriages between people from different ethnic groups)." Actually, the Roma are constantly proving their human qualities to the members of other ethnic groups, in order to enjoy their attention. I asked old Veronica how were things were with the Saxons: "I went along so well with those Hungarian women, we'd go to plant (trees), they were not walking proud – we'd eat from them and they would eat from us." At other times, the interviewees are rather nostalgic about the orderly, simple world twenty years ago, when everyone had their nation and people had not 'gone crazy' like nowadays:*

*"Maria: May the storm take him! A Hungarian? (She laughs with her whole heart, as if she had never heard of such a prank – a Roma woman married to a Hungarian) Alina: Why not?*

*Maria: We don't need any Romanians and Hungarians.*

*Alina: Well, what was wrong with them?*

*Maria: Our own nation! (Again, she laughs loudly) Our own.*

*Alina: What were you afraid of – being the daughter-in-law of a Hungarian, or the fact that they were people of...*

*Maria: My lady, it wasn't as it is now. When we'd see a Romanian, we'd run away, afraid that he'd beat us. Not even think about talking to him! Our nation! Isn't it better – your own nation?!*

*Alina: I don't know!*

*Maria: It's better! And what does the Romanian woman say: Go to hell, Ți gane! Or the Romanian man: Go away, Ți gană. You are Ți gană, right?! But otherwise, I can't say that...*

*Alina: Well, you said you were getting along together quite well.*

*Maria: Well... Now we get along well, but it wasn't like this 23 years ago. I don't know of a Gypsy married to a Romanian or Hungarian... I am 39 years old, but I never heard of anything like that!*

*Alina: How about a Saxon with a Țigan?*

*Maria: No! There have been none in our village! Saxon with Ți gan. No! People only went crazy recently. Let them be! If it's not your nation, let him be!" (Interview with Roma woman, Veseuş, quoted by Silian 2007)*



### 4.5.3 Ethnic Closure in Family

The degree of openness or closure of families towards members of other ethnic groups is significantly different between Roma and non-Roma families. A proportion of 34% of Roma respondents (heads of households) have family members of Romanian ethnicity, a proportion of 9% of Roma respondents have Hungarian family members. Overall, around 40% of the Roma respondents have family members of non-Roma ethnicities – in contrast with the only 6% of the respondents in the comparative sample who have Roma family members.

This data is concordant with information in the Roma Inclusion Barometer, which includes a nationally representative sample and a representative Roma sample.

*Table 4-9. “I have Roma/Romanian relatives”. Source: RIB 2006 database (percentage)*

“I have Roma/ Romanian relatives”	Non-Roma respondents about Roma relatives	Roma/Gypsy respondents about Romanian relatives
Yes	9.8	34.3
No	90.2	65.7
Total	100.0	100.0

This asymmetry is also reflected at attitudinal level: 78% of all Roma respondents in the RIB sample declare that it is good or very good for Romanians and Roma to inter-marry, compared to 53% of respondents in other ethnic groups (Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 11).

Family social contacts with non-Roma families are strongly influenced by the material situation of the household. Around 60% of the Roma respondents which declare a decent living standard or more have non-Roma family members, compared to 30% of those who do not have enough for the minimum necessities.

*Table 4-10. Family members of non-Roma ethnicity for households in the Roma sample, by subjective standard of living (percentage)*

	We can afford...		
	...decent living or more	...only the minimum necessities	Not enough for minimum necessities
Only Roma family members	39	50	70
Non-Roma family members	61	50	30
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Within the comparative sample, 3% of the better-off households (a decent living standard or more) have Roma family members, compared to 7% of other more impoverished households.

Mixed families are also predominantly found in those households who do not use the Roma language (see Chart 3-10).

We have explored variations in opinions regarding inter-ethnic marriages in two different models. The first regression model only included the main socio-demographic variables: affiliation with a traditional sub-group (as discussed above), use of Romani language in the household, education (whether she/he is a gymnasium graduate), the number of long-term consumer goods in the household, and the urban residence. It is interesting to see that all of them have a statistically significant influence on the disposition to accept Romanian family members, with the notable

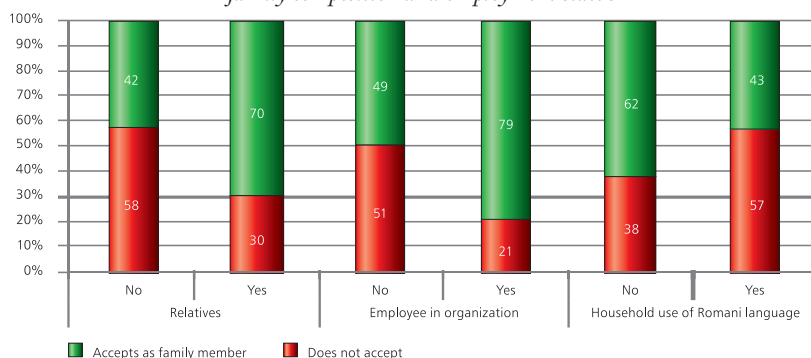


exception of consumer goods (see Table 16-11)<sup>19</sup>. Roma people who affiliate themselves to the traditional *neamuri* and those who speak Romani in the family are less likely to declare their acceptance of a Romanian family member, while the gymnasium graduates and the urban residents are more likely. Household welfare, as measured by long-term consumer goods, has no influence.

In the second model, we have added variables that indicate social contact with non-Roma: working as an employee in an organization, living in a Roma neighbourhood, having Romanian or Hungarian family members, and having Romanian or Hungarian friends. After adding these variables, only the use of Romani language continued to be statistically significant. The influence of affiliation to a traditional group, the level of education, and living in urban residence is explained away by variables of social interaction (see the regression model in the annex, in which only the significant variables are included).

As it is to be expected, Roma people who already have in the family a Romanian or Hungarian ethnic member declare more often their willingness to accept a Romanian as a family member (70%) than the others (42%). It is interesting that professional socialization has a similar effect: almost 80% of employees in organizations accept Romanian family members, compared to 49% of the others. A proportion of 62% of respondents who do not use Romani in the family are open towards a Romanian family member, compared to 43% of the others.

*Chart 4-6. Acceptance of Romanian ethnic persons in the family, by language use, family composition and employment status*



#### 4.5.4 Commercial Relationships

In comparison to other types of interactions, commercial relationships are more frequently inter-ethnic. If a marriage between a Roma and a non-Roma is exceptional and subject to intense community pressures, commercial relationships are usually embedded in a local economic structure and they are not seen as unusual.

At the same time, economic relationships are charged with power, as they give their partners in relatively stable economic roles and allocate social status accordingly. Commercial transactions do not necessarily constitute a first step for another type of transaction – they have their own logic (see Quote 4-33).

***Quote 4-33. Power in commercial relationships in Nuşfalău***

*Although the services offered to the Gadjo by the Roma represent a necessity for the Gadjo, their activities are considered unimportant. Moreover, the Gadjo sanction*

<sup>19</sup> This model explains around 8.8% of the variation in attitudes (Nagelkerke R square).

*these activities. This materializes in the continuous reproduction of stereotypes and the maintaining of social distance on a constant level. (Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

At the same time, the large-scale under-employment of the Roma (see chapter on employment) limits drastically the opportunities for commercial interactions with non-Roma. Types of employment more often available to Roma people situate them in the lower end of power hierarchies, thus decreasing opportunities for other meaningful inter-ethnic relationships.

*Table 4-11. Type of occupation for adult, working members of the households, by sample type (percentage)*

Type of occupation	Roma sample	Comparative sample
Business owner	4.0	5.5
Manager	0.4	1.4
Intellectual/Professional	0.7	5.2
White collar employee	0.4	2.2
Administrative worker	1.4	5.7
Foreman, technician	1.1	3.4
Skilled worker	24.7	42.9
Semi-skilled worker	3.3	1.8
Unskilled worker	30.4	10.6
Public servant (teacher, police officer, etc)	0.7	3.7
Farmer	2.8	9.2
Agricultural worker	21.0	2.8
Other	9.2	5.5
Total	100.0	100.0

For example, in the case of Babadag, the main type of relationship does not involve employment or collegiality, but only the short transactions of itinerant traders (*comercianţi ambulanti*).

**Quote 4-34. Unemployment and social segregation in Babadag**

*All those we interviewed stated that neither themselves, nor anyone they know, has a job – which is an indication of the extent and frequency of employment. (...) For almost all households in the community, small itinerant trade is the main occupation and source of income. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

The same community report, in Babadag, illustrates two forces that have negatively affected the opportunities for economic relationships: one the one hand, a changing structure of needs (see Quote 4-35), and on the other hand, conflicting cultural practices (see Quote 4-36).

**Quote 4-35. Driving licenses in Babadag**

*One important investment for a horahai household is the Dacia “slipper” (papuc) car, which would help in developing itinerant trade, but what is really difficult is getting a driver’s license. Initially, Romanians would be employed as drivers on these trips, and paid 300-500 thousands lei a day. Lately, the number of Turkish Gypsies who have driving licenses started growing (getting the license is an event celebrated with great grandeur and many guests – 50-100 people), so they gave up collaborating with the Romanians. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

**Quote 4-36. Emotions and commercial relationships in Babadag**

*The family's budget is also managed by the woman, who keeps the money (together with other valuable things or documents) in a special pocket, made inside her skirt or shalwar trousers, in the frontal part, around the pelvic area – she would take it out from there any time she needs to. This habit triggers disgust and dissatisfaction especially among sales persons in shops – who refuse to receive their money and sell them goods. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

Another example of conflicting significance invested in the same practice (“normal” for the Roma and “blameworthy” for the non-Roma) is illustrated by Toma (2007) in Nuşfalău: Roma parents often sell goods which they have received as aid. This is widely seen as a lack of respect for the donors, and it is blamed accordingly.

On the other hand, even if commercial relationships are subject to unbalanced power distribution, discriminatory practices and conflicting interpretations, they do sometimes generate trust and function as a win-win situation (see Quote 4-37).

**Quote 4-37. Trade and trust in Nuşfalău**

*Poverty and lack of money forces many Roma to buy food and other products on credit. This interest-free informal credit system is called “the list” because shop-keepers write down all the products they sell mentioning also the exact date of payments. The fixing of the date is done by the buyers as they know exactly the date of receiving money. At the beginning of this practice, the shopkeeper was the one who settled the date for payments, but this proved to be ineffective as it gave opportunities for misunderstandings, which led to distrust on behalf of the shopkeeper. Being forced to continue his familial business – as the single source of income – he had changed the policy of his business and decided to go by his customers. His clientele is formed mainly by Roma. Contrary to the expectations, his business is one of the most developing among the others in the village. One of the explanations could be that he has a stable circle of customers. The Roma buyers are faithful to him and make their payments in time because if they lose his trust they lose almost any access to basic necessities. For some of the inhabitants the existence of this list is the ultimate sign of poverty. But – as we have seen – this is also a sign of trust beneath poverty (Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

## 4.6 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

### *Points to Highlight*

- Around 50% of the *Gadje* agree that Roma children should learn Romani in school, compared to 65% of the Roma respondents.
- Around 47% of the *Gadje* agree with reserved places for Roma in high schools, compared to 77% of the Roma.
- Around 33% of the *Gadje* agree that non-Roma pupils should learn about Roma history and culture in schools, compared to 67% of the Roma.
- The more educated Roma respondents accept more often close relationships with the *Gadje*. On the contrary, the more educated non-Roma accept less often close relationships with the Roma.
- 18% of non-Roma would accept Roma family members, while among the Roma 54% would accept Romanian family members and 29% would accept Hungarian family members. Only 10% of non-Roma have Roma relatives, while 40% of the Roma have Romanian relatives.

- 42% of non-Roma respondents would accept a Roma as a friend. Among the Roma, 89% would accept a Romanian as a friend, and 45% would accept a Hungarian as a friend.
- Around 20% of Roma and non-Roma respondents alike would accept a person of (fictive) Pirez ethnicity as a family member. Around 30% of both Roma and *Gadje* would accept to have a Pirez friend.
- 34% of Roma people have family members of Romanian ethnicity, a proportion of 9% of Roma people have Hungarian family members. Overall, around 40% of the Roma have family members of non-Roma ethnicities – in contrast with the only 6% of the respondents in the comparative sample who have Roma family members.

The Roma have lived in Romania for centuries now, but they are still strangers to the *Gadje*. Social distance attitudes of Romanians towards the Roma are markedly cold – especially regarding the acceptance of them as family members. It is interesting to see that household welfare does not affect the openness of Roma people towards potential Romanian family members, but graduating from the gymnasium does. It is also interesting that the “tolerance” effect of education is actually due to its positive effect on opportunities of inter-ethnic contact. As we have discussed in the section on ethnic closure in the family, if we control such contacts, the influence of education and urban residence disappears.

A general conclusion is that the opportunity for relationships between Roma and non-Roma is low – be it family relationships, neighbourhood collaboration or just commercial interactions. Inter-ethnic relationships are rare and, when they exist, they are most often power-laden, and also more often with Roma participants in the predominant position. This conclusion is supported by data which is disseminated throughout the remainder of the text, such as information on residential segregation and educational segregation. We can see how in Roma schools the teacher – pupil relationship, which could be the basis of a formative experience, sometimes degrades to a meaningless co-presence experience.

Ethnic closure is mutual but asymmetric. Statistical and qualitative data indicates that the *Gadje* are much more opposed to interactions with the Roma than the Roma are in relation to the non-Roma.

This asymmetry in attitudes towards interactions is enforced by a lack of opportunities for direct knowledge. The mediated information – especially as second-hand information or mass-media content – is too often biased by stereotypical assertions, which are the main frames for interpreting and re-telling any event concerning a *Țigan*.



### PART III



### QUALITY OF LIFE



# 5 Divergent Experiences

As the following quote illustrates, extreme poverty is still a very tangible experience for many Roma families. The following chapters explore the quantitative dimensions of living at the limit.

**Quote 5-1. Living in extreme poverty in Timișoara**  
*The second day I meet E.L., early in the morning. We take a trolley and we travel to the Health Insurance State Company (CAS). We are done there in about an hour; we take an order ticket and we wait for our turn. We pay for October too, so I.L. will be able to stay in the hospital not only the four remaining days in September, but also in October, if necessary. We go towards the hospital, of course this trip also takes long, and meanwhile we talk about everything – how they live, how they made a WC by digging a hole and surrounding it with wooden boards; how they carry their water, how children sit by the candle, how they cook, in the summer with an outside fire. They have no wood for heating, so they use clothing. We talk about the huge rats that wander through the house, how children did not receive any books in school and they could not learn how to read and they had to repeat a year, about her endless desperation, how she must be a woman and a man because anyway I.L. is ill and he cannot work, as he couldn't anyway, not even before the accident. She was told in the Neo-protestant church gathering that something will happen, and God appeared and said that He could kill him, but He left him alive. We talk about how children are hungry, how their shacks were put on fire and how the burners came back to them to fight with them because “they made a scandal in the newspapers and TV and they put shame on them” (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007).*

## 5.1 Experience of Hunger

One of the relevant indicators of extreme poverty is the experience of hunger. Almost 60% of the Roma heads of the household declare that at least once in the past month somebody in their household has gone to bed hungry because s/he did not have enough food, compared to 12% of the non-Roma respondents.

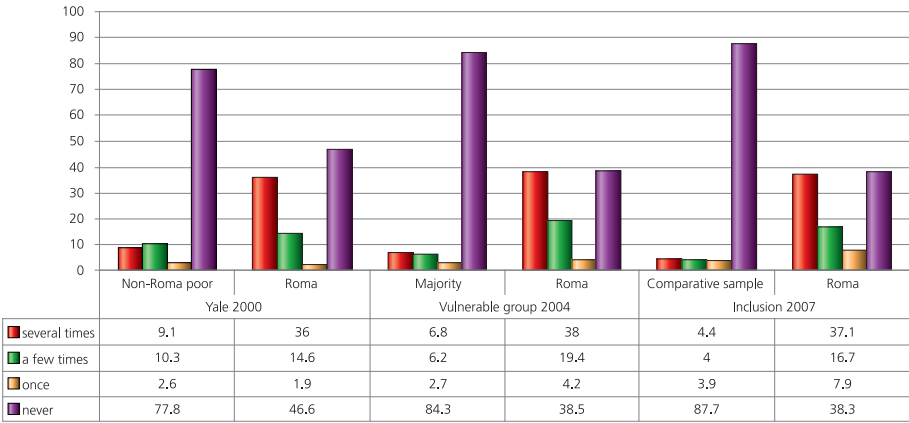
Table 5-1. Experience of hunger for Roma and non-Roma respondents.

Sorry for asking it, but has it happened in the last month that you or your household members went to bed hungry because of not having enough food?	Roma in Roma sample	Non-Roma in comparative sample
1 Never	38	88
2 Once	8	4
3 Couple of times (2-3)	17	4
4 Several times (4 or more)	37	4
Total	100.0	100.0

In Chart 5-1 one can see that answers to these questions have remained remarkably stable through the years, especially in the Roma sample. Surveys from 2000 to 2007 indicate that around 37% of the Roma have experienced hunger systematically, compared to only around 6% of the non-Roma. In the case of the non-Roma there is also a considerable stability in the data; the Yale

survey information refers to a sub-sample of poor non-Roma respondents, which explains why the occurrence of hunger is higher than in the other two surveys.

Chart 5-1. Comparative analysis of exposure to hunger (percentage)

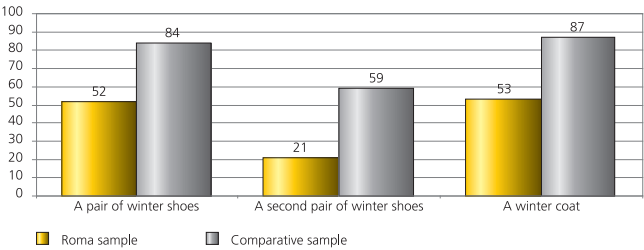


5.2 Experience of Cold

If we take into account the number of rooms which are heated during the winter and the total number of household members, we can see that, on average, during winter the Roma households must accommodate 3.1 members per heated room (3.4 members in rural households and 2.8 members in urban households), while the households in the comparative sample must accommodate 1.5 members per heated room (1.7 in rural households and 1.3 in urban households). Therefore, the housing density during winter in heated rooms is exactly double in Roma households compared to non-Roma households.

Children also experience cold more frequently in Roma households. Only half of Roma households can afford to give all children a pair of winter clothes and shoes, and less than one quarter can afford a second pair of winter shoes for all children – compared to 60% of the comparative sample (see below).

Chart 5-2. “Do all children (under 14) in the household have...” (percentage)





If we look at all children aged 1 to 14 years, we can see that 53% of Roma children live in households that cannot afford a pair of shoes for all of them, compared to 15% of non-Roma children; and 53% of Roma children live in households who cannot afford a warm winter coat for all of them, compared to 13% for non-Roma children.

5.3 Sleeping Conditions

Quality of sleep is also affected by crowdedness in Roma households, which have to accommodate on average 1.9 persons per bed, compared to 1.4 persons in the comparative sample. It is interesting that the average number of persons per bed does not differ in rural localities from urban localities, for Roma and the comparative sample alike.

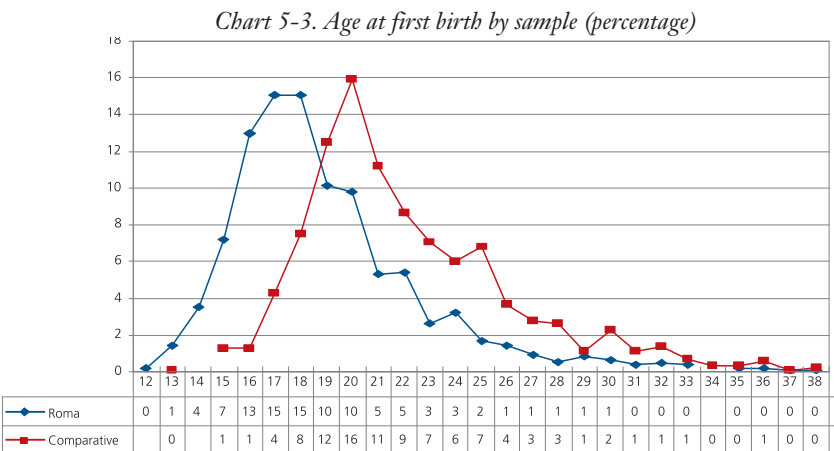
The subjective living standard of the household is associated with sleeping conditions for the Roma households, but not for the comparative sample. This indicates that such a basic need has been satisfactorily attended to in all non-Roma households, but it is fulfilled to different levels within the Roma sample.

Table 5-2 Average number of people per bed, by subjective standard of living

	Roma sample	Comparative sample
A decent living or more	1.6	1.4
Only the minimum necessities	1.8	1.4
Not enough for minimum necessities	2.0	1.4
Total	1.9	1.4

5.4 Age at first birth

There is a gap of around three years between the age at first birth of women in the Roma sample, compared to those in the comparative sample (see Chart 5-3). A majority (55%) of women in the Roma sample carried their first pregnancies while minors of age, compared to 14% in the comparative sample. 16% of women in the comparative sample carried their first pregnancy after 25 years, compared to 5% of women in the Roma sample.



A regression model on age at first birth on all women surveyed, accounting for 17.5% of variance (see Table 16-26.), indicates that education and Roma ethnicity have influences of almost equal magnitude. It is also interesting that urban residence has no influence. (Age is not included in the model, because we do not have complete information for women who have not ended their fertile period).

If we analyse the two samples separately, we can see that around 10% of the variance of age at first birth is explained by education and age, with no significant contribution of urban residence.

## 5.5 Working, Begging and Stealing

The Roma beggars (*cerșetori țigani*) and thieves (*boți țigani*) are part of the core of the *Țigani* stereotype. These traits carry strong moral connotations and “iron-fist” policy implications. Still it is a question, what the moral significance and the policy solutions are to such practices. When put into the broader perspective of criminality in Romanian society, policy diagnostics may significantly change (see Quote 3-37).

Subsistence-related crimes usually include non-predatory ones, such as begging (also begging abroad), or predatory strategies, such as stealing scrap iron or other materials with commercial value such as stone or wood, and stealing agricultural products from household gardens. These practices may also be more or less organized.

### **Quote 5-2. Subsistence-related crime in Cugir**

*Major crimes are not frequent, and Cugir is considered a rather peaceful town. When Roma are involved, besides “troubling public order”, one mentions scrap iron thefts – a practice which is often met in many poor communities, be it Roma or non-Roma (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

### **Quote 5-3. Subsistence-related crime in Glod**

*Despite environmental warnings, due to the fact that stripping the stones from the river bed makes it broader and increases the danger of inundations (which have already covered the village areas close to the river in the summer of 2004 and 2005), and despite high fines, residents still collect and sell stones. This activity is the only one that can provide an income for a large number of them. (Glod, Oteanu 2007)*

Theft is usually only a secondary strategy associated with a given business area – such as the collection of scrap iron, or agricultural work. Such predatory practices are partly the effect of poverty, partly the effect of poor organization or even corruption, in local organizations, that enhances the profitability of criminality.

### **Quote 5-4. Scrap iron as business and theft opportunity in Curtici**

*Collecting and selling scrap iron is another income source. It seems that both communities are involved in this business, but the mediators between the community and the collection points are Căldărari, who find themselves in a better situation, again. Still, this cannot be said for certain, because it is a very sensitive topic in Curtici. According to pieces of information coming from children, it seems that it is a profitable business. “My father says that he makes better money inside the country, with scrap iron, than abroad” (R, aged 13). The police officials, the Romanian authorities, as well as Roma community leaders tell me that this is one of the serious problems of the community – the theft of scrap iron. Some insinuate a certain*

*complicity of the Police. Some respondents also implied (off the record) that some Roma people steal scrap iron from the collecting point and then resell it to other collecting points, in Arad (15 km away from Curtici). (Curtici, Goina M., 2007)*

Qualitative research supports the conclusion that such practices are a temporary alternative to work, in social contexts in which work opportunities are extremely scarce while such income opportunities are relatively accessible.

**Quote 5-5. Alternatives to subsistence theft in Lupeni**

*A third reason (for falling into poverty) lies in the frequent negative experiences of their acquaintances or kin, in the many cases when a company is cheating on its employees. This happens especially with companies which recruit workers from different areas (in Lupeni almost everyone is aware of such incidents with employers in Ineu); they promise high wages and other benefits (accommodation, meals, free transportation). In many cases people return home after the first month, after hard work, with no wage. (Lupeni, Geambașu 2007).*

Illegal income opportunities may be tolerated or even supported by people in the broader society, such as in the case of begging, which relies on the willingness of people to finance the beggars. They may even be tolerated by employees of public and private organizations such as the Police, or victimized factories, warehouses, etc. Within the same community, some people choose begging or predatory strategies while others stick to mainstream, work occupations (see Quote 5-6). It is important to see that this is a different distinction to the legal/illegal distinction, since work abroad can also be illegal for people without proper work permits.

**Quote 5-6. Begging and working abroad for Roma people in Curtici**

*Another source of income is work abroad. Cornelia, sanitary mediator, estimates that around 25% of the population is abroad. They usually go for destinations such as France or Ireland. (...) The occupations of both (Roma) communities seem to be the same abroad. It seems that the main occupations are begging, newspapers or flowers selling, as well as working on building sites, or in agriculture, particularly mentioned by Căldărari Roma. Sometimes working in agriculture in the country is done together with leaving for work abroad. G, 38, told me that they leave "to countries" at the end of the agricultural season, in late autumn, and that they come back when they need to work on the seedling for the following year: "We were abroad too, and to be honest you can't make here the money you make there. You're forced to go, you never get enough money here... I worked there too, mostly in Spain, in the vineyards, in tangerine, oranges orchards, how do you imagine Romania got better, from working abroad too, don't you think so, dear lady? Here with us, in Romania, you can hardly make a living, live one day to the next, how are you going to build a house?... and how about our children, how are they going to have their own house?... there is no point now to stay here... it is my country here and it's not fair to say so, but it's better there." (C.G., 42, Curtici, quoted by Mariana Goina 2007)*

## 5.6 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

### *Points to Highlight*

- A proportion of 62% of Roma respondents declare that someone in their household has gone to bed hungry in the last month, compared to 12% of the non-Roma respondents.
- The number of people per heated room (during winter) is double in Roma households compared to non-Roma households.
- If we look at all children aged 1 to 14 years, we can see that 53% of Roma children live in households that cannot afford a pair of winter shoes for all of them, compared to 15% of non-Roma children.
- 53% of Roma children live in households who cannot afford a warm winter coat for all of them, compared to 13% for non-Roma children.
- Roma households must accommodate on average 1.9 persons per bed, compared to 1.4 persons in the comparative sample.

Hungry, cold, crowded, holding babies and reaching for alms – this is one of several omnipresent pictures of the *Tigani*. Destitution is indeed a visible reality in Roma communities. While it is not a defining or an exclusive feature of the Roma, statistical indicators point out that it occurs more frequently in Roma households. Of course, statistical indicators do not allocate moral responsibility and do not know the social meaning of the *Tigani* label. There is a wide gap between private experience and public perception of hardship and distress.

Qualitative information, as well as numbers, also point out that destitution may be more frequent among the Roma, but it is not omnipresent and also not unavoidable. People fight against it and go beyond it. Still, the “unworthy poor” stigma does not differentiate between degrees of poverty, and the “culture of poverty” representation is a poor instrument to guide understanding.



## 6 Health Care Issues

This chapter discusses health problems and access to health care, and its implications for people's lives, using community report information and data from the survey research.

### 6.1 Health Issues in Community Reports

The lack of medical insurance is a form of social exclusion, as this makes it almost impossible to access medical services and solve health problems. Field observations support this affirmation.

People find themselves in the situation of not having access to medical insurance if they don't have access to information about the medical system rules; or if they don't have, a birth certificate or valid identity document. This situation can also arise for someone who doesn't have a formal job, with registered papers and hasn't been able to pay the monthly contribution to health insurance, together with the retroactive amount of insurance for the last 6 months (until recently, it was supposed to be the retroactive amount for the last 5 years).

In all the 36 studied Roma communities the researchers noted issues of health and access to the health system. The observations show that the situations in these communities combine issues of access to medical services and health insurance; issues of poverty, poverty illnesses and precarious resources unable to guarantee health, and issues of access to information and practices about cures and medication.

#### ***Quote 6-1. The vicious circle of the lack of health insurance***

*Lack of health insurance is one of mechanisms of social exclusion in health. Those, who are unemployed, have no retirement pay, social allowances and/or those who don't pay regularly their sums for the Health Insurance Companies, don't have medical insurance. Thus they don't have access to general physicians (medici de familie), free and compensated medicines, access to free consultancies and examinations in different fields and hospitals, etc. At the same time, certain changes could be seen, which, theoretically and at the first sight, seem to improve the chances of accessing medical assistance. Those without health insurance can now subscribe to a list of general physicians, and they can also pay retroactively a contribution to a health insurance company in order to have free access to services. (For instance, free hospitalization implies contributions paid for half a year and not only for five months). But subscribing to a general physician implies only free primary consultation without including free medicines and special consultancies. In perception of many locals new regulations were issued in order to make emergency situations easier, as many people with a lack of health insurance turned to them. On the other hand those with no stable incomes can now pay the sum of about 200 RON for a six month-period. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

#### **6.1.1 Health Problems Linked to Precarious Living**

When assessing the health condition of the Roma communities they were studying, the researchers noted a high rate of poverty illnesses. The resources for this information were interviews with doctors who were involved with the community to a certain extent; town hall social assistants; health mediators (where present); interviews with the community members themselves and direct observations of the households, living conditions and medical practices.

Poverty illnesses are a general term for afflictions that are caused and maintained by cold, humidity, precarious hygiene due to proximity of landfills or poor water sources, and inconsistent or low nutritional quality food. Another characteristic of certain poverty illnesses is that their development and spread as an epidemic is linked to high density living. (Such living conditions are documented with survey data in the sections on experience of hunger and cold, housing density and access to utilities.)

To mention only a few of the field notes: in Oșorhei, in the Roma community, most children have respiratory problems and anaemia; 90% have parasites; 60% have TBC and, due to low access to medical care, there have been cases of death by TBC. In Coltău, the Roma children suffer from acute skin affections, especially in summer, when the parasites are breeding. In Dolhasca, the researcher noted a high rate of poverty illnesses caused by cold and humidity.

Gabriel Troc notes the diseases and disorders that are frequent to the Roma in Sîntana, due to their low standard of living: intoxications, malnutrition, stomach illness, dental problems, rickets – mainly caused by the nutritional habits and the ways of producing food, marked by the difficulty of obtaining fresh food and boiling it properly, to ensure acceptable nutritional levels; skin diseases, heart disorders and alcoholism, severe injuries – due to high density living with crowding of individuals and objects in the rooms – and freezing.

It is important to highlight that most of the investigated Roma settlements were severely affected by the lack of water sources or by dangerous levels of water impurity. This has dramatic effects on different aspects of individual and community health: first of all, it affects the vital supply of drinking water; secondly, it affects nutrition (the impossibility of cooking properly or of breeding small animals for household consumption); third, it affects individual hygiene and the proper cleaning of dishes, linen and clothes, which then become transmitters of microbes and germs; last but not least, if the water source is polluted (as for example in the case of Glod and Byron street in Cluj), it becomes a medium of toxicity, affecting the respiratory system and skin.

***Quote 6-2. Water sources – the main problem affecting health in Roma communities, such as Curtici***

*“One of the proposals, put forward by the secretary was to build a public bath in the community. She told me that before prices became prohibitive, Roma people used the lavatories from the thermal water swimming pool in the town for shower.” (Curtici, Goima M., 2007)*

Health problems are not only generated by precarious location and housing status, but also by dangerous working conditions. The example of 3 of the researched communities is revealing: the former (now unemployed) miners from Lupeni used to work in conditions with high risk of industrial illnesses; but after the closing of the mines, they were left with no access to medical care – as most of them had not been retired but fired. Another example of health issues associated with unqualified and precarious work can be found in Slobozia village of Voinești locality: pottery making, a frequent economic activity in the area, carries some health risks such as lead poisoning, but the informal character of this work leaves the practisers uncovered by health insurance. In addition, as Ami Oteanu notes for the case of the Glod Roma community, collecting construction stones from the rivers or seasonal work in the forest, picking fruit and mushrooms, are activities associated with very poor hygiene conditions (Oteanu 2007).

These examples show that these precarious, unqualified and informal jobs are associated with risk of illness and, at the same time, lack of difficult access to medical insurance and services.

The researchers also gathered information on life expectancy in Roma communities. The data offered by the medical staff, social assistance offices or by the mediation structures showed that – at least in the studied localities – the life expectancy of the Roma seems to be 10 years lower than that of the non-Roma. For example, in Racoș, 50 is considered old age and there are only very few Roma over 60 (Gătin 2007).

**Quote 6-3. Low life expectancy in Oșorbei Roma community**

*We found no family without having at least one child dead at an early age, just as we have not found any aged person who benefits from a decent pension. (Oșorbei, Pantea 2007)*

We can get an impression of the differences in life expectancy if we take a look at the table below, listing the distribution of all members in the surveyed households across age categories. For example, of a total of 5400 household members about whom we have age information in the Roma sample, a total of 1786 persons are aged between 30 and 59 years, and 336 are 60 years or over. If we take the age category 30-59 as the comparison unit, we can see that:

- For each Roma household member aged 30-59, there are 0.2 elderly members, while for each non-Roma household member aged 30-59, there are 0.5 elderly members.
- The situation is reversed when analyzing the younger family members: each Roma household member aged 30-59 is accompanied by an average of 0.4 pre-school children, 0.8 children aged 7-17 and 0.7 young adults aged 18-29. Corresponding proportions in the comparative sample are about half in size.

*Table 6-1. Distribution of household members across age categories in the Roma and the comparative sample (frequencies and percentages)*

Age categories	Number of individuals		As a proportion of the age group 30-59	
	Roma	Comparative	Roma	Comparative
Less than 7	758	214	0.4	0.2
Aged 7-13	820	255	0.5	0.2
Aged 14-17	471	160	0.3	0.1
Aged 18-29	1229	572	0.7	0.4
Aged 30-59	1786	1391	1.0	1.0
Aged 60 or over	336	713	0.2	0.5
Total	5400	3305	-	-

Of course, this distribution does not only reflect mortality rates – it also reflects different fertility rates, which lead to a higher proportion of younger to older people. Even so, lacking more relevant data, we can conclude that Roma communities have significantly lower numbers of elderly people than the non-Roma.

Looking only at absolute numbers, in 1142 households in the Roma sample there were only 31 persons over 80 years and 121 aged between 70 and 80. In the comparative sample, in fewer households (1013) there were 114 persons over 80 years and 276 persons between 70 and 80 years.

With this background of low life expectancy and poverty illness characterizing most of the poor Roma communities, it is interesting to observe how health can become a status symbol – good health conditions as a differentiation from the poor and from the marginalized “other Roma”.

**Quote 6-4. Health as a status symbol, in Sîntana de Mureș**

*Very interesting is the information provided by the doctor about his rich Gabor and Căldărari Roma who are his “clients”, but are not from the village. They come from long distances to his consulting room because they do not want their community to know about the fact they are ill. The illness is thus seen as shameful, and has to be kept secret; the doctor has to assure them of his confidentiality, and he is asked to cure them so as to avoid going and staying in the hospital. (Sîntana de Mureș, Tróc 2007)*



## 6.1.2 Health Problems Linked to Precarious Resource Management

We discussed before (see section 0) about the theory of “living in the present” and the specific resource management that it implies, specific to poor and excluded communities. Thus, the combination of precarious conditions for cooking fresh food, with the desire to consume what the better-off “others” consume, together with the management of resources from one day to the next – creates the premises for bad nutrition, which is an indicator of poverty and exclusion from certain resources.

### ***Quote 6-5. The case of Glod: lack of water and precarious food supply***

*Food is also a risk factor, as most food products are carbonated soft drinks, sweets, and chips, and very few products provide the daily necessary doses of protein and carbohydrates. Therefore, recent years have seen cases of gastritis, ulcers and other diseases of the gastro-intestinal apparatus, resulting exclusively from unhealthy eating habits. This is outlined by the declarations of village physicians and shop assistants and parents of children inclined to such conditions:*

*“What can they buy, Miss? Cigarettes, soft drinks... everybody buys soft drinks especially since we don’t have water...and sometimes one of them comes and buys 2 or 3 slices of salami, cheaper salami, because salami is expensive. Miss... what can we do? Stones sell badly, there’s no money...” (Shop assistant/owner) (Glod, Oteanu 2007)*

The common opinion of the non-Roma (medical staff, social assistants, random observers) is that many illnesses in Roma communities are due to the improper nutritional habits, especially with youngsters and young adults. But it is worth exploring the fact that the nutrition is strongly linked to consumerist behaviour, to symbols of status and to the general desire to have what “the others” have and what makes “the others” happier or higher in status. Commercials and the visible/ apparent popularity of certain products, the combination of good prices with small portions in the case of snacks, all influence the nutritional habits in Roma (and also non-Roma) households.

### ***Quote 6-6. Consumerist society and nutrition in Roma communities: the case of Oșorbei***

*Children learn to prefer energisers and chips to healthy food. The consumption of highly advertised products is a frequent practice, probably due to a need of recognition and similarity with the majority population and the richest. Training on proper nourishment is more than necessary. For example, instead of the traditional crescent-roll all pupils get in school every day, children could be offered health food. However, this problem does not affect only the Roma children, but all the children who live in a media society but are still economically poor. (Oșorbei, Pantea 2007)*

Smoking and drinking habits in Roma households are seen by outsiders to be one of the main causes of the illnesses in Roma communities and an indicator of bad resource management (as an irrational expenditure). But in order to improve public health policies, it is important to understand the social functions of these practices for Roma and non-Roma people and to adjust policies accordingly, without any tendency to moralize. It is not disputed that smoking creates serious health problems as well as dependency, for Roma and *Gadje* alike, but equally there is no empirical evidence to support singling it out as especially “irrational” for the Roma, in comparison to the *Gadje*.



**Quote 6-7. A frequent critique: “coffee and cigarettes” behaviour, the case of M. Kogălniceanu**  
*Nevertheless, morning time is always inaugurated with coffee. There is no waking up without coffee and cigarettes. Even if they are short of money, nearly all Roma smoke a pack of cigarettes a day. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

There is another practice common in Romania – that of self-medication, or taking drugs without professional medical advice, but rather on the hearsay of other patients. As one researcher noted, this common Romanian practice (Goina C., 2007) has a direct link to people’s access to medical services, information, and education.

**Quote 6-8. Improvised self-medication as defective information management, example of Sântana**

*People would share their antibiotic pills with others, not only because they are expensive, but simply because they ‘helped’ them and therefore they might help others too, with no consideration that one has to complete a treatment and that it simply cannot be stopped when one feels better. They trusted all kinds of remedies, pharmaceutical or of other nature (‘magic’ mushrooms fermented in yoghurt good for anything from asthma to lumbago) or ad hoc self-medication. (Sântana, Goina C., 2007)*

Interviews with medical staff in the Mihail Kogălniceanu locality revealed an improvement in management of infant healthcare, as a result of increased access to more information on this topic.

**Quote 6-9. Management of infant healthcare in precarious conditions: the case of M. Kogălniceanu**

*“Customarily, they are cooperating enough when it comes to their children, they buy treatments even when it is not free. Even more, when it comes to children, they inquire more than Romanians, come to the practice in threes or fours for one single child, when it is ill.”*

*(...) A fact recently observed by the medical staff regarding the Roma is that they have started using pampers on infants, even if they have no money, they manage to buy pampers and do not present themselves as they used to, ragged up. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

### 6.1.3 The Roma Communities and the Health System

The locality reports show that the medical centres are either not well equipped or far away from the Roma settlements – which usually are the poorest and most marginal settlements in the locality. This shows, first of all, the difficulty of accessing the health services that characterizes certain social groups, such as the Roma living in compact communities.

At the same time, it suggests that the wider medical system in Romania has worrying deficiencies and that the medical centres are not able to cope with the demands on healthcare services.

Another aspect pointed out by the qualitative researchers is the difficulties of accessing the medical system in Romania today, despite formal universal coverage. People without income sources are covered if they are recipients of social aid. However, social aid is distributed according to local priorities and policies, thus leaving entire communities without coverage. Formal coverage does not automatically lead to access to quality medical care, due to the difficulty of actually getting there, the corruption of medical staff, discriminatory practices, lack of information, previous negative experiences that discourage access, and other such hindrances.

**Quote 6-10. The heaviness of the medical system and informal arrangements in Sântana**

*In many cases the Gypsy do not know, or prefer to act as if they do not know, the way the health system is organized in Romania (...) According to the Comlaus nurse I talked to, most of the Gypsies would simply come to the dispensary and would go (and expect to be consulted) to any doctor that is available, irrespective of whether that person is the 'family doctor' of the patient or not. (Sântana, Goina C., 2007)*

The practice of bribing medical staff – is widely deployed by the patients and tacitly expected by the recipients – becomes in practical terms a disadvantage for the poor: the probability of them receiving less attention from medical staff is higher. This is therefore yet another form of exclusion from the medical system, which is embedded in the way the system itself functions in the present.

Some of these exclusion factors can be partly alleviated by the intervention of a health mediator (such as issues of information, discrimination, and the exercise of one's rights); others, though, are systematically embedded either in the structure of the medical system (such as corruption) or in the marginal position of Roma communities (such as spatial segregation and marginality).

*Access to Health Services*

The problem of physical access to medical services, described in almost all 36 community reports, is related to 3 aspects:

- Firstly, the scarcity of medical centres in certain areas, illustrated by the example of Colțâu where the medical centre is improvised in the house of the doctor;
- Secondly, the geographical segregation and greater distance to the closest medical centre which characterizes most of the compact Roma settlements;
- Thirdly, but directly linked to the previous point, the bad condition of the roads and the difficulty of entering/ leaving the compact Roma settlements; for example, in Curtici, the Roma patients have to walk from their neighbourhood to the medical centre, because there are no means of transport there. There are even some Roma settlements, such as Dolhasca, where an ambulance could not go, because of the bad condition of the access roads.

On the other hand, opening a medical centre inside a Roma community would reinforce segregation and could lead to indirect discrimination, if, for example, this separated centre was less well equipped and had less qualified personnel (M. Goina 2007).

The communication gap between medical staff and the Roma patients is exacerbated by the problem of physical access to medical services. Some of the interviewed doctors complained about tensions between medical staff and Roma patients related to the release of subsidy drugs. The researcher Veronica Lazăr found out that a doctor in the Dolhasca locality refuses to have Roma registered on his list. In Cugir, neither the hospital director nor the doctor who collaborates with the health mediator wanted to give assistance or information relevant for the health situation of the Roma to our researcher, proving the lack of desire to assist policy-orientated research.

In a neighbouring village to Nușfalău, there was even a conflict between the Roma community and the doctor who refused to treat them properly:

**Quote 6-11. Conflict between Roma and doctor, in a neighbouring village to Nușfalău**

*"...she didn't really examine the Gypsies, she didn't give them prescriptions for subsidized medicines, and the Gypsies finally wrote an article about her in the newspaper. About 50 Gypsy people signed it, they were clever...I don't know what happened there (...) we didn't have such...ok, sometimes they quarrel because of the medicines...but... no... Anyway...it is good, we are ok with them, and they are ok with us" (Health mediator, for Bakos community, quoted by Toma 2007)*

Exclusion from normal health services, often leads patients to go to the emergency department of bigger medical centres, mostly hospitals, as a final resort, when their situation becomes serious. Sometimes they are not attended to if they come by themselves to the emergency department, so they either call the ambulance to pick them up from home, claiming that they are insured, or they try to obtain a paper from any doctor stating that they need emergency treatment. Some doctors do this, knowing that it is the only way for the patients to be attended for free, even if they are unregistered and uninsured.

**Quote 6-12. Strategies to access health services, recorded in Timișoara**

*Recently a new regulation was drawn up, making it compulsory to register persons with no health insurance on their lists of patients. This seems to take the burden from the shoulder of the emergency services, to which people with no family doctors and health insurances turned to, as its services were free. (Anca told me some days before, people say they have insurance and a family doctor when they call for the ambulance or go to the emergency, otherwise neither of these institutions would accept them (discussion with family doctor, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 6-13. Roma perception on medical emergency services, recorded in Zăbrăuți**

*“We have no reason to complain about the hospital, they know you and help you without humiliating you for the fact that you are Gypsy. They only have a problem with the fact that some people are dirty, you know, this is actually what they pay attention to. The ambulance comes by daily, they always come if there are sick people here.” (F., man, 38 years old, Bucharest quoted by Țîrcă 2007)*

In Curtici, during the winter, the families living in extreme poverty try not to take their children out of hospital, once they get better. This is a coping strategy against the location problems but also a rational prevention practice against the illnesses, as the children catch the diseases at home and this could happen again. But the rules of the medical system do not allow this – instead, the children are sent home, if their affections are not severe, which can actually lead to a worsening of their situation. Interviews have also revealed cases of patients being sent home from hospital prematurely.

**Quote 6-14. The hospital reaction to coping strategies of the poor Roma, in Curtici**

*“I understood from the health mediator that some Roma children, sent to hospital by the family physician, were taken out of the hospital in Arad only a few days after hospitalization even if their health had not improved. The medical doctor does not confirm, although during the discussion she mentions, that “the hospital staff may happen to get tired of them.” On the other hand, I understood that poor families have made a habit of keeping their children in hospitals even after they have been cured, because at home “they have no fire, no food and so they leave them in the hospital as a last resort.” (G.P., 56, Curtici, quoted by M. Goina 2007)*

The physical and social difficulty of access to the medical centres and their services transforms them into unknown territory. Once entering this unknown territory, many Roma and other excluded groups find themselves in a situation of uncertainty and lack of personal control over the surrounding circumstances. For a person in such a situation, certain emotional reactions labelled as strange, aggressive, ignorant and uncontrolled can be expected, while the person feels disadvantaged or discriminated against – which is true, in the sense of not having access to an understanding of what is going on and what kind of decisions are taken regarding her/him.

**Quote 6-15. The feeling of being discriminated against by the medical staff and the emotional reactions to this, in Dolhasca**

*According to Ns. F., Roma people resist attempts to persuade them to immunize their children. This reticence can be explained by their lack of information concerning the risks, by secondary effects of immunization (fever, pain, crying) but also by the propagation and spread of fear from one parent to another. Moreover, Roma people always believe that they are discriminated against and they claim preferential treatment. (Dolhasca, Lazăr 2007)*

Nevertheless, some Roma have better access to health services than others: in Oșorhei, the rich *Gabors* are registered and treated by the most experienced doctor who, except for them, only treats non-Roma; they were among the first “wave” of health insured and registered people in the locality (Pantea 2007). This shows that the question of access to medical services is also a question of economic level and access to information, besides an ethnic issue.

Having health mediators significantly improves the possibilities for the Roma communities to access information about medical services and to actually receive these services. Not all Roma communities or all localities with a Roma population in Romania have a mediator. But where they do exist, they are often associated with a certain amount of voluntary work and with an improvement in the health condition of the community members. Most of the community reports show this, in the analysis of interviews with the inhabitants, with the mediators themselves, with other involved medical or social assistance staff and with people/personnel from other mediation or leadership structures.

**Quote 6-16. Health mediators and voluntary involvement in Timișoara**

*“I also took them to my family doctor to get them a basic examination. When they come to me, and I see they’re poor, they have no money, no insurance, some can’t read and speak Romanian... I go with them and help... I usually leave my home at 8, and return between 6 and 7. I also help them with insurance and problems with finance. It would be better to just explain to them where to go, and not actually seeing them there, but they refuse to go without me, and when we are there, they shout after me, saying, ‘A. where are you?’ , because they are frightened, like little kids. 300-400 persons, I take care of have no insurance.” (Health mediator, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 6-17. Difficulties in health mediation, confessed in Zăbrăuți**

*The hardest problem the health mediator had to tackle was people’s unwillingness to talk about their illness, to accept their problems and to go to hospital for treatment. (Zăbrăuți, Tîrcă 2007)*

But the short-term visible, positive effects of the presence of health mediators in Roma communities could be diminished in the long run by the negative effects, such as the communities’ dependency on mediation; the excessive reliance of the medical staff on mediators, leading to confusion of responsibilities; the perpetuation of defective medical practices and self-diagnosis, and public perception of excessive positive discrimination and focus on Roma. This last risk is the risk involved in any policy that focuses explicitly or implicitly on a certain ethnic category of people.

The pros and cons of the introduction of health mediators are debated among policy makers, social activists, and policy evaluators. At stake is not only the health condition of the disadvantaged groups and the exclusion from the health system of the Roma communities, but also the overall quality of the medical services.

**Quote 6-18. Negative side effects of the health mediation, as in the case of Timișoara**

*As it is women, who have higher responsibilities in taking care of family members, taking children to doctors (for vaccination, or for treatment) – they are most exposed to discriminatory treatment, and they also hold stronger positions towards the doctors – so when health mediation institutions were founded at the proposal of Romani Criss, it was proposed to choose women for the position of health mediators. Thus the Roma women activists' programme of health mediation followed, among many other things – recognition of women's role in the community and the family, and to strengthen their role in decision-making. Although elaboration and implementation of such policies on health mediators was and still is considered a positive model in Europe – represented by the Romanian government as an attempt at creating resources for improving Roma health conditions – its implications, both positive and negative, are subjects to debate. These controversies are related first of all to a secondary effect of health mediation. On the one hand it produces a dependency among Roma communities (people becoming accustomed to having other persons around, with their duty to resolve the problems, as we could see in Timișoara – the health mediator takes them to the hospital, to the doctor, to the institution of health insurance, and takes their children for vaccination. On the other hand, family doctors (after accepting these kinds of patients with serious reservations) can take advantage of the health mediators by handing over to them their own duty of keeping contacts with the communities and visiting them in their houses. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Access to Healthcare Information**

Speaking about information and the flow of information regarding health issues, we have to bear in mind that the health mediator doesn't have all the necessary knowledge for all the medical problems. This knowledge is restricted to that one shared by the family doctor(s) and, thus, beyond all the good intentions of the health mediator, it can be incomplete.

From the community reports, we noticed that the responsibility for explaining different medical treatments can be lost on the way from the doctor to the patients, through the mediation structures, thus absolving the doctors of more effort in attending to some of their potential Roma patients.

These aspects add up to the generally poor information about the medical system, about the rights of a patient and the responsibilities towards a patient, about necessary practices in order to avoid certain illnesses or to stop the development of certain affections, and about dangers in improvised medication or word-to-mouth diagnosis.

**Quote 6-19. Obstacles to accessing family planning information, registered in Timișoara**

*Stereotypes saying that Roma women do not think about the future, and also gender stereotypes and stereotypes on ethnicity can make medical nurses refuse services and information on family planning, or to reduce such information to a certain type of contraception. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

The role of Roma women in, and their relationship with, the health system can be analyzed on a triple level: first, it is who are usually the ones responsible for the health of their household, therefore their awareness and access to information is vital; secondly, the health mediators were chosen mostly from the Roma women who were, or became, activists and started to be the bearers of emancipation in their communities or among women in general; thirdly, women are the subject of one of the most delicate health – pregnancy and family planning.

**Quote 6-20. Previous studies on Roma women's health**

*Researchers and activists, who approached problems of Roma access to health services underline – among high rates of diseases, low life expectation, and infant mortality – that Roma women give birth to their children at an early age and have little access to information and other services (gynaecological consultation, family- planning, post-natal nursing) connected to preventative sexual health and reproduction (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Family-planning is usually a controversial topic, but even more controversial when associated with the Roma – as the community reports show. There are different types of discourse linked to this topic, which can be found in the case studies:

1. One level of discourse focuses on the early age of the first pregnancy for a number of Roma women in Romania, and its possible cultural causes. The discourse usually attributes this behaviour to Roma traditions, and evaluations range from blaming to protecting the respective tradition.
2. Another discourse is the religious one, especially in Neo-protestant churches that oppose family planning.
3. Another line of debate refers to the number of children in Roma households, which is on average higher than the one in the non-Roma households. Perspectives are diverse: some consider family-planning information and education necessary, in order to give parents an informed choice and also for the emancipation of women. Others stress the fact that decisions to have children are profoundly personal and, even in poor households, the birth of children, especially boys, is a cause of pride and joy and therefore cannot be assessed simply from the point of view of its implications at a social level. Still others consider that family planning preoccupations come naturally from within the household, when a certain level of welfare is reached, and therefore that it should not be addressed artificially.

On a pragmatic level, contraceptive methods are also debated from various perspectives – from the feminist approach to emancipation, to the necessity for men to assume responsibility as well, and having in view criteria related to costs, and risks.

For the purpose of our report, the most important debate is linked to contraceptive injections that seem to be the most frequently used contraceptive method, in most of the studied communities. Many Roma women receive contraceptive injections free of charge, every 3 months. Interviews indicate that in some cases prescriptions do not take into account the specific medical situation of the women, leading to potentially dangerous side effects.

**Quote 6-21. Obstacles to accessing family planning information and its dangers, registered in Timișoara**

*"I took 5-6 women to injectable contraception. No one told me, it makes them bad, but they have headaches, menstruation with intense bleedings, sometimes they have no menstruation at all. Now I don't take them for this kind of contraception. The doctor said, women under 40 can't have injections, so they are given free pills. Some can manage it, and some forget the pills because they have small children. This method isn't a good one either, some put on weight because of it. I told them to try IUD, but a previous treatment is needed in such cases, for not to have infection or something, but they won't have problems for five years long. Men don't say anything about it ... they don't use condoms and women do not take them from the doctor as the men don't use them. Even so, it would be better for the women to take these medicines, poor creatures." (Health mediator, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*



As the qualitative research showed, the level of access to information about health practices also depends on the doctors. But there are cases in which the doctors fail to share information with the patients or potential patients.

**Quote 6-22. Refusal to explain the child's afflictions to the Roma parents, in Dolhasca**

*Although she has spent most of her recent years in hospitals alongside the children, the mother was never informed of diagnoses. Sometimes doctors would prefer to speak to the father, but even this did not always happen. It even happened that, shortly after the birth of her first-born, she discovered that he had a surgical intervention on his head, but even now she does not know the reason why. (Dolhasca, Lazăr 2007)*

#### 6.1.4 Extreme Cases

The dimension of Roma exclusion from the health services and the vulnerability of marginalized communities can be better understood if illustrated with some examples of extreme cases:

- in the last 2 years in Dolhasca, there were 2 cases of untreated pneumonia that led to child death, and in Oșorhei children died of TBC – which shows the “poverty illness” vulnerability of the marginalized communities;
- in the Arad hospital the Roma are usually hosted in separate rooms; there was a recent case of a Roma woman who was left to give birth alone – the doctor who didn't want to assist her was fined (C. Goina 2007).

#### 6.1.5 Assuming Responsibility

The exclusion from health services and the high vulnerability to health problems of the poor and segregated Roma (and also non-Roma) can be addressed only through the involvement and coordination of all actors involved, from the people themselves to the policy and decision makers.

Considering this need to take responsibility, it is worth deconstructing (in a constructive manner) certain stereotypical discourses that prove either a poor understanding of the overall situation, or the desire to shift responsibility.

In the following, we will highlight the biases and errors of certain discourses generated in the medical system. This does not mean an accusation against the doctors, nor that all doctors think alike. The goal is to explain how biases appear and interfere with the distribution of responsibility. Indeed, the community reports illustrated the voluntary practices of several doctors to improve the health condition of the unregistered and excluded.

Sometimes, because of not knowing the real situation of the Roma communities, the doctors tend to perceive wrong reasons for the most frequent afflictions. For example, in a village without sources of water and with extremely poor housing conditions, the medical staff still considers the lack of hygiene as a personal choice of the people.

**Quote 6-23. “Blaming the victims” in the situation of Glod village**

*“...they are heavy smokers, Miss... especially the young under the age of 20... they develop viral infections, bronchitis... it was understandable before, when they were working for Comenul, for Steaua, but... (...) and they don't wash, they don't have the slightest idea about optimal hygiene...” (Medical staff, Glod, quoted by Oteanu 2007)*

Most of the time, the procedures, the outcomes, the side effects of vaccination and how to act when such side effects appear are not explained. In such conditions it is not surprising that the beneficiaries are suspicious of vaccination and ignore its real importance.

In certain cases, the doctors' discourse about parents' refusal of vaccination shows a superficial understanding of this suspicion mechanism. This creates a double misunderstanding and a communication gap between the two sides, who both, in fact, want the same thing: to do their job well (as parent or doctor), so that the children are taken care of.

**Quote 6-24. Minimization of the doctor's responsibility to explain the vaccination procedure, in M. Kogălniceanu**

*"I have a few Gypsy families that will not show up for anything in the world to get their vaccine shots. They say we harm them. One had his fever go up once after such a shot and they've stopped coming ever since. We always try to explain them, keep telling them to come, but if they don't want to, what to do, bring them here by use of force?" (Doctor, Mibail Kogălniceanu, quoted by Marcu 2007)*

The doctors' personal choices, related for example to their beliefs or religion, may have an important influence on the information that is shared with the patients and on the information channels that are put in use while interacting with the patients. Sometimes, delicate issues collide – such as family planning and the neo-Protestant religion of the doctor.

**Quote 6-25. The doctor's religion and access to family planning information, in Timișoara**

*She says, she does not give family planning advice, as there is a kind of service in the city. I knew from my research in Orastie, family planning belongs to the basic package of health services. But maybe it does not, or not anymore, or not here. I thought, because of her Neo-protestant religion she has a different opinion on contraception, but I didn't push it, observing her rapidly in passing over the issue. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

It was often mentioned in interviews from case study communities that in the '90s the health condition of the respective Roma community was much worse. The first interventions at that time came from civil society. *Médecins Sans Frontières*<sup>20</sup> (mentioned in Nușfalău and Zăbrăuți) and other foreign associations (for example, a German foundation pioneered the health mediator system in Sântana, focusing on family planning and child protection) took responsibility for the extreme cases.

There are now some local Roma associations taking responsibility for the partnership with the state structures, in order to improve the health condition of the communities. But there is still a big gap between the goals of the NGOs together with the recently organized "mixed working groups on health" in several Local Councils, and the visible results.

**Quote 6-26. A critical view of the national strategy for health**

*These steps are far from being enough to bring to life the strategy "National politics of health relevant for inclusion of minorities" elaborated by the Council of Ministry of Public Health and represented by Romani Criss in 2005. This strategy aims for the "100% implementation of a national programme on health in Roma communities, with special attention on preventative programmes; the promotion of health for children and families", "guaranteeing a 100% access to health services and primary pharmacy for Roma communities (services corresponding to UE standards);", "the promotion of intercultural education among all categories of medical stuff at a national level;" and the inclusion in the social security system of those Roma, who for objective reasons do not fulfil legal criteria (lack of identity cards, poverty). (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

20 Médecins Sans Frontières (fr.) = Doctors Without Borders



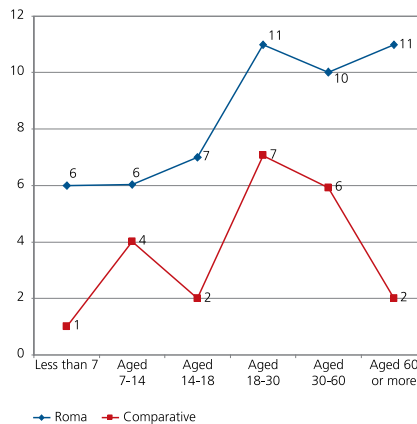
## 6.2 Registration with a Family Doctor in Survey Data

If we take into account all household members surveyed in the research, 9% of Roma and 4.5% of people in the comparative sample are not registered with a family doctor. The RIB 2006 indicates that 8% of *Romi românizați* and 20% of other Roma people are not registered with family doctors, compared to 4% of people of other ethnic affiliations (Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 47).

There are significant differences of enrolment between age categories. The non-Roma sample members display a “rational choice” pattern: children are enrolled, since they do not require any proof of income; the highest rate of lack of enrolment is for adults, decreasing again for the elderly – probably because most non-Roma elderly rely on pension benefits and they more often need medical attention.

In the case of non-Roma we can find the same difference between children and adults, but the elderly suffer from the same rate of non-enrolment as the younger people – probably because of lack of entitlements.

*Chart 6-1. Proportion of household members who are not registered with a family doctor, by age category and sample*



Two thirds of heads of household respondents declare that there is a health mediator charged with assisting their community – in the Roma and in the comparative sample alike. There is no significant difference in enrolment with a family doctor between the respondents who are aware of a health mediator and those who are not.

## 6.3 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

### *Points to Highlight*

- Roma communities have significantly fewer elderly people than the non-Roma. In 1142 households in the Roma sample there were only 31 people over 80 years and 121 aged between 70 and 80. In the comparative sample, in fewer households (1013) there were 114 people over 80 years and 276 people between 70 and 80.

- Evidence of failures in health and safety at work was found in the Roma communities
- Around 10% of Roma people are not registered with a family doctor.
- The practice of health mediators explaining medical interventions to patients can affect the doctor's assumption of responsibility

Case studies indicate that Roma families are often affected by poverty diseases. Lack of drinking water, crowded housing and low incomes all increase health risks. Poor eating habits and smoking addiction are both taking their toll on Roma and *Gadje*, probably more in the impoverished households.

The Romanian health care system is still plagued by major systemic problems. Many patients manage to successfully navigate the system using money, relationships, and additional information from sources as different as friends, books, alternative doctors or the Internet. Roma patients are burdened by multiple disadvantages in their interactions with medical staff and organizations: many of them are poor, functionally illiterate in the field of medicine, with no useful connections and bearing the locally-flavoured stigma of *Țigani*. All these disadvantages have visible consequences on opportunities to access the medical system, the quality of medical care, and their overall state of health.

While community reports illustrated the voluntary practice of several doctors to improve the health of unregistered and excluded persons in some cases doctors fail to share persuasive information with patients or potential patients. This is particularly the case with vaccinations.

The institution of health mediators has alleviated, to some extent, the access problems confronted by Roma people – while at the same time raising concerns about patient dependency and the confusion of responsibilities between doctors and mediators. It is also expected that their intervention will also have indirect positive effects in terms of mutual understanding among Roma patients and *Gadje* doctors, better information among the potential Roma patients, and the production of relevant information and feed-back for policy-makers. Still, there is a long way to go – at least until there is a significant proportion of Roma doctors in all localities, an indicator that this professional glass-ceiling has been cracked.



# 7 Housing Issues

The experience of housing for people living in extreme poverty has been extensively documented in previous research, such as Dan (2004) or Berescu and Celac (2006). This chapter analyses several issues related to housing, as they emerge in community reports and in the database, focusing on the most difficult housing problems and their consequences. Of course, housing is not always a static experience, but can be a continuous challenge. As people strive to improve their homes and they adapt them to their needs, as much as they adapt their needs to their *de facto* possibilities for accommodation.

## 7.1 Housing Issues in the Qualitative Study

### 7.1.1 Living in an Urban Ghetto

Several urban case studies reported the presence of a compact Roma population in what is usually called “ghettos” (*ghetouri*). In all such cases, the researchers mentioned that the ghetto population is not entirely homogenous from an ethnic point of view, but it is from an economic point of view. All of them share the stigma of the ghetto neighbourhood, and often an unwanted intimacy. (See also discussions on socialization and Quote 3-24).

The living conditions in the studied ghetto environments had certain similarities: segregated areas of blocks of social or public housing, small room flats usually poorly equipped (lacking facilities or only recently equipped with electricity, water or gas, or disconnected from the public facilities because of unpaid debts), crowding, and difficulties in the functioning of the sewage or garbage disposal system.

**Quote 7-1. Intense crowding in a social housing ghetto, such as Zăbrăuți**  
*In Zăbrăuți, people use hallways to deposit things and to socialize. During the night, the hallways are very dynamic. Clothes are hung to dry there, children play there during the winter, and people are sitting talking one with the other. It is a space one uses and negotiates for at all costs. The hall represents for everybody, a second home, shared by everybody. (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

The personal stories of individuals or households who end up living in a social housing ghetto have similarities: the stories involve consecutive changes of residence, circles of evictions or selling off the better apartments once owned, accumulation of debts, linked to lack of access to the well paid jobs. But the stories also involve real hard work for improving housing conditions, through small repairs and investment in cosiness.

There was a definite tendency for the interviewed subjects to assume responsibility themselves for their living conditions. Their awareness of the “ghetto” environment and their dreams for a better future indicate this fact.

**Quote 7-2. Living in the ghetto of Zăbrăuți and hoping for a better housing situation**  
*Concerning their plans for the future, most of my informers stated that they want to leave the neighbourhood either for to the countryside or somewhere “more civilized”. Most of them are aware of the fact that they are living in a ghetto, a term*

*that belongs to their daily vocabulary: “I live in a ghetto”, “wait for me, I’ll be in the ghetto in a minute”, “I left the ghetto”. Most of them share the desire to leave the neighbourhood as soon as possible. (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

Some of the researchers observed two different aspects in parallel: on the one hand, the discourse of the local authorities on the social history and the situation of the ghettos or poverty enclaves; on the other hand, the actual stories of the inhabitants and their memories of how the ghettos developed. The case of Lupeni is pertinent in showing the lack of correspondence between these two parallel views; at the same time, it is illustrative for many other industrial towns in Romania, in which the former workers’ blocks were abandoned after the Revolution and the fall of state communism, and then re-occupied in the mid-‘90s.

The “social blocks as refugee communities” described by the researcher Reka Geambaşu in Lupeni have a controversial history: one alternative states that the former workers’ blocks were abandoned and left empty for a few years, when the entire town passed through bankruptcy. In the mid ‘90s several poor families found refuge in these almost ruined blocks. The “occupiers” then started refurbishing the interior of the inhabited rooms, in order to make it possible to live there during the winter and the rainy seasons but they didn’t have the resources to repair the exterior or to perform serious restoration. The other alternative, preferred by the local authorities’ representatives, is the “occupation scenario”, which states that people actually occupied the already repaired blocks of social housing and destroyed them in the meantime.

**Quote 7-3. Contradictory opinions on the history of the Lupeni ghetto**

*In Lupeni, empty, deserted social housing buildings are not an unusual sight. Built during Socialism, but abandoned by the owners – Local Authorities – some of these places offer shelter to (Roma) families in need. Of course, the sometimes cynical measures affecting people in no-escape situations are a reflection of the ambivalent attitude of the authorities towards marginalised communities, as well as of the lack of a coherent strategy to create a chance for them to escape poverty. Just as – ironic as it is – people who are actually living at the waste dump under daily threat from snakes, are actually paying for sanitation services – the families that move into the flats that the Town Hall had long ago forgotten and make them inhabitable are obliged to pay substantial rent fees from the very first day. In other words, the local authorities forget about these buildings and the flats with no windows or doors – actually nothing but bare concrete, but once a family in a crisis situation manages to repair one, here comes the town hall to collect the rent fee.*

*Therefore, in reality, the situation is exactly the opposite of what the mayor describes, relying on one of the most frequently seen preconceived ideas regarding the Roma – their “incapacity” to live in a “civilised” manner and their inclination to “destroy their surroundings”.*

*“It’s even hard to help them. It’s much easier to help those who know how to maintain what they have – it’s much harder with those who tidy up today and make a greater mess tomorrow.”*

*– They are not used to... and it’s going to be very hard, but it’s something to think about – we have to mobilise these people, make good citizens of them so that they look after what they have. Because most of the times, where there is one or two Roma, they just destroy a whole entrance, let’s say, in a building.*

*– How is that?*

*– With their behaviour, with how they are, with how they speak. Because, you see, the citizens – and at least older ones – don’t have the time to spend all day arguing with*

*them and reintegrating them into society. This is something that every person should understand inside themselves – that we have to integrate ourselves into society.” (Lupeni, Viitorului neighbourhood, Geambaşu 2007)*

### 7.1.2 History of Residence Changes and Evictions

As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, there are several scenarios of residential trajectories, which start from the last years of the communist period and end up in ghettos or in extreme living conditions.

The story of Lupeni is representative for the situation in the Valea Jiului former mining area and for other towns that depended on the state industry and communist factories/ plants. The families that arrived in the “Viitorului” ghetto from Lupeni were conditioned by the need to leave their previous locations, the information they had access to (about where to find a place to stay), and the social capital represented by family networks. The need to leave the previous locations was, in its turn, conditioned by the need to find sources of income in a different region, the need to find a cheaper residence, the need to sell the property in order to pay debts or living costs.

#### **Quote 7-4. Lodging trajectories, ending up in Viitorului ghetto**

*All the families I interviewed in these three buildings moved here in the last decade, into empty flats. Also, in all the cases, the kinship relationships that I described in the previous chapter prove to be what counts most in recruiting new inhabitants. One of the men I interviewed says that they had taken shelter in Lupeni, hoping to find cheaper homes here, after they had to sell their parental house in Sibiu following his father’s death. Three of the other flats are inhabited by their relatives – the mother and two sisters – who helped them to move there 18 years ago. Another typical scenario is the young married couple, finding out from relatives about these empty flats and starting their lives together in these social housing buildings. Each family’s history seems to repeat the same events: a satisfying life in the country, with an acceptable job at the farming association, then disappearance of the income sources with the fall of Socialism. And since domestic migration takes place within wide kinship networks, the whole family would leave the native village at once, so it’s impossible to go back to places they cut all type of contact with. (Lupeni, Viitorului neighbourhood, Geambaşu 2007)*

In most of the field reports, it was noted that the housing solutions and the trajectories of internal migration are dependent on family networks and the information that runs through this network. Under such conditions, social capital is the only resource the ghetto dwellers have. With the scarce material resources they have, they improvise the “occupied” apartments.

What characterizes the ghettos and the social housing neighbourhoods is uncertainty and instability: people do not own their houses; their status is one of semi-tolerance; if they cannot afford to pay the rent to the local authorities they could be evacuated; if any investment is put into the blocks, this automatically means a rent increase, and in addition, everyone dreams of better housing conditions, somewhere else, outside the ghetto.

#### **Quote 7-5. Instability and investments in social housing flats, in Viitorului ghetto, Lupeni**

*The “cultural” explanation that the mayor had offered fits perfectly in the “blaming the victim” type of views. Only, it does that by reversing the events, replacing the cause and consequences and the sequence in time. As a matter of fact, it’s not the*

*Roma who ‘destroy the buildings and the flats’ – the Roma are those who, with their work and investments, make these spaces something to live in, after having moved in most of the times in flats with huge debts attached, to pay to the state and public utilities. A family with five children spends two winters with cellophane windows and sleeps for some weeks on the concrete covered with some cardboard sheets, and after this while they manage to get wooden floors and windows. Roma women are those who paint the flats every summer, decorate the kitchens, wash away the mould from the walls, repair the holes in the roof, replace the glass in the windows and so on. And they pay the rent for these flats – to the owner: the town hall. Of course, the shared space – the stairs and the entrance are still deteriorated, with the walls not painted, no electricity, broken handrails... It’s only that all the blocks of flats in Lupeni look the same, for the reason mentioned above – that is, the inhabitants do not own the buildings. Of course, in both cases, this is not the real reason – the real reason is the scarcity of money, but in the Jiu Valley this is something that goes without saying. (Lupeni, Viitorului neighbourhood, Geambasu 2007)*

As the final point for housing trajectories, only the improvised shelters can be worse than the social housing ghettos. Instability and stories of repeated evictions characterize them both. The field reports showed how repeated evictions create a vicious circle of precarious living, leading to increasingly worse forms of habitation.

**Quote 7-6. Vicious circle of multiple evictions, in Timișoara**

*During state communism many Roma lived in blocks or houses expropriated from their previous owners, or living places that were then the local council’s property. Many people have these living places as their residences on their identity cards. If they become unable to pay their bills, or the rent, or if the living places are given back to their ex-owners, these Roma can be evacuated. Eviction is made upon a decision of the local council, community police, gendarme and the public cleaning authorities are also involved. The eviction usually happens suddenly and without warning. “Evacuated people” move to their relatives’ apartments (becoming a “too large family” who provoke anxiety from the neighbours, a usual motif for eviction), and then leave for villages, making shelters for night and day from any accessible materials (nylon, paper, wood, etc.) at the towns’ margins. It’s obvious, eviction does not solve Roma problems: sometimes evacuated apartments remain unoccupied, while evacuated people have to live in hard conditions, generating new conflicts, usually among neighbours, local administration, etc. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

### 7.1.3 Housing and Conflicts

Housing means space, visibility, access, and welfare – disputed resources in any society. As any scarce and vital resources, they generate competition and conflict – such as the ones observed by the field researchers.

Firstly, the conflict related to assuming responsibility for the improvement of housing conditions for the poor and assuring housing for the homeless and the ones living in improvised shelters. From the point of view of the local authorities, reflected in interviews or collected from the media, this responsibility is actually a political and economic choice. From the point of view of the people – who place requests for social housing at the town hall location department and have to face the lack of

space and the years of waiting for an uncertain answer – the responsibility belongs entirely to the local authorities, who are perceived with suspicion and suspected of corruption and lack of interest.

**Quote 7-7. The responsibility to build social housing in Bucharest**

*“I do not want to transform Bucharest into a social town but to increase living standards there. Bucharest needs a certain living standard and I will permanently resist the idea of building social housing in Bucharest.” (Mayor of Bucharest, from the newspaper “Gîndul”, 2 November 2007, quoted by Tîrcă 2007)*

**Quote 7-8. Evictions as a situation of conflict, in Timișoara**

*Last year the police and the local cleaning companies visited them, and during their action of “making clean” they put shacks to fire and documents were burned. They appeared at 5 a.m. woke them up, made them to leave the shacks and put them to fire. As I was told there, shacks were re-built with difficulty, they have no place to go and have identity cards issued in Timișoara. (E.L. și L.L., neighbourhood Blascovics, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Another conflict is related to visibility and the symbols of social status represented in the public space around Roma houses. For example, the controversial adorned tin roofs of the rich Roma houses: the Romanian intellectual elite condemn the un-aesthetic, kitsch roofs, while all the interview subjects (both Roma and non-Roma) in Curtici and Sântana appreciate them as a great proof of the welfare and diligence of the rich Roma.

Conflicts come up when the symbols of status, expressed through the houses, interfere with the symbols of status of other people or with other forms of social symbols and representations (such as the historic values of another ethnic group or of the majority, shown in patrimonial buildings).

**Quote 7-9. Status symbols generating conflict in Timișoara**

*“Other Roma, “with a statute” are the ones who build and modify houses without authorizations, and Mayor’s Office comes and pulls them down. He tells about a recent case: the owner had authorization but the roof “did not respect certain norms, it wasn’t in harmony with other constructions in the area as it was much higher and decorated.” The owner was told to pull it down, and at his refusal the authorities (local council and the gendarme) came and did it. “It wasn’t a big conflict - the man forbade the authorities to enter the courtyard, but in the end he could do nothing.” (R.S., ANR, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Another aspect is linked to inter-ethnic conflicts, the “not in my back yard” rejection. The example of Mihail Kogălniceanu, where the Roma houses were burned and demolished in such an inter-ethnic conflict in the ’90s, is an extreme case in which conflicts escalate to the extent that sharing the same space becomes unimaginable.

**Quote 7-10. Housing, proximity and inter-ethnic conflicts in M. Kogălniceanu**

*In 1990 there was a conflict among the Romanians, Macedonians, and Gypsies. Romanian and Macedonians, also called Turks, wanted to ban the Roma community. No one can remember exactly what the real reason was, what is certain is that both communities were not very much liked in the locality, as there were frequent fights, mostly with ethnic pretexts. As a result, one night, people set fire to the Roma houses, rammed them with bulldozers, tearing them down. The Roma were left with no homes, and one year after the incident, a German foundation for Roma protection initiated*



*and financed the rebuilding of each of the demolished or burned up houses; on that occasion, the Town Hall issued ownership certificates to all the Roma. The houses were built entirely from the money donated by Roma families in Germany. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

In the aftermath of the conflict, the legal situation of house ownership was clarified by local authorities, thus decreasing the chance of future violent actions against residents, and acknowledging their status as citizens of the locality.

While in Mihail Kogălniceanu houses were burned down as part of a violent escalation of conflict between neighbours, in Timișoara improvised shacks were put on fire by local authorities, as part of a plan for “cleaning” the area. Since this plan amounted to nothing more, the situation reversed gradually back to square one, as people had no other option but to rebuild their precarious shelters.

***Quote 7-11. Burning down shacks and democratic exercises in the Blascovics neighborhood of Timișoara***

*Two women participate in the workshop organized within the project “Timișoara – a City of Social Inclusion”. L.M. invited them because she was a group facilitator. Before returning to our groups, we take part in the official inauguration of the event. They don’t quite understand what they are supposed to do there. It is explained to them, in French and Romanian, that it is a democratic exercise: citizens express their opinions on how they feel in their city. E.L. has done many such democratic exercises: she wrote to the President of Romania that she comes often to the Town Hall, she explains her major problem and then nothing happens. Last year the Police and the Sanitation Company came to their neighbourhood to “clean it up”: they burned down the shacks and also the documents inside. They came there at 5 AM, they took the people out of the shacks and they started to put them on fire. As they have already told me when I was there, they have gradually rebuilt their shacks, they have no other place to go, and anyway they have a formal residence on their ID card in Timișoara. (...) They, as well as the other “citizens” invited for discussions, are supposed to answer the question “what does it mean to live well in Timișoara?” In order to do this, the Roma group (which I am joining) goes in one of the seminar rooms. We have to write our answers to this question on colourful pieces of paper, and then the answers to “which are the obstacles...?” and “what do we want to do in order to live well?”. (...) It comes out, of course, that there are people in Timișoara for which living well means not to live under the open sky, on the meadows. E.L. writes that on her paper (“not to sleep in the meadows”). (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

#### **7.1.4 Property Rights**

The case studies illustrate a multiplicity of legal ownership situations of Roma people. Most of them are typical at community level, as they are the result of the historical development of the respective community.

***Quote 7-12. History of formal exclusion and evictions, in Timișoara***

*EP was staying there for some time with her parents. It was a house made of dry brick in the period of the war. There was a time when a man, a “Sir” took the ground and people made bricks from it, then he left and people covered the pits and made their houses. Later the garbage pit was made. During Ceaușescu some “cards” were given,*



*but these were not fully identical with certificates of property. A factory of washing powder, Perla, was also created, and it works even today, black and very toxic clouds were just leaving the chimneys “they put them to work at the evening and night-time”. Roma from Kuntz may have to face forced eviction. I see new buildings of international companies that might need land. Or wealthy people, she told me, who want to build small detached houses in order to make a suburb here. The Mayor is about to make a “cleaning” in this part of the city. (EP, Timișoara, Kuntz neighbourhood quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Many Roma households do not have proper ownership papers for the land or house they live in; their residence is therefore justified only by a temporary consensus that they are entitled to live there. This consensus can be very thin – as in the case of the Blascovics neighbourhood of Timișoara (see Quote 7-1), or the urban ghettos where residents are at any time at risk of forced eviction. In other cases, such as in Colțâu (see Quote 7-13) or the Kuntz neighbourhood of Timișoara (see Quote 7-14), there is a combination of legal and informal agreements that supports the development of the Roma community.

Informal local consensus is often not enough to allow residents to obtain ID cards on their *de facto* addresses. Despite significant changes in the legislation that facilitate the registration of residents with no ownership contracts, it is not possible to obtain legal recognition of one's *de facto* address when ownership problems are serious – for example, when the house or shack does not even have a postal address, or when it already has a different owner (who may be abroad, dead etc). A series of conditions have to be met in order to lead from long-term, unformalized possession of a house to a legal document (see a detailed presentation of sociological and legal issues in Florea et al. 2007). Difficulties in obtaining an ID card lead to problems of accessing all social services or of entering any contractual relationship, and they also lead to serious difficulties in obtaining birth certificates for children.

Residents with no ownership contracts, especially those living in illegal buildings, often find that it is impossible to finalise a contract with the electricity company or other utility providers. This affects the quality of housing and may lead to risky or illegal behaviour, such as improvised connections to the electrical network (without paying for electricity, such as in Zăbrăuți, or by paying, such as in Colțâu).

Lacking a legal basis for arbitration, land disputes against neighbours can escalate. Last but not least, residents with no legal rights over the land have a marginal citizenship status at local level. They are at any time subject to forced evictions or other interventions of local authorities, and they may be discriminated against – on the basis of their precarious housing status – when it comes to accessing services such as schooling, employment, social assistance etc.

**Quote 7-13. Uncertain legal status of new constructions in Ladiș neighborhood of Colțâu**

*The territorial isolation is obvious: the two older streets (Arieșului and Poșta), arranged in a V shape, extend towards the extreme limit of the Colțâu village and they enter the village pastures. The new neighbourhood or Ladiș (...) develops between them chaotically and without any type of systematization. Here problems are complicated and manifold:*

*- Nobody knows for sure who the owner is of the land they build on, although there is a legal document by which the Local Notary grants rights of use to the Roma community for an undetermined period;*

- There is no General Urban Plan to include this new neighbourhood, and no Land Register. This is the source for a series of problems: it is impossible to obtain ownership contracts, all building lacks authorization, ID cards must give a different address, etc;  
 - As there is no systematization, people start to fight over the position of their houses;  
 - There is no legal electricity network. Electricity is taken informally from neighbours, using improvised cables. The entire neighbourhood is covered with cables which are supported by wooden poles – leading to a danger of electrocution and fires;  
 (...) The Roma community is developing rapidly. New constructions appear all the time. (Coltău, Iorga 2007).

Last but not least, all communities with no clear legal status are subject to the risk of eviction – depending on factors which are largely outside their control, such as the political climate in the locality, the commercial value of the land they occupy.

**Quote 7-14. Vague property rights and the vulnerability to evictions, in Timișoara**

*Some, staying in their houses inherited by parents or grandparents, built or bought by the latter, in some cases even before the period of state communism, may not have the necessary certificates, but some handwritten, unofficial documents from the period the house was built or bought. Lack of legal documents and concession of the land the houses are built on may lead to eviction (...). The city's urban and economic development plans can follow aims different from the interests of those marginalized (especially in case of estates built in the peripheral areas). These regions can be turned into new suburbs or headquarters for international companies. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 7-15. The contradiction of discourses upon property rights, in M. Kogălniceanu**

*Concerning plots of land, some Roma allegedly own, as far back as they can remember, lots of land or forest passed on from generation to generation, that they have been toiling on for years, but once a new mayor came into office, their ownership rights were no longer acknowledged as there was no deed to justify the claim. From discussions with the local mayor, it emerged that there is a shortage in agrarian or construction land, and that this is one of the reasons why the local Roma do not get a lot of land to build a home. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

**Quote 7-16. Vulnerability to evictions in Timișoara**

*L.M. also remembered the discourse of the vice-mayor on social affairs held in a union of the local council about solutions to “cleaning” the city. As she proposed, people without residence and identity cards should be gathered, especially those from other places, put in trains and sent back home. To an observation reminding him that “moving freely is a human right” he replied: “Don’t push me madam with human rights!” (Expert on Roma issues, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

## 7.2 Housing Issues in Survey Research

This section discusses several dimensions of housing, such as housing density, comfort as measured by access to utilities and long-term consumer goods, and residential segregation. Two other issues are discussed above: the experience of cold (see section 5.2) and sleeping conditions (see section 5.3).

## 7.2.1 Property Rights

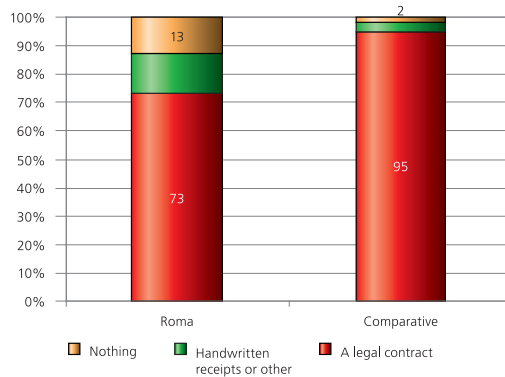
The rate of respondents who live in houses which are owned by themselves or other household members is around 85% in the Roma and 90% in the comparative sample. Another 5% of the respondents in both samples live in houses which belong to other (non-resident) family members (see Table 7-1).

The specificity of the Roma sample is that 2% of the respondents live in unregistered homes, while 4% live in public housing (compared to 2% in the comparative sample). To this we should add another 13% of Roma respondents who live in (presumably registered) houses whose *de facto* owner has no contract whatsoever documenting their ownership (15% in rural areas and 11% in urban areas).

In addition to these unregistered *de facto* owners, if we analyse the privately-owned houses of our Roma respondents, a proportion of 70% of their *de facto* owners in rural areas and 79% in urban areas have a legal ownership contract (73% in the total Roma sample). 16% of rural owners and 11% of urban owners have handwritten contracts (*chitanță de mână*) or other papers (14% of the total Roma owners). (See Chart 7-1).

This distribution of home ownership should not be generalized for the entire Roma population, because it is to a large extent dependent on the sampling methodology. It is useful, thought, in order to interpret the subsequent analyses.

Chart 7-1. Distribution of home ownership contracts in the Roma and the comparative sample (percentage)



The RIB 2006 indicates that 74% of Roma residents in urban areas and 67% of the residents in rural areas have legal ownership or a rental contract for their houses (Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 45).

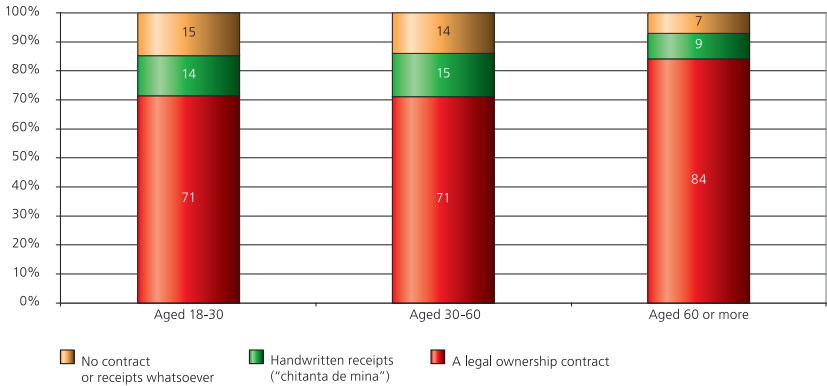
Table 7-1. Who is the owner of the residence you currently occupy? (percentage)

Who is the owner of the residence you currently occupy?	Ethnicity	
	Non-Roma	Roma
You or another member of the household	90.0	85.1
A relative of yours or of another member of the household	4.8	4.8
Another person	2.2	3.1
The Local Authority or the state	1.5	3.6
A firm or other landlord	1.5	1.2
Unregistered dwelling with no official owner	0.0	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0

A multivariate analysis<sup>21</sup> indicates that the risk of living in a house with no contracts whatsoever is higher for heads of household in the age group 18-60 and lower for older respondents, for those with low education, living in poverty (without any long-term consumer goods), living in predominantly Roma neighbourhoods but without speaking Romani. The type of locality (urban/rural) exerts no influence (see Table 16-24.).

Age differences (see Chart 7-2) probably indicate the disruptions that have occurred after 1989, as younger households have become more at risk of living in precarious conditions – either due to migration, or to leaving the parental house.

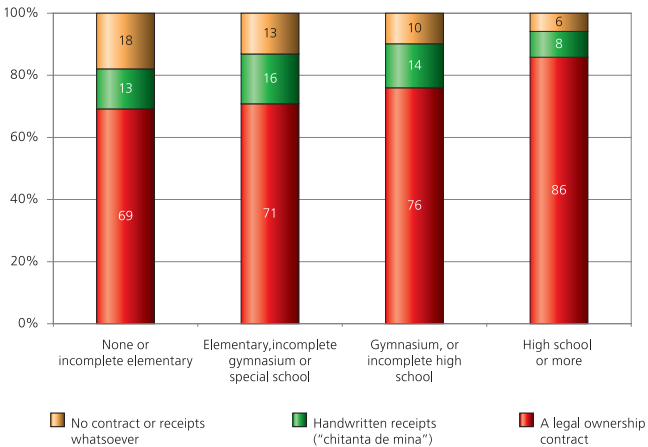
Chart 7-2. Legality of house ownership by age category of the head of the household – Roma sample (percentage)



There is a direct relationship between the educational level of the head of the household and the legality of house ownership (see below).

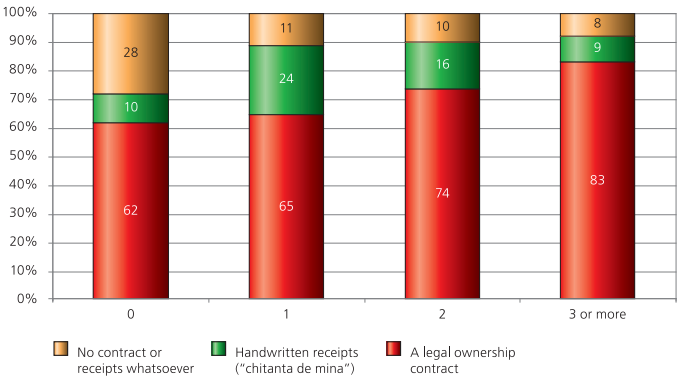
<sup>21</sup> Multivariate analysis = ~ in statistics describes a collection of procedures which involve observation and analysis of more than one statistical variable at a time.

*Chart 7-3. Legality of house ownership by education category of the head of the household – Roma sample (percentage)*



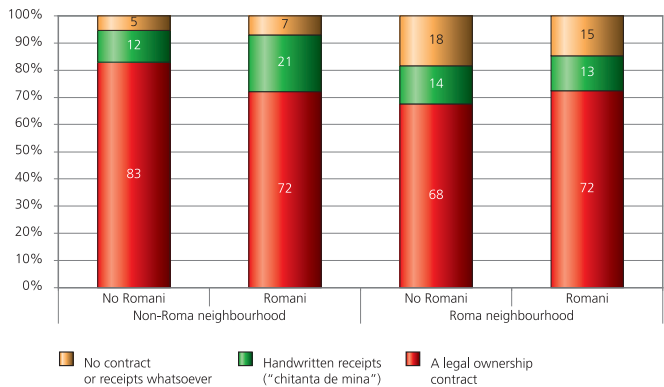
Households who have no long-term consumer goods are significantly more at risk of being in a precarious legal situation with their house (see below) – indicating that this situation is correlated with economic vulnerability, which probably reinforce each other in a vicious circle.

*Chart 7-4. Legality of house ownership by number of long-term consumer goods in the household – Roma sample (percentage)*



Legality of home ownership is positively influenced by a concordance between the type of neighbourhood (dominantly Roma/non-Roma) and the language spoken at home. In Roma neighbourhoods, households speaking Romani are more likely to have legal ownership status, while the reverse is true in non-Roma neighbourhoods. It is possible that the “discordant” households are more frequently newcomers, having migrated to the neighbourhood after 1989, when building and selling houses without formal contracts increased due, at least in part, to fewer constraints.

Chart 7-5. Legality of house ownership by ethnic composition of the neighbourhood and language spoken in house – Roma sample (percentage)



7.2.2 Housing Density

The density of housing is more than double for Roma households. There is an average of 0.8 persons per room in the case of non-Roma and 1.98 persons for Roma. In the Roma sample the housing density is higher for houses built after 1989.

Table 7-2. Housing density by sample type (percentage)

Number of people per room	Non-Roma	Roma
0-1.00	83	38
1.01-2.00	14	31
2.01-3.00	2	16
3.01-4.00	1	8
4.01-5.00	0	3
5.01-6.00	-	2
Over 6.01	0	2
Total	100.0	100.0

7.2.3 Access to Main Utilities

Electricity is present in over 98% of households from the non-Roma sample and in almost 84% households from the Roma sample. A large number of Roma households have no access to an electricity supply, either because their houses are not connected (almost 15%) or are switched off (1%). There are no differences between rural and urban households.

The Roma Inclusion Barometer (RIB 2006) also indicates that 13% of Roma people and 2% of people of other ethnicities have no electricity in their homes (Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 33).

A gas supply system works only in 46 localities (Bucharest included) from the 104 selected in the sample. One third of households from the non-Roma sample and 17% from the Roma sample have access to a gas supply.

Access to water is a critical issue for rural areas, where the source of water is outside the house (fountain, well) both for Roma and non-Roma households. Significantly more Roma households have access to water sources outside their yard, most of them at a distance of more than 100 meters from the household. As is to be expected, there are significant differences between rural and urban households.

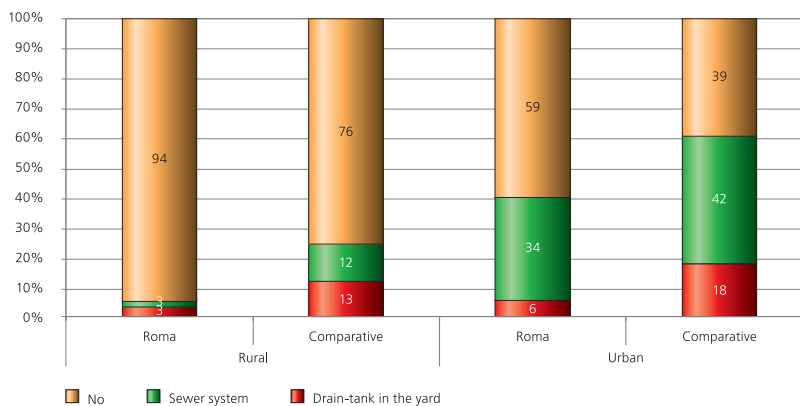
*Table 7-3. In the dwelling where you presently live is there water? – by sample type (percentage)*

	Comparative			Roma		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1 Water pipe in the house	23	61	39	8	30	17
2 Water pipe in the yard	15	17	16	14	26	19
3 Fountain in the yard	50	17	36	33	16	26
4 Water out of the yard, but closer than 100 ms	8	2	5	20	14	18
5 Further than 100 ms	4	3	4	25	14	20
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The RIB 2006 indicates that only 27% of Roma in urban localities and 5% in rural localities have water pipes in the house (14% of the total Roma population), compared to 90% of non-Roma in urban areas and 16% of non-Roma in rural areas (a total of 56% of non-Roma from the total non-Roma population). (Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 33).

There are significant differences between the two samples in access to sewage in urban and in rural areas (see below).

*Chart 7-6. Access to sewer, by type of locality and sample (percentage)*



## 7.2.4 Long-term Consumer Goods

Proportion of households with less long-term consumer goods<sup>22</sup> is significantly higher for the Roma sample than the non-Roma sample.

<sup>22</sup> The list includes: refrigerator, colour TV, automatic washing machine, car, mobile phone, CD player and computer.

Chart 7-7. Number of long-term consumer goods per household (percentage)

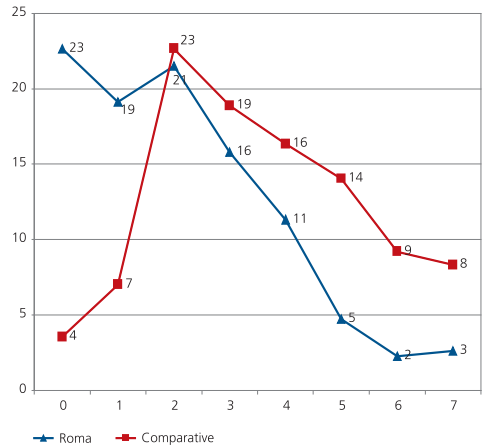


Table 7-4. Proportion of households in possession of various long-term consumer goods, by sample; comparative presentation of Social Inclusion 2007, and RIB 2006 results (percentage)

	Phare - Social Inclusion 2007			RIB 2006		
	Roma	Comparative	Ratio Comparative/Roma	Roma	National sample	Ratio National/Roma
Colour TV	68	90	1.3	64	91	1.4
Mobile telephone	43	58	1.3	28	57	2.0
Satellite dish	26	37	1.4	-	-	-
Refrigerator	53	92	1.7	37	88	2.4
CD player	12	24	2.0	-	-	-
Car	12	30	2.5	6	36	6.0
Automatic washing machine	14	40	2.9	9	50	5.6
Computer	8	24	3.0	4	29	7.3
Land fixed telephone	10	40	4.0	8	47	5.9

RIB 2006 results are presented in Bădescu et al. 2007, p. 41

If we rank long-term consumer goods according to the ration of non-Roma ownership to Roma ownership, the resulting pattern is similar in the survey with RIB 2006. Colour TVs and mobile phones are the most equally distributed, and so we can propose, at least as a hypothesis, that these technological means of information and communication may be an important factor in narrowing inequalities of quality of life between the Roma and the *Gadje*. At the other end of the spectrum, automatic washing machines and computers are among the most unequally distributed.

A very small number of households, 8.6% from the comparative and 5% from the Roma sample, have bought a long-term consumer goods in the last 12 months.



About one fifth of the variation of household wealth, as indicated by the number of long-term consumer goods, can be statistically accounted for by the influence of several socio-demographic variables (see Table 16-25.).

The most powerful predictor is the education level of the head of the household. In order to have a more intuitive understanding of this influence, we can say that on average a difference of 4 years of schooling is reflected in the possession of 0.5 goods. Migration is the next best predictor: we can see that households in which there is experience of migration own, on average, 0.9 more household goods when all other influences are controlled for. The next predictors, in descending order, are: the status of employees of the head of the household, living in an urban locality; the number of household members (negative influence), and (also a negative influence) the household use of Romani language.

### 7.3 Residential Ethnic Segregation

Residential ethnic segregation is a crucial variable in understanding the lack of interaction and familiarity across various communities. Social distance and geographical separation are mutually reinforcing.

#### ***Quote 7-17. Residential segregation in Curtici***

*A second dimension of the inclusion/exclusion situation in Curtici is represented by daily interaction practices, as they have resulted from the historical coexistence of the two communities. It is obvious that, traditionally, both the Roma and Romanian community, and especially the Romanian one, have developed, maintained and reinforced a set of values, stereotypes and interaction practices aimed at maintaining the least contact between the two communities. As a result, Romanians and Roma have coexisted peacefully in Curtici with a very high level of segregation. Romanians are very often surprised to see that a Romanian woman has the courage to go into the Roma community. I can see the same surprise at a Căldărari woman when she finds out that a researcher goes alone to the Gropeni' community. This lack of contact, as well as the reciprocal prejudices (although fundamentally asymmetrical, to the disadvantage of the Roma) are the basis of a pattern of exclusion practised on a daily basis, which, until recently, excluded the Roma from any participation in public affairs. In fact, it is these practices which place the 'Gypsy in the position of a subhuman creature. (Curtici, Mariana Goima 2007)*

Many of the communities included in case studies were residentially segregated: they were separated from the rest of the locality by a visible border, such as a street (Ladioş in Coltău, Valea Rece in Târgu Mureş) or a river (Nuşfalău) or even an altitude differential (Ţrkó in Sfântu Gheorghe). They were clearly identified as the Roma neighbourhood in the collective mental map, and as such they were considered off limits. In many of the same localities there are also mixed neighbourhoods (Bakos in Nuşfalău, Remetea in Târgu Mureş) or Roma communities who live amongst non-Roma (such as the *Gabors* in Târgu Mureş).

In some cases, such as the Bendea Muslim Roma community in Babadag, the process of expansion pushes Roma households towards the city centre, and thus decreases segregation. At the same time, in the case of Coltău, the very same process pushes the new Roma households away from the locality centre.

Why (and how) does residential segregation matter? In order to answer this question, we have used several indicators related to the ethnic and economic situation of the neighbourhood in the database (see the table below).

*Table 7-5. Indicators of economic and ethnic residential segregation*

Variable	Questionnaire question	Respondent	Variable used in analysis
Poor district	Which of the following statements describes the district (cartier) where you presently live? 1 Everybody or almost everybody is poor 2 Majority of the people are poor 3 There are poor and not poor people on the same rate 4 Majority are not poor 5 Nobody or almost nobody is poor	Head of the household	Dichotomy for "Everybody... is poor" Indicates (perception of) economic segregation at district level
Roma district	People of which ethnic group mostly live in the district where you presently live?	Head of the household	Dichotomy for "Roma" Indicates (perception of) ethnic segregation at district level
Roma neighbourhood	In the neighbourhood of respondent' s house... 1 only or almost only Roma families are living 2 there are Roma and non-Roma families in the same rate 3 there are some Roma families, but the majority is non-Roma 4 there are no Roma families near	Operator	Dichotomy for "only... Roma families". Indicates (perception of) economic segregation at neighbourhood level
Unkempt neighbourhood	The neighbourhood of respondent' s house is... 1 a very poor, unkempt area ( <i>zona foarte saraca, neingrijita</i> ) 2 a poor, but relatively ordered area 3 average 4 better than average	Operator	Dichotomy for "a very poor, unkempt area" Indicates (perception) of ethnic and economic segregation at neighbourhood level

Of course, all four indicators are subjective, as they reflect either the perception of the head of the household or the perception of the operator. However, lacking a better alternative, we shall use them as indicators of segregation, although they are affected both by random and systematic errors of estimation.

The last variable, unkempt neighbourhood, is an indicator of both ethnic and economic segregation of the neighbourhood. Although in theory it could apply both to Roma and non-Roma vicinities, in practice the operators apply the label of "unkempt" neighbourhood to 42% of Roma households and to only 6% of non-Roma households.

We cannot use these indicators to estimate the degree of residential segregation, because the sampling methodology requires operators to select Roma respondents who live in Roma neighbourhoods or districts, and therefore Roma residents of non-Roma districts are underestimated. Still, we can investigate the influence that segregation has on other aspects of life. We chose two types of areas of exploration:

1. The influence of spatial segregation on access to utilities and social services: ethnic segregation in education, and households' connection to electricity and water;
2. The influence of residential segregation on individual coping strategies such as openness across ethnic boundaries, or migration. Openness refers to variables such as having ethnically diverse friends, and accepting Romanian people as family members.

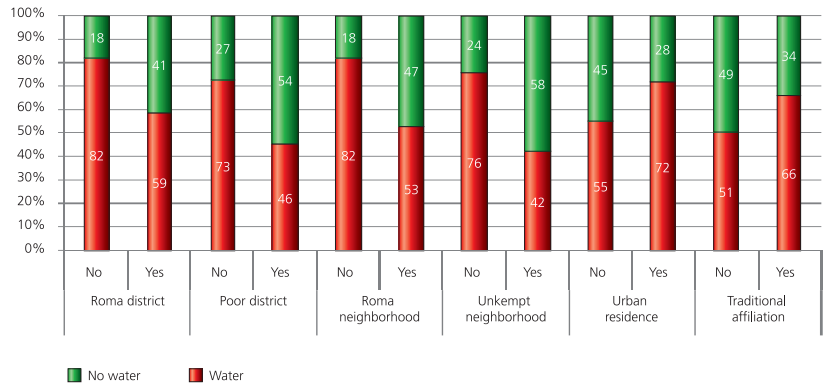
For each dependent variable we computed a binary logistic regression model including all four indicators of segregation<sup>23</sup>, indicators of ethnic affiliation and other socio-demographic variables.

<sup>23</sup> For models in which no indicators had an influence, we have also tested models with only one or two indicators of segregation to see whether any of them would prove to be a statistically relevant predictor, but this was useful only for the model on migration intention.

The models are presented in the annex (for the Roma sample), while details of statistically significant influences are discussed below.

Access to electricity is only influenced by living in an “unkempt” neighbourhood, household wealth and age of the head of the household. A proportion of 29% of the Roma households in “unkempt” areas have no electricity, compared to 7% of the others. On the contrary, access to a water source in the residence or in the yard is influenced significantly by all indicators of segregation. The probability of not having water in one’s house or yard is increased by economic and ethnic segregation at district and neighbourhood level and it is decreased by personal characteristics such as traditional ethnic affiliation, household wealth, urban residence and education of head of the household.

Chart 7-8. Lack of access to water, by type of neighbourhood and other variables (percentage)



The probability of having a Romanian or a Hungarian friend is not influenced by any indicator of segregation, but only, in this model, by traditional affiliation and age (see Table 16-16). Along the same lines, the regression model indicates no influence of segregation indicators on acceptance of Romanian people as family members.

Migration experience is also not influenced by any of the four indicators. The intention of migration for a couple of months is increased by residence in an “unkempt” area, but not by the other indicators.

Poor districts and “unkempt” neighbourhoods are more likely to have a majority of Roma children in their schools. The same is true of access to electricity. Access to water is equally influenced by ethnic and by economic homogeneity of the residential area. We can therefore infer that residential segregation influences the access that Roma people have to quality education and to utilities. It is interesting that the probability of educational ethnic segregation is not increased by ethnic residential segregation, but by the combination of economic and ethnic homogeneity.

Concerning personal strategies such as friendship networks or migration, these do not seem to be influenced by the ethnic or economic composition of the household. It appears that individuals find ways to overcome such barriers in their personal choices, but they are unable to compensate for the institutional deficiencies induced by segregation.

## 7.4 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

### *Points to Highlight*

- Housing density is more than double for Roma households. The average number of persons per room in case of non-Roma is 0.8 persons and for Roma is 1.98 persons.
- 15% of Roma households live without electricity, compared to 2% of the non-Roma.
- 36% of Roma households have to bring water from outside their yards, compared to 9% of the non-Roma.
- 53% of the Roma have a refrigerator in their house, compared to 92% of the non-Roma.
- 43% of the Roma have a mobile telephone, compared to 58% of the non-Roma – one of the smallest differences in ownership.
- 8% of the Roma have a computer, compared to 24% of the non-Roma – one of the largest differences in ownership.
- Residential segregation, as measured by indicators of "living in a poor district" and "living in an unkempt neighbourhood", has a significant influence on risks of educational segregation. Children living in such districts are more likely to study in classrooms where a majority of pupils are Roma. Also, households living in such districts are more likely to have no electricity.
- Access to water is equally influenced by the ethnic and economic homogeneity of the residential area.

Housing conditions are a powerful force that reflects and then structures personal and community lives. They convert a person's resources and social position into tangible comfort or hardship, and it turns social distance into geographical distance. The reverse is not necessarily true, because distance may be overcome by various means when communication is really sought after. But for unwanted people who live at the margins, even a four km road may remain forever unpaved (see for example the case of Veseuş, in Quote 4-28).

Many Roma households do not have proper ownership papers for the land or the house in which they live; their residence is therefore justified by a temporary consensus that they are entitled to live there. No clear legal status means they are subject to the risk of eviction.

Housing can be a framework for interethnic violence – be it private or public, in the case of forced evictions. Residential segregation has a statistically significant effect on quality education and access to utilities – an effect which is clearly visible in the case studies, too.



# 8 Employment

Employment is one of the most mentioned issues when analyzing the consequences of the political-economic transition of the post-socialist countries. Most Roma in Romania during the socialist period worked as unskilled and semi-skilled workers, and also had jobs in factories or in public services in urban areas and in socialist agricultural cooperatives in the villages. After the state-socialist heavy industry and agriculture had collapsed, the first to lose their jobs were those who had no qualifications. The unemployment rate in the country increased dramatically in the early 90s. In recent years, the economy has been undergoing restructuring and new possibilities are just appearing. Everyone is trying to find their new place in this new and unprecedented situation. Those who have less economic, political and decision-making power, as well as less information and less ability to enforce their interests, also have the fewest opportunities. As our data shows, most Roma people seem to be in this situation. As a consequence of this race for resources, under these socio-economic circumstances of scarcity, many people are forced to find alternative ways for survival, outside the formal labour market.

## 8.1 Employment Issues Reflected in Community Reports

### 8.1.1 Who is Unemployed?

National statistics show that the level of employment is far lower for Roma than it is for non-Roma. The statistics, though, are based on data for formal occupation and therefore completely mask the deeper phenomena behind the facts: the unequal chances of accessing work, the discrimination in the labour market.

#### **Quote 8-1. Reasons for being “unemployed” in Timișoara**

*The question is what kinds of jobs are available to them, how are they regarded, and what symbolic and economic prestige can they bring for their communities and among non-Roma? What kind of work is excluded due to many factors, among them negative stereotypes among employers, who – categorising people by their skin colour – prefer to hire non-Roma. Then it is also important to mention the impact of all these on their perceptions, reinforcing their beliefs that “they” by their nature are only capable of doing these kind of jobs, or of coping without working.” (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Education and professional background are the main conditions for accessing qualified jobs, but these are strongly conditioned by economic and symbolic capitals; from this standpoint, most Roma are in a worse condition than others.

#### **Quote 8-2. Influence of educational background on employment**

*As abandoning school leads to lack of a professional background and a drastic decrease of the possibilities of being employed, day shifts, unskilled work and jobs on the black market, are the most accessible for these people. This kind of work doesn’t bring a stable or sufficient income, and – as they can only be sure of day-by-day-living – it also cannot bring any security for the future or planning for a longer period of time. Besides, these aspects only reinforce perceptions of Roma in accordance with they are able only for these*

*kinds of jobs. Never being employed, or being out of work for a longer period, these people didn't benefit from allowances for unemployed. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

### 8.1.2 Gender Issue in Employment

As observed in the studied Roma communities, the women's responsibility is to carry out the domestic work and to take care of the children. Depending on the financial situation of the family, they can also have unqualified work in the local administration as cleaning women or they can work for other members of the community. Mostly, women work informally and try to make money from wandering around the locality, collecting different things (for example recyclable materials), and trying to sell small things such as used clothes. Women with official regular jobs represented quite isolated cases in all the observed Roma communities.

***Quote 8-3. Division of labour in Roma families in Coltau***

*Women work at home with children and picking forest fruits. (...) Men are the workers and those who bring money and food for home. (Coltau, Iorga 2007)*

***Quote 8-4. Women's responsibilities in Roma households in Sântana de Mureș***

*Women, for their part, are generally wandering in the town of Târgu Mureș, often together with their children, looking for food and small recyclable materials in the garbage piles and begging around the stores and churches. (Sântana de Mureș, Troc 2007)*

***Quote 8-5. Roma women's earning strategies in Oșorhei***

*A family who has a financial breakdown makes women sell their clothes and gold received as dowry. Women may trade their dresses and the money they earn is entirely theirs. Old skirts are sold to poorer Roma or Gabors. (Oșorhei, Pantea, 2007)*

### 8.1.3 Commuting Versus Social Benefits

Roma are economically bound to a very limited area which makes the employment in other regions (regions with more jobs to offer – such as industrial regions or larger localities) more difficult or even impossible. The high transportation costs and other costs involved by living away from the family, as well as the dependency on informal connections (necessary to get daily work) stop them from moving from one region to another. In some cases, the social benefit, which is not even sufficient for the basic needs of a large family, can be higher than the salary earned in another locality, after paying the transportation costs.

***Quote 8-6. Costs of commuting in Lupeni***

*(...) "The offer is most of the time quite poor, and most of the time the companies are from different parts of the country, which, in financial terms, is not an efficient strategy, considering the high transportation costs and living expenses far from the family." (Social assistant, Lupeni, quoted by Geambasu 2007)*

### 8.1.4 Influences of Roma Projects on Employment

The role of mediators and experts who could improve the employment possibilities of Roma is crucial. Unfortunately, the reality is far from ideal. The place of mediators in the everyday life of the community is formal, rather than effective and efficient. The job mediators, due to the lack of opportunity of being hired legally, will have worked as volunteers, or they may manage to get involved in new projects, very often without their officially aimed long-term results.

**Quote 8-7. Inefficiency of Roma labour projects in Timișoara**

*An increasing attention towards having a workplace in strategies for improving Roma condition was embodied in programs of forming experts. Unfortunately these persons could not be hired; they remained in the status of consultancy for projects and/or volunteers. It would of course be desired that National Agency for Labour Force should support strategies for hiring such qualified persons and create positions for job mediators (similar with those of school and health mediators). (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Without managing to do more than solve a few individual cases, the labour programmes haven't really begun to make an impact on Roma unemployment levels.

**Quote 8-8. Courses and labour practice in Timișoara**

*"A new course on training facilitators was launched, but how many courses should I keep doing? Without having any certainty of having a job I keep doing courses and I lose working experience in the meantime, without any practice." (M.P. in Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

### 8.1.5 Work and Social Benefits

There is a dialectic relationship between social aid and informal incomes. On the one hand, sometimes the authorities refuse to grant social aid to a family, because one of its members already has an informal income. On the other hand, most Roma can only get an informal job. At the same time, both incomes (social aid and informal work) can be insufficient for the needs of a large family. In this system, disadvantaged people depend increasingly on the Local Government's mercy, which only reinforces their vulnerability in an already strongly hierarchical local society.

Moreover, community jobs offered by the Local Authorities (street cleaners, park cleaners, maintenance, etc.) are strongly stigmatized activities and further reinforce this unfavourable position. These measures are often categorized as active instruments which intentions are to reintegrate unemployed people to formal labour market; but, as the information from the community studies shows, they rather belong to the category of insufficient social benefits without any long-term results in reintegration or in helping people not to be long-term unemployed without having work experience.

**Quote 8-9. Local Authorities' perception of work and the Roma people, in Bucharest**

*(...) "I might say that the issue with this ethnic group is that they don't like work and do not want to work in order to cater for themselves. They'd rather have the assistance of the state, let the state help them, if they could get this support for life it would be wonderful. Some might have a lot of children for whom they receive allowances and they still come to the Child's Protection and say 'what does the state do for me, look I have 5 children, what do you do for me?' But the perspective on things, this mentality that the state should assist them permanently without their doing anything is not right, and this goes for one's workplace up to you name it." (Executive Manager of General Board for Social Work and Child's Protection, Town Hall, Sector 5, Bucharest, quoted by Tirca 2007)*



**Quote 8-10. Circles of dependency, from the Local Authorities' perspective, in Bucharest**

*"If one does not have the means to live in Bucharest one should move somewhere else where life is cheaper, to a village for instance. Not everybody has to live in Bucharest. This is the solution, we can draw up thousands of projects, but if these projects make them dependent on us, they amount to nothing". (Head of the Social Assistance Department, Sector 5, Bucharest, quoted by Tirca 2007)*

The fear of dependency and the conception that Roma families are willing to trick the state into obtaining undeserved benefits leads to social aid (Minimum Guaranteed Income) not being given in all eligible cases. Since the MGI is means-tested, social workers/inspectors tend to sanction in fact those social aid applicants who, instead of relying solely on the minimum guaranteed income, also have informal work (see Quote 8-11).

This strict application of legal criteria paradoxically, reinforces the structure of motivations that sanction individual economic initiatives and thus favour dependency.

**Quote 8-11. Social aid for households with informal incomes in Modelu**

*A great number of families have complained about the fact that, although by law they are entitled to social benefits (payments), they do not get them, because the social worker thinks that, if any member of the family earns any other income from any other external (informal) sources, they shouldn't get the social payments. Thus - in their opinion - the social worker treats the cases in a very biased way, sometimes suspending the social payments with no evidence for sustaining such action. (Modelu, Feraru 2007)*

### 8.1.6 Past and Future of "Traditional Professions"

Nowadays we can notice a structural transformation of the "traditional professions". For example, the "nomadic lifestyle" associated with trade and horse-rearing is not profitable and even a few decades ago became very difficult.

On the other hand, the traditional skills are still passed down through the family, from father to sons, but the future of these professions is doubtful, due to the general transformation of the national economy. These family professions can not be learned in any vocational school – there are no diplomas for the new generation for these abilities.

**Quote 8-12. Nomadic life as a source of local conflict in Oşorbei**

*Nomads today own one horse at the most. As they do not have agricultural land, they face problems in feeding the horses. Animals are left grazing on the peasants' hayfields, which generates conflicts and successive arrests. Today transportation by cart has become an unproductive activity. (Oşorbei, Pantea, 2007)*

The case of *Gabors* is relevant, because tinsmith is more than just a profession; it is an important part of their community identity. But the demand for this skill has been reduced due to the modernization of construction techniques and the *Gabors* cannot afford to buy the expensive materials and tools now needed by the up to date technology (such as machines for crafting plastic and large-size tin and copper drainpipes). Moreover, because they are not trusted by the banks, they cannot get a loan, and therefore cannot set up firms in order to offer their services legally.



**Quote 8-13. The impossibility of legalization of “traditional professions” in Oșorbei**

*Tinsmithing is inherited from one generation to another – young boys begin working at 14 years old and are encouraged to continue the tradition. In recent years they have established family associations, but they still do not get any diplomas certifying their crafts. And tinsmithing is not easy. Generally tinsmiths cover an extended geographic area (a number of counties) where they look for jobs. [...] But the request for tin pipes has been significantly decreasing and they do not have the technology required for making plastic pipes. Because they do not have a stable income the banks won't grant them loans for purchasing the tools. Therefore, their situation becomes more and more serious. For now they travel to rural areas, to families who only afford tin works. (Oșorbei, Pantea 2007)*

The employment situation of the *Gabors* is illustrative also for the case of other Roma groups, living off traditional professions.

**Quote 8-14. The problem of legalization of traditional professions in Timișoara**

*In presenting the Roma communities from Timișoara, their traditional occupations were also mentioned – jobs that in present conditions of market economy and competition among big companies are harder to carry on than in state communist period. Many would be happy to apply for the new authorization for these old jobs (such as the *Gabors* for drain making), but lack of education marks this difficult for them. Without authorization all their jobs (such as collecting and storing iron) are declared illegal and punished by penalties.” (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

Most Roma performing traditional professions don't have enough information about the legal framework for such an enterprise. On the one hand, lack of education affects the access to, and the understanding of, legal means; on the other hand, the relevant information is itself not clear enough, requiring juridical assistance or advice.

**Quote 8-15. Lack of education as impediment to obtain authorization in Timișoara**

*“I discussed with *Gabors* who traditionally work with metals, among whom many have no licenses and many of them are punished as they work on the black market. They would like to have a firm, but lack of education is a problem, as local councils cannot issue an authorization when there are no qualifications. So they practice the job, it is transmitted from father to son, but they have no qualifications. It is a vicious circle. If Roma would realize qualification helps to give them a status in life, they would get qualifications. They should have seen that qualification leads them to better jobs. I found a community of 46 people; they all wanted to have qualifications, all in constructions. By now they should have been sent to courses. (MP, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

### 8.1.7 A Special Case: The Former Miners

**Quote 8-16. Story of a former miner after the transition, in Lupeni**

*Besides a number of personal reasons (such as law infringement, incapacity to work underground, conflicts with management etc), the so-called “ordinance” is a significant structural factor, which has influenced the lives of a lot of families in Lupeni – both Roma and non-Roma. The Ordinance is actually the Emergency Ordinance passed in 1997, according to which miners who give up their jobs willingly would get a severance payment representing the salary accumulated for a longer period (6-9 months), without being entitled to any other unemployment benefits*

later. Many people 'filed for the ordinance', which at that time they saw as a major benefit from the government, considering the significant amount they would receive – around 13 million old lei, in that time. On the other hand, in the miners' opinion, it was the best way of dealing with the hardships that were to challenge the mining industry in the future: it was known that there were going to be massive lay-offs, there were rumours that people would be fired anyway for unacceptable behaviour or on age-related grounds, without then being entitled to cash this amount of money. Most of the time this money was perceived as 'ticket money' for those who, seeing the deterioration of their living standards in the city, were planning to go back to their native villages. We don't know how many people actually managed to rebuild their lives in the countryside or elsewhere – we can only estimate. But those who, after a failure, had to come back to Lupeni, those are the real losers of the Ordinance. Here is how the people to whom the ordinance has ruined the next ten years of life reconstruct the history of the changes in their lives:

[...] Man: I was a miner for 21 years, and I was fooled, too, as I wasn't told about this amount of pension I have to raise my kids from. I find it very hard to make ends meet. But I don't beat and steal.

Woman: My husband was working in the mine, and it wasn't bad on those times, not at all.

Man: yes, it was good.

Woman: We had a good life than, as we had money and children were in school. Cause there was a school made for children not to become vagabonds, as they can become today. We send them to school, telling them to learn to make a better life. But now it is hard for us.

M: Communists, these country burglars, made many factories in the whole country, and than all were sold out.

Question: How much time had you spent in the mine?

M: 18 years and 9 month.

Q: And then you used the benefits of the Ordonanța? When was that?

M: In 97, when I was 37. I had 8 years to go to 45, but I hadn't worked in that time as I couldn't know what was going to happen. Because all leaders told me: don't be a fool, you'll come back in a year. Take the money and come back.

Q: How much did you take?

M: 18 millions and 500.

Q: What happened to this money?

M: It's all gone. Some was stolen; some was spent on silly things, as man could not know in those times. You know, we miners were given salaries twice a month, and not those millions you only feel once in your hand. Money was given twice a month. And many, many of us left and were killed, all with Ordonanța. The young and family men don't know what it was like.

Q: Didn't you manage to buy anything at that time?

W: Clothes. We bought pigs for slaughter and sell...

M: All money had gone.

Q: And nothing left?

M: No.

Q: What would you do if you got that sum now?

W: I would know different...

M: Today we couldn't think what we thought in 97. Now I can make something with 100 thousands in my pocket, but I couldn't do it then with 18 millions. Nowadays I go and buy

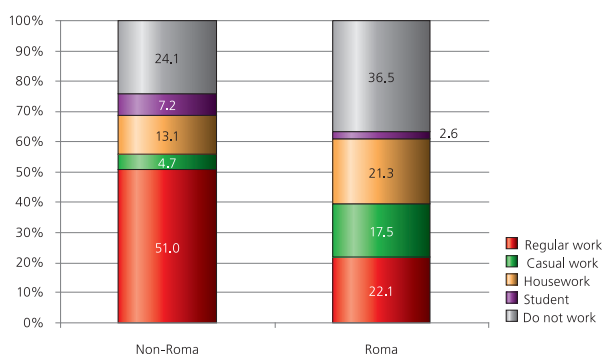
*some palinka and cigarettes and have fun. (Laughing.) In those times the sum was a huge one, not like the millions today. (Man and woman, 53 and 49, Lupeni, Geambaşu 2007)*

## 8.2 Employment Issues in Survey Research

### 8.2.1 Ethnic Inequalities in Economic Activity

Analysing the jobs of Roma and non-Roma in our sample, we can see differences in the structure of different kind of activities (see Chart 3-5). While there is a very big difference in having regular work (more than half the non-Roma has this kind of employment, while less than a quarter of the Roma do, so the difference is more than double), the situation is more balanced when analysing data about those do not work (24.1 versus 36.5%). Casual work is much more frequent among Roma (almost four times the rate of Roma have casual work than the non-Roma), and housework is also more typical, but the difference is not as great. There are a relatively small proportion of school population (pupils and students) as we analysed just those older than 18, but among non-Roma school population's rate is almost three times bigger than among Roma adults. When it comes to school population the level for non-Roma is almost three times higher than it is for Roma, but it should be noted that we only included adults over 18 as subjects for our analysis.

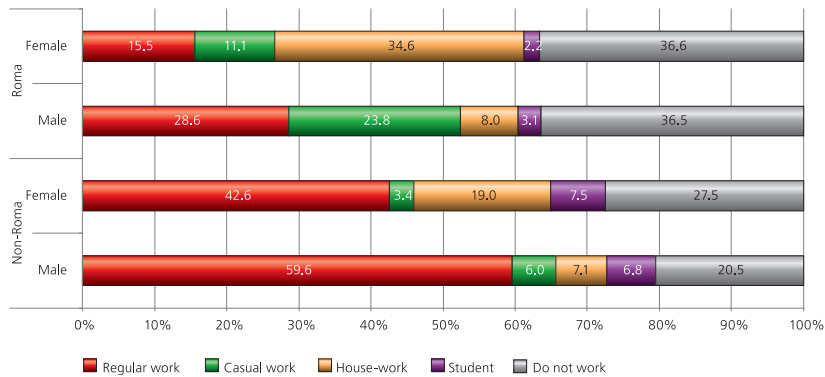
*Chart 8-1. Economic activity by ethnicity (respondents between 18-59 years, percentage)*



There are several factors that can influence economic activity. Gender has more or less the same effect on both kinds of ethnic group (see Chart 3-5). Regular and casual work is more frequent among men, while housework is far more typical among women. In the Roma sample the latter difference is greater: four times the rate of women work at home than do men, while this difference is less than three times amongst non-Roma.

There is no strong gender-specific difference in case of school population, but rate of them among female in comparison with male is a bit higher in the non-Roma, and a little bit smaller in the Roma sample. Women are more often economically non-active in the non-Roma sample, while in the Roma sample there is no difference between men and women when it comes to lack of job possibilities.

Chart 8-2. Influence of gender on economic activity by ethnicity  
(respondents between 18-59 years, percentage)



Age generates more or less the same tendencies both in the non-Roma and the Roma sample, with a few important differences. In the case of those who have regular work, the three middle age-categories are the most active in both samples.

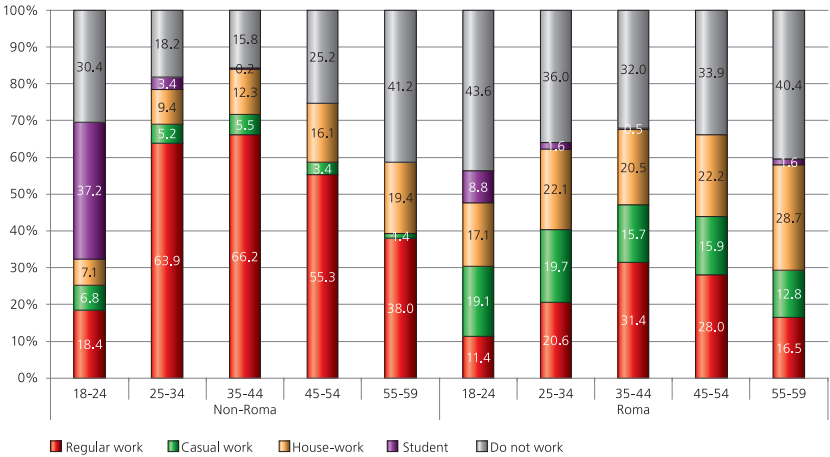
Casual work is most frequent among younger job hunters, but the highest rate of casual work is under 7% for non-Roma, while it is 19.1% for Roma.

Age leads to the opposite tendency when it comes to housework which is much more typical for the older age categories in both of our samples.

The rate of school population is generally relatively low, but while more than one third of non-Roma between 18 and 24 years old are in this category, only 8.8% among young adult Roma are high school pupils or students.

The rate of those who do not work is the highest in the oldest and youngest age categories, both in the Roma and the non-Roma sample.

Chart 8-3. Influence of age of respondent on economic activity by ethnicity  
(respondents between 18-59 years, percentage)

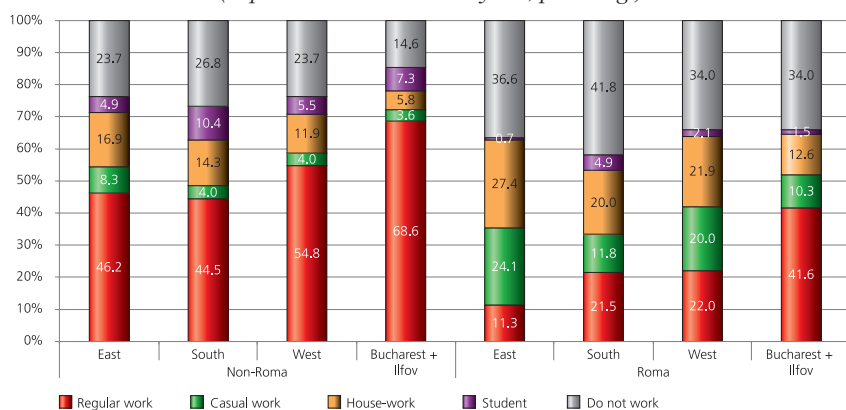


There are strong regional inequalities in opportunities to access regular jobs, both for Roma and non-Roma, but, in the case of the Roma, the region has an even stronger influence (Chart 8-4). The capital and its surroundings is the best area for getting a permanent job both for Roma and non-Roma. The lowest rate of regular workers is in the East and the South for the non-Roma, and in the East for the Roma.

The data shows that the Eastern region presents the greatest inequality in the chances of getting a job, between the two ethnic groups. But at the same time, the highest rate of casual work among the Roma is to be found here. As a consequence, ethnic inequality in being inactive is not stronger in this region than the country average. As a result of these two simultaneous phenomena, in the category of those having no any work less ethnic inequality is actually in force in this region than the average for the country.

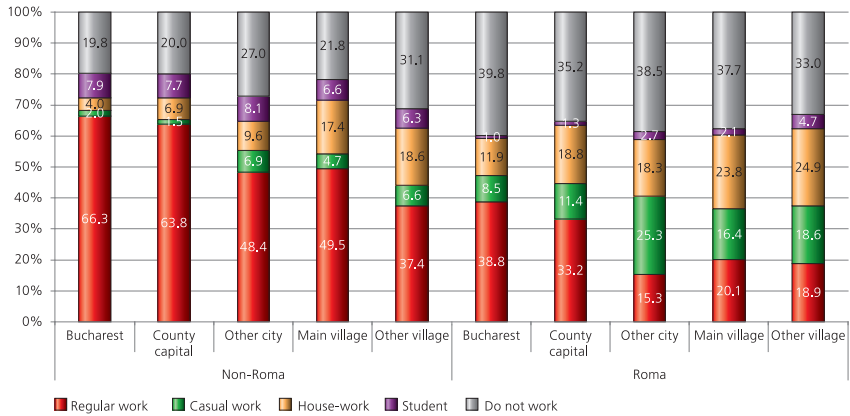
The highest rate of inactive Roma and non-Roma is in the South, but the greatest inequality between the two ethnic groups is in Bucharest-Ilfov.

*Chart 8-4. Economic activity by regions and by ethnicity  
(respondents between 18-59 years, percentage)*



In the case of the non-Roma there is a clear tendency: the smaller the location, the lower the rate of those having permanent work. It is almost the same in the case of Roma, with an exception: the highest rate of Roma without permanent work is in the smaller cities. The rate of those who do not work is highest in the smaller villages in the case of the non-Roma, but in the smaller cities in case of the Roma. It seems that smaller cities are the most problematic locations for Roma, considering their formal position in the labour market. But, at the same time, smaller cities provide the best chance of casual work for Roma.

*Chart 8-5. Economic activity by type of location and by ethnicity (respondents between 18-59 years, percentage)*



### 8.2.2 Distribution of Economic Sectors

Almost a third of economically active Roma work in agriculture and forestry, compared to only 13.4% of non-Roma. Almost a quarter of non-Roma work in services compared with 18.1% of Roma working in this sector. (See Table 8-1)

After agriculture, the second greatest difference between Roma and non-Roma workers rates is seen in education, science, health and culture: in this category, almost one tenth of non-Roma work, compared with less than 2% of members of Roma households.

Construction is also a sector with a higher rate of Roma workers, while all the other sectors offer more job opportunities for non-Roma.

*Table 8-1. Distribution of economic sectors by ethnicity (respondents aged 18-59, percentage)*

	Roma	Non-Roma
Education, science, health, culture	1.8	9.9
Transport	3.7	8.8
Other	6.3	7.5
Industry, mining	7.3	10.5
Trade	11.5	13.9
Construction	18.8	11.4
Services	18.1	24.7
Agriculture, forestry	32.4	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0

### 8.2.3 Effect of Spatial Segregation

The social and ethnic composition of the locality and neighbourhood only had an influence on the economic activity of the members of Roma households (see Table 8-2 and Table 8-3 ).

When it comes to regular work, the most favourable settlements and neighbourhoods for the Roma are those where poor and better-off people are living together. While social segregation in

the locality has no significant influence on having casual work, the rate of those trying to live from casual work is highest in socially segregated neighbourhoods.

The situation is more or less the same with housework, where the social segregation of the locality has the same effect.

The proportion of school population among Roma is highest in socially segregated localities, but from this point ethnically mixed neighbourhoods are more favourable for them.

When Roma live with a majority of non-Roma in one locality they are more likely to be economically non-active. While ethnic segregation of the locality has a slightly positive effect on Roma having any kind of work (those with no work at all is lower in ethnically segregated localities), living in segregated Roma neighbourhoods is a disadvantage in this respect.

*Table 8-2. Economic activity of Roma by social composition of the locality and the neighbourhood (Roma respondents aged 18-59, percentage)*

	Regular work	Casual work	House-work	Pupils or students	Do not work	Total
<i>Total</i>	22.0	17.5	21.3	2.6	36.5	100.0
Social composition of the locality						
Majority is poor	19.9	17.7	23.9	3.5	34.9	100.0
Mixed	25.1	17.1	19.8	1.9	36.1	100.0
Majority is non-poor	19.2	19.6	17.8	1.4	42.0	100.0
Social composition of the neighbourhood						
Majority is poor	21.0	19.0	21.8	2.6	35.6	100.0
Mixed	28.4	9.6	19.8	2.9	39.3	100.0
Majority is non-poor	25.5	13.5	14.9	2.1	44.0	100.0

*Table 8-3. Economic activity of Roma by ethnic composition of the locality and the neighbourhood (Roma respondents aged 18-59, percentage)*

	Regular work	Casual work	House-work	Pupils or student	Do not work	Total
<i>Total</i>	22.0	17.5	21.3	2.6	36.5	100.0
Ethnic composition of the locality						
Majority is Roma	18.4	20.3	26.6	3.2	31.5	100.0
Majority is Non-Roma	23.3	16.7	20.1	2.4	37.4	100.0
Ethnic composition of the neighbourhood						
Majority is Roma	19.6	17.7	22.1	2.4	38.3	100.0
Majority is Non-Roma	36.4	10.6	15.9	3.5	33.6	100.0

## 8.3 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

### *Points to Highlight*

- There is a very wide ethnic difference in having regular work - more than half of the non-Roma compared to less than a quarter of the Roma, so the difference is more than double.
- The situation is a little bit more balanced when analysing data about those who do not work: 24.1 % of non-Roma compared to 36.5 % of Roma.

- Casual work is much more frequent among Roma (the rate of Roma with casual work is almost four times that of the non-Roma). Among young job hunters (between 18 and 24 years old) the highest rate of casual work performance is under 7% for the non-Roma, while it is 19.1% for the Roma.
- Women are more frequently economically non-active in the non-Roma sample, while in the Roma sample there is no difference between men and women who do not have any working possibilities.
- The proportion of school population is generally relatively low, but while more than one third of non-Roma between 18 and 24 years old are in this category, only 8.8% of young adult Roma are enrolled in school institutions (pupils, students, etc)
- The capital and its surrounding is the best place to get a permanent job both for Roma and non-Roma.
- The lowest rate of regular workers is in the East and the South in the case of non-Roma, and in the East in the case of Roma.
- In the case of the non-Roma there is a clear tendency: the smaller the location, the lower the rate of those having permanent work. It is almost the same in the case of the Roma, with one exception: the highest rate of Roma without permanent work is in the smaller cities.
- The economically active Roma people are most likely to have work in agriculture and forestry (almost one third of them are working in this sector), while the rate of non-Roma working in agriculture and forestry is 13.4%.
- Almost one tenth of non-Roma work in the sectors of education, science, health and culture, compared with less than 2% of members of Roma households.
- For having regular work, the most favourable settlements and neighbourhoods for the Roma are those where poor and better-off people are living together.
- The rate of Roma trying to live from casual work is the highest in socially segregated neighbourhoods, where the majority of inhabitants are poor.
- The proportion of school population among Roma adults is the highest in socially segregated localities, but from this point ethnically mixed neighbourhood is more favourable for them.
- When Roma live with a majority of non-Roma in one locality they are more likely to be economically non-active. While ethnic segregation of the locality has a slightly positive effect on Roma having any kind of work (those with no work at all is lower in ethnically segregated localities), living in segregated Roma neighbourhoods is a disadvantage in this respect.

After the political and economic transition the labour market can be characterized as a race for resources causing strain. Under these socio-economic circumstances of scarcity, many people living in a disadvantaged situation are forced to find alternative ways for survival, outside the formal labour market. Most Roma people are confronted with this situation. Education and professional backgrounds are pre-conditions for being hired for qualified jobs; from this point of view most Roma are worse off than non-Roma. Some people survive only from the social benefit (which is not sufficient for the basic needs of a large family), which can be higher in some cases than the salary earned in another village minus the transportation costs and the living costs of being away from home. Some labour training could be crucial, but due to the lack of opportunity for being hired legally afterwards, they may manage to get involved in another project. Without real long-term results in getting formal jobs, these labour training programmes are just postponing the unemployment of some Roma people by some months, and only in a few individual cases.

Nowadays we can see a structural transformation of the “traditional professions”. In a modern, globalized economy, these forms of pre-modern economic activities are unprofitable and in most cases are more important as part of the identity of the group than real sources of income. The need



for such works had been reduced due to the effects of modernization which are everywhere. There is a lack of information offered by Local Authorities and the lack of education hinders access to legal and profitable opportunities.

The disadvantaged population (especially Roma, who can be easily stigmatized) is more and more dependant on the Local Authorities since their main income sources (such as social benefits and community work) stem from local (from point of view of Roma also *Gadjo*) institutions. This situation reinforces their defenceless position in local society which is anyway strongly hierarchical.



# 9 Income and Expenditure

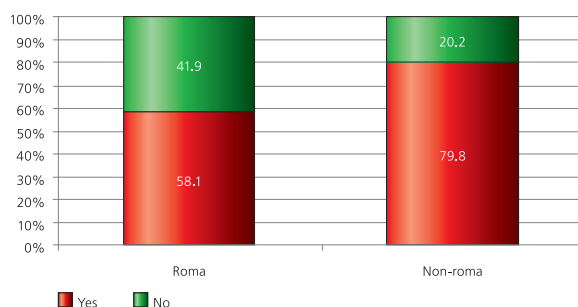
This chapter explores data on income and expenditures from the survey research, using a comparative perspective.

## 9.1 Access to Income

Data on income was obtained from heads of Roma households, who enumerated the incomes of all family members for the previous month (July). In order to eliminate any problems associated with the different age structure of the two populations only the incomes of adults were compared.

The proportion of those who did not have any income in the reference-month was more than two times higher for the Roma than for the non-Roma: 41,9% of the Roma compared to the 20,2% of non-Roma.

*Chart 9-1. Access to at least one type of income by ethnicity of the respondent (respondents over 18 years, percentage)*



Access to income is determined by a series of factors. Among them we will focus on age, gender, type of residential locality, region, and ethnic residential segregation inside the locality.

Age has a considerable effect on income-access, acting in different ways on both populations (Table 9-1). At the start of adulthood both Roma and non-Roma have equal access to income sources, but from then on differences increase rapidly with age: in the 25-34 age-group more than 20% less Roma have some kind of income compared to non-Roma in the same age bracket. In older age the difference remains roughly constant, with the greatest difference being apparent in the age-group 55-64.

Gender also has a significant effect on access to income. In both cases its effect is negative for women, but for the Roma, the difference between the proportion of men and women with income is greater than for the non-Roma.

Linkage between type of location and access to income seems to be linear: the smaller the locality, the lower the proportion of those with income. As could be expected, with the Roma this connection is stronger. In the capital the difference between proportion of Roma and non-Roma earners is significantly smaller than in the villages.

Linkage between size of locality and access to incomes seems to be linear: the smallest the locality, the lowest the proportion of those with income. As it could be expected, in case of the Roma population this connection is stronger. In the capital the difference between proportion of Roma and non-Roma earners is significantly smaller than in villages.

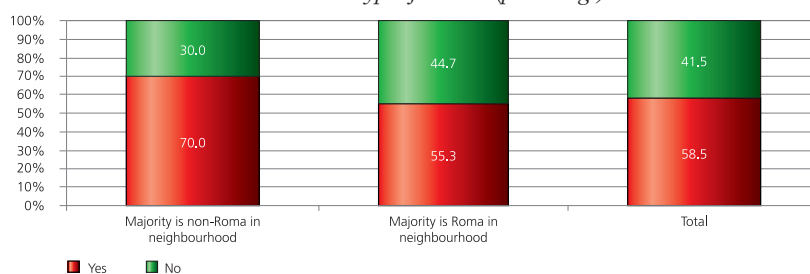
Looking at the proportion of those with at least one type of income, a far greater proportion of Roma have an income in Bucharest and Ilfov county compared to other regions of the country. In the eastern and southern regions both Roma and non-Roma have the most difficult access to incomes. In the western region the proportion of non-Roma with income is the same as non-Roma earners from Bucharest. However, despite the likely greater income possibilities for this region, the proportion of Roma earners here is not significantly higher than in other regions.

*Table 9-1. Effects of different socio-economic factors on access to at least one type of income (affirmative responses, percentage)*

	Roma	Non-Roma
<i>Total</i>	55.8	77.8
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 24	41.3	40.3
25 – 34	54.9	76.3
35 – 44	58.3	80.3
45 – 54	61.9	78.1
55 – 64	61.5	88.2
over 65	80.5	93.6
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	63.3	82
Female	48.4	73.9
<b>Type of location</b>		
Bucharest	76.2	84.7
Other cities	58.6	79.1
Rural	51.9	76.4
<b>Region</b>		
East	54.9	74.3
South	53.8	71.9
West	55.3	82.9
Bucharest + Ilfov	67.9	80.7

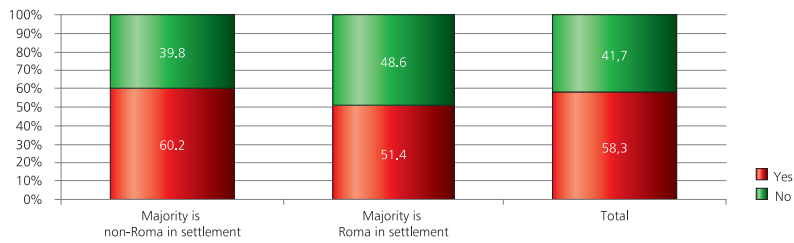
For the Roma respondents the effect of residential segregation on access to income seems to be obvious: those living in segregated districts have a significantly lower proportion with at least one type of income compared to those living in non-Roma neighbourhoods.

*Chart 9-2. Effect of residential segregation on access of Roma to at least one type of income (percentage)*



If the Roma population constitutes the majority of a locality, their chance of having some income is lower than in localities with majority of non-Roma.

Chart 9-3. Effect of ethnic composition of the settlement on access of Roma to at least one type of income (percentage)

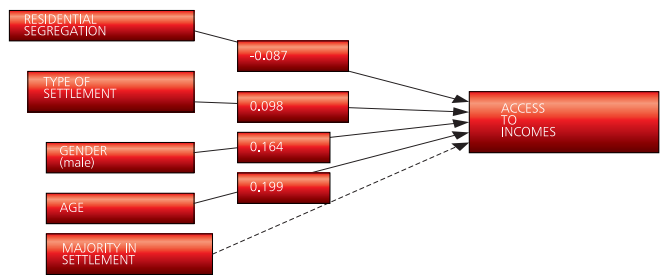


Put into a single linear-regression model, we can make some conclusions regarding the relative importance of the above discussed factors and their effect on the access of the Roma to at least one type of income.

The strongest influence on income access is age (the older the respondent the greater the chance of having an income), followed by gender (males have a greater chance of earning) followed by type of locality (bigger settlements have better income access).

Taking only the Roma, segregation inside the location proved to have the weakest effect on income access, and the ethnic composition of the settlement has no significance at all.

Chart 9-4. Linear-regression model of the effect of different factors on the probability of having at least one type of income (Roma population, respondents over 18 years)



## 9.2 Types of Income

The most important source of incomes for the Roma population proved to be the maternity leave, child benefit, family allowance and other social benefits (for 26.1% of the Roma population). Next in importance is social benefit (guaranteed minimal income), for the 14.4% of those who formed our Roma-sample.

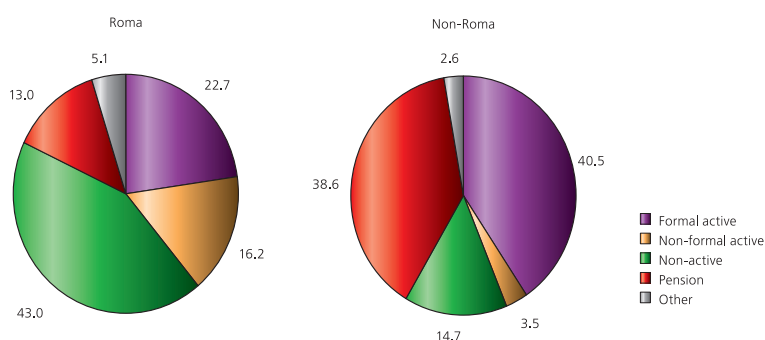
The situation is significantly different when it comes to members of non-Roma households: pensions (including disability pension, state benefit for handicapped and war veterans) are the most frequently mentioned sources of income.

Table 9-2. Main income sources by ethnicity (percentage)

Types of main income sources	Roma	Non-Roma
Maternity leave, child benefit, family allowance and other social benefits	26.1	11.6
Social benefit	14.4	2.0
Pension, including disability pension, state aid for handicapped	13.0	38.6
Remunerative work for neighbours, friends	12.2	2.4
Regular income from private company, organization	11.8	19.0
Regular income from state or municipal institution, company	6.2	17.4
Payment for casual work in private company, organization	2.7	1.0
Income from goods sold at fairs, markets, flea markets	2.4	0.1
Remittances from abroad	2.3	0.6
Profit from own enterprise	1.7	2.2
Other	1.7	1.0
Other social benefits from government or local government	1.3	0.3
Unemployment benefit	1.1	0.7
Money from selling collected recyclable materials	0.9	0.0
Stipends, scholarships	0.8	0.9
Income from sale of home-grown agricultural products	0.4	1.0
Money from informal personal activities such as gambling, begging	0.2	0.0
Aid from civil organizations, support from foundations	0.2	0.0
Remittances from relatives	0.2	0.1
Payment for casual work in governmental institution, company	0.2	0.6
Salary, payment for work in civil organization, NGO	0.1	0.3
Loan	0.1	0.0
Heritage	0.1	0.0
Income from rent or interest	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

After categorization of income sources differences are even more obvious between the two samples. The highest proportion of income for non-Roma is from formal activities (40.5%) and pension (38.6%), while Roma households live mostly from non-active sources (43%) and non-formal activities (22.7%). We can rightly suppose that most Roma in our sample are outside the formal economy, while the main income of almost 80% of non-Roma is either from formal activities or from pensions.

Chart 9-5. Categories of main income sources by ethnicity (percentage)



Differences in the age-structure of the two populations must also be taken into account in this case, because the higher percentage of Roma children increases the number of certain state-allowances/amount of state allowance for the Roma. For this reason, in the following, we have separated the income structure of those under 18 years old from that of the adults (over 18 ).

Comparing the income structure of the children (see Table 9-3), a clear difference can be seen when it comes to work for neighbours or friends for money, probably covering widespread day-labouring. This way of earning money is unknown for young non-Roma.

Regarding access to stipends and scholarships non-Roma children proved to have an advantage over Roma children, and the situation is the same with disability pensions.

*Table 9-3. Proportion of main income sources for children, by ethnicity (respondents under 18 years, percentage)*

Types of main income sources	Roma	Non-Roma
Maternity leave, child benefit, family allowance and other social benefits	79.3	85.0
Remunerative work for neighbours, friends	5.9	0.0
Stipends, scholarships	2.7	3.9
Other social benefits from government or local government	2.5	1.7
Social benefit	1.9	0.0
Pension, including disability pension, state aid for handicapped	1.5	4.7
Regular income from private company, organization	1.0	0.4
Regular income from state or municipal institution, company	0.2	1.3
Other	5.0	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Among the adult population there are evident differences in the income-structure of Roma and non-Roma (see Table 9-4). While for adult Roma the most important source of income is the social benefit, pension and disability pension, regular salaries from private companies, and also informal work (probably day-labouring); for non-Roma the three most important income sources are pensions (including disability pensions) and regular salaries from private- and state-sector.

Despite the fact that pensions are very important sources of income for both Roma and non-Roma, here we also find the greatest difference between the two populations: while pensions constitute the most important sources of income for 42.6% of the non-Roma population, that is true for only 16.7% of the Roma.

There is also a significant difference in the frequency of regular earnings from state or municipal institutions; access to this sector is being difficult for Roma. In other words, the private sector seems to increase the chances of access to income sources from formal economy for the Roma.

Working for neighbours or friends for money seems to be again characteristic for the Roma, and being insignificant for the non-Roma. We can suppose a strongly hierarchical and unequal relationship between poor Roma families and their non-Roma neighbours in local societies.

*Table 9-4. Main income sources for adults, by ethnicity (respondents over 18 years, percentage)*

	Roma	Non-Roma
Social benefit	18.6	2.3
Pension, including disability pension, state aid for handicapped	16.7	42.6
Regular income from private company, organization	15.3	21.2
Remunerative work for neighbours, friends	14.1	2.7
Maternity leave, child benefit, family allowance and others	8.4	3.2

	Roma	Non-Roma
Regular income from state or municipal institution, company	8.2	19.2
Payment for casual work from private company, organization	3.5	1.1
Income from goods sold at fairs, markets, flea markets	3.1	0.1
Remittances from abroad	3.0	0.7
Profit from own enterprise	2.3	2.4
Unemployment benefit	1.5	0.8
Money from selling collected recyclable materials	1.3	0.0
Income from sale of home-grown agricultural products	0.6	1.1
Other social benefits from government or local government	0.8	0.1
Other	2.6	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0

The importance of different types of income is determined by a series of factors. In the following we will discuss two of them – the effect of locality-type and of gender. The type of locality has a significant effect on the opportunity of accessing regular jobs in the private sector: in the capital, regular incomes from private companies become the most important income source, state allowances losing their importance. In the villages the situation is the opposite – income from the private sector is rare, while social benefit is more important. Pensions are also more important in the villages, probably due to the massive employment of Roma workers on the cooperative farms during the period of socialism. Informal work is again less important in the capital, but more important in villages and in other towns.

Regular income from state or municipal institutions proved to be equally unimportant in each type of locality.

*Table 9-5. Main income sources of Roma adults by type of locality (percentage)*

	Bucharest	Other cities	Rural
Regular income from a private company, organization	36.0	18.1	9.8
Social benefit	14.5	13.6	23.0
Maternity leave, child benefit, family allowance and others	11.4	6.4	9.3
Pension, including disability pension, state aid for handicapped	10.1	16.3	18.1
Regular income from state or municipal institution, company	7.0	8.7	8.1
Other social benefits from government or local government	5.7	0.1	0.5
Remunerative work for neighbours, friends	5.1	14.1	15.5
Money from selling collected recyclable materials	1.9	1.4	1.0
Profit from own enterprise	1.3	3.6	1.6
Unemployment benefit	1.3	0.4	2.4
Income from goods sold at fairs, markets, flea markets	1.3	3.3	3.2
Remittances from abroad	1.3	4.4	2.2
Payment for casual work from private company, organization	0.6	6.3	1.9
Payment for casual work from government institution company	0.6	0.1	0.2
Other (detail)	1.9	3.2	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The structure of income sources seems to be different for Roma men and women as twice the number of men have informal work than women. Access to regular incomes from the private sector depends much less on gender.

Work-related earnings being more common for men, state benefits/allowances are the most important sources of income for women.

Money transfers received from family members who are working abroad are more frequently the most important income-source for women than for men. Probably the phenomenon of single male migrants working abroad and sending money home is behind this figure.

*Table 9-6. Main income sources of Roma adults by gender (percentage)*

	Male	Female
Remunerative work for neighbours, friends	18.0	9.0
Regular income from private company, organization	16.9	13.1
Pension, including disability pension, state aid for handicapped	15.7	18.1
Social benefit	15.4	22.8
Regular income from state or municipal institution, company	8.8	7.6
Maternity leave, child benefit, family allowance and others	5.1	12.7
Payment for casual work from private company, organization	4.3	2.3
Income from goods sold at fairs, markets, flea markets	3.8	2.2
Profit of own enterprise	3.1	1.2
Remittances from abroad	2.4	3.6
Unemployment benefit	1.8	1.2
Money from selling collected recyclable materials	1.4	1.0
Other social benefits from government or local government	0.7	1.0
Other	2.6	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0

### 9.3 Amount of Income

Collecting data on monthly income creates some methodological problems, as the respondents tend to report lower incomes than they really have. This data therefore has less certain) informative value but can be used to analyze the relative differences of income level between types of income source as well as for comparisons between ethnic groups.

The average income of non-Roma is approximately 40% higher than that of the Roma (see Table 9-7). This great difference can partially be explained by the differences in the age-structure of the two populations, as the greater number of Roma children with low income decreases the average value of income per person in the Roma population. To get a clear picture of disadvantage that the Roma have when it comes to the amount of income we have to limit the analyses to adults.

*Table 9-7. Average monthly income by ethnicity (total sample, RON, Euro)*

	Average income RON	Average income Euro*
Non-Roma sample	532	170
Roma sample	327	104

*\* Based on July 2007 currency rate, 1 EURO = 3,133 RON.  
From now on we will use this currency rate for calculating incomes in EURO.*



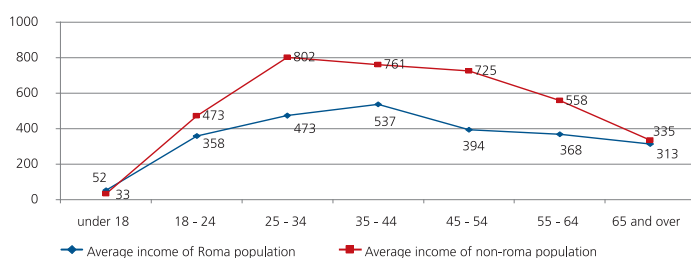
For adults the difference between Roma and non-Roma income level is smaller, but still significant as Roma adults earn 27% less than non-Roma adults.

*Table 9-8. Average monthly income by ethnicity (respondents over 18 years, RON, Euro)*

	Average income RON	Average income Euro
Non-Roma sample	593	189
Roma sample	432	138

At all ages income level is different for Roma and non-Roma (see Chart 9-6). As Roma people start working at a younger age, in the under 18 age group Roma income is slightly higher than that of the non-Roma. But in early adulthood the income level of non-Roma increases fast and in the age group 25-34 years the income-level of the Roma is lower than 60% of the income level of the non-Roma. The difference decreases in the next age group, but in middle-age it becomes even higher (the average income for Roma being only 54.4% of the non-Roma average income). In older age this disparity decreases, almost evening out in the oldest age group.

*Chart 9-6. Average monthly income by age groups (total sample, RON)*



### 9.3.1 Influences on Income Level

Based on the level of income, there seem to be three main sources of income for the Roma (in descending order of importance):

- The profit from own enterprises and from remittances received from family members working abroad;
- Regular salaries (from the private or state sector) and the selling of goods in markets ensures that Roma income is close to the average for Romanians in general;
- Informal work and different state allowances bring in the lowest income. In this category casual work for private companies ensures the highest income level, but this is still significantly lower than regular salaries. The income from informal work for neighbours and friends is lower than the average for pensions.

*Table 9-9. Average monthly income for Roma by type of income sources (RON, Euro)*

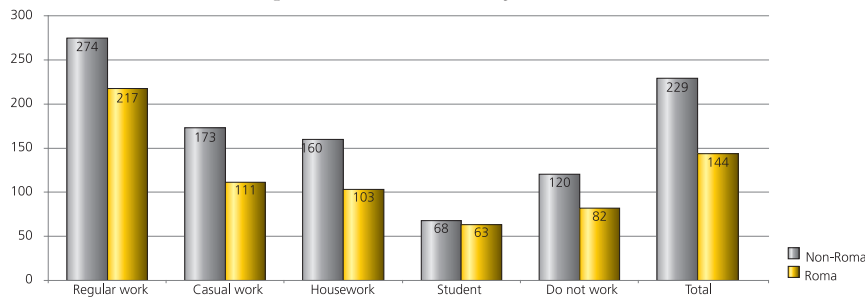
	Average income RON	Average income EURO	N
Profit from own enterprise	1231	393	20
Remittances from abroad	916	293	21
Regular income from state or municipal institutions, companies	756	241	112
Income from goods sold at fairs, markets, flea markets	718	229	37

*Types of income are only included, where the number of cases is higher than 10.*

	Average income RON	Average income EURO	N
► Regular income from private company, organization	687	219	267
Payment for casual work from private company, organization	408	130	58
Pension, including disability pension, state aid for handicapped	321	102	261
Work for neighbours, friends for money	255	82	202
Unemployment benefit	204	65	24
Social benefit	194	62	273
Stipends, scholarships	165	53	13
Money from selling collected recyclable materials	145	46	11
Other social benefits from government or local government	127	40	21
Maternity leave, child benefit, family allowance and others	68	22	550

As Chart 9-7 shows, the type of economic activity has no influence on ethnic inequalities in income, except in the category of pupils and students, where the differences disappear. In all other sectors non-Roma has around one and a half times higher monthly income than Roma – including the economically inactive respondents.

Chart 9-7. Monthly income by economic activity and by ethnicity  
(respondents between 18-59 years, Euro)<sup>24</sup>



Inequalities between the two samples are strongly influenced by economic sectors (Table 9-10). In construction, the second most frequent sector for Roma, income difference is the widest, while in transport and trade incomes are on the same level. Those Roma who work in “education, science, health, culture” have the chance to earn more than non-Roma. We could suppose that this situation has been influenced by education: namely, that with a higher level of education the Roma have better chance of avoiding ethnic inequalities in income.

Table 9-10. Monthly income by economic sectors and by ethnicity  
(respondents between 18-59 years, Euro)<sup>25</sup>

	Non-Roma	Roma	Inequality- index
Industry, mining	237	177	1.3
Construction	344	203	1.7
Transport	259	257	1.0

►

24 July 2007 currency rate: 1 EURO = 3.133 RON  
25 See footnote 24

	Non-Roma	Roma	Inequality-index
Trade	268	259	1.0
Agriculture, forestry	147	97	1.5
Services	274	179	1.5
Education, science, health, culture	287	304	0.9
Other	242	154	1.6
Total	264	175	1.5

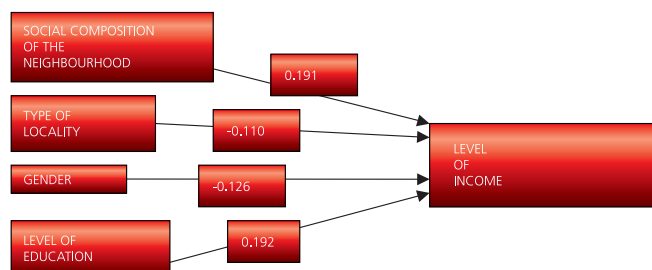
As Table 9-11 makes clear the higher the level of education, the higher the level of income for both Roma and non-Roma. But a difference emerges when we look at school examination level. The greatest difference can be seen in the category of those who have less than 4 grades, where non-Roma have 1.8 times higher income than Roma. In the following categories inequalities are not as big. In the next category up to incomplete gymnasium Roma have a slightly better chance to earn more, while in the three higher categories non-Roma have a bit of advantage.

*Table 9-11. Monthly income by level of education and by ethnicity  
(respondents between 18-59 years, Euro)<sup>26</sup>*

	Non-Roma	Roma	Inequality index
None or incomplete elementary	168	91	1.8
Elementary, incomplete gymnasium or special school	111	135	0.8
Gymnasium, or incomplete high school	174	154	1.1
High school	226	211	1.1
Post-liceal, student, university	338	292	1.2
Total	228	145	1.6

Income level, just as access to incomes, is determined by various factors. Using a linear-regression model we can see that income level is mainly determined by four variables. The most important is level of education (those who finish school later earn more), followed by the social composition of the neighbourhood (Roma living in neighbourhoods with majority of non-Roma have better chance to earn more). Then, gender (men earn more than women) and type of locality (smaller localities mean lower incomes).

*Chart 9-8. Linear-regression model of the effect of different factors on Roma income level  
(respondents over 18 years)*



<sup>26</sup> See footnote 24

## 9.4 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

### *Points to Highlight*

- 41,9% of Roma had no income in the reference month compared to 20,2% of non-Roma – in other words, almost twice the number of Roma had no income in this period.
- The smaller the locality, the higher the proportion of Roma and non-Roma without any income and for the Roma this connection is stronger. In Bucharest the difference between the proportion of Roma and non-Roma earners is significantly smaller than in the villages.
- Roma who live in Bucharest and Ilfov County have at least one type of income in a far greater proportion than in other regions of the country. Access to income is most difficult in the eastern and southern regions, for both Roma and non-Roma.
- The effect of residential segregation on the Roma's access to income seems to be obvious: those living in ethnic segregated districts have significantly lower chance to access at least one type of income than those living in non-Roma neighbourhoods.
- The most important source of income for the Roma proved to be maternity leave, the child benefit, the family allowance and other social benefits (for 26.1% of the Roma population). After this in importance is social benefit (guaranteed minimal income), for the 14.4% of those who formed our Roma sample.
- The highest proportion of income for non-Roma is from formal activities (40.5%) and pension (38.6%), while Roma get their living mostly from non-active sources (43%) and non-formal activities (22.7%). Based on the main income sources we can rightly suppose that most Roma in our sample are outside the formal economy. Almost two thirds of them get their living from non-active sources and non-formal activities, while almost 80% of non-Roma main income is either from formal activities or from pensions.
- While pensions are the most important source of income for 42.6% of the non-Roma, that is true for only 16.7% of Roma.
- Remunerative work for neighbours or friends seems to be characteristic for Roma while it is insignificant for non-Roma. We can therefore suppose that there is a strongly hierarchical and unequal relationship between poor Roma families and their non-Roma neighbours in the local society.
- On average, Roma adults earn 27% less than non-Roma adults.
- Inequalities in income level between the two samples are strongly influenced by economic sectors. In construction, the second most important sector of employment for Roma, income difference between Roma and non-Roma is the greatest, while in transport and trade incomes are on the same level. Roma who work in "education, science, health, culture" have the chance to earn more than non-Roma.
- Education level strongly influences income level. For both Roma and non-Roma the higher the level of education, the higher the level of income. The effect of ethnic inequalities on income differs according to the level of education. The highest difference is in the lowest school categories (those who have less than 4 grades), where non-Roma have 1.8 times higher income than Roma.

## PART IV



## AGENTS OF CHANGE



# 10 Education Issues

Education is generally considered a key factor for social inclusion of the Roma population into Romanian society – but this is where the consensus ends. While some practical measures have been taken to improve school participation of the Roma pupils, to decrease school segregation and to increase the visibility of Roma culture, these measures have not yet led to a substantial change in the risk of school failure for Roma pupils.

Beyond the individual practices and achievements in school, we must also bear in mind that education is a right for all children, enshrined in Romanian legislation, and that from the perspective of the citizen and taxpayer the educational system is responsible for providing the right conditions for learning.

There are two main questions related to education and Roma pupils, from the point of view of the policy maker:

1. Why are schools unable to provide efficient educational services for Roma children and their families?
2. How can this situation be improved?

Community research and quantitative data supports the common knowledge that, in many communities, there is a high likelihood of educational failure for Roma pupils, and that level of education is a powerful force in shaping one's path of life and in moving out of extreme poverty. At the same time, several other observations frame, in a broader context, these two conclusions:

1. Educational participation and success for Roma pupils can be achieved by adjusting the organization of educational services to the needs and conditions of the community;
2. Access to education can be no silver bullet for the stigma and discrimination confronting the *Țigani*, and the multiple mechanisms that lead to social exclusion.

Even so, data indicates that changes in the Romanian educational system that would make it more appealing to Roma parents and children would probably be met with resistance. For example, we have seen that only one third of non-Roma respondents agree to teaching issues of Roma history and culture to all pupils (see Table 3-1). Affirmative action is still a disputed topic among the non-Roma: almost 80% of the Roma respondents favour reserved places for Roma in high school, compared to one half of the non-Roma respondents.

## ***Quote 10-1. The debated role of education***

*Finally, what should be boldly underlined is that education is not the ultimate solution for the Roma problems, as is often asserted by different officials. This old paradigm of the Enlightenment, that equates formal education with social emancipation as the sole solution, is not necessarily applicable for a group that has been historically and structurally marginalized, like the Roma. Education would work only if other forms of emancipation (political, economic etc.) were provided for the Roma by society at large. (Sîntana de Mureș, Troc 2007)*

In order to find solutions, the issue of school failure should probably be interpreted as a broader question about the meaning of school experience for Roma pupils and parents, as compared to its significance for non-Roma families. Connections between living conditions, values, expectations and school activity are more complex than the simple equation of poverty with short-term goals/limited horizons. School experience is just a fragment of overall daily life and the social involvement of both Roma and non-Roma – it is not an isolated reality. The significance of school, its school career and its achievements and failures, are all influenced by, and interconnected with, the other realities of everyday life.

**Quote 10-2. Caught between two worlds in the Zăbrăuți schools, Bucharest**  
*An additional problem is that children seem to get caught between two different worlds: school on the one hand, where they are educated along certain guidelines, and their daily lives which are characterized by different social codes and values. Children are often hindered from having a harmonious personal development, precisely because of their belonging to two different social realities which hardly communicate at the moment. (Bucharest, Tircă 2007)*

## 10.1 Education Issues Reflected in Community Reports

Community reports reflect the different school career of Roma and non-Roma children; the relationships between children, parents and institutions, and also explore the significance itself of school and education.

Another interesting aspect of the collected data concerns the history of education: the personal histories of education in different households and the history of education in the respective localities. This is important for an understanding of the situation today and its causes, but also for a wider perspective on the processes and outcomes of education.

The community reports revealed a discrepancy between two general points of view: one stating that the younger generations have a lower level of education and that educational achievements have been lower in the last two decades; the other, maintained by older teachers (such as those from Sântana), that school attendance level was no higher during the communist period.

Some of the respondents interviewed (of different ages, from different communities, both Roma and non-Roma) expressed the opinion that school used to be better, that teachers used to be more qualified and more respected, that school used to have a more important role in the community and that everybody learned at least basic reading and writing skills. Other interviews reveal that there is a “hidden” lack of education on the part of the Roma elders: even if the elders used to have a higher level of school attendance, it was only a formal attendance, as they really didn’t learn anything and were just left, sitting in the back of the class, drawing by themselves.

The example of Sântana also reveals something of the methods and achievements of the education system: the generation born in the 40’s had good results, many Roma going to college and getting good jobs, and also migrating to the big cities; after this “boom”, the education level decreased, and now there are only two young Roma adults with college degrees, obtained through special programmes for Roma (see Sântana, C. Goina 2007).

The history of education for the Roma in Nuşfalău is relevant to other Roma communities: during Communism, many Roma had no permanent residence in a locality. Children attended different schools (when they did), at different ages, and were very often in the situation of having a change of teaching language, depending on the majority population in the locality. They are now the parents’ generation who, even if they are open to participating in the educational process of their children, have difficulties themselves in reading and writing, turning them into outsiders (see Nuşfalău, Toma 2007).

### 10.1.1 Educational Failure

The communities studied have in common stories about a very few children who took the “Capacitate” test (after 8 years of school) but then gave up school after the 10th grade. For example, in the whole city of Curtici, in the last few years, only one Roma girl took the exam, but she, as well, stopped after the 10th grade.



The researchers agree that school failure and school abandonment generate low social mobility in the Roma communities and bring about a series of negative effects, leading to a vicious circle of other failures and economic traps.

The decision to leave school early has a complex mixture of causes, which reveal the nature of the educational situation if they are considered together.

***Quote 10-3. The complex cause for the decision to leave school, in Dolbasca***

*If we think about school failure, the main reasons can be found in the precarious physical situation, the difficulty of walking daily the four kilometres to the school (teachers believe that a transportation means would significantly improve attendance), marriage, the need for a workforce in the household, and the lack of motivation for pursuing education (many find it difficult to imagine themselves in a completely different situation than the one of the other community members – they do not know the tangible benefits of education, while the better informed believe that anyway their ethnicity would prevent them from getting good jobs). (Dolbasca, Lazăr 2007)*

The researchers could identify two general types of causes leading to school abandonment and failure: the formal ones, embedded in the education system itself, and the structural ones that affect the everyday lives of the Roma communities and, implicitly, the children's lives.

***Formal Failures in Education***

The formal failures in education refer to the gaps in the education system and to the failures registered by the education institutions themselves. These are “external” failures that affect Roma as well as non-Roma communities, and the general level of inclusion in education.

Equipment and infrastructure shortages, together with the crisis of teacher numbers, are the general problems facing the education system in Romania. The rural areas suffer most from this shortage – the poorest and most vulnerable communities (including most of the Roma communities) being particularly affected, especially the geographically marginal ones.

The example of Gulia community in Dolbasca is relevant to other Roma communities: kindergartens are improvised in private houses, through the effort of the teachers; classes are overcrowded, with children of different ages mixed together; the learning materials are personal contributions from the teachers; and the teachers are young, with little experience and only a post high school degree, and therefore overwhelmed by the situation they have to manage.

Such conditions lead to a paradox: when more children are brought into the educational system, the quality of education suffers.

***Quote 10-4. Higher school attendance leading to lower quality of education, in Nuşfalău***

*“Yes, fewer parents enrol their children in the Hungarian classes, although that would be better for them. They could learn more easily there, than in the Romanian language classes which are generally smaller, speaking about the Romanian children, and thus the Roma children represents the majority in these classes. Poor teacher hardly can maintain the discipline among them, because they are not attentive. They have to work hard as well, because they have nine Roma children and three or four Romanian children. And they have to practice separately with each of them, on different levels, because the Romanian parent maybe expects a higher level from his child...” (Teacher at the Hungarian secondary school, 7th grade, Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

Another generally known and much debated factor is the distance to the educational institutions and the lack of public transport in many rural settlements. This also affects the rural Roma communities.

For example, the children from Gulia would have to walk 4 km to school, on a bad road, or pay 4 Ron (approximately 1.3 Euros) each day to the local drivers (car owners using their cars as a taxi).

The case study in Curtici reveals another important institutional gap: many Roma children from Curtici had experiences of living abroad, where they were registered in the host country schools and received school records. But these records are not valid/cannot be used for re-registration in Romania. So these children would have to repeat classes, as if they didn't know anything, even if they were already past the normal age for the class.

In recent years, the fact that most Roma children have not been attending kindergarten has generated much debate. Lack of pre-school education is perceived as one of the main causes of school failure, early abandonment and poor school performance of Roma children.

To complete the data from the Survey, the community reports indeed showed (from interviews with school staff and with data collected from the local authorities) that pre-school attendance is low in the Roma communities, especially for the reasons given above – inadequate materials and geographical distance to these institutions. To illustrate: in Nuşfalău, the director of the kindergarten stated that a maximum 10% of Roma children enrol every year, mostly from Romanian speaking groups.

The research in Cluj (Byron street community) highlighted an important phenomenon, which is partly the result of formal failures in the educational system: the registration of Roma children in special schools (schools for children with special needs), although they are not mentally challenged.

Considering the educational methods and the formal character of these methods (as opposed to the new interactive and socially stimulating methods), the researchers showed that there is a gap between them and the children's needs, especially the children living in precarious and crowded conditions and they stressed the advantages of a more flexible way of teaching and learning.

**Quote 10-5. Advantages of new learning techniques**

*The more recent methods show that in an efficient educational process, the graduation level and the grades obtained by the pupils should be compliant with the Gauss curve, namely the 7.5 average. From this point of view, the educational system is to be blamed for the failure of the Roma pupils in graduating at least from the first four classes. It is clear that there is discrimination against the Roma children. There is no doubt that non-Roma parents continue to avoid the mixed classes. (Oşorhei, Pantea 2007)*

The “repeaters” (repetenţi) are another issue related to formal failure. The teachers confessed to the researchers that they don't know which is better: to give strict marks and to promote only the deserving children, leading to a higher risk of the “repeaters” abandoning school altogether; or to promote all the pupils, with the risk of some not learning properly.

Teaching the Romani language in school is yet another complex issue, as the first chapters of this report showed. It is also associated with technical difficulties, such as the heterogeneity of Romani dialects in different communities – a heterogeneity that is not considered at all in the curriculum.

**Quote 10-6. Romani language in school – the case of Dolbasca**

*The Romani language that children learn in school is different from the language they speak in various communities, so it is often learned as a foreign language. The most difficult part is grammar, which is quite abstract and theoretical for the children. School learning can also interfere with the natural language use. Also, the children who have spoken Romani when young mistake often Romani with Romanian words. (Dolbasca, Lazăr 2007)*

*School Attendance and Educational Failure*

There are many factors that contribute, with overlapping or alternative influences, to this systematic school failure of the Roma pupils. Complementing the formal failures, community researchers indicate

the influence of language, communication problems and lack of familiarity, marriage practices, household child labour, and also the difficult choice one must make between urgent needs and future investments. In the case of very poor families, this choice is often biased towards the first option.

**Quote 10-7. Problems of school attendance in Sfântu Gheorghe**

*The gravest problems for the school are high number of absences and school abandoning; Roma children usually have to help their parents in many business (housework: nursing children, cleaning, bringing water and wood, working by day alongside their parents in agriculture - GK), so they don't come to school. School presence is rather high in wintertime, due to the heating and the food offered. (1 lunch per student for the whole school year provided by Caritas Sfântu Gheorghe - GK) Abandoning school is also a major problem. "About 20 pupils start the 5th form, but only ten graduate it." (AK, teacher). They get married in the meantime; have to go to work inside or outside the country, some got bored, some fail to pass the class. As KA (teacher) says: "...marriage prevents children in carrying on their education, as they are stopped to do it by their spouses. Although there are some guaranteed places in high schools for Roma, they fail to take them as being afraid of requirements or having no material. (Sfântu Gheorghe, Kalamár 2007)*

Early marriage as a reason for school abandonment was mentioned in all interviews with school staff. It is interesting that in Ploiești the researcher actually had the role of teacher in the Mimi community (one of the studied communities from Ploiești) and she was also a Roma, giving her a broader perspective on this subject. The pupils trusted her with more personal discussions, in which the girls explained their reasons for getting married and giving up school. Mimi is not a traditional community, but a very poor and marginalized one, and for the young girls marriage offers an escape from their family households, where they have to take care of younger brothers and sisters – quite hard work – and where they live in crowded rooms, with no privacy. They get married hoping to have a room of their own or at least a bed of their own and to do less work at home.

School cannot offer this immediate escape, and so, given such conditions, it does not warrant effort, from the Mimi girls' point of view. In fact, in the long run, most of the young girls from Mimi end up living in the same state as they did before marriage, as their husbands have equally precarious living conditions.

School – as any investment – becomes valuable only if it can offer something in return for the effort of attending it, such as the certainty of better economic status, or the opportunity to move into a better location. In poverty enclaves such as Mimi, or in poor rural areas, the effort of attending school is sometimes reckoned as too high in comparison to the benefits it could offer – from the perspective of both parents and children. This view is sustained by the fact that well paid job opportunities and better housing conditions are a distant reality.

**Quote 10-8. High costs and low rewards of education, perceived by both Roma and non-Roma in Coltău**

*The level of education in Coltău is fairly low both for Hungarians and Roma. It happens very seldom that either leaves the locality in order to graduate secondary school in the town. Arguments are: expensive passes, lack of interest, a less favourable start of school career that cannot be recovered later. Those who succeed are guided to vocational or trade schools. "From this year – as I understand – one or two pupils were continuing their education, if they hadn't changed their minds. They didn't decide to go to high schools but to trade ones. I don't know if they did the matriculation, because – as I understand – passes are too expensive, and they think it has no use as*

*they won't gain anything. But in my opinion they should do this (meant the Hungarians). It is a question of the Romanian language, an important issue for Hungarians."* (G. A., Hungarian woman aged 21, Colțâu, quoted by Iorga 2007)

It is often argued that the lack of education of the parents is an impediment for the children's educational development: either because they do not perceive the value of education and don't encourage their children to attend school, or because they cannot share knowledge or help with their children's homework.

From the policy makers' point of view, the constructive approach is to remember that both parents and school staff have the same goal, even if the perspectives, knowledge and methods are different: they all want the best for the children. Therefore, developing the parents-school partnership approach would be the most efficient way to stimulate educational improvement in Roma communities.

**Quote 10-9. The parents' attitude towards education in Cetate**

*"The Roma and Romanian school abandonment rates are not very different; but the Roma parents tend to be passive-aggressive when it comes to the education of their children."* (Teacher in Cetate, quoted by Isan 2007)

**Quote 10-10. School careers for Roma pupils in Mihail Kogălniceanu**

*When it comes to the quality of education given to the Roma children, all parents agree that they benefit from a fine education given by their teachers. (...) Specific problems of Roma students can be observed notably from the 5th grade on, when there is no one teacher to tutor them all the time. Because Roma children do not go to kindergarten, in the first four grades they stay far behind the other children, learn with more difficulty and do not master foreign languages. One of the causes would be that, once they arrive home, Roma children are not helped by their parents who are illiterate. For this reason, in 5th grade when they have more than one teacher/tutor, they cannot cope anymore, they fail to progress and quit school. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

## 10.1.2 The Value of Schooling

As already discussed, the balance between effort and reward of a school career can be perceived as negative from a short-term perspective. This means that education can have different values for different groups of people (parents, children, teachers, poor families, or better-off families). At the same time, it can also have different symbolic meanings, socially constructed, for different groups of people.

School and education is a social arena, where social interactions occur, where information is transmitted through specific communication means, and where social symbols and meanings are shared and negotiated. For example, for very poor children school can be a social space entirely different from home or from the social space of the "neighbourhood". Space is simply more abundant, while at the same time rules of behaviour are different and usually more restrictive.

**Quote 10-11. Social problems reflected in school behaviour in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*The school Principal made an interesting observation concerning these children's behaviour at school: "They explore the space as much as they can by running along the corridors, because at home they are crammed in a small space."* (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)

*Discrepancies Between Practice and Theory*

Because of different practices and theories that meet up here, school often becomes an arena for conflicts – between pupils, between parents and teachers, or between different educators. The biggest problems seem to be between parents and teachers.

For many parents school is an unknown space, conducted by social rules that they are not familiar with – a situation which puts them, from the start, in a position of inferiority. After all, education means knowledge and knowledge means power.

**Quote 10-12. Parents' relationship with the school, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*Insofar as the perspective of the Roma families is concerned, as far as we could observe, the school remains unknown to them, a place they do not master and which they perceive as completely foreign to them. For them, it is an unfamiliar place which they did not have time to grow used to. Many parents never even attended school and did not go through the formative experience of living within a school environment. I could realize this thing better when I accompanied one of my informers, S.V. at a parents meeting in school. It was maybe the second time that she attended such a meeting. Her husband is in jail now and he was the one who handled such duties. Once we entered the school, I noticed that Vandana felt insecure and did not know how to behave. It was obvious she was in a completely unfamiliar place for her and she defended herself by using aggressive language. (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

The lack of communication between parents and teachers often leads to parents being viewed as inferior and the teachers perceiving themselves as superior. This situation reinforces even more the communication gap and blocks constructive negotiations between, in fact, complementary roles.

At the same time, lack of communication brings reciprocal suspicion: teachers suspect the parents of using school just for the material help that their children can get, while parents suspect the teachers of discriminatory practices.

**Quote 10-13. Communication problems between teachers and parents, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*"(...) one should go to their homes and speak to their parents to see why they are skipping classes. Some of them talk to you and you really have to speak their language... For instance, the children have to pass their second examination in the autumn. The child does not come and I have to go fetch him from home. Am I the only one with an interest in this matter?" (E.D., teacher)*

*The problem this teacher mentions is extremely important and reflects the frailty of the relationship between schools and the Roma communities: "We are not ready to communicate, to relate to people. We are trained to perform our jobs well-this is something else". (Teacher, quoted by Tîrcă, Bucharest 2007)*

**Quote 10-14. Teacher-parent reciprocal suspicions in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*Mrs. E.D., teacher (4th grade) asserts: "They don't care. I have the feeling that these children are rather sent to school so that they can get their allowance or the bun and the milk and that's all" This is more or less confirmed by Mrs D.T., school principal: "They know their rights very well. They seem to have only rights and no responsibility. They make a fuss and use the word 'discrimination' very often. So they have the impression that it is only they who are being discriminated against although they may be discriminating against others in various ways." (Quoted by Tîrcă, Bucharest 2007)*

The discrepancies between different practices and theories employed by different actors involved in the educational process don't stop at this level: even different educators – some employing formal and others informal methods – come into conflict.

**Quote 10-15. Relations between schools and NGOs/programmes in Bucharest**

*“School was a great obstacle, at least during the first years. We had to work with the principals and the teachers, to have meetings with them and to make the most of any event so as to get them involved, to make them understand that what we are doing comes as a support for them and that it was in fact their problem and not ours... One should know – schools only work after having received permission from higher forums even though they are independent. When permission was granted, because this is how they work, they started changing their attitude, when they came to understand that we were there to solve their stupidity and ignorance. Because they discriminate against people, they did not allow Roma children in schools and when they created that phenomenon, which is very big in Romania (abandonment rate is 25%), and when one comes with a solution, they should have kissed our feet and not the other way around. The people from 134 came to us and asked us to pay for I don't know what in the school. The problem is yours, you should have specialized people, trained to stop school abandonment and paid by you; and when I come and offer everything to you ...you should be ashamed ...that's outrageous.” (Jean Baptiste, specialized educator, Fundația FOC, quoted by Țircă 2007)*

In addition, certain discrepancies appear between teachers and pupils when it comes to social representations, values and moral judgments.

**Quote 10-16. Discrepancies between the values of language, registered in Dolhasca**

*“The study of the Romanian language is, from the perspective as a teacher, a civilizing factor, a language of politeness which balances the use of the colloquial mother tongue.” (Teacher in Dolhasca, quoted by Lazăr 2007)*

*Education Versus the Other Alternatives*

Most of the community reports noted that education was more important for Roma men and traders, who need specific knowledge for their economic activities. The observations revealed that the value of school is usually perceived in economic terms – the possibility of reaching certain economic goals through knowledge achieved in school. If this possibility is perceived as unlikely, other alternatives are preferred and more valued.

**Quote 10-17. Lack of examples of social mobility through education, in Curtici**

*Unfortunately, it seems that the people of Curtici still have no knowledge of the career of a community member whose social mobility would be the result of education. (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)*

**Quote 10-18. Alternatives to education perceived as more profitable, in Nușfalău**

*“In Nușfalău the Gypsies do not have jobs, they are used to work as day workers, they participate in the black market, and they don't feel the need of continuing studies.” (Professional high school, Romanian language school, quoted by Toma 2007)*

After all, education is actually valued as a strategy towards welfare and a better life, by all of us, Roma or non-Roma. The difference revealed by the community reports is that, for the moment,



this strategy does not offer the desired welfare to all individuals and that the balance between expected welfare / obtained reward / investment costs affects in a different way the different social groups, such as Roma / non-Roma, the poorer / the richer.

**Quote 10-19. Life expectations and disappointments in education for the Roma in Curtici**

*“Now everybody wants to make a fortune... and you can only make a fortune elsewhere. You only make a fortune in a different position. I’m here studying and the one went away... by his 20’s he already has children, I can never get here what he gets by his 20’s; the ones that went abroad for 4-5 years, they already have beautiful houses, cars... and somebody else, going to school doesn’t have anything.” (S.V., 52, Curtici, quoted by M. Goina 2007)*

**Quote 10-20. Education fails to secure welfare, in Timișoara**

*Failures of educated persons in the labour market can rebuild lack of trust in formal education. This concerns middle aged persons, who graduated from vocational schools during Communism, or those young ones from universities, who graduate course after course, but are still unable to become employed. Moreover “culture of living in the present” is not suitable for long-term planning, thus education, seen as a long-term process leading to a future and secure workplace, is impossible to imagine for such people. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

*Premises for Educational Success*

Apart from the obstacles and difficulties, some of the community reports also illustrated cases of an improvement in social mobility, and a change of perspective towards the benefits of schooling.

For these cases, even in very poor households, the role of education is valued and efforts are made to support the children through their school career. This positive trend can be put down to certain models of success, seen by the Roma, and also with the “formal” accessibility of schooling (distance, facilities, professionalism and communication with the staff).

**Quote 10-21. Efforts to offer education to children in poor Roma households in Timișoara**

*The efforts to ensure a day-to-day living become the model transmitted to the next generation. On the other hand, for many persons I talked with, efforts for day-by-day survival and education are both important. The former can bring an immediate result; the latter represents a belief in long-term benefits. In fact living in the present goes hand in hand with making plans for the future for anyone, independent of ethnicity, education, gender or social position. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 10-22. Importance of schooling in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*Despite the problems mentioned by the teaching staff, I noticed that most of my informers living in Zăbrăuți have already started to become aware of the importance of their children’s education. They strive a lot to enable their children to go to school and to buy all the necessary materials for school and to keep them clean and neat. School is gradually becoming an important reference point for them, although it is still a fragile one. Another proof supporting this argument could also be those who received cameras and used them to take pictures of their children on their first day at school. Anyway, that was a day people living in Zăbrăuți granted importance to. (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

**Quote 10-23. Change in perspectives about the value of education, in Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*There are other significant examples which give an idea of the importance of school for people: Simion Vandana (31 years old), an illiterate woman whose husband is in jail and whose son attends the 4th grade at school no. 148, wants with all her might for her little girl to also start school next year, although her means are minimal. Ștefan Ion (59 years old) has already started saving money in order to buy his daughter attending the 9th grade, a computer. He also wishes for his daughter to go to university and claims that he does not have the least intention to get her married or to sell her. Of course, these are isolated examples, however they are significant. (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

Looking back at section 3.3.3 about the children's dreams for the future, it can be emphasized that many of them used the "Capacitate" exam as a reference point, according to which their lifetime plans might change. Even though they had plans for the future based on passing or not passing the exam, their plans as graduates were presented as generally more desirable and more successful. The failure of their parents and the success of older brothers or peers were important factors in building these future plans.

**Quote 10-24. Short-term economic welfare versus professional careers for young Roma people in Timișoara**

*"I started a BA programme in law, I have already an MA, but I want to have a BA in order to work as a lawyer. For my second degree I could not profit from places allocated to Roma, but I entered anyway. My parents always supported me, and always advised me to graduate from schools as they have not enough money - this would be my chance, as I cannot inherit like those children whose parents run businesses. In these times you cannot make a family of your own before 30, as you have to learn, to have a job, to gain a status, security, family comes after. I don't want to go and work abroad, forget all the schools I graduated and pick strawberries. I want to work in my field. Otherwise I should have to go and earn my living after I graduated school, but now it's too late for this." (School councillor, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 10-25. The educational failure of the parents and motivations for a professional career for the musicians in Cugir**

*Unlike the rural environment, where usually a musician would finish eight classes in school and then focus on work and music (mostly on the latter) things are somewhat different in the city: Here, you shouldn't leave school too early, and if this has happened, children should not repeat the mistakes of their parents. (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

### 10.1.3 Finding Solutions

There are different visions of how to improve the education system in general and how to strengthen the educational improvement of the Roma. The different actors involved assume responsibility or choose to indirectly deny responsibility, by delegating it or imposing it on someone else. As the qualitative research shows, assuming responsibility is more constructive than blaming others or finding excuses.



**Quote 10-26. Involved actors and assuming responsibility for education of the Roma**

*Education is, in the end, the task of the school, which should be interested to bring the children in school. Therefore, the school officials should press the township officials to provide the conditions needed for school attendance and to force the parents to send their children to school. Instead, all the guilt for abandonment is put on the Roma parents themselves, and it seems that after all the school officials tacitly agree with this abandonment which exonerates them of responsibility [...] In fact, in his opinion (the headmaster), the Roma children's school problems can be solved by the school psychologist. Therefore, what has actually happened in the end is that the social, economic and cultural difficulties of Roma in general, when they have to find their place in a non-Roma environment, and of the children here, have been turned into a medical problem. (Sintana de Mureș, Troc 2007)*

The school mediator is one of the actors who – as reflected in the interviews with both beneficiaries and school representatives – assumes the most responsibility, sometimes even exceeding the formal requirements of the post (as with the health mediator discussed in section 6.1.5). And, as can be seen in this case, the negative aspects to this mediation structure slowly start to appear, such as the double dependency on the health mediator – from the institutions and from the Roma parents – or the complete lack of direct communication between the institution and the parents.

**Quote 10-27. Key role of the school mediator as the best short-term/urgent solution**

*Under these circumstances, the school mediator's work is critical. His is a key position, a sort of intermediary between school and community. (...) Because he is of Roma origin, the school mediator is granted more trust from the community itself as people consider him as one 'of theirs'. The mediator's basic tasks consist in the effort he deploys into making people of Roma origin understand the necessity of their children's education and in convincing them to allow their offspring to attend school. When it comes to real situations, he does much more than that as he is often compelled to listen to people's problems and to advise them – it is a sort of therapy he adds to his efforts of convincing parents about the importance of school. (Bucharest, Tîrcă 2007)*

**Quote 10-28. School mediator exceeding duties, in the case of Zăbrăuți, Bucharest**

*"Although the mediator is in charge only of Roma people's problems [...] if there are four Romanians who need help more badly than Gypsy children, I'll choose the former four as this is the correct thing to do, as I see it. If I confined myself only to what my job chart says, then I would be the one accused of discrimination... Many people snort at this, and they come from among the Roma group, the Gypsies themselves" (school mediator, Bucharest, quoted by Tîrcă 2007)*

In a different local context, specific measures proved to be efficient. One example is the primary school in Dolhasca, where the graduation is 95% and the attendance is high. The researcher's reasons for this achievement, synthesized from the interviews in the community, are the following: the beginning and end of school semesters are correlated with the beginning and end of agricultural work seasons, so that the children wouldn't have to skip classes in order to help their families; although most of the children and teachers are Roma, the classes are mixed and the Romani language classes are optional for any pupil, so that Romanian pupils also attend Romani classes and none of the lessons are segregated (see Lazăr 2007).

The researchers recorded various different experiences of efficient practice for better schooling and a higher level of education.

**Quote 10-29. Roma grand-parents' proposals for how to improve literacy among Roma children in Colțâu**

*"From what I see, there should be meetings and more meetings with parents"*

*"Parents have to wake up at 7 with a wand in their hands in order to send children to school. Because school is near and no one cares who's poor, dirty. Parents usually say they have no clothes for children, and they cannot send them to school in slippers. And they have nothing to eat at home. But they have the daily milk and crescent in school."* (Group interview, Colțâu, quoted by Iorga 2007)

**Quote 10-30. Proposals from experienced teachers, in Oșorbei and Timișoara**

*"The solutions related to the improvement of the school attendance rate proposed by CA are the following: 1. to oblige the children to also attend the kindergarten, in order to acquire the social behaviour required for the 1st class; 2. the introduction of a preparatory month before the commencement of the 1st class so that these children become familiar with the rules regarding the sitting down at their desks, keeping the silence in the classroom, etc.; 3. preferential aid by granting them free school supplies and books; 4. obliging the Roma girls to attend the school even after starting to wear traditional skirts; 5. the social responsibility awareness and special trainings for the teaching staff; 6. a more attentive corporal hygiene for the optimal integration of the children in the community; 7. establishment of special recuperation classes for Roma children."* (CA, retired teacher from Oșorbei, quoted by Pantea 2007)

*She tells me about a project focusing on integration of Roma children through special programmes: a programme after school schedule, meant to help them cope with school tasks. "A change in the teacher's mentality would be needed in order to become able to know the Roma. We need programmes for it." "Children learn from adults what to believe and think about Roma, they don't have prejudices from themselves, but parents came and tell them whom to stay in the same bench with, and whom to play with. (Teacher, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 10-31. Benefits of mixed classes, from the experience of teachers in Lupeni**

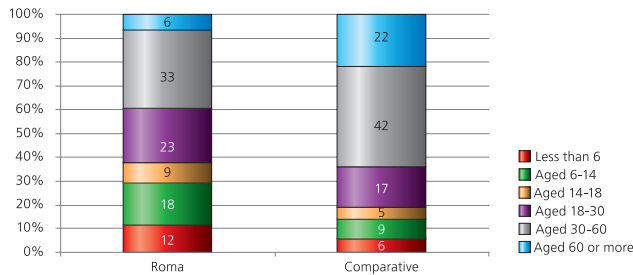
*Based on a long experience, the primary school teacher sustains the work with mixed classes with children from any ethnic group, and underlines all the negative consequences that segregated education brings upon the socialization of children and upon prejudice perpetuation, in the conditions of lack of interaction among other ethnic groups. (Lupeni, Geambașu 2007)*

The discussion mixed versus segregated classes is a key issue for the topic of education in the Roma communities, thus it will be granted an entire section, below (see sections 10.6 and 10.7).

## 10.2 Education Issues in Survey Research

There is a significant difference between the age structures of the Roma and the non-Roma (see Chart 10-1). The school age population (6-18) is more than a quarter of the Roma sample, but only 14% in the comparative sample.

*Chart 10-1. Age structures of the Roma and the comparative sample  
(all household members) (percentage)*



### 10.3 Level of Education

We can track significant changes in educational attainment for different generations. For the purpose of this analysis we can basically distinguish between the following age groups:

- Children aged 7-13, who should currently attend primary school or gymnasium;
- Adolescents aged 14-17, who should currently be enrolled in vocational school or high school; they were born after the collapse of the communist regime;
- Young adults aged 18-29, who could be students or graduates; they were born in the period 1977 – 1989, an interval of intense assimilation policies targeting the Roma<sup>27</sup>;
- Adults aged 30-59, who were born in the period 1947-1977, when communist social policies did not target the Roma as a special group;
- The elderly, aged 60 or more, born before 1947.

In Table 10-1 we can see that the age group 30-59 has the highest proportion of high school graduates, for both the Roma and the comparative sample. Even so, there are significant differences between the two samples regarding the younger group, aged 18-29. In the Roma sample their educational level has decreased: instead of high school education, a larger proportion of pupils only obtain gymnasium or lower schooling. In the comparative sample, the decrease in high school graduates is due to enrolment in higher education: there is a significant increase for post-liceal graduates, students and university graduates.

*Table 10-1. Educational level, by age category and sample type  
(all household members included) (percentage)*

	Roma sample					Comparative sample				
Most recent graduated school:	Aged 7-13	Aged 14-17	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-59	Aged 60 or over	Aged 7-13	Aged 14-17	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-59	Aged 60 or over
Did not go to school	14.6	11.0	19.0	16.4	26.7	8.3	3.2	1.8	1.7	2.8
Incomplete elementary	40.2	12.3	12.0	12.2	16.6	34.4	2.5	1.1	1.2	5.7
Elementary	19.7	12.1	14.1	16.7	24.8	22.0	7.6	2.1	3.2	24.9
Incomplete gymnasium	21.4	28.4	15.7	15.4	12.3	25.7	19.7	4.8	3.8	19.5

<sup>27</sup> In 1977 the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist party launched a special programme for the social assimilation of the Gypsy population, with actions such as compulsory sedentarization, employment, legalization of marriages or even linking child allowances to school attendance and parental employment (Achim 1998, pp. 162).

	Roma sample					Comparative sample				
Most recent graduated school:	Aged 7-13	Aged 14-17	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-59	Aged 60 or over	Aged 7-13	Aged 14-17	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-59	Aged 60 or over
Special school for disabled	1.3	1.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.1	0.1	0.1
Gymnasium	2.7	23.7	22.1	18.5	10.7	8.3	31.8	14.3	15.1	20.2
Incomplete high school		7.5	5.8	5.4			21.7	6.9	7.3	2.3
Vocational / technical / arts high school		2.2	7.5	12.4	5.5		8.3	28.6	41.2	13.9
Theoretical high school		1.3	1.5	1.9	0.6		3.2	12.7	13.5	4.0
College, post-liceal school (2 years)			0.3	0.3	0.3			4.8	4.8	2.3
Incomplete university			0.4	0.1	0.3		0.6	13.6	1.6	0.8
University and higher			0.9	0.4	1.5			8.3	6.7	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total cases	752	455	1194	1718	326	241	157	566	1382	707

As to be expected, the older age group (60 and above) has the lowest formal education level within the adult population, in both the Roma and the comparative sample, so the relationship between age and education level is not linear.

The educational levels of young and middle-age adult Roma (the age groups 18-29 and 30-59) seem to be similar in the two surveys – although comparison is made difficult by the different classification of educational levels.

*Table 10-2. Educational level, by age category and sample type, for respondents in RIB 2006 (percentage)*

Most recent graduated school:	RIB 2006 Roma sample			RIB 2006 National sample		
RIB 2006 educational categories	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-59	Aged 60 or over	Aged 18-29	Aged 30-59	Aged 60 or over
No schooling	21.0	19.7	38.1	0.9	0.3	3.0
Primary	25.8	25.1	41.6	1.3	2.1	31.2
Gymnasium	35.0	37.5	13.7	22.4	18.7	29.0
Apprentice school (coal de ucenici)	1.9	1.6	3.0	0.4	1.1	2.8
First two years of high school (treapta I)	6.5	6.3	2.0	9.9	11.2	5.8
Professional school	3.4	4.4	1.0	12.1	18.0	8.3
High school	4.1	3.7		40.4	28.9	9.9
Industrial master school (scoala de mai tri)	0.7	0.6		0.9	2.8	2.5
Post-lyceum school		0.2		3.1	4.9	1.7
Short-term university (college)	0.7	0.6		1.8	2.6	1.1
Long-term university	0.5	0.2	0.5	5.8	8.3	4.7
Post-graduate studies	0.2			0.9	1.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total cases	414	857	197	223	616	362

## 10.4 Determinants of Educational Level

Variables that have a statistically significant influence on educational achievement are mainly the same for the Roma and the comparative sample, with some exceptions. We have included in the models all adult household members (aged 18 and over) for whom we have information in the database.

The probability of a Roma being a high school graduate is increased significantly by being male, belonging to the age group 30-60, having a traditional *neam* affiliation and by living in a better-off household (as indicated by the number of long-term consumer goods); and it is decreased if household members speak Romani in the home and if the person has failed at least one school year. (see Table 16-19.)

The probability of having at least a gymnasium degree (8 years of schooling) is increased by being male, belonging to a better-off household and not speaking Romani at home (see Table 16-20.). The 30-60 age group does not differ significantly from the other adult group, but the elderly have a significantly lower proportion of gymnasium graduates.

In the comparative sample, the probability of having graduated high school is increased by being male, living in an urban locality and coming from a better-off household, and it is decreased by being over 60 or having failed at least one school year. (See Table 16-21.)

Type of locality has no influence on Roma level of schooling, but is significant for the comparative sample. This indicates that Roma pupils do not take advantage of the opportunities of the urban environment – they face an equally adverse schooling challenge, irrespective of locality.

## 10.5 In the Classroom

### 10.5.1 Repeated School Years

Around 7% of adult Roma have repeated at least one year in school, compared to around 1% of non-Roma. This discrepancy holds for the present situation too: out of the 756 Roma pupils aged 6-18 who are currently attending school, 69 (9%) have repeated at least one school year, while out of the 327 non-Roma pupils aged 6-18 who are currently attending school, only 3 have repeated school years.

Roma boys are much more likely to repeat school years (11% of the 6-18 age group) compared to Roma girls (7% of the same age group). Repeating school years is not influenced by the locality (urban/rural), family wealth, family ethnic affiliation or language spoken, or the fact of a predominantly Roma classroom. However, it has an adverse effect for the Roma on their chances of graduating from high school, but not, interestingly, from the gymnasium.

### 10.5.2 Illiteracy

Illiteracy is a serious issue for the Roma population, as it affects one quarter of adults. It is certainly not exclusively due to low school attendance – it also reflects what we may term invisible segregation – the segregation that takes place inside the classroom. It can be seen in the fact that Roma pupils sometimes graduate from elementary school without even the basics of education. The reasons for this situation are complex, and may involve benevolence, indifference and prejudice at the same time. But what is true is that this system perpetuates ignorance, with a significant cost for the Roma pupils when it comes to their chances of succeeding in life.

For example, our interviews indicate that around 7% of people aged 14 or over who graduated from elementary school are illiterate; 28% of people who attended elementary school but did not

graduate are illiterate, and 88% of people who did not attend school at all are illiterate. Overall, 22% of all household members aged 14 or over in the Roma sample are illiterate, compared to 2% in the comparative sample.

If we only look at heads of household, 4% declare that they are illiterate although they have graduated elementary school. Gymnasium is the only guarantee for literacy for Roma pupils, as virtually all respondents who have finished 8 grades or more know how to read and write.

Roma pupils in segregated classes have a significantly higher risk of illiteracy. By analyzing 671 Roma pupils aged 8-18 we can see that 15% of those in classes with a majority of Roma pupils are illiterate compared to around 4% of the other pupils. The proportions are the same at the primary and secondary levels.

The probability of being illiterate is also higher for pupils from poorer households and who speak Romani at home. (See Table 16-23.)

## 10.6 Ethnic Segregation in Schools

The widespread practice of ethnic segregation has already been well documented by sociological research (such as Surdu 2003 or Stanculescu 2004). Ethnic segregation is a complex concept that also provokes ambivalent emotions. It can be used to describe the processes that lead to the appearance of creating homogenous Roma classrooms, for example, or it can describe refer to the existence of such classrooms independently of the process through which they were created.

Segregation has often been evaluated positively or ambivalently by *Gadje* and also Roma respondents:

- it is seen as the cause of problems such as the high social distance between ethnic groups, discrimination and school failure – but it can also be seen as a short-term, inexpensive solution to precisely those problems;
- Roma people condemn it but still appear to choose it or to accept it, especially in situations where it seems, for an external observer, to produce the most damage (closed and / or very poor Roma communities).

Still, qualitative and quantitative data as well present an unambiguous conclusion: school segregation affects dramatically the quality of the educational and social experiences of children.

For example, M. Goina (2007) analyzes in detail the situation of the segregated Roma school in Curtici, and the mixed opinions of the population. While it increases the probability of school attendance, it also renders it meaningless as any proper educational content is missing. The Roma school functions rather as a social institution and, at most, as a literacy-producing facility.

### ***Quote 10-32. Mixed opinions on segregated school in Curtici***

*Roma have different opinions on their school. It is regarded as an accomplishment by all members of the Roma community and sometimes with envy or rebuke by the Romanian community, especially for the school infrastructure. Community leaders, the school mediator, the counsellor, believe that it is beneficial for the Roma children to have a good school, close to their houses. M.C., school mediator told me that regardless whether the mother is at home or not, the child takes his school bag and comes to school, even if he is dirty or poorly dressed, he'd still get a croissant and a glass of milk that "brings him joy". Nevertheless, if the school was in the centre, among Romanians, he's probably not go at all... (M.C., 34). And the truth is that the community is located a few good kilometres away from the centre and there is no transportation means, which stands to support what the school mediator says. (...) Unfortunately, the level of schooling and teacher's performance in School No. 2 seem deficient. It seems that purpose of the teaching staff is to educate children only at a level of basic reading and writing. The*

only evaluation criteria is related to how well they can read and write. This is present both in the statements of Romanian speakers and Roma parents. According to the opinion of one of the people I interviewed in relation to the school, whose name I cannot disclose, In School No. 1 Curtici “the curricula can't be observed, basic notions with us are reading and writing... they are good children and we don't want them to have the 8 grades graduation certificate and be illiterate.” It seems however that many children are nearly illiterate up to the 5th grade. Some mothers, most likely not very honest, seem to blame it on the low potential of children, to the fact that they are “a little more weak-minded.” “My young daughter underwent a hernia surgery and now she's not doing so well in school, in the 5th grade she can write but she can't read... but teachers are very good, very good...” (O.C., 29). Other women more honestly admit that they are actually not teaching anything in the school in the community. The fact seems to be common place in the discourse of the Roma community: “the young ones don't teach them much, the older ones teach them more, but the young ones... when we went to school for certificates we had to wait them for hours... they were sitting in their office having coffee, while children are just playing in the classroom, when they had classes in the afternoon they would get there at one (o' clock) and came at three, in the morning they go and at 11 they're back home... they don't get any homework, they don't get anything, it's only a pretence that they're going to school...” Other parents also complain of the fact that children are left in the classrooms under the surveillance of older children, while teachers get together in their office, having coffee... (S.C., 33 Some younger ones regret the segregation of the school: “(...) it would have been better if they were together, then Gypsy and Gropeni children would study better, I noticed that Romanians... are more educated... while Gypsy some study and some don't, but if they were together in the same school they would study together, because teachers here don't really mind the children, to teach them, and to... but there, in the centre they are forced to study, while here, in School No. 2 they're footloose. Teachers say that if children don't study they can't do anything to make them study. But teachers are not really interested, they're not really concerned...” (Curtici, M. Goia 2007)

“Temporary segregation” or “unintended homogeneity” are the situations which are most likely to be approved of, by Roma and non-Roma alike.

**Quote 10-33. The new legal frame and the issue of equal chances**

Segregation as a mechanism of social exclusion – in education – leads to a higher level of abandoning school or a refusal to be educated. It also reinforces majority prejudices on Roma and also influences the level of education for Roma classes/schools. In 2007 Ministry of Education issued Order 1540 with its objective of “prevention, stop and elimination of segregation seen as a serious form of discrimination with negative consequences on children's legal access to an education of high quality.” Order forbids the creation of separate classes of 1st and 5th form having mostly Roma children in, beginning with school year 2007-2008. This law regards “segregation as a serious form of discrimination, leading to an unequal access of children to a high quality education, affecting equal conditions for access to education and human pride.” Beyond discriminatory practices and treatment towards Roma children, who – of course – would not eliminate themselves after the law is issued, (the law that accepts, rebuilds and legitimizes inequality between majority and Roma), we have to deal with cultural conceptions on equality and difference or guarantees of equal chances for individuals in different socio-economic conditions. (Timișoara, Magyari-Vincze 2007)



### 10.6.1 Ambivalence of Segregation in Public Opinion

While segregation is generally condemned by both Roma and non-Roma in public, and considered, at least at a discursive level, to be a policy priority (see also Quote 10-33) it is enforced in practice by individual choice: Roma try to avoid expected stigma and higher disadvantages, while non-Roma try to avoid what they see as potentially risky school-mates for their pupils. Segregated classrooms bring short-term benefits to parents, teachers and pupils – especially for the *Gadje*, but also for the Roma. The long-term negative effects are often overlooked.

For example, in the case of the segregated school in Mihail Kogălniceanu, the evaluation proposed by teachers, as it appears in the report, is quite positive. The school is known for its good performance of Roma pupils and good inter-ethnic relations. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to understand why segregation is ever considered necessary.

**Quote 10-34. A rosy view of a segregated school in Mihail Kogălniceanu**  
*Classes are homogenous, and there are no problems with racism or theft. There was an isolated case two years ago when two Roma pupils were waiting for younger children at the entrance to the school and they were beating them. When minor conflicts appear, which is normal for a certain age, Roma parents do not come to school when they are called, and, if they do, they do not admit the behaviour of the children, maintaining that it is impossible that their child did this. In the first four grades the problems of Roma children are similar to those of any other child of another ethnic group, in their age. Relationships between Roma children and other children in school is good, and in most cases the Roma children seek to adopt habits of the children of other ethnic groups. Also, in the primary grades there are some Roma pupils who have very good results in mathematics, in the 1st and 3rd grade, and they were awarded diplomas. The benefits of the ethnic homogeneity in the classroom are:*  
- Children are better acquainted with each other;  
- Inter-ethnic conflicts are diminished;  
- Children adapt faster, and it is said to be easier to interact with other ethnic groups at a higher age. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007).

This comfort has high costs for the development of Roma children's school careers and for the mutual knowledge of the future adults in the two ethnic groups. It is indeed difficult to see how inter-ethnic relationships become easier later in life – as Roma people sometimes see in their own experience.

**Quote 10-35. School as a basis for subsequent relationships in Colțău**  
*"Hungarians are now separate from the Gypsies...it isn't good. Because I know each of my colleagues, Hungarians, I was in the same school with them, they greet me in the street. But if children are separated, you can imagine how this would be. It would be better to leave it as it was, because children got along well, they did not quarrel. In my time we weren't arguing either."* (T.P. Roma man, 33, Colțău, quoted by Iorga 2007)

**Quote 10-36. Attitudes towards mixed schooling in Cugir**  
*However, non-Roma parents are quite reluctant to register their children in the school, and they prefer to take their children to other schools. On the other hand, there is a shared perception that, from an administrative point of view, the ethnic homogeneity of a classroom is an advantage, as the risk of being avoided by parents is smaller. Of course, such atmosphere is also beneficial for Roma pupils, especially that*



*when they come to school first time they are ‘shy’ and ‘introvert’, but then they integrate with the group easily. (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

**Quote 10-37. Segregation as an unintended effect of individual choices in Glod**

*“Why should I go to high school? To hear the others saying look, here’s that Gypsy from Glod? I rather stay at home and... with my father... he has a shop, it will be mine because I’m the oldest... like this, people respect me and say Hello when they meet me because I am the son of Oaie... but over there?” (S. O., has finished the 8th grade and works in his father’s grocery shop in Glod, quoted by Oteanu 2007)*

## 10.6.2 Experimenting with segregation

In the past and also now school authorities feel the need to experiment with segregation, which promises educational improvements for the completely excluded Roma pupils, without imposing any discomfort on non-Roma parents. Community reports point to a multiplicity of such initiatives.

**Quote 10-38. Segregated education in the 50s in Nuşfalău**

*One of the envisaged tasks of school reform was to reach the 100% enrolment of school-aged children. By declaring education as compulsory the school administration could not reach this dream partially due to the growing number of Roma children in the village. Thus they developed a differentiated programme special created for the Roma children. In 1949 was established a Roma school in Brazilia community with four grades. One teacher was employed to teach the Roma pupils. There did not remain any documents about the 17 years of activity of this school. We could only rebuild from interviews the story of this school. It was mostly considered as a “black point” in the eyes of the officialdom, thus the local organizations tried to better the situation of this school. The local women’s association organized charity events to gather clothes for the Roma children. They also cooked. The Roma school was closed in 1966. (Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

**Quote 10-39. Segregated education in the 90s in Nuşfalău**

*At the beginning of the 90’s the director board of the school decided that it was worth trying segregated education for the Roma children. They prepared a four-year programme, but the overall conclusion at the end of the programme was that it is not efficient from the point of view neither of the pupils nor for the teachers. They did not have any special curricula. The classes were held in Romanian or Hungarian language. Only one teacher was of Roma ethnicity, the others were Romanians or Hungarians without any specialization on teaching Roma children.*

*Even the Roma parents were suspicious about the organization of the school in this way. They tried to enrol their children in the Hungarian classes (...) The teachers had to accept the situation because if the parents declared themselves as Hungarians, they had the right to enrol the child in the Hungarian classes. (...) After this failed experiment, the director’s board has decided to try another way to better the efficiency of teaching. Another four years the children were chosen to continue their studies in the secondary school in accordance of their previous level. The children with better learning results were enrolled in one class, and the “weaker” pupils were enrolled in another class. According to the head of school it wasn’t specified that one class is the “elite” class, but in the imaginary of the parents and later in the pupils’ this separation meant that some of the pupils are elites and the others are the worst. After*

*a generation of pupils the project was dropped because there were more conflicts than results. (Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

**Quote 10-40. Segregated education in the 50s in Őrkő**  
*Till 1950 Őrkő Roma children were attending "Török Sándor school" close to the Orthodox Church, near the district. "So as not be taken as a Roma segregation school was closed and Roma children sent to different schools in the 60's" mostly in School nr.1. After a while "in the end of 70's till 1989 almost no Roma children from the district were sent to school." (Sfântu Gheorghe, Kalamár 2007)*

In Sfântu Gheorghe, a school and a kindergarten were built for the Őrkő community, on the initiative of the local Romano-Catholic priest. Up until then the vast majority of Őrkő children had been completely illiterate. The new school gradually developed, but it remains a homogenous educational institution, due to its proximity to the neighbourhood.

Such situations of segregated education as a result of residential segregation are common, especially in rural communities. In larger towns, where there is the possibility of mixed schooling, segregation may be a combined process of residential homogeneity, *Gadje* parents' withdrawal from predominantly Roma classrooms or schools, and Roma leaders and parents' acceptance or even preference for such arrangements.

**Quote 10-41. Emergence of segregated education in Curtici**  
*After 1980, Roma ethnic inhabitants began extending from the outskirts towards the centre, by buying houses from the Romanians. The number of Roma children grew in the neighbourhood school and Romanian students start to represent a minority. The answer to the situation was that Romanians started moving their children to the school in the centre, in the beginning individually, for various reasons, by changing their residence, for example, changing their residence to the constituency of the school in the centre. Gradually, because of the increasing demand, they reached a compromise. M.C. says that it was because of the aggressions of the Roma children on the Romanian children that they were transferred illegally to the school in the centre. "It was a mixed school, it was mixed, both Romanian and Gypsy... Why do you think the Romanians left?! This ethnic group (Roma, note MG) is not keen on working. Since they are not working, what do you expect the child to live on? So he was charging the Romanian, when he came to school he had to have an extra sandwich, - 'there's a sandwich, there's one Lei, and let me go.' Then (parents) went to the school inspectorate, and they accepted that children in this sector go to the school in the centre, under provision that they are registered with us. Starting around 1981-1982, or 1982-1983... why do you think Romanians ran away from them, it wasn't the Romanian that went to beat up the Gypsy, to take their... to take their scalp of, possibly some lice" (...) After the revolution the informal arrangements during the last communist years was institutionalised: the school in the Roma community officially became the Roma School, while the school in the centre, the Romanian school. There were some Romanian children who went to the Roma school, because they were "chucked out" (chased away) from the centre, for not belonging there." (Sanitary mediator in Curtici, quoted by M. Goia 2007)*

In Babadag, the kindergarten founded by the Pentecostal church, also homogenous, has definitely improved the schooling situation for the Roma pupils. When ethnic homogeneity is part of the solution, it is not seen as part of the problem.

**Quote 10-42. Segregation as a solution in Babadag**

*Partly, the education process is slower also due to the fact that the Horabai children only speak the Romani language they speak in the family when they come to 1 grade in school, and they have no discipline routines whatsoever. The results of the Horabai children who attended the Babadag Children's Club before school (an organisation of the Pentecostal denomination, having missionary purposes in the Muslim Gypsy community) are evidence for that. The Club's activities have a sharp religious hue, focused on Catechism preaching and Christian missionary work, but they follow the structure of the curriculum and teaching methods used in public kindergartens. The results obtained are significant – both the teachers from the schools in the city and the mayor or ordinary members of the community mention the results above the average that children from this Club had achieved in school. What is amazing is that the differences are obvious not only in relation to those children who hadn't been included in any form of the pre-school education system, but also in relation to those who had attended the public kindergarten. As we were discussing about this with the teachers in schools 1 and 2, but also with the teachers in the public kindergarten and the volunteers at the Children's Club, the conclusion emerged that the source of these differences was in the ethnic homogeneity of the children at the 'Pentecostal kindergarten', working exclusively with Muslim Roma children, in the specific manner of the Club's volunteers (two very energetic and committed young ladies) in interacting with the children, and last but not least, in the final goal that is envisaged in this project. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

There is only one report of local attempts at desegregation – in Nuşfalău. It is interesting to see that this has come about as a result of competition for the enrolment of Roma pupils, since the demographic gap poses a risk of unemployment for teachers.

**Quote 10-43. Economic incentives for desegregation in Nuşfalău**

*"There are more Roma children in the Romanian section, because the pre-school teachers have this propaganda to have their job. Because if they don't ...they won't have the four classes, they lose their jobs. These are the problems. When we have problems, we also fight for children. We have to fight for them... So, to have the four classes. When I came here, there were two teachers. After a while have come one more, now we have four. This happened in 15 years, let's say. And because of the Roma children they have their jobs. And to be honest, we are in the same situation. Next year we will have two first grades, but after that only one. The number of children is decreasing, so for years now on we will have only one first grade, if we cannot gather the Roma children...and we can't..." (Nuşfalău, teacher at the Hungarian language class, 3rd grade, quoted by Toma 2007)*

The integration policies in Nuşfalău come after two failed attempts at segregated education, but even so may still be fragile and dependent on circumstances. Homogenous classrooms are often useful for specific purposes and this usefulness may easily lead to a more general segregation project or, at least, to the lack of any effective de-segregation policy.

**Quote 10-44. Integrationist attitudes in Nuşfalău**

*We could easily see a strong agreement among the teachers that the segregated form of education is not efficient at all. Less strong – but still significant – was the agreement of the parents – Roma and Hungarians – that it is best for the Roma child and the community itself if the children are taught together with the*

*Hungarians and Romanians. We could not identify signs of intolerance or segregationist tendencies when speaking with parents; moreover they strongly support the integration of the Roma children in the majority school. (Nuşfalău, Toma 2007)*

### 10.6.3 Invisible Segregation in the Classroom

It is also important to see that classroom segregation or homogeneity may be replaced by an invisible, within-the-classroom segregation if Roma pupils are treated *de facto* differently from non-Roma ones.

An increased tolerance of failure for the Roma pupils, and less attention given to their educational progress, may lead to school becoming little more than a residential facility. Survey data on illiteracy among the graduates of primary education supports this contention (see section 10.5.2). Of course, there are other factors involved besides neglect – such as concern for the pupil's future if s/he has no schooling, a hope that literacy may improve after all, and others.

**Quote 10-45. Unequal attention in the classroom in Colţău**

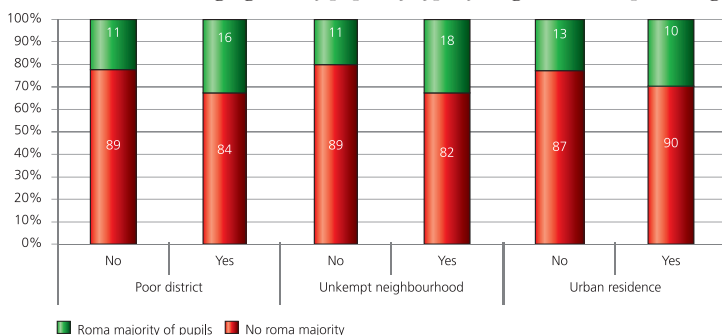
*If not, one graduates 8 classes and knows nothing. The teacher gave you something to draw, you do what you're wanted, and teachers let you pass the class because otherwise they've lost their salaries. You could be a Roma without speaking any Hungarian – it was compulsory to study, teachers were shouting at you and you were afraid. (Group interview, Colţău, quoted by Iorga 2007)*

## 10.7 Educational Segregation in Numbers

25% of Roma pupils learn in classrooms with a majority of Roma children, and 28% learn in classes which have around half Roma children, according to estimates given by the adult heads of their household. The remaining 47% learn in classrooms with a majority of non-Roma pupils.

Probability of educational segregation is increased by residence in a poor district and in an “unkempt” neighbourhood, but not by residence in Roma districts or neighbourhoods. It is also increased by urban residence and decreased by household wealth.

*Chart 10-2. Ethnic segregation of pupils by type of neighbourhood (percentage)*



Ethnic segregation of Roma pupils is aggravated by economic segregation since it is more likely to affect children from poor households. “Roma” classrooms are also poor classrooms. Around one third of pupils aged 6-18 from households that own no long-term consumer goods are included in majority-Roma classrooms, compared to around one quarter of the other pupils.

Girls are also significantly more likely to study in Roma classrooms: 29% of girls compared to 21% of boys aged 6-18 and attending school study with a majority of Roma peers.

### 10.7.1 Public Opinion on School Segregation

One of the most debated topics regarding educational reform is that of ethnic segregation. In public discourse it has been consistently denied and condemned at the same time, while ethnic segregation between classrooms or even within classrooms is still found in the Romanian education system. Furthermore, public opinion on the subject is divided – among both Roma and non-Roma. While Roma respondents are in general less tolerant of, or inclined towards, ethnic segregation in schools, there were Roma and non-Roma respondents who believe that such educational practices are legitimate, or at least that they should not be sanctioned.

Educational segregation may be tolerated because people believe that schooling and personal development of children may be negatively affected by having Roma children in the classroom. For example, around one quarter of non-Roma and 14% of Roma respondents believe that schooling of Romanian children is made more difficult if they have Roma classmates. Moreover, around 12% of Roma and non-Roma alike believe that schooling of Roma pupils is adversely affected by the presence of non-Roma pupils. Around 20% of both Roma and non-Roma respondents believe that Roma students need different school curricula and methods to that of non-Roma pupils. Overall, around 60% of Roma respondents think that the director of a segregated school should be punished, compared to 47% of non-Roma respondents.

*Table 10-3. Opinions on mixed schooling:  
“To what degree do you agree with the following assertions?”*

	If a Romanian child has Roma classmates, his schooling will be worse.		If a Roma child has Romanian classmates, his schooling will be worse.		Roma students need different curricula and methods in the school than non-Roma students.		If a school has Roma only classrooms and Romanian only classrooms, the director of the school should be punished	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Totally disagree	54	47	55	58	51	47	19	29
Rather disagree	32	29	32	32	28	31	19	23
Rather agree	10	15	9	7	13	14	25	23
Totally agree	4	8	4	3	7	8	37	25
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Differences of opinion between Roma and non-Roma respondents are statistically significant for the first and last questions, (Chi Square test) for  $p=0.01$ , but not for the middle questions.*

One third of non-Roma respondents agree with the assertion that friendship with a Roma person is of no value to a Romanian, compared to 13% of the Roma respondents; around 17% of both Roma and non-Roma believe that a Roma has nothing to gain from befriending a Romanian.

Table 10-4. *Opinions on ethnic segregation in personal relationships:  
“To what extent do you agree with the following assertions...”*

	A Romanian has nothing to gain by befriending a Roma.		A Roma has nothing to gain by befriending a Romanian.	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Totally disagree	55	37	54	50
Rather disagree	32	33	30	32
Rather agree	8	17	8	11
Totally agree	5	13	8	7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Differences of opinion between Roma and non-Roma respondents are statistically significant for the first and last questions, (Chi Square test) for  $p=0.01$ , but not for the middle questions.*

In neither sample was the respondent’s level of education an influence on his opinions regarding school practices for Roma pupils.

## 10.8 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

*Points to Highlight*

- A proportion of 9% of young Roma adults (aged 18-30) are high school graduates, while an additional 2% have pursued higher education. In contrast, 41% of non-Roma young adults are high school graduates, while an additional 27% have pursued higher education.
- The age group 30-60 has the highest proportion of high school graduates, for both the Roma and the comparative sample. But there are significant differences between the two samples regarding the younger group, aged 18-30. In the Roma sample their educational level decreases: instead of high school education, a larger proportion of pupils only achieve gymnasium level or lower schooling. In the case of the comparative sample, the decrease in number of high school graduates is due to enrolment in higher education: there is a significant increase for post-liceal graduates, students and university graduates.
- Around 7% of adult Roma have repeated at least one year in school, compared to around 1% of the comparative sample. This discrepancy is maintained in the current pupil population: out of the 756 Roma pupils aged 6-18 who are currently attending school, 69 (9%) have repeated at least one year in school, while out of the 327 pupils aged 6-18 who are attending school in the comparative sample, only 3 have repeated school years.
- If we take into account all members of Roma households, around 7% of people aged 14 or more who graduated from elementary school are illiterate. Furthermore, 28% of people who attended school but did not graduate elementary level are illiterate, and so are 88% of people who did not attend school at all. Overall, 22% of all household members aged 14 or more in the Roma sample are illiterate, compared to 2% in the comparative sample.
- Roma pupils in segregated classes have a significantly higher risk of illiteracy. Around 15% of pupils in classes with a majority of Roma children are illiterate, compared to around 4% of the other Roma pupils.

- 25% of Roma pupils learn in classrooms with a majority of Roma children, and an additional 28% learn in classes which have around half Roma children, according to estimates of adult members of their household. The remaining 47% learn in classrooms with a majority of non-Roma pupils.
- 62% of Roma respondents believe that directors of schools with segregated classrooms should be punished, compared to 48% of the non-Roma respondents.

There is not so much to conclude on education as an agent of change in the social situation of the Roma, except to say that this is not the case. The Romanian school system has not yet succeeded in ensuring the right to education for Roma pupils. One can also say that Romanian schools are not yet able to “sell” education to Roma pupils and parents.

While the general economic situation of the Roma is improving, it is unclear to what extent this will lead automatically to an improvement in their educational situation in the next few years. Without programmes that can convert improved standards of living into school performance, it is likely that the gap between average Roma and non-Roma pupils will continue to grow, at the same time that the gap between the average European and the average Romanian continues to grow (see Miclea et al. 2007).

It is also clear that poverty per se is not the only, and maybe not even a major, factor that hinders the school careers of Roma children. While it is undisputed that lack of material resources is a significant problem, it is important to see that most Roma children do not become *de facto* pupils, in the strict meaning of the word. Even when physically present in school, their engagement in the actual learning process as well as in the school atmosphere in general is significantly less than it is for other children – this is particularly the case in schools with predominantly Roma students, where their educational experience is often simply focused on literacy. This situation can also be seen in communities which live below subsistence level.

Segregation in education is a debated subject. It is still either experimented with as an intentional solution, or tolerated as a side effect of residential segregation and the flight of non-Roma parents – all for short-term comfort but long-term negative effect. Ethnic homogeneity is evaluated ambivalently by both Roma and non-Roma stakeholders and this perpetuates a system that operates visibly to the disadvantage of Roma children.





# 11 Financial Coping Strategies

This chapter discusses two coping strategies used to improve standards of living: migration and credit. Both are discussed using survey data.

## 11.1 Migration

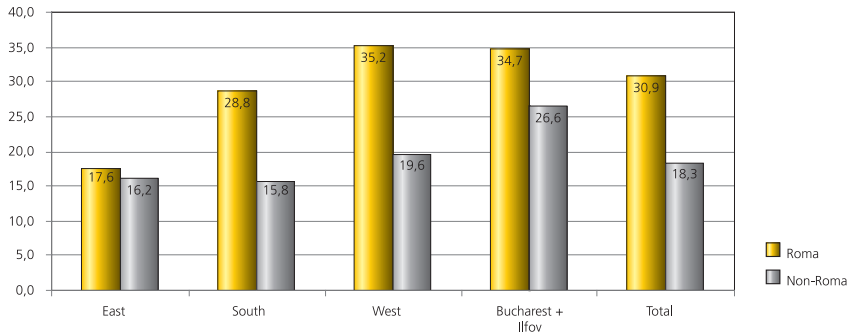
Migration is one of the most sensitive issues concerning the Roma situation in Eastern Europe, especially after Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007. This chapter aims to address the question of whether the migration potential for Roma actually differs from that of other poor non-Roma citizens in Romania. It also examines the different factors that may have an impact on planned migration.

In this section we will use three different measurements for analysis of the migration potential:

1. The gross migration potential indicates the proportion of the population being sampled who plan to work abroad on a regular basis (short-term: daily or weekly, medium-term: for weeks or months, and long-term: a number of years) or plan to emigrate on a permanent basis (Sik and Simonovits 2002).
2. The combined migration potential is a composite indicator, covering all instances of intention to work abroad, be it short-term, medium-term and long-term, as well as emigration on a permanent basis.
3. The net migration potential is based on the gross migration potential, filtered with another indicator – the date of the planned migration. This net indicator only covers the migration potential of those who could name the exact date of migration and therefore shows more precise migration plans.

As Chart 11-1 shows, the migration potential of the Roma is generally higher than that of the non-Roma in Romania. This is in fact the case for all regions in the country. For both, the Roma and non-Roma, migration potential is highest in the West and in Bucharest-Ilfov, with the difference between these two samples being more striking in the Western counties, where the Roma migration potential almost doubles the potential of the non-Roma. The lowest levels can be found in the Eastern counties and in case of the non-Roma also in the South.

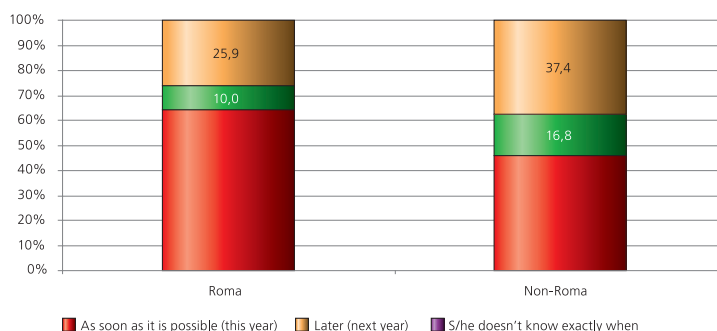
*Chart 11-1 Combined migration potential of the respondent by ethnicity and by region (percentage)*





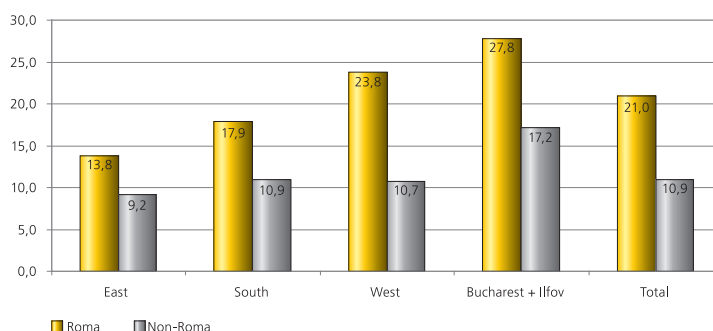
Asking about the date of departure for intended migration helps to reveal the seriousness of these migration plans. According to Chart 11-2, the intentions of Roma seem generally more serious. A higher rate of Roma would go abroad as soon as possible this year. Together with those who gave precise answers on migrating next year, the rate for the Roma is around 74 percent, while for the non-Roma it is 63%. Meaning that non-Roma respondents were less sure of their exact departure.

*Chart 11-2 Departure time for the planned migration, by ethnicity (percentage)*



Analysing net migration potential<sup>28</sup>, reveals that it is generally lower, yet the difference according to ethnicity is practically the same as for the combined gross migration potential (see Chart 11-3). In all regions though, the intention to migrate is higher for the Roma than for the non-Roma and the filtering did not radically change the regional differences (compare with Chart 11-1).

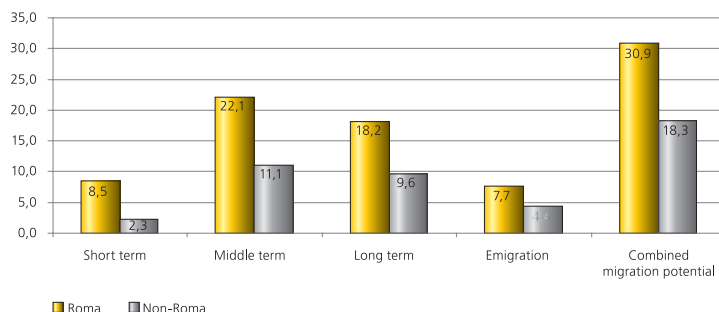
*Chart 11-3 Net migration potential of the respondent by ethnicity and by region (percentage)*



As for the net migration potential, the number of cases for a more detailed analysis is relatively low. This is why in most cases we will use the gross potential during the course of analysis.

We asked our respondents about their planned migration (see Chart 11-4). For medium-term and long-term migration, as well as emigration, potential of Roma is around twice as high, while for short-term migration it is more than three times as high, meaning that the Roma are more prepared to commute daily or weekly. This shows that the Roma in our sample are prepared to migrate under much harder conditions than their non-Roma counterparts.

<sup>28</sup> Based on the migration intentions of respondents who answered the question about when they plan to go abroad for work.

*Chart 11-4 Period of the planned migration, by ethnicity (percentage)*

As Table 11-1 and Table 11-2 also reveal, both Roma and non-Roma prefer a medium-term period of migration. The highest rates of a combined migration potential among the Roma respondents prevail in the West and in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, while for the non-Roma only the capital and its surrounding areas are salient. The rate of those contemplating possible emigration is almost twice as high among the Roma, however, with the rates being comparatively low in the South and East.

For the Roma, the combined migration potential is lowest in county capitals, higher in “other villages” and highest in the “main villages”, albeit with minimal differences. The type of location has different effects on different types of migration: The rate of those planning short-term migration is highest in “other villages” and lowest in county capitals, with differences being almost quadruple. With respect to long-term migration the tendency is the same but there are no strong differences between the different locations. Emigration is highest in the “main villages” and lowest in county capitals, with a huge difference between the locations. The type of location has no significant effect on medium-term migration. Among the non-Roma respondents differences are rather insignificant.

Age has a significant effect on migration potential. It can generally be concluded that younger respondents, both Roma and non-Roma display a higher potential for migration. Education has no significant effect on the Roma’s migration potential, whereas data from the non-Roma respondents reveals a very clear tendency: the more educated people are, the higher their migration potential for all kinds of migration.

Our formulated hypothesis was that those who are in regular employment would display the lowest migration potential due to their more established links with the formal labour market, while those unemployed and hence least integrated, would display much stronger motivation levels to work abroad. Our data shows, however, that this hypothesis neither holds true for the Roma nor the non-Roma respondents. With respect to Roma adult school population, they have the highest potential for all types of migration except for emigration, while non-Roma students and those who engage in casual work are mostly prepared to migrate (it is imperative to mention that the number of students is very low among those who are planning to work abroad, both for our Roma and non-Roma sample). So what is very clear, and indeed far from our original hypothesis, is the fact that those Roma and non-Roma respondents who do not work reveal the lowest potential.

*Table 11-1. Effects of different socio-economic factors on gross migration potential of Roma respondents (percentage)*

Socio-demographic variables	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Emigration	Combined migration potential
Total Roma population	8.5	22.1	18.2	7.7	30.9
Region					
East	5.6	13.7	9.2	1.1	17.6
South	13.4	22.2	22.4	2.4	28.8
West	76.8	24.3	17.8	11.9	35.2
Bucharest + Ilfov	(7.1)	(22.5)	(21.4)	(9.8)	(34.7)
Chi-square significance <sup>1</sup>	0.006	0.057	0.009	0.000	0.000
Type of location					
Bucharest	(8.0)	(23.5)	(14.0)	(14.6)	(30.8)
County capitals	3.6	14.3	10.9	2.9	20.9
Other cities	8.7	23.8	16.7	9.6	32.8
Main villages	7.7	23.2	20.7	11.3	35.6
Other villages	13.6	24.4	22.4	2.7	29.0
Chi-square significance	0.013	0.107	0.024	0.001	0.008
Age					
18 - 24	8.3	28.3	24.8	8.8	41.5
25 - 34	10.1	28.5	23.0	10.6	39.8
35 - 44	12.2	27.8	23.7	10.7	37.1
45 - 54	8.4	15.4	14.6	5.0	21.1
55 - 64	3.8	9.4	8.6	(2.4)	11.6
65 and older	(1.3)	(5.0)	(1.3)	(1.5)	(6.1)
Chi-square significance	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.024	0.000
Highest completed level of education					
No schooling	9.3	24.1	17.3	6.4	31.4
Incomplete primary	8.2	21.1	17.3	8.4	29.0
Complete primary	7.5	20.7	19.0	6.1	31.8
Complete secondary or higher	9.6	24.3	20.6	8.5	35.3
Chi-square significance	0.872	0.719	0.800	0.701	0.511
Economic activity					
Regular work	7.8	18.4	15.5	6.7	26.7
Casual work	12.6	28.5	23.4	10.4	39.4
Housework	10.8	30.7	22.5	9.8	38.3
Student	((15.4))	((50.0))	((38.5))	((0.0))	((64.3))
Do not work	6.2	15.6	14.6	6.6	25.0
Chi-square significance	0.049	0.000	0.002	0.269	0.000

( ) Number of cases is between 50 and 100

(( )) Number of cases is between 20 and 50

*Table 11-2. Effects of different socio-economic factors on gross migration potential of non-Roma respondents (percentage)*

Socio-demographic variables	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Emigration	Combined migration potential
Total Non-Roma population	2.3	11.1	9.6	4.4	18.3
Region					
East	3.2	6.3	11.4	3.9	16.2
South	2.5	9.1	9.7	1.9	15.8
West	1.7	13.4	8.3	6.0	19.6
Bucharest + Ilfov	(3.1)	(15.6)	(14.1)	((6.5))	(26.6)
Chi-square significance	0.698	0.035	0.408	0.087	0.154
Type of location					
Bucharest	((4.1))	((12.2))	((10.2))	((9.4))	((20.4))
County capitals	2.1	15.9	10.5	5.5	24.8
Other cities	1.3	9.8	9.3	5.7	16.9
Main villages	3.5	11.6	9.3	4.0	17.9
Other villages	0.6	7.4	9.7	1.7	14.5
Chi-square significance	0.168	0.168	0.993	0.197	0.137
Age					
18 - 24	(8.6)	(22.9)	(19.1)	(13.2)	(36.0)
25 - 34	1.4	17.6	15.3	8.0	29.8
35 - 44	3.7	18.5	15.3	6.9	28.5
45 - 54	3.2	11.0	7.8	1.9	16.3
55 - 64	0.7	5.1	5.8	3.7	9.9
65 and older	0.8	2.0	1.2	1.5	3.4
Chi-square significance	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000
Highest completed level of education					
No schooling	((0.0))	((18.8))	((12.5))	((6.7))	((18.8))
Incomplete primary	1.3	4.3	3.0	2.1	6.3
Completed primary	2.5	10.4	10.0	4.3	18.3
Completed secondary or higher	2.7	14.3	12.3	5.4	23.6
Chi-square significance	0.603	0.001	0.001	0.310	0.000
Economic activity					
Regular work	2.9	15.0	13.6	7.0	26.1
Casual work	((5.3))	((15.8))	((21.6))	((6.5))	((31.6))
Housework	1.9	13.4	8.8	4.7	19.1
Student	((5.7))	((22.9))	((20.0))	((0.0))	((28.9))
Do not work	1.4	4.9	3.3	2.3	7.6
Chi-square significance	0.305	0.000	0.000	0.031	0.000

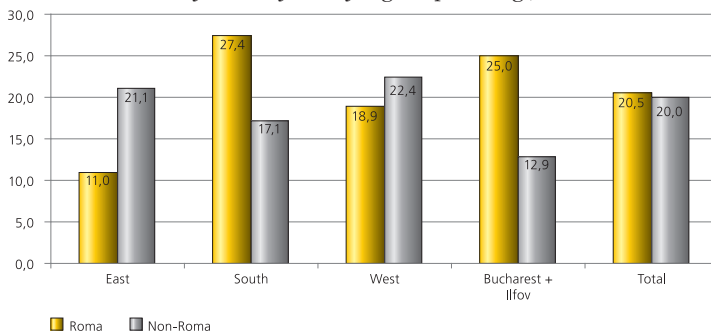
( ) Number of cases is between 50 and 100

(( )) Number of cases is between 20 and 50

It should be mentioned that in the course of this research only informants currently living in the country could be targeted and so the data does not reveal any information about past migration. The only thing that actually gives some insight into this issue is account of past migration

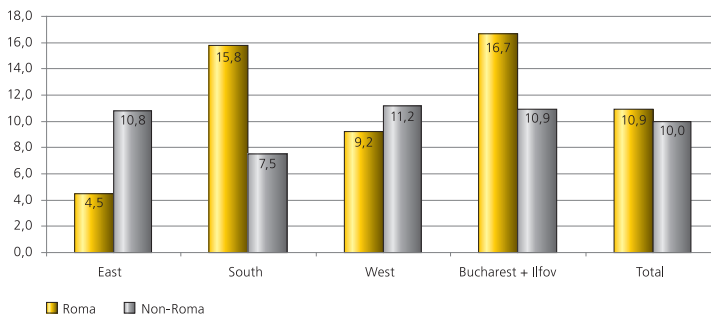
experiences by members of the respondent's household. As Chart 11-5 shows, the general level of previous migration experience is exactly the same for both ethnic categories, yet there are significant regional differences. While this rate is highest in the South and in the Bucharest-Ilfov region and lowest in the East among the Roma, higher rates of non-Roma who have already worked abroad can be found in the West and the East, with the rate being lowest in the capital and its surrounding areas.

*Chart 11-5 Migration experience of any member of the household by ethnicity and by region (percentage)*



We can rightly suppose that previous migration experiences of the respondents have strongly influenced their migration potential, on the assumption that those who have already worked abroad are indeed more likely than not to repeat this experience.

*Chart 11-6 Migration experiences of the respondent by ethnicity and by region (percentage)*



As Table 11-3 shows, our hypothesis is validated: migration experience has a strong effect on migration potential. In case of the Roma, those who have already worked abroad tend to plan to go abroad again (combined migration potential) – 2.2 times more likely than those without any previous migration experience. In the case of the non-Roma, this difference is even more striking – 2.7 times higher than those without any previous migration experience. For the Roma, the shorter the period of planned migration, the stronger the effect of previous experience, while for the non-Roma the opposite is true.

*Table 11-3 Gross\* migration potential, by previous migration experience of the respondents and by ethnicity (percentage)*

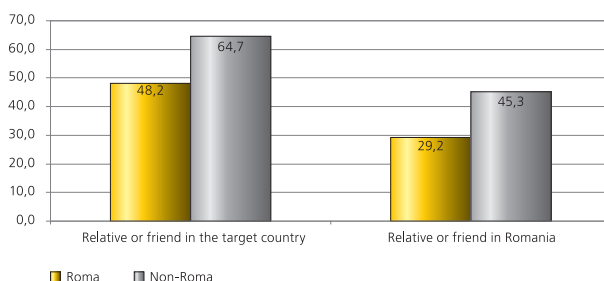
	Short- term	Medium- term	Long- term	Emigration	Combined migration potential**
Roma					
Total	8.6	22.4	18.2	7.9	31.4
With migration experience of the respondent	21.9	52.9	41.7	16.0	68.4
Correlation index	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.2
Non-Roma					
Total	2.4	10.9	8.9	3.9	17.5
With migration experience of the respondent	1.3	28.6	26.7	14.3	48.0
Correlation index	0.5	2.6	3.0	3.7	2.7

\*The gross migration potential indicates what proportion of the population questioned plans to work abroad

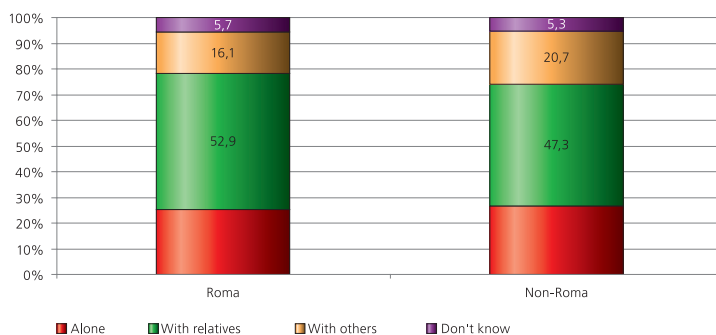
\*\*The combined migration potential is a composite indicator containing all instances of intention to work abroad, be it short-term, medium-term, long-term, or emigration.

As an important factor of migration, we asked respondents about their migration-specific network. By ‘network’, we understand a circle of relatives or friends who are in a position to help them in the target country, or still in Romania, when setting up migration plans. As Chart 11-7 shows, non-Roma respondents tend to rely much more on these networks either in Romania or in the target country. We can suppose again that those respondents who were able to answer our questions more precisely, and who had saved some “network capital” for their pending migration would indeed be more serious about their migration plans.

*Chart 11-7 Rate of respondents who have migration specific network, by ethnicity (percentage)*



As Chart 11-8 shows, both Roma and non-Roma respondents would prefer to migrate with relatives, friends, neighbours or acquaintances rather than on their own. Among the Roma sample, there was a higher tendency to go with a relative rather than among non-Roma (53 and 47 percent, respectively). At the same time, fewer Roma would go abroad to work with others (non-relatives) than non-Roma. The level of those planning to migrate alone does not show any significant differences according to ethnicity, including those who do not know who they would go with. Again, our hypothesis is that those who do not know with whom they intend to migrate are less serious about migration than those who provided clear answers to our inquiry.

*Chart 11-8. With whom the respondents plan to migrate, by ethnicity (percentage)*

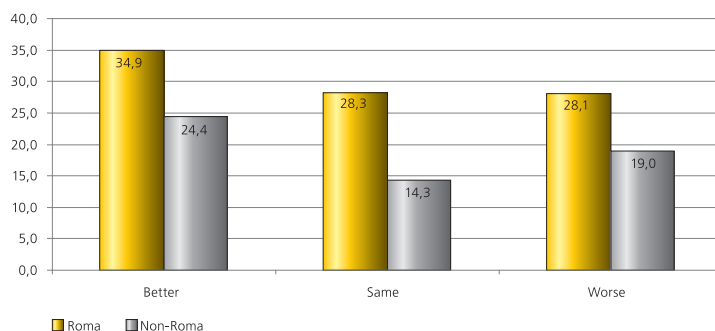
We asked our respondents whether they had ever been treated worse than others because of their ethnicity. As Table 11-4 shows, lived experiences of ethnic discrimination have had quite a strong impact on migration potential. In the case of the Roma this effect is around 1.3 times higher than those without such experiences, for all kinds of migration (for short and long-term migration the effect is even greater), while in the case of the non-Roma the rate is above 2 for all categories, being highest among those who are planning short-term migration (4.1), or emigration (3.7).

*Table 11-4 Gross migration potential, by experience of ethnic discrimination and by ethnicity (percentage)*

	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Emigration	Combined migration potential
Roma					
Total	7.2	20.8	16.5	8.0	29.6
With experience of ethnic discrimination	13.0	27.0	26.6	10.1	39.1
Correlation index	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.3
Non-Roma					
Total	1.9	10.2	8.4	4.7	16.9
With experience of ethnic discrimination	7.8	23.5	21.6	17.5	38.2
Correlation index	4.1	2.3	2.6	3.7	2.3

Those who keep better track of their financial situation (concerning the previous year), display a higher migration potential among both groups, Roma and non-Roma. For the non-Roma respondents, the lowest rate can be found among those who feel that their situation has not changed, while for the Roma there is no significant difference between those living in stagnant financial conditions and those whose financial situation has actually deteriorated.

*Chart 11-9 Combined migration potential, by effect of the development of the household's financial situation and by ethnicity (percentage)*



It can be expected that changes in a household's financial situation come about as the result of migration by members of the household. As Table 11-5 shows, the experience of migration has a stronger correlation with the financial situation in Roma households than in non-Roma ones. Those Roma who have worked abroad are 2.4 times more likely to find themselves in better living conditions than they were a year ago, compared to those who have never worked abroad. This difference for the non-Roma households is only 1.6 times.

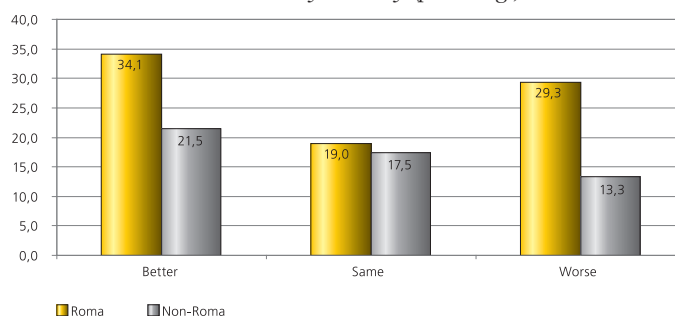
*Table 11-5 Development of the household's financial situation, by migration experience of any members of the household and by ethnicity (percentage)*

	Better	Same	Worse
Roma			
Total	13.8	38.4	47.8
With migration experience	33.1	21.3	15.6
Correlation index	2.4	0.6	0.3
Non-Roma			
Total	17.8	52.9	29.3
With migration experience	29.2	18.1	18.6
Correlation index	1.6	0.3	0.6

An expected improvement in the household's future financial situation can be another important factor for migration plans. As Chart 11-10 shows that this is clearly the case for the non-Roma: those who believe in better financial conditions after migration show the highest migration potential, while those who are not convinced show the lowest migration potential. Although there is no such clear tendency for the Roma, those with optimistic expectations are more likely to display a higher migration potential. Interestingly though, even those who do not expect to have a better financial situation as a result of migration, still display the same level of migration intentions. For those who believe in no changes of their financial situation after migration, migration potential remains below the average.

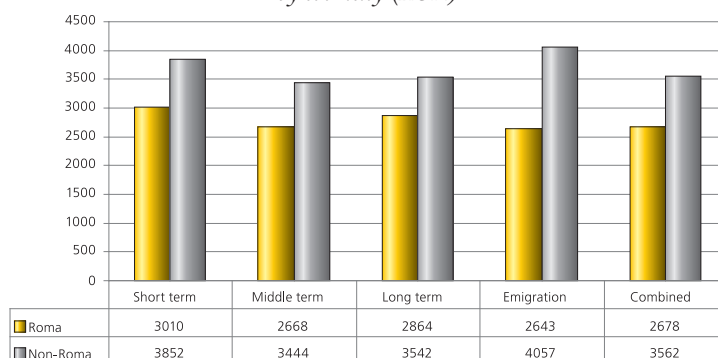


*Chart 11-10 Combined migration potential, by expectation of the household's future financial situation and by ethnicity (percentage)*



We asked respondents what the minimum amount of monthly income would be for them, for migration to be worthwhile. In general, non-Roma people are only prepared to migrate for 1.3 times the level of monthly income than their Roma counterparts would accept (Chart 11-11). The biggest difference between both ethnicities can be found with respect to emigration (1.5 times). While non-Roma display the highest financial motivation for emigration, the Roma, on the other hand, are financially driven only in the case of short-term migration, while at the same time displaying the lowest financial motivation levels in the case of emigration.

*Chart 11-11 Average level of monthly income considered worthwhile to work abroad for, by ethnicity (RON)*



## 11.2 Work Abroad in Community Reports

Romanian citizens of all ethnic identities have improved their material standing through work abroad, and this is a common practice in Roma communities too. Most community reports indicate migration for work as one of the main “bootstrapping” strategies of the Roma.

**Quote 11-1. Work abroad for Roma people in Timișoara**  
*Working abroad (especially in Italy and Spain) was mentioned as a way of adaptation to living conditions for almost every person and his/her relatives I talked with. Today Roma from Timișoara work abroad, they are helped by informal networks of migrants, which has facilitated transnational temporary migration since 1990. Women take care*

*of children and old people, men work in construction and do business in the “grey market” (e.g. buying and selling used motor-cycles). (...) [G.L.] is 46, being married since 16 with two sons staying in the house and a girl left for Spain. One of the sons has a daughter raised up by her. She lives together with her husband and mother-in-law, who do not help her in household troubles. The house has six rooms, we’re talking near a table set in a small corridor, entrance hall, extremely long, for about 30 meters, where 10 scooters are put as his husband deals with selling them. After they returned from working in Germany and France (four years) in the early 1990’s, they renovated the house. (GL, Timișoara, quoted by Magyari-Vincze 2007)*

**Quote 11-2. Work abroad for people in Cugir**

*Some of the former members of the band left abroad to work – which is a very widespread habit among the Cugir population. (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

The dramas of migration are also the same for all people – especially the family members left behind, or children that should follow a school career. Families are torn apart, and bureaucratic problems related to school and other papers are exacerbated.

**Quote 11-3. Work abroad for people in Mihail Kogălniceanu**

*Most of the young people in the village prefer looking abroad for work, due to better working conditions and a higher salary they can benefit from. They do not typically stay in a foreign country more than several months, whereby an average is of 3-4 months; they then return with the earned money, used for house decorations or insulation. From all communities present in the locality, the ones who migrate most often are the Roma. (...) They say this is good. Much better than home, but they are compelled to come back, because this is where the family and the house is. (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Marcu 2007)*

**Quote 11-4. Work abroad for the Cbinari Roma in Sântana de Mureș:**

*In the last two years they have started to go to Hungary for seasonal work in agriculture. At the time of the research (June 2007) large groups of Roma were in Hungary leaving at home the very young mothers and the older people. (Sântana de Mureș, Tróc 2007)*

Working abroad can be seen as a financial coping strategy, as it significantly improves the chances for the family to have a decent standard of living. However, it does not seem to have direct positive effects on education – at least according to our qualitative information. In theory, it is to be expected that a higher standard of living will reduce at least some of the factors that negatively affect the school careers of Roma pupils. On the other hand, migration is a disorganizing force for pupils’ school tracks, and it is also a factor that may decrease motivation for spending time in classrooms.

**Quote 11-5. Family and educational problems due to migration in Curtici**

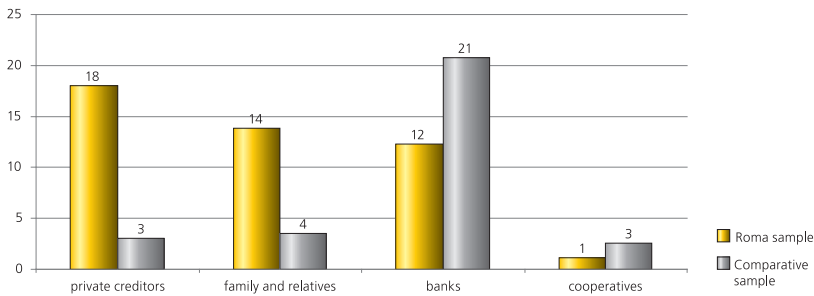
*The Roma are around 20% of the total 8500 residents in Curtici (A.N., Mayor of Curtici). Because of migration a large part of the Roma population is abroad. “During the winter, they leave as much as they can! As many as want to work! Curtici has 8500 residents, in the summer it has 7500, and of those who leave, the Roma are about half.” (A.N., Mayor of Curtici) “France is the most sympathetic country – but there are many tears there” – tells me Simona, aged 38. The tears are because the family back home is missing, she explains. (...) Another problem that leads to the lack of identity papers, especially for children, is migration. Children go abroad, where they most frequently attend school, but only rarely do they bring back papers to prove this. Even more, parents*

*travel independently of the school programmes. All of these factors increase the tendency for school abandonment. Even though in Curtici it was made possible to re-register children, without papers, on the basis of an exam which they pass in the school, girls only rarely come to this exam. For boys they even make more compromises because they know that once they fail they will completely give up school.” (Curtici, M. Goina 2007)*

### 11.3 Credit

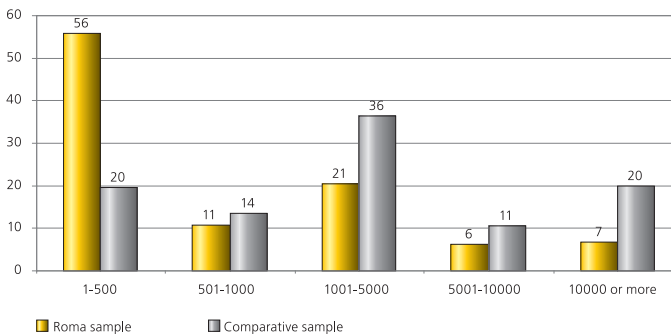
A look at data on household credit illustrates a facet of social exclusion that confronts Roma people. A total of 40% of Roma households have borrowed money, and so have around 30% of households in the comparative sample. Among the Roma sample, 17% of the households are indebted to private creditors, compared to 3% of the households in the comparative sample. The level of access to bank credit is lower – 12% of Roma households have borrowed money from banks, compared to one fifth of the comparative sample. The Roma also rely heavily on family and relatives for financial help, unlike the non-Roma. Credit in the formal sector is still a daring choice for the Roma (see for example Quote 3-27) – due at least in part to their lower incomes and lack of stable jobs in the formal labour market.

*Chart 11-12. Household credit by source, in Roma and comparative samples (multiple answers were possible)*



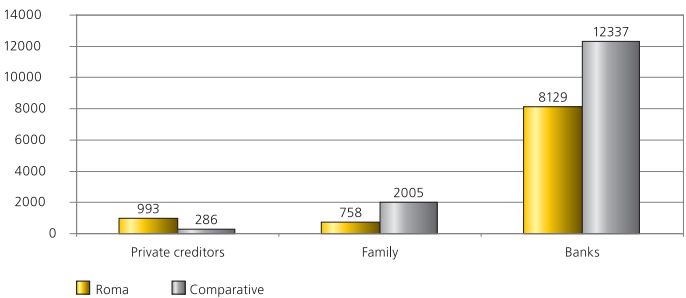
The majority of Roma households who use credit borrow small amounts (less than 500 RON), while households in the comparative sample make use of substantially more credit (see below).

*Chart 11-13. Credit size, by sample (RON)*



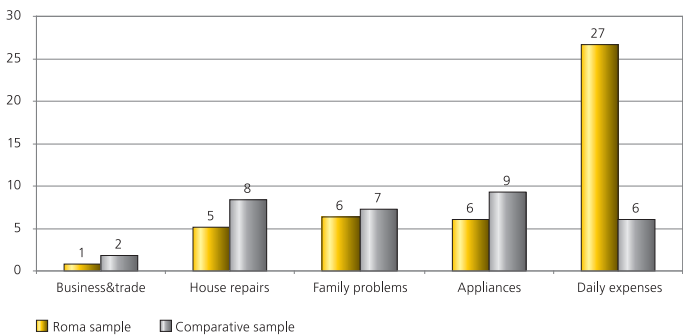
Households that have borrowed money from banks have a significantly higher level of debt than households that use private creditors or family members. This relationship is the same for Roma and comparative samples (see Chart 11-14).

Chart 11-14. Average sum of borrowed money, by main credit source (RON)

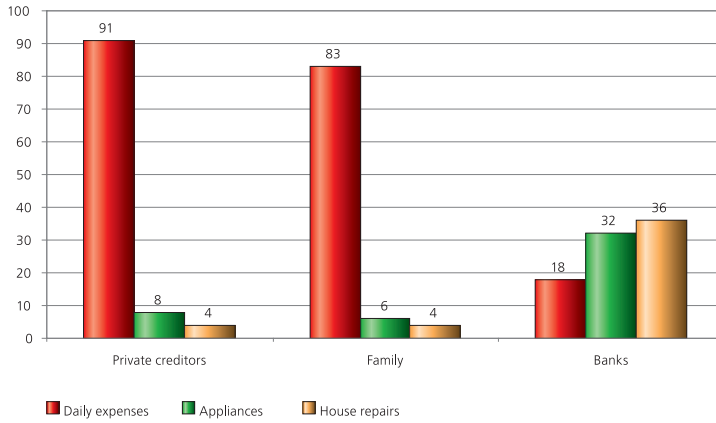


Credit destinations also vary considerably between the Roma and the comparative samples: more than one quarter of Roma households have used credit to cover their daily expenses, compared to only 6% of the comparative sample.

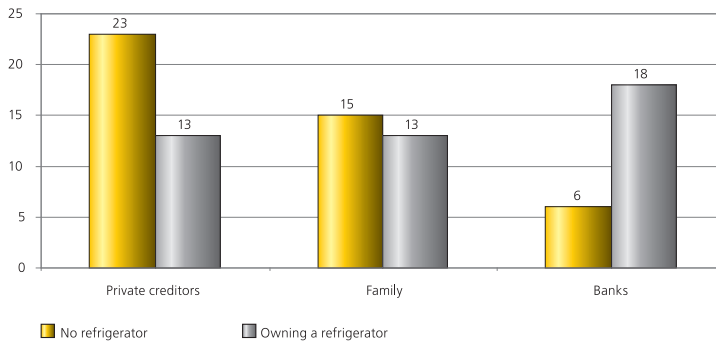
Chart 11-15. Destination of credit, in Roma and comparative samples (multiple answers were possible) (percentage)



If we analyse all credits that Roma households took from private creditors, 90% of these were used to cover daily expenses; 83% of credits from family and relatives were also used for daily expenses. Credits from banks are usually taken out for more significant expenses, such as household appliances or house repairs.

*Chart 11-16. Uses of borrowed money from different sources in the Roma sample (percentage)*

Overall, the better off and the worse off Roma households have a similar probability of borrowing money – around 40% of Roma households with and without a refrigerator in the household have a credit. The better off are more likely to borrow from a bank, while the poorer households are more likely to borrow from private creditors.

*Chart 11-17. Credit source by household financial situation, in the Roma sample (percentage)*

## 11.4 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

### *Points to Highlight*

- In all regions of Romania the migration potential of the Roma is generally higher than that of the non-Roma.
- Taking all those who gave precise answers a higher rate of Roma – 74% – compared to non-Roma – 63% – would go abroad as soon as possible this year.
- Twice the rate of Roma compared to non-Roma are prepared to undertake medium and long-term migration, while three times the rate of Roma compared to non-Roma are prepared to undertake short-term migration, meaning also that they are more prepared to commute daily or weekly..
- The rate of those contemplating about possible emigration is almost twice as high among the Roma.
- The general level of previous migration experiences is exactly the same with both ethnic categories, yet there are significant regional differences. While this rate is highest in the South and lowest in the East among the Roma, higher rates of non-Roma who have already worked abroad can be found in the West and the East.
- Migration experience has a strong effect on migration potential. In the case of the Roma, those who have already worked abroad tend to plan to go abroad again – 2.2 times more likely than those without any previous migration experience. In the case of the non-Roma, this difference is even more striking – 2.7 times higher than those without any previous migration experience.
- When making migration plans non-Roma respondents tend to rely much more on a migration-specific network (a circle of relatives or friends that are in a position to help them) either in Romania or in the target country.
- Both Roma and non-Roma respondents would prefer to migrate with relatives, friends, neighbours or acquaintances rather than on their own. Among the Roma sample, there was a higher tendency to go with a relative rather than among the non-Roma (53 and 47 percent, respectively).
- Experiences of ethnic discrimination are positively correlated with short, middle and long-term migration and emigration potential.
- Those who have already worked abroad are 2.4 times more likely to find themselves in better living conditions than a year ago. This difference among the non-Roma households is 1.6 times.
- In general non-Roma are only prepared to migrate for 1.3 times more monthly income than their Roma counterparts would accept. The biggest difference between both ethnicities can be found with respect to emigration (1.5 times).
- A total of 40% of Roma households have borrowed money, and so have around 30% of households in the comparative sample. Within the Roma sample, 17% of the households are indebted to private creditors, compared to 3% of the households in the comparative sample. Level of accessing credit from banks is lower – 12% of the Roma households have borrowed money from banks, compared to 21% of the comparative sample.
- Roma rely heavily on family and relatives for financial help unlike non-Roma households.
- More than 25% of Roma households have used credit to cover daily expenses compared to only 6% of non-Roma.

Most community reports indicate migration for work is one of the main “bootstrapping” strategies of the Roma. Romanian citizens improve their material standing by working abroad. The experience of working abroad seems to be similar across ethnic borders, while migration

intention is more frequent among the Roma. Several factors influence the realization of migration plans, such as migration-related network capital, experience of discrimination or financial situation. Another factor is that ethnic distinctions are strongly dependent on a national and local context. Roma stories of work abroad are indistinct from *Gadje* accounts. At the same time, the experience of credit is drastically different, with Roma households limited to informal networks, mostly for small scale purchases. Low income and the lack of stable, formal jobs are probably the main two causes that restrict the access of Roma households to bank credit.







## PART V



## LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ROMA CITIZENS



## 12 Local Mediation Structures

Local mediation structures reflected in community reports include:

- Roma experts in town halls and county councils;
- Health and school mediators;
- Other formal structures of representation (Roma local councilors, special offices for the Roma, NGOs);
- Other informal leaders who have systematic contact with local authorities, mediating between them and Roma citizens.

Mediation structures have increased the visibility of Roma people for local authorities, and they have facilitated communication between the two. This solution has been evaluated as functional. However, this solution seems to be reaching its limits, especially regarding the informal leaders of Roma communities, who are not held accountable in any official way. The main grounds for suspicion of these informal leaders are related to corruption. At the same time, case studies in localities where there is no representation point to the low bargaining power of the Roma residents and their dependency on local authorities. As is the case with all citizens with impoverished lives and little education, Roma people have little power over their elected representatives, and their votes have yet to have value, at local and national level.

### ***Quote 12-1. Interactions with the Mayor in a locality without representation in Modelu***

*The majority of Roma families perceive their relationship with the mayor as good and the mayor as being “a good man”. However, they were unable to describe how the mayoralty had contributed to improving their standards of living. My personal observation alongside the discussions with the mayor and while I was at the mayor’s office (I happened to be there when he was receiving people in his office) is that the mayor had a flexible approach to people and was trying to earn their sympathy and confidence; he would “solve” problems tactfully by promising people solutions that were obviously impossible (for instance, he would promise them a piece of land to build a home). Although there is quite a big number of Roma families in the community, the Local Authority does not have an adviser on Roma issues – but the mayor does have the intent to open such a position within the office. (Modelu, Feraru 2007)*

The lack of communication between Local Authorities and Roma citizens has been solved, to a certain extent, by the introduction of multiple mediation agencies – such as local experts, educational and health mediators, special departments in Town Halls, and also informal mediation structures based on informal leaders. There is often a strong connection between formal and informal leaders – either through their collaboration and partnership, or because the same person has occupied, at times, different positions.

For example, in Târgu Mureş there are two main mediation structures: the street-leaders structure, on the one hand, and the Department for Roma Support within the Town Hall. Both of them have their advantages and disadvantages, as discussed below.

These intermediate structures are praised for easing the interactions between authorities and citizens. Besides this, or in relation to this, they also have other involvement in the community, which may range from economic to religious, charitable or political.

### ***Quote 12-2. Local leadership and mediation in Gradinari***

*There is a necessity to have a formal leader in solving problems of Roma. The local expert here has both formal and informal power among the community members,*

*representing Roma towards the local council and being at the same time member of each “Gypsy law council” (Romani Cris). He is seen as a wise man, he is said to have no local problems he isn’t involved in.*

*“Yes, he helps us a lot, it’s a kind of God for us. He gives us many things, although he has a family. He lends us money, and we give it back when we can, but he gives us” (Roma respondent, Gradinari)*

*“They come and curse you, promising they will kill you. After he comes and explains the things to them, he checks the files and says I was right. They don’t believe me. When he comes they accept I’m right” (Social assistant, Gradinari, OR team 2007)*

Local leaders and mediators are part of a community and part of an organizational system that allocates rights and responsibilities, together with systems of monitoring and sanctions. The function of filtering and aggregating the demands and problems of Roma citizens is seen as key to such intermediate agents. At the same time, this very same filtering procedure deprives them and their beneficiaries of the political influence which comes with numbers. The multiplicity of Roma voices and the intensity of their problems are reduced by the process of translation into the administrative language.

### **Quote 12-3. Formal and informal leadership in Târgu Mureș**

*Since the very first days of the research, I came in contact with the person called the representative of the Roma at the Town Hall – wording which, apparently, was describing a formal position. Moreover, the representative had subordinated street representatives (street chiefs), which were people assigned from all the six Mureș communities. Further on, I was to find out that the structure appeared in the 90es and was organised by the Roma Party; it had become very useful to the authorities, mainly due to its central leader, accepted as a representative of the communities.*

*On an ascending axis, the street chiefs have attributions in many different fields. First of all, they represent the community; they collect the requests that the inhabitants write to the authorities and submit them on their behalf, defending this situation through a viewpoint of “usefulness” (the inhabitants may be illiterate, they may spell the applications wrong or come up with illogical wordings). The relationship is even more formalised, as the requests are signed exclusively by the street chiefs. From the information gathered, the authorities only accept requests from these people – the situation has not been proved, but it was confirmed by many different sources. At the same time, the street chiefs perform a control function, acting as mediators between the police and the community; they are those who inform the police in exceptional situations, provide information regarding the issues that may occur and even take responsibility towards the authorities. It is the place to emphasise that these people are accepted by the representatives of public institutions as partners; the list of people holding this position is available to all authorities that have contact with these communities.*

*Another important role of the street chiefs is to be informative. They alone have the duty to inform the central leader (the Roma representative) about all issues in the community, if the seriousness of such issues requires communication to authorities through the central leader. The Roma representative to the Mayorality – as this “function” is called – was extremely important in the period when the authorities were trying to solve documentation problems; this person would ‘guarantee’ that the people to whom Identity documents were to be released were indeed inhabitants of the locality. Moreover, the person holding this position was also an adviser on how various problems were to be solved. (...) Regarding their relationship with the authorities, the Roma Assistance Department at the Târgu-Mureș Mayorality is the local*

*administration office that deals with the issues of this community. At least in the first stage, after the office had been established, the community accepted this preferential treatment, as the employee was speaking Roma language. However, beyond this direct usefulness, no long-term effects had been taken into consideration, of the fact that an ethnic minority has to address a special office, located not in the Town Hall, but in the city's medieval fortress. (Târgu Mureş, Cengher 2007)*

At the same time this mediation also affects the political connection between local authorities and Roma citizens, as responsibilities are blurred.

**Quote 12-4. Political accountability in Sfântu Gheorghe**

*Community problems are solved by its representatives, who have a good relationship with local authorities. Therefore, the other community members do not have their own experiences with local authorities and this is why, in a crisis situation, when failure or unsolved problems persist, the locals blame authorities without understanding the limiting factors that condition their activity. (Sfântu Gheorghe, Kalamár 2007)*

## 12.1 The Formal – Informal Partnership

One significant issue confronting Roma communities is the confusion between formal and informal leadership. In many communities formal, elected leaders – such as local authorities – rely on informal leaders to communicate with the Roma citizens and to help implement policies. This assistance is two-sided. On the one hand, informal leaders provide vital organizational support to local authorities, and in this way they help to solve urgent issues. On the other hand, informal leaders accumulate significant power due to their connection to local authorities – power which is not constrained by the accountability requirements of any public office, since local leaders are usually private individuals. This power may, in some cases, be used against the interests of the local citizens. Even when this is not the case, the proximity of these informal leaders to the centre of decision making without transparency of decision-making procedures gives rise to significant public suspicion which, even when it is not warranted by the facts, may hinder local development efforts.

A second problem related to this partnership of formal and informal authorities is the fact that, while public authorities operate on the principle of the division of power (legislative, executive, judiciary), local leaders may represent the community in its relationship with all of these authorities. These leaders may acquire, therefore, decision-making power or influence in all areas of community life, without any significant counterbalance.

## 12.2 Popular Suspicion

Most community reports discuss cases of suspicion of the Roma people, addressing the interests and actions of local authorities, NGO activists, informal leaders etc. The field researchers do not have the available means to decide whether such accusations are ever true or false – this is for the justice system. Even so, independently of whether these accusations are justified or not in a given case, we can look at the social conditions that lead to their persistence. Among these we may indicate, as hypotheses, the following:

- Personal experiences with cases of abuse or discrimination in relations with informal or formal leaders, or NGO's;
- Other reasons for dissatisfaction, which are misinterpreted as abuse or discrimination;

- The lack of transparency in the decision-making processes of local authorities or NGO's regarding policies and benefits for the Roma people;
- The low “policy literacy” of many Roma people, leading to difficulties in understanding the decision-making process and its constraints.

**Quote 12-5. Leadership and suspicion in Târgu Mureș**

*What is very suggestive here is the perception of the foreigner, the intruder, regarded with suspicion inside the community. More than once I've seen Roma who express their suspicions about the real intents of the organisations that do charity in the community: “Even though they grant financial support, the Brits do make a living on us” (R.V., 31 y.o., Roma). This type of perception may be the cause of the problems that can be identified even in the attitude leading to a refusal to send their children to the community school: “The foreign foundation that has built the school does have some interests, if they come here in the Gypsy colony... they do swirl around with some cash. Maybe they drop a plate of food and some rags here and there... but it's sure they don't come for nothing.” (Discussion with a Roma person, 43 y.o., Târgu Mureș, Cengher 2007)*

While public policies and administrators may discriminate against Roma – and especially against the poorer Roma – the local leaders themselves are also seen in several reports to be rather ineffectual and sometimes surrounded by popular suspicion.

**Quote 12-6. Leadership and suspicion in Cetățeni**

*As is also the case with the majority of the Roma residents in the locality, people in this area are disappointed and they have an ironical attitude towards the activities of Roma organizations that only contact them before the elections and promise a solution to their problems, and then abandon them after the elections. (Cetățeni, Isan 2007)*

**Quote 12-7. Leadership and suspicion in Cugir**

*As I wanted to learn more about the various associations of the Roma, I was referred to the ‘expert for Roma issues in Cugir’ at the City Hall, who was the president of a ‘initiative group’. The communication was not very smooth – probably because I was suspected for having a hidden agenda, other than the one I had declared. (All the conversations took place within the perimeter of the ‘Social Bathing Facility’). As a matter of fact, all the respondents outside the institution were of more help, as people who hold certain positions (Roma or non-Roma) were very slow in making a decision about how to support my research. And then, the ‘internal regulations’ at the City Hall require every employee to inform or ask the mayor’s permission for any type of collaboration with anyone from outside (interview, delivery of official information of any kind, etc.). This aspect somewhat hindered my research at local level, especially because some of the people at the City Hall were missing – especially the mayor, who was out of the country when I got to Cugir. (Later on I learned about the attitude of great distrust towards the representatives of the Roma, to be more general; it seems that certain people have obtained their influence in rather obscure ways; usurers are mentioned... but at the same time, I am being told that those people are not bad, they are just... somehow different; one obvious thing is the difference between the financial possibilities of the majority and those of some of the ‘representatives’). (Cugir, Stoianovici 2007)*

**Quote 12-8. Leadership failure in a community project**

*There is a large number of people who are not registered and have no Identity documents, which makes them formally excluded. There has been an attempt – a programme launched by the Tulcea Prefect's office and co-ordinated by the Babadag Local Authority, to identify people in this situation in order to be given Identity documents – but it ended in a failure. The person in charge of this project from the Local Authority was Regep Mustafa, adviser on Roma issues at that time and member of the community, who is also responsible for the failure of the project.*

*Regep ("Monoloi", by his nick name) is a very active, entrepreneur-like individual. For him, being appointed as adviser on Roma issues at the Babadag Local Authority, on the one hand, was the confirmation of his status as a leader in the community, and on the other hand, it led to a considerable decrease of his incomes, as the 3.5 million lei salary was obviously insufficient to support his large family. Thus, as naturally as he could, he asked the assisted individuals to pay amounts between 200 – 500 thousands lei in exchange for the support to get their Identity documents. This led to him being replaced in the public position he was holding, but at the same time, the project was abandoned for an indefinite period.*

*Monoloi, however, is not the only one responsible for the whole situation; on the contrary, we may actually say that his help could have contributed decisively to solving the problem. Later on, it was discovered that those who were in the situation of having no Identity documents didn't really want to have any – some arguments that were revealed to us were that having Identity documents would also mean being obliged to pay taxes, fees, fines, etc. (Babadag, Gătin 2007)*

## 12.3 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

Special representation and mediation institutions for the Roma people and communities are by design temporary arrangements. Their mission will be accomplished only when increased social equality and integration of the Roma people makes them obsolete. This time has not yet come. Meanwhile, these institutions run the risk of becoming communication channels themselves instead of facilitators for communication, in this way replicating and replacing the mainstream institutions but with downgraded responsibilities.





# 13 A Survey of Local Authorities' Information on Roma Communities

The Local Authority Survey (LA survey) Questionnaire asked public officials in all Local Authorities in Romania to provide estimates for various indicators of social inclusion related to Roma communities. The survey had a double purpose:

- 1. Gathering information at locality level concerning the situation of Roma communities;
- 2. Complementing available official information, such as that included in the 2002 census, with unofficial estimates that are used to inform the policy-making process at local levels.

People in all social positions, including local authorities, use multiple sources of information to make decisions, while official information is restricted to verifiable, objective indicators. For this reason the survey respondents were asked to provide unofficial information, relying on their own perceptions and experiences, where official information was missing or felt to be inadequate. In this way the survey hoped to throw light on the data which informs, officially and unofficially, the policy-making process at local level.

It is expected that the information offered by respondents would be, to a certain extent, subject to error – random (due to misinformation, for example) and systematic (due to mis-representations of the Roma situation, for example). This is why the data from the LA Survey database is best understood from a statistical, aggregated perspective (in order to minimize random errors) and as partially subjective, rather than purely objective, data. Subjective estimates are nevertheless valid indicators of the gravity of social problems at local level, and can be used as starting points for development projects and for further data collection.

The type of information included in the LA database does not allow any answer to be construed as to the question of the total number of Roma-ethnic citizens in Romania, since it is probable that some estimates are at least partially based on hetero-identification of Roma people by the respondents. Hetero-identification as Roma cannot be used as an indicator of ethnicity; however, it is an indicator of social exclusion and poverty, since attributions of Roma ethnicity correlate with a disadvantaged social situation.

## 13.1 Estimates of Rates and Numbers

Data from the 2002 Census indicates that 70% of Romanian localities have Roma-ethnic residents. In the LA survey 61% of the returned questionnaires indicated the presence of Roma population in the locality, which is about 10% lower than the national distribution. (Table 13-1)

Table 13-1. Existence of Roma population in localities in Census and LA survey data (number of cases, percentage)

	Census data (2002)		LA survey (2007)*	
	N	%	N	%
There are no Roma	963	30	673	39
There are Roma	2211	70	1100	61
Total valid cases (localities)	3174	100	1773	100

\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities



Because the LA survey answers rely on subjective estimates, there are discrepancies between the 2002 census data and the LA database. While some of these discrepancies may be due to objective demographic developments, most of them probably reflect the differences in sources of information instead of changes in the social situation. For example, respondents in around 13% of localities that had no Roma residents in the 2002 Census have submitted information about Roma people in the LA survey, while respondents in around 17% of localities that have Roma residents in the 2002 Census declared in the LA questionnaire that they have no Roma residents. (Table 13-2)

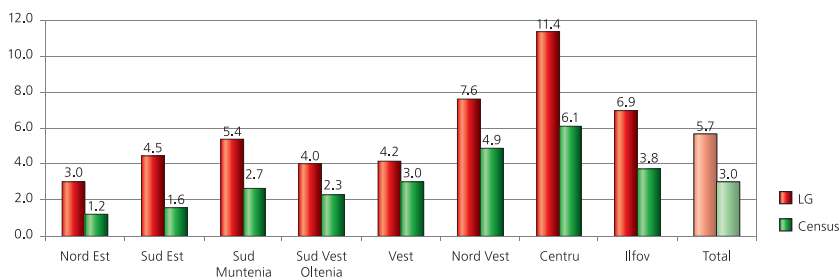
*Table 13-2. Comparison of existence of Roma population in localities in Census and LA survey data (percentage)*

		In Census data (2002)		
		No	Yes	Total
In LA dataset (2007)*	No	87	17	39
	Yes	13	83	61
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*\*The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities*

If the data is organized by regions, the result shows that in some regions the local authorities estimated the number of Roma to be significantly higher than the census data revealed, and others to be closer to the census indications (Chart 13-1). Although the rate of localities with Roma-ethnic residents is lower in the LA survey than in the census, the overall rate of Roma people in the LA dataset is almost double that of the 2002 census data. The total rate of inhabitants classified as Roma by local authority representatives in Romania is almost 6%.

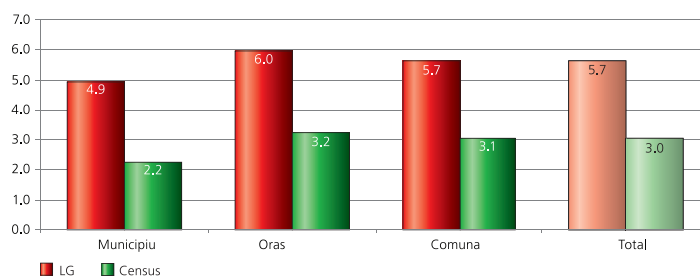
*Chart 13-1. Rate of Roma people by regions in Census data (2002) and in LA dataset\* (2007) (percentage)*



*\*The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities*

The LA dataset shows considerable differences between proportions of Roma inhabitants by region. The lowest rate is in the North-East region with 3 percent, and the highest is in the Central region with more than 11%.

Chart 13-2. Rate of Roma people by type of locations in Census data, 2002 and in LA dataset\*, 2007 (percentage)



\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities

We expected that at regional level the rate of Roma people would be higher in the less developed regions, areas, and localities, and also that Roma people would be overrepresented in rural localities. The LA data does not confirm this. Based on the LA dataset one cannot speak about regional concentration of poverty and ethnicity in Romania. Although there are some counties where the rate of Roma population is higher (in Brasov and Mureş it is more than 14 percent, in Sibiu it is over 12 percent, in Covasna, Bihor, Satu Mare and Calarasi the Roma rate is higher than 8%)<sup>29</sup>, the map of ethnicity and the map of level of development of localities do not overlap. There are many developed areas with a high proportion of Roma and also less developed ones with a low proportion of Roma.<sup>30</sup>

## 13.2 Information on Formal Exclusion

Since we cannot speak about strong regional concentration of Roma population in Romania, we need to check other possible factors for social exclusion, such as formal exclusion (lack of personal and property documents), spatial segregation inside localities, educational inequalities and the presence of ethnic conflict. We will also control for some other possible indicators of inclusion, such as the existence of Roma NGOs and Roma experts employed by Local Authorities, as well as previous programmes involving Roma people.

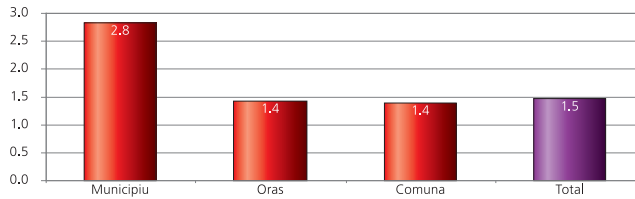
### 13.2.1 Lack of Personal Documents

According to perceptions of local authorities, altogether 1.5% of Roma people have no birth certificate (BC). Lack of BC can be due to lack of registration, or to lost certificates. From our data we cannot know the precise reason for lacking a BC.

<sup>29</sup> See Chart 16-2 in the Annex

<sup>30</sup> See Map 16-1 - Map 16-4 in the Annex

*Chart 13-3. Rate of Roma people without birth certificate compared to the total number of Roma, by type of locations, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*

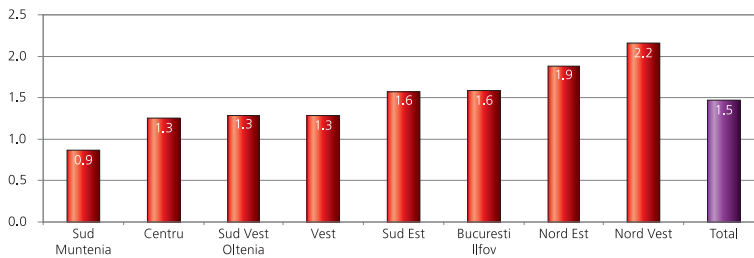


*\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities*

Data shows that lack of BC is more likely to occur in large cities (Municipiu), and that there is no difference between small cities (oras) and villages (comuna).

The highest rate of Roma people without BC, as declared by local authorities, is in the North-West region (2.2%), while South-Muntenia has the best situation of all regions (0.9%).

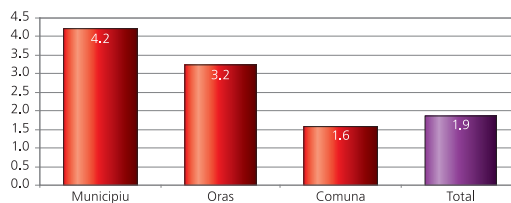
*Chart 13-4. Rate of Roma people without birth certificate compared to the total number of Roma, by regions, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*



*\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities*

Another important indicator of formal exclusion is the lack of identity documents (ID). Although the total rate seems not to be very high (1.9%), lack of ID has a strong connection to access to employment and different social services, such as health care and education. As with BC, the problem seems more serious in large cities (Municipiu), where an estimated 4.2% of Roma people have no ID card, while in villages this rate is around 1.6%.

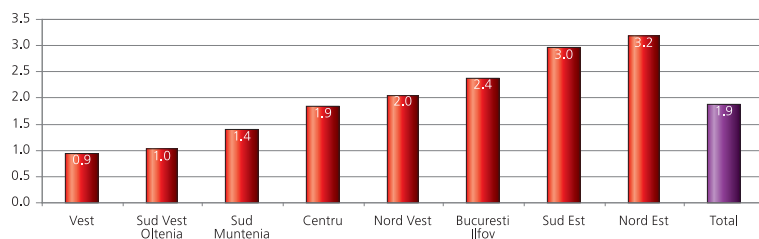
*Chart 13-5. Rate of Roma people without ID card compared to the total number of Roma, by type of locations, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*



*\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities*

In the Eastern part of the country (both North- and South-East) the average estimated rate of Roma people without ID is around 3%. There is considerable variation between county average estimates: for example, in Neamt County the estimated rate is 9 percent, which is more than four times higher than the country average.

*Chart 13-6. Rate of Roma people without ID card compared to the total number of Roma, by regions, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*

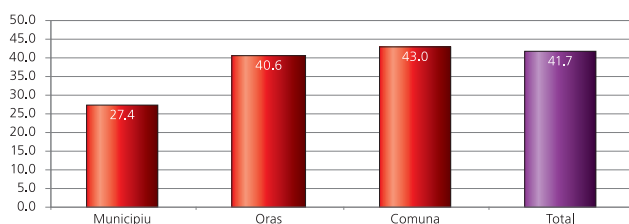


\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities

### 13.2.2 Lack of Property Papers

Another important factor for formal exclusion is lack of housing documents – such as property titles or rental contracts for land and housing. Based on the perception of local authorities this problem seems to be much more frequent than the lack of Identity documents. Answers indicate that more than 40% of Roma households living in compact communities do not have land titles. And the problem is more serious in smaller cities and villages than in big cities.

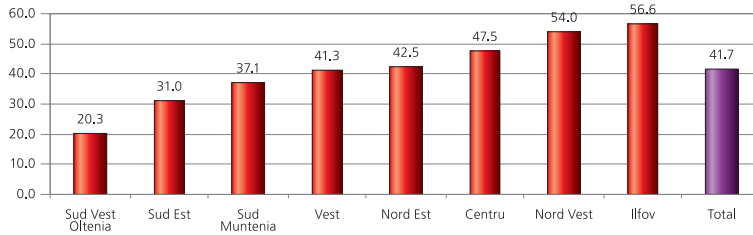
*Chart 13-7. Rate of Roma households in communities without land title, by type of location, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*



\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities

There are also huge regional differences: in South-West Oltenia the average estimated rate is around half the country-wide rate, whereas in Ilfov and the North-West region the authorities declare that more than half of the Roma households living in compact communities have no land title.

*Chart 13-8. Rate of Roma households in communities without land title, by regions, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*



*\*The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities*

### 13.2.3 Other Factors for Social Exclusion

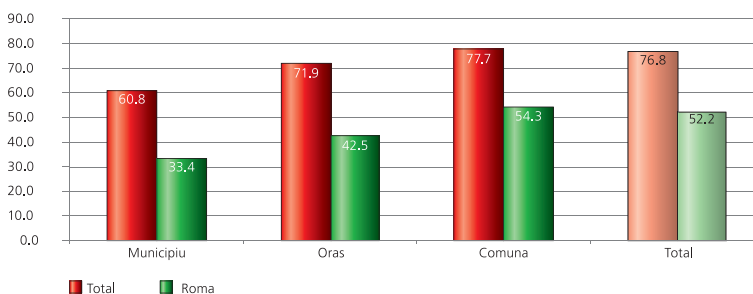
#### *Education*

One of the reasons Roma (and generally disadvantaged) children have unequal chances from the very beginning of elementary school is that many of them do not attend kindergartens, while non-Roma, or less poor children from their age group, usually start elementary school after two or three years of pre-school.

As Chart 13-9 shows, an estimated 77% of the children aged 3-6 are attending kindergarten in Romania<sup>31</sup>, compared to about 50% of Roma children in the same age group.

If we organize our data by type of locations the picture is really surprising. The average estimated rate of children attending kindergarten is much lower in municipalities, a bit higher in towns, and highest in rural communes. The rate of Roma children attending kindergarten (computed from the relevant age group) is also lowest in municipalities. The difference between the total population and Roma seems to be higher in urban localities compared to rural localities. There are no strong differences between regions.

*Chart 13-9. Rate of children attending kindergarten compared to the total number of children aged 3-6, by type of location, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*



*\*The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities*

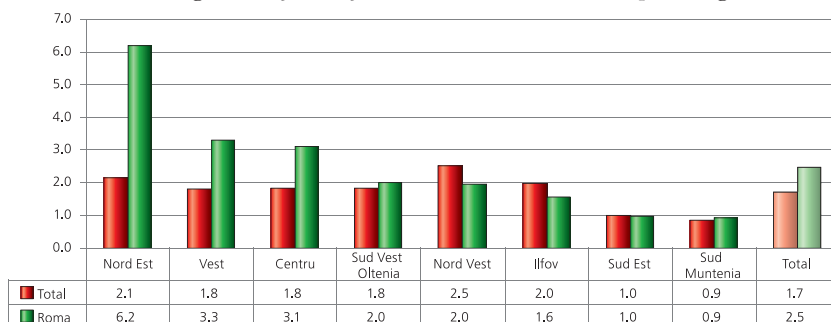
One of the most controversial types of educational segregation of Roma or disadvantaged children is sending them to special (auxiliary) schools, which have a curricula adapted to children

<sup>31</sup> The total number of children is a country-wide data, containing also Roma children.

with special needs. Roma children attend them for a variety of reasons – such as being considered unable to learn in regular schools; or because parents want to provide them with a more supportive educational environment (feeling that they are neglected in the regular schools), and also because of the extended timetable and lower costs of these schools which try to support stretched family budgets. But this type of segregation has long-term disadvantages, both for pupils and for the general education system. Roma pupils who attend special schools implicitly give up the possibility of higher education and are limited to a more basic curriculum - their school diploma may also be a disadvantage in the labour market. This segregation also reinforces the general inability of the regular schools to accommodate Roma children within ethnically integrated classrooms, and therefore prolongs this educational crisis.

The average rate of pupils attending special schools in European countries is between 1.5-2%. The LA dataset indicates that the total rate in Romania is around this number, but amongst Roma it is higher (2.5% versus the total of 1.7<sup>32</sup>). There are considerable regional differences (see Chart 13-10.). In North-East the estimated rate of pupils attending special schools compared to total number of Roma children from the relevant age group (6-14) is almost 3 times higher than the average of the region (6.2% compared to 2.1%). The rate is lowest in South-Muntenia, where the Roma rate is no higher in this region than the regional average (0.9%).

*Chart 13-10. Rate of children attending special (auxiliary) school compared to the total number of children aged 6-14 years, by counties, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)*

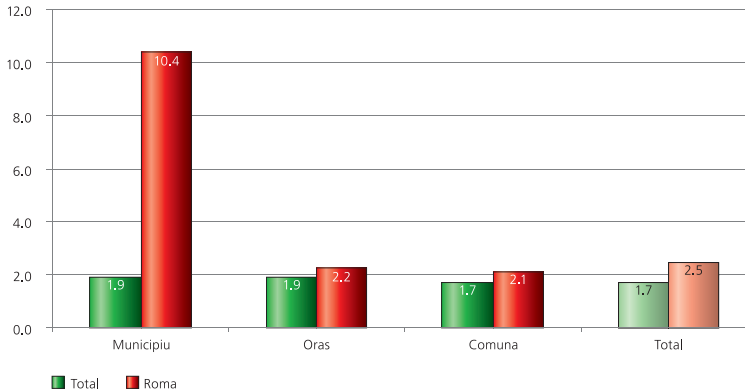


\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities

Data controlled by type of locality shows a really shocking picture (Chart 13-11). While in towns (oras) and villages (comuna) the difference between the total and the Roma rates is minimal, in larger municipalities (municipiu) the average estimated rate of children attending special schools compared to the total number of Roma pupils is five times higher than the national average. A probable explanation is that special schools are not available in smaller localities. In larger localities, where there are such schools, they enrol a disproportionate number of Roma pupils, even if they have no medical reasons for enrolment.

<sup>32</sup> We need to note again that the total rate is a country-wide average including data about Roma. The difference between Roma and non-Roma is consequently even higher.

Chart 13-11. Rate of children attending special (auxiliary) schools from the total number of children aged 6-14 years, by type of locality, LA dataset, 2007\* (percentage)



\*The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities

#### *Ethnic Conflicts*

Out of the 1773 local authorities who submitted answers to the questionnaire, 1305 answered the question Q13<sup>33</sup>.

Among the 1100 local authorities declaring that there are Roma-ethnics in the locality, in 88 cases the respondents stated that there were/are conflicts linked to the Roma presence. There were also two special cases in which the authorities stated that there are only undeclared/unregistered Roma in the locality, but even so there are conflicts linked to these Roma families.

In the remaining localities, the authorities specifically stated that there are no conflicts linked to the Roma presence. It is possible that this was a socially desirable answer, or that they did not have information about such conflicts (especially in larger localities). Even so, as the subsequent analysis also suggests, it seems that at national level there are few violent social conflicts with an explicit ethnic context.

In total, there are 90 cases of reported local conflicts linked to the Roma residents. Of these, only 38 contain information about the number of reported conflicts.

Analysis of the more detailed answers indicates that most of the conflicts linked by local authorities to the presence of Roma people are actually different types of delinquent actions by individual Roma with no explicit ethnic significance or motivation. Some of these incidents may rather still have been caused, among other factors, by the precarious living conditions of the Roma.

- in 34 cases, the local authorities found that the main reasons for ethnic conflict were property destruction and stealing;
- in 14 cases the conflicts involved “disturbing the public order”;
- in 11 localities the conflicts were produced by alcohol consumption;
- in 13 cases the conflicts were caused by what we term “precarious living conditions” – the delay or refusal of the VMG<sup>34</sup>, lack of IDs, lack of property documents (followed by repeated evacuations), “lack of education”, the specific living conditions of the Roma that angered the

<sup>33</sup> This chapter is based on the analysis of Q13. and Q14. of the LA datasheet referring to the conflicts in the locality, involving the Roma:

Q13. In the last year, were there any conflicts linked to the presence of the Roma in the locality?

If yes, how many?

Q14. If yes, please describe, briefly, the most important ones...

<sup>34</sup> Minimum Guaranteed Income (*Venitul Minim Garantat*)

non-Roma neighbours, and fights over precarious resources and income sources (such as fights over fruit-picking, mushroom-picking and other seasonal crop-picking). These conflicts actually show the difficult conditions of the Roma in the respective localities, and the fact that resources are so scarce (scarcity of income sources, information, housing, education) that they generate conflict;

- in 9 localities, the local authorities identified conflicts of a more inter-personal level – in other words, family fights, scandals;
- the local authorities reported six cases of severe infractions of the law (murder and attempted murder) committed by individual Roma.

Several cases reported by local authorities seem to have a more direct, explicit ethnic motivation or significance for the parties involved:

- there are seven recognized cases of evident inter-ethnic conflicts – as we previously stressed, this is just the number of cases for which the local authorities gave us information
- the actual number of inter-ethnic conflicts could be entirely different. All inter-ethnic conflicts are worth studying in depth, as, for example, the inter-ethnic conflicts in the village of Găleşti (Mureş county), which ended up with a house set on fire;
- in another three cases, the conflicts were between teenagers and there were another three localities in which minor conflicts, reported as solved at inter-personal level, were reported;
- there were six cases of open conflict between Roma and the local authorities, particularly the police. Of these, one should be mentioned. In the city of Ploieşti a group of Roma set the national flag on fire, in front of the police station – a symbolic gesture that shows the real gulf between the police and the Roma population;
- there were two cases in Grătia village (Teleorman county) where the conflicts were caused by severe traffic accidents – the fact that the local authorities link these to the Roma presence in the locality is an indicator of the fact that the ethnic element can sometimes be an escalating force, feeding the hatred that already exists;
- the data from the city of Sighetu Marmăției (Maramureş county) is fairly negative. A Roma citizen got into a fight with a group of teenagers and died as a result. As there are no further details or comments from the respondent, it is hard to analyze the exact role of the ethnic issue in this incident. But this case raises the whole question of the public representation of conflicts in which the Roma are the victims: how do the authorities react and how does the mass-media and public opinion create the story? Is there a difference in representations of the conflicts having Roma as victims versus Roma as perpetrators? A research and monitoring grid covering this issue would be very useful for measuring an important and hidden component of discrimination in Romania.

### 13.2.4 Information on Institutional Capacity

Among the 1100 local authorities declaring that there are ethnic Roma in the locality (out of the 1773 local authorities which submitted answers to the questionnaire), only 192 stated that there are associations, initiative groups or NGOs that work or have worked in the Roma communities in the locality.<sup>35</sup>

This information is worrying because, at a formal level, the total number of associations and foundations in Romania claiming to cater for the Roma is larger. This could mean:

- either the local authorities do not have information about the activities of the NGOs – revealing a communication problem or, even worse, lack of interest;

<sup>35</sup> Analysis of Q15 and Q16, referring to the civil society initiatives for the benefit of the Roma communities: Q15. In your locality, are there associations, initiative groups or NGOs working in the Roma communities? Q16. If yes, please write their names and activities, as well as the contact details for persons responsible.



- or the local NGOs are not active or visible enough – revealing a communication problem or, even worse, lack of resources or competence.

The questionnaire also required further information such as name, description of activities and contact persons for the association/initiative group/NGO active in the local Roma community. 182 local authorities gave answers to this, but not all were complete: approximately half only gave the name and the contact person for the association/initiative group.

Among the more complete answers some are typical:

- In some cases, the organizing of the “mixed work group” at the town hall level was perceived by the respondent authority as local initiative for the Roma - a good sign of the collaboration between local authorities and local civil society, at least at a formal level. However, the concrete, pragmatic outcomes of this formal structure are not clearly stated, probably because it is relatively new.
- The Pro-Europa Party of Roma was mentioned in at least 20 cases as the main representative of the civil society in the respective localities. The typical description of the Roma Party's activities, in different localities, is “representing and supporting the rights and interests of the Roma minority, among the non-Roma and to the authorities”. The typical practical activities that the Roma Party organizes at the local level are linked to registration for education and re-qualification courses. Only in one case the Roma Party was described by the respondent authorities as a structure involved in all kinds of activities and community issues.
- Most of the activities enumerated by the respondent authorities were linked to culture and education. In a more general sense, there are the local initiatives to improve the Roma public image, to support Roma culture and the development of Roma traditions, and to further Roma “integration” and the public representation of the Roma (approximately 20 such responses). On a more practical level, kindergartens have been organized, occupational re-conversion classes have been held and school mediators have been hired (approximately 15 responses).
- Projects for improving the infrastructure in the Roma communities were also mentioned by six respondents.
- Projects for solving the problem of ID papers were also mentioned in four localities.
- Collaboration with external partners and with PHARE structures were mentioned in four localities.
- In only 15 cases the presence of other NGOs, working at the same time in the communities, was mentioned. This fact – that in only 15 localities the authorities mentioned the combined effort of more active civil society – means that in other localities, problem solving has to rely on minimal sources and resources, and also that other localities have difficulty in building a safety network, or that the local authorities don't have the correct information.
- Through these questionnaires, for about 60 localities, we received contact details for representatives of the civil society (informal or formal initiative groups representatives).

There were also some atypical answers:

- Some respondents stated that there used to be counselling programmes and info-centers/information centres which functioned well but didn't continue. The question has to be asked – why did they not continue? What mechanisms are there for prolonging “good practices”/programmes that functioned well? And are such programmes really used as “best examples” in other localities? The other question that has to be asked is what benefits do the info-centres and counselling centres bring to the communities? And to what extent do active social interventions need to be doubled, in the case of each community, by a permanent counselling service?
- One case stated that the first Roma NGO is currently in the process of being established.

- Four cases gave unexpected answers: the employment of Roma as workers in a refuse-collecting company was considered to be a social project; also, the fact that a transport company was working with people from the Roma community was seen as a project worth mentioning.
- In the town of Piatra Olt (Olt county), the respondent states that a housing project and a refuse-collecting project for the Roma community were “illegally rejected”. This raises some questions. Why were two projects refused? Who refused them? Why the refusal was illegal and, most important, how were people’s needs satisfied if these projects were refused? More detailed research on the situation in Piatra Olt might be recommended/could be advantageous.
- In the case of Merei (Buzau county), in the village Izvoru Dulce, there is a current project focused on the drinking water supply of the Roma community. On the one hand, the fact that this project exists at all is positive – on the other hand, it is worrying, because it shows that lack of drinking water is still a problem in some rural Roma communities.
- In the city of Gheorgheni (Harghita county), the social department in the Town Hall organized, together with two NGOs, a special school for Roma. This might be a best practice example of partnership between local authorities and civil initiative groups, in education; on the other hand, the long-term impact should also be taken into account – special schools for Roma often generate “integration” but, in fact, maintain segregation (because these special schools for Roma children separate them from other children).
- In two cases, social assistance and social case inquiries – which should be a compulsory service in the town hall – were presented as initiatives for the Roma citizens. The fact that a social service delivered by the municipalities is presented as a social initiative is worrying – showing that the municipality doesn’t consider these services an obligation (as it should be), but an initiative.
- In one case, in Cârțișoara (Sibiu county), the conservation of the Peasant Museum was presented as a social initiative for the Roma community – the fact that Roma workers were involved is perceived as a social initiative.
- The terms “community”, “disadvantaged groups” and “marginalized groups” are used in only one response. This could indicate a lack of interest in these topics for the majority of social initiatives (which focus mostly on culture), a lack of knowledge of the terms and concepts related to social exclusion, or a preference on the part of the respondents (representatives of the local authorities) not to use these terms - something which has grave connotations.

Localities with Roma experts employed in the local administration have a greater probability of having best practice programmes involving Roma (see Table 16-27. in the annex). However, statistical data alone cannot indicate whether experts have had a real contribution to this outcome or whether their employment is a result of such projects. Both variables could be the result of the political will of the local authorities. Correlation data should not be automatically interpreted from a causal perspective, unless clear information (for example, from qualitative case study analyses or interviews) indicates a causal connection between the two variables.

Of all local authorities that answered the question, around 15% declared that they employed Roma experts.

*Table 13-3. If Roma experts employed in local administration, number of cases, percentage*

	N	%
Roma expert(s) employed	191	14.6
No Roma expert	1115	85.4
Total answers	1306	100.0

In about 22% of localities there have been best practice programmes involving Roma.

*Table 13-4. Best practice programmes involving Roma in the locality, number of cases, percentage*

	N	%
There have been such programmes	282	22
No such programmes	1001	78
Total answers	1283	100

The larger the Roma community is, the less likely it is that either Roma experts are employed by local authorities or that best practice programmes have been put in place: correlations are significant and negative in outcome.

The Roma communities with a higher probability of best practice programmes involving Roma people are (see Table 16-27.):

- the ones in which Roma experts are employed in the local administration (the most powerful correlation);
- smaller Roma communities;
- Roma communities with no ethnic-related conflicts (a significant, but not very strong correlation);
- Roma communities with a higher percentage of people without birth certificates and households without land titles.

The Roma communities which suffer more from social exclusion problems, such as poor infrastructure and illiteracy, do not have, on average, a higher probability of best practice interventions than the others. The only two issues that seem to be an incentive for development projects are lack of birth certificates and lack of land titles (“formal exclusion”).

However, lack of infrastructure (indicated by the high percentage of households who only have a common water source) and low human resources (indicated by the estimated percentage of illiterate people) are positively correlated with social assistance, in the form of Minimum Guaranteed Income.

### 13.3 Some Concluding Remarks and Points to Highlight

#### *Points to Highlight*

- Although the rate of localities with ethnic Roma residents is lower in the LA survey than in the census, the overall estimated rate of Roma people in the LA dataset is almost double that of the 2002 census. The total estimated rate of inhabitants classified as Roma by local authority representatives in Romania is almost 6%.
- Based on the LA dataset one cannot speak about regional concentration of poverty and ethnicity in Romania. Although there are some counties where the estimated rate of Roma population is higher, the map of ethnicity and the map of level of development of localities do not overlap.
- According to local authorities, an estimated 1.5% of Roma people have no birth certificate.
- Data shows that estimated rates for the lack of birth certificates are higher in large cities (Municipiu).

- Lack of ID card, as with birth certificates, seems more serious in large cities (Municipiu), where an estimated 4.2% of Roma population has no ID card, while in villages this rate is around 1.6%.
- An estimated rate of more than 40% of Roma households living in compact communities does not have land titles. The problem seems to be more serious in smaller cities and villages than in big cities.
- An estimated 77% of the children aged 3- and 6 are attending kindergarten in Romania, compared to about 50% of Roma children in the same age group.
- The estimated rate of Roma children attending kindergarten (computed from the relevant age group) is lowest in the municipalities. The difference between the total population and Roma seems to be higher in urban localities than in rural localities.
- The LA dataset indicates that the estimated total rate of pupils attending special schools in Romania is around 1.5-2 percent, which is the European average rate, but for the Roma this is higher (2.5% compared to the total of 1.7).
- While in towns (oras) and villages (comuna) the estimated difference between non-Roma and Roma rates for special schools is minimal, in larger municipalities (municipiu) the average estimated rate of Roma children attending special schools is five times higher than the national average.
- Of the 1100 local authorities who declared that there are ethnic Roma in the locality, in 88 cases the respondents stated that there were, or are, conflicts linked to the Roma presence.
- Of the 1100 local authorities who declared that there are ethnic Roma in the locality (out of the 1773 local authorities which submitted answers to the questionnaire), 192 stated that there are associations, initiative groups or NGOs that work or have worked in the Roma communities in the locality.
- Of all local authorities that answered the question, around 15% declared that Roma experts were employed in the local administration.
- In about 22% of localities which provided data on Roma communities there have been best practice programmes involving Roma.
- According to the LA database, the larger the Roma community is, the less likely it is that either Roma experts are employed by local authorities, or that best practice programmes have been put in place: correlations are significant and negative in outcome.

## PART VI



## CONCLUSIONS



# 14 Conclusions

In the following sections we shall take a look at the main empirical findings of the research, reorganizing them from a different perspective. Namely, we ask: what information do we have on the development opportunities for Roma people and communities? Romanian society changed significantly after 1990, and now European accession has opened up new possibilities for wealth creation, mobility and innovation. Of course, the costs and the benefits of these changes, such as the transition process, the European integration and the transformations to come, are not distributed evenly. Which Roma people have the resources to benefit from these developments, and what might prevent them from doing so?

## 14.1 Constructing the “Average” and the “Middle” Roma Subject

As with most pieces of sociological research on Roma issues, we have particularly highlighted the indicators and processes of social exclusion. Of course, data indicates that there is a degree of variation in the economic and social characteristics of the Roma. There are Roma people who work in all sectors of employment, who live in all types of residences, and who have various degrees of access to social services – from very low to very high. This report does not reveal a uniform marginal condition, but a diversity of experiences and living trajectories. However, previous and current research concur that personal and community development opportunities for Roma and, for that matter, for all people defined as *Tigani*, are seriously diminished by processes of exclusion.

The risk of any diagnosis that points again and again to the marginal social position of the Roma people, is that it may simply reinforce stereotypes about the impoverished *Tigani* who, allegedly, will never change their ways. There are several reasons for the systematic highlighting of social exclusion of the Roma in sociological research. On the one hand, since many sociological research projects aim to contribute to policy debates, the general focus is on what is socially seen as “problematic”, rather than on what is seen as “normal”. Even if survey data illustrates varied situations of employment or, for example, education, the discussion is focused on the unemployed and the under-educated. This tendency is reinforced by the persuasive power of averages and majorities in statistics – since average Roma incomes are low and the majority of Roma are poor. The average Roma person lives a life of hardship and social exclusion.

On the other hand, sampling is also a consideration. As we have discussed in the introduction and methodology chapters, Roma respondents in Roma samples are usually selected from Roma communities, leaving aside the Roma who live in non-Roma neighbourhoods and who may be systematically different on issues such as employment, schooling, housing etc.

The distribution of various types of capital (human, financial) in the Roma population is biased towards the lower extreme. Even so, as a consequence of policy programmes targeting Roma and sampling methods of research projects on Roma, the sociological and public discussions on Roma people are even more biased towards the “social problem” topics.

The richest Roma, as well as the richest non-Roma, are usually under-represented in surveys, because of difficulties in applying a questionnaire to them, and because of a general public reluctance to declare high incomes to a survey operator. At the same time, though, the rich Roma and *Gadje* are extensively covered by the mass-media. The people living in the middle, in terms of wealth and education, the ones who lead unspectacular lives, are the missing characters - both from sociological

discourse and from public representations. By the “middle” Roma we mean the ones whose living conditions allow them to make choices which do not require any compromise on basic needs.

In order to balance out, even briefly, the representation of the Roma people which is biased towards the average, we include here some of the same statistics presented earlier, highlighting the life trajectories of the “middle” Roma – in comparison to “middle” non-Roma respondents.

- The more educated Roma respondents accept more often close relationships with the *Gadje*. On the contrary, the more educated non-Roma accept less often close relationships with the Roma.
- If we look at all children aged 1 to 14 years, we can see that 47% of Roma children live in households that can afford a pair of winter shoes for all of them, compared to 85% of non-Roma children.
- 47% of Roma children live in households who can afford a warm winter coat for all of them, compared to 87% for non-Roma children.
- 90% of Roma people are registered with a family doctor.
- 43% of Roma have a mobile telephone, compared to 58% of non-Roma – one of the smallest differences in ownership.
- 21% of Roma households own four or more long-term consumer goods, compared to 47% of non-Roma households.
- 22% of Roma aged 18-59 have regular work, compared to 33% of non-Roma.
- 2% of the working Roma population work in education, science, health and culture, compared to 10% of the non-Roma working population.
- 95% of young Roma adults (aged 18-30) are high school graduates, while an additional 2% have pursued higher education. In contrast, 41% of non-Roma young adults are high school graduates, while an additional 27% have pursued higher education.
- 12% of Roma households have borrowed money from banks, compared to one fifth of the comparative sample.
- 4% of Roma adult and working household members are business owners, compared to 6% of non-Roma.
- The Roma respondents who have already worked abroad are 2.4 times more likely to find themselves in better living conditions than a year ago. This difference for the non-Roma respondents is only 1.6 times more likely.

## 14.2 The Two Vicious Circles

The metaphors of “vicious circle” and “trap” have often been used in relation to the Roma, pointing out the mutual reinforcement of poverty, unemployment, school failure, negative stereotyping and discrimination. For analytical purposes, it is useful to speak not of one, but of two such vicious circles: the one of poverty and low education, and the other of social distance and segregation. While in the case of the Roma both of them are linked – particularly due to residential and school segregation – in the case of other social groups they may work rather more independently. For example, social distance and segregation may separate local communities which otherwise share similar living standards and styles – such as the Romanians and the Hungarians. On the other hand, the vicious circle of poverty and low education also traps social groups such as the residents of poor rural localities, who are not affected by negative stereotypes to the extent that *Țigani* people are. But unlike these social categories, the Roma people live under the combined constraints of both vicious circles, which in their case are mutually reinforcing.



### 14.2.1 The Vicious Circle of Poverty and Low Education

Data on income, employment, credit and consumption indicates that Roma people are very often excluded from the core areas of economic markets. They have less formal employment, they often have little, if any, stable income sources, they often do not own long-term consumer goods, and they have less access to bank credit, depending rather on family loans or private creditors.

- 62% of Roma respondents declared that someone in their household has gone to bed hungry in the last month, compared to 12% of non-Roma respondents.
- 53% of Roma have a refrigerator in their house, compared to 92% of non-Roma.

Access to better jobs is conditioned by education level – this is one of the most important areas of disadvantage for the Roma population.

- 9% of young Roma adults (aged 18-30) are high school graduates, while an additional 2% have pursued higher education. In contrast, 41% of non-Roma young adults are high school graduates, while an additional 27% have pursued higher education.
- If we take into account all members of Roma households, around 7% of people aged 14 or over who graduated from elementary school are illiterate. 28% of people who attended elementary school but did not graduate are illiterate, and 88% of people who did not attend elementary school at all are illiterate. Overall, 22% of all household members aged 14 or over in the Roma sample are illiterate, compared to 2% in the comparative sample.
- 8% of Roma have a computer, compared to 24% of non-Roma – one of the largest differences in ownership.

There are multiple exclusionary pressures that push Roma pupils away from schools in the present-day education system. Poverty is one of them as impoverished housing decreases dramatically the capacity of children to do any homework. Pupils who sleep in crowded rooms may also have difficulties in concentrating during the day.

- Housing density is more than double for Roma households. The average number of persons per room in case of non-Roma is 0.8 and for Roma is 1.98 persons.
- On average, during winter Roma households have to accommodate 3.1 members per heated room (3.4 members in rural households and 2.8 members in urban households), while households in the comparative sample have to accommodate 1.5 members per heated room (1.7 in rural households and 1.3 in urban households). So housing density in heated rooms during winter is exactly double in Roma households compared to non-Roma households.
- Quality of sleep is also affected by crowding in Roma households, which have to accommodate on average 1.9 persons per bed, compared to 1.4 persons in the comparative sample.

Parental education levels are also a powerful influence: parents with low education levels cannot guide their children's school career. Last, but not least, school segregation and inadequacy of teaching for the needs of the Roma pupils play a significant part. Case studies and survey data show that ethnically homogenous classrooms are pervasive for Roma pupils, often due to residential segregation alone or in combination with school policies and pressures from non-Roma parents.

- 25% of Roma pupils learn in classrooms with a majority of Roma children, and an additional 28% learn in classes which have around half Roma children, according to estimates of adult members of their household. The remaining 47% learn in classrooms with a majority of non-Roma pupils.
- 62% of Roma respondents believe that directors of schools with segregated classrooms should be punished, compared to 48% of the non-Roma respondents.

- Roma pupils in segregated classes have a significantly higher risk of illiteracy. Around 15% of pupils in classes with a majority of Roma children are illiterate, compared to around 4% of the other Roma pupils.

Residential and ethnic segregation are forces in both vicious circles: they reinforce low-level schooling and lack of working opportunities, and they contribute to social distance attitudes.

### 14.2.2 The Vicious Circle of Social Distance and Ethnic Segregation

Opportunities for meaningful social contact between Roma and non-Roma people of all ages are rare, due to residential and school segregation, low employment of the Roma in formal organizations, and opposition to intermarriage.

Qualitative case studies illustrate how even commercial relationships – for example, between Roma day workers and *Gadje* villagers who hire them, or between Roma customers and *Gadje* salespersons – maybe affected by negative stereotyping and discrimination.

- 18% of non-Roma would accept Roma family members, while 54% of Roma would accept Romanian family members and 29% would accept Hungarian family members.
- 34% of Roma respondents have family members of Romanian ethnicity, 9% have Hungarian family members. Overall, around 40% of Roma respondents have family members of non-Roma ethnicity – in contrast to only 6% of respondents in the comparative sample who have Roma family members.
- 25% of adult, working Roma household members are skilled workers, compared to 43% of non-Roma; 30% of working Roma members are unskilled and 21% are agricultural workers, compared to 11% and 3% of non-Roma members, respectively.

Moreover, because of low qualifications in the Roma working force, commercial relationships between Roma and *Gadje* are often asymmetric, situations in which Roma people have less power than the non-Roma. This type of relationship has a lower potential for leading to other, horizontal types of communication – such as collegiality, friendship, romantic or family ties.

There are many points where the reinforcement processes in these vicious circles may be weakened, but there is little indication, for now, that such structural change is happening.

## 14.3 Reflections on Research Data

All theoretical deconstructions of ethnic distinctions such as the Roma / *Gadje*, or Romanian/ Hungarian / *Tigani*, must face a difficult empirical challenge: the real-life conflicts of interests between people who live together, but still apart. These conflicts shape, to some degree, the process of ethnic differentiation and identification, as they make ethnic borders seem more relevant and more impenetrable. When antagonistic feelings and resentment are involved, disputes that originate in radically different path of life and chances become easily ethnicized, pushing people to define themselves and others as different types of human beings – be it „*Tigan*“, „*Gadje*“, „Romanian“ or „Hungarian“ – who have little to share. People affiliated with any ethnicity may participate in these conflicts, may escalate or de-escalate them, and may thus share in the responsibility for the damage. However, we should note that, more often than not, the non-Roma have significantly greater access to resources of all kinds and thus more chance of shaping the situation and interaction to a conflict-prone one.

Even when observers of such conflicts are aware of the powerful economic, social and informational constraints faced by the Roma people, the interpretations are still centred on the *Gadje* perspective, with all its blind spots. From this point of view, it is the Roma people who are the problem, and “solutions” (such as programmes of various kinds) should be applied to them in

order to fix them. The Roma communities and individuals are to be repaired, patched and transformed. Such a “problem and programme” view of Roma people can be found in many discourses of local authorities and social professionals, and also in research reports. For example, a case study on the current situation in Mihail Kogălniceanu (affected by violent inter-ethnic conflicts in 1990) concludes that: “On the one hand, a cause of all anti-social behaviour of the Roma people is the fact that they do not have the necessary resources to provide them with a decent living; on the other hand, they have certain personality traits that are represented, in the collective mentality, as negative stereotypes. The Roma represent a social problem, and the case of the Mihail Kogălniceanu locality is an example. Solutions must be searched for and found. (...) It is necessary to find medium and long-term programmes, instead of short-term measures which do not, in fact, solve the grave social problems of this ethnic group, or the ones that this group may generate” (Netedu and Drăguș 2005, p. 133).

The focus on Roma people as problems and the source of problems that need to be solved, be it by the most sympathetic programmes possible, leaves in a blind spot the issue of the structural changes that should be triggered in Romanian institutions. The need for change is not restricted to the Roma people and communities. On the contrary, it is pervasive in the Romanian educational system, in the medical system, in the public administration, in mass-media, in employment practices and most probably in many other institutions. Of course, such change is not necessary for the sake of the Roma alone – although they are entitled to benefit from it. Such change is necessary for the sake of all Romanian citizens who are excluded or marginalized when interacting with agents in these fields, for all people whose time is wasted in unprofitable or too few profitable exchanges. The average Roma pupil fails in school more often and earlier than the average non-Roma pupil. Hidden behind these average differences, though, there are many non-Roma pupils who gain little from their time spent in school, or who cannot spend enough time in school. Corruption in the medical system and poverty diseases are taking a high toll on impoverished Roma people, but they are not the only ones to pay an undue price. It seems plausible that reforming institutions so as to make them more responsive to people’s needs, and to ensure transparency and equal treatment, is a significant part of any solution for the conflicts between non-Roma and Roma people, and for other visible and invisible conflicts of interests as well.

Roma issues have not yet been mainstreamed into social reform agendas. There are institutions, such as the National Council for Combating Discrimination, or the universal social protection measures (among which the Minimum Guaranteed Income and the child allowances are most often analyzed) which integrates the problems experienced by Roma citizens with those experienced by other people. Still, the dominant approach up until now has been to address Roma problems by specifically-tailored solutions – such as Roma mediators and experts, legislative initiatives directed against ethnic segregation of the Roma pupils, and special places for Roma pupils in high schools and universities. Such measures are justified as short-term policies aimed at addressing serious inequalities of opportunity of Roma-ethnic citizens. As surveys repeatedly show, these inequalities persist, so such direct intervention measures are still necessary. However, there is a risk that they may become and remain the only type of solution put in practice for the so-called “Roma problem”. Without comprehensive changes that would encourage the meaningful participation of all citizens in social institutions, irrespective of their position in social hierarchies, specific measures cannot fully reach their goals. In addition to this, sectorial policies for the Roma are subject to two risks:

1. On the one hand, public opinion may turn against them, perceiving them as undeserved benefits (this seems to happen for the quotas of Roma pupils);
2. On the other hand, they may be appropriated by the privileged Roma people, as part of the general social process by which people with access to resources gain access to even more resources. This may happen to the reserved places for Roma pupils, when they are

occupied overwhelmingly by children from better-off families, or with local leadership structures when they sometimes fail to become responsive to the needs of the communities.

Framing inter-ethnic conflicts and tensions as a problem of the Roma people, caused by their poverty and “culture of poverty”, also leaves in a blind spot the issue of ethnic tensions that appear as a result of processes of collective (self-)identification, community closure and ethnic politics. However, the question is what happens if, and when, the significant majority of the Roma people overcome their situation as outcasts and gain more access to resources. Will they “merge” with their neighbour *Gadje* communities, and integrate themselves fully into their networks? For example, will the non-Roma be willing to marry them, and will they be willing to marry a *Gadje*? Will ethnic discrimination against the Roma (or, for that matter, the eventual ethnic discrimination against the *Gadje*) subside?

The analysis on social distance and social closure in the chapters above indicate that, indeed, the more educated Roma are more tolerant towards potential Romanian family members, and the wealthier Roma experience less ethnic discrimination than the poor ones. Even so, wealth has no influence on ethnic closure in family relations, and the effect of education seems to be entirely due to its positive influence on opportunities for inter-ethnic relations in employment and in the family. At the same time, in the case of the Roma, education does not influence entrenched discrimination, while opportunities for inter-ethnic relations (the very same that increase tolerance) also make ethnic discrimination more likely. On the other side of the divide, the more educated *Gadje* display stronger rejection tendencies towards the Roma, as measured by social distance attitudes. These divergent influences indicate that there is great potential for increasing toleration between non-Roma and Roma people, bearing in mind that at present the *Gadje* are significantly less tolerant than the Roma.

To conclude, this research joins the long tradition of reports that ask for the right policies to prevent extreme-right politics.

## PART VII



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## 16.5 Tables and Charts

### 16.5.1 Methodological Information

*Table 16-1. List of communities for Community Studies*

Location	County	Researcher	Fieldwork period
ANINOASA	Argeş	OR Team	July – August, 2007.
BABADAG	Tulcea	Constantin Gătin	August – September, 2007.
BĂRBULEȘTI	Ialomița	Ovidiu Isan	September, 2007.
BATANI / Herculian community	Covasna	Dénes Kiss	July – August, 2007.
BUNEȘTI / Viscri community	Braşov	Ana Bleahu	August, 2007.
BUZESCU	Teleorman	OR Team	August – September, 2007.
CETATE	Bistrița-Nasăud	Ovidiu Isan	July – August, 2007.
CLUJ NAPOCA / Iris neighbourhood	Cluj	Plainer Zsuzsa	August – September, 2007.
COLTĂU	Maramureş	Iorga Alexandru	July – August, 2007.
CUGIR	Alba	Sasha Liviu	August – September, 2007.
CURTICI	Arad	Mariana Goina	July – August, 2007.
DOLHASCA / Gulia community	Suceava	Veronica Lazar	August – September, 2007.
DUMITREȘTI	Vrancea	OR Team	July – August, 2007.
BUCUREȘTI, FERENTARI, Aleea Zăbrăuți	București	Miruna Tîrcă	September, 2007.
GLOD	Dâmbovița	Ami Oteanu	August – September, 2007.
GRĂDINARI	Olt	OR Team	August – September, 2007.
JIDVEI / Veseuş community	Alba	Alina Silian	July – August, 2007.
JILAVA	Ilfov	Elisabeta Ionescu	July – August, 2007.
LUPENI	Hunedoara	Geambasu Reka	August, 2007.
MIHAIL KOGĂLNICEANU	Constanța	Mihai Marcu	August – September, 2007.
MODELU	Călărași	Ionut Feraru	July – August, 2007.
NUȘFĂLĂU	Sălaj	Toma Stefănia	August – September, 2007.
OȘORHEI	Bihor	Ana Pantea	July – August, 2007.
PLOIEȘTI	Prahova	Ramona Gheorghe	October, 2007.
PRUNDU	Giurgiu	Stefan Stancu	September, 2007.
RACOȘ	Braşov	Constantin Gătin	July – August, 2007.
SÂNTANA DE MUREȘ	Mureș	Gabriel Troc	June – July, 2007.
SEBEȘ	Alba	Alina Silian	July – August, 2007.
SF GHEORGHE	Covasna	Gábor Kalamár	June – July, 2007.
SIBIU	Sibiu	Streza Teodora Cristina	August – September, 2007.
SÂNTANA	Arad	Calin Goina	July – August, 2007.
TIMIȘOARA	Timiș	Enikő Magyar-Vincze	August – September, 2007.
TÂRGU MUREȘ	Mureș	Paul Cengher	July – August, 2007.
VALEA CRIȘULUI	Covasna	Tamá s Kiss	July – August, 2007.
VALEA MARE	Vaslui	Luis Ciprian Turcitu	September, 2007
VOINEȘTI / Slobozia community	Iași	Alexandra Vasilache	July – August, 2007.

16.5.2 Charts and Tables for Ethnic Affiliation

Chart 16-1. Feelings of pride for various identities (percentage)

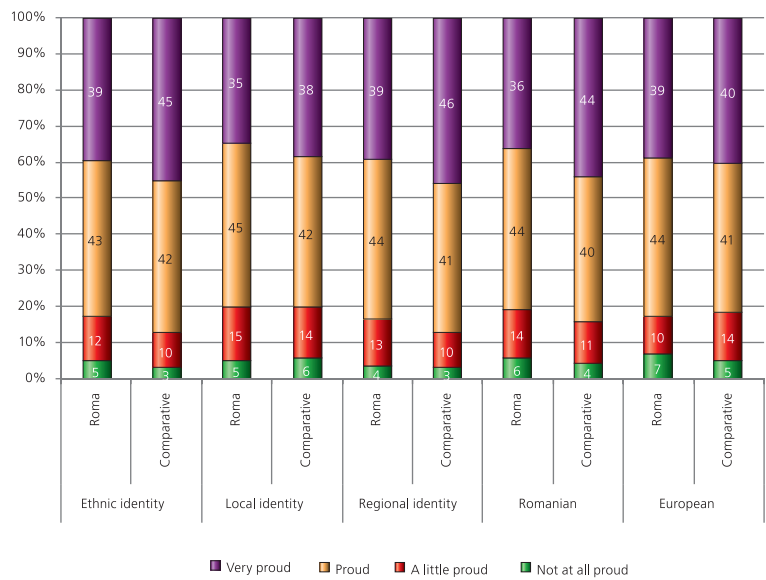


Table 16-2. Exploratory recodification of sub-group affiliation

	caldarari	ciurari and other frequent affiliations (recoded)	de vatra	romanizati	romanesti	romi maghiari	rudari	spoitori	ursari	other	Total
caldarari	28										28
ciurari		5									
cortorari		13									13
de vatra			31								31
gabori cu palarie		18									18
geambas		11									11
lingurari		9									9
romanizati				48							48
romanesti					35						35
de matase		11									11
domnesti		6									6
Romi maghiari						29					29
rostars		9									9
rudari							32				32
spoitori								36			36
ursari									85		85
other										42	42
Total	28	77	31	48	35	29	32	36	85	42	443

### 16.5.3 Binary Logistic Regression Models for Ethnic Affiliation

*Table 16-3. Binary logistic regression model for neoprotestant affiliation; analysis for all household members*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Roma neighbourhood	0.12	0.14	0.70	1.00	0.40	1.12
Use of Romani at home	0.10	0.13	0.65	1.00	0.42	1.11
Somebody in the household has migration experience	-0.49	0.17	8.17	1.00	0.00	0.61
Has bought long-term consumer goods in the last year	0.61	0.15	15.57	1.00	0.00	1.84
Has an automobile in the household	0.79	0.17	22.14	1.00	0.00	2.20
Has a mobile phone in the household	-0.40	0.14	8.41	1.00	0.00	0.67
Urban residence	-0.37	0.13	8.58	1.00	0.00	0.69
Age	0.00	0.00	0.97	1.00	0.33	1.00
High school graduate	-0.46	0.22	4.46	1.00	0.03	0.63
Gender	-0.16	0.12	1.86	1.00	0.17	0.85

*Table 16-4. Binary logistic regression for ethnic affiliation to traditional sub-groups*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
High school graduate	0.04	0.53	0.01	1.00	0.93	1.05
Employee in an organization	-0.65	0.57	1.30	1.00	0.25	0.52
Has Romanian or Hungarian friends	-1.41	0.63	5.02	1.00	0.03	0.24
Urban residence	0.26	0.34	0.61	1.00	0.43	1.30
Uses Romani at home	1.28	0.34	13.95	1.00	0.00	3.59
Long-term consumer goods	0.12	0.11	1.18	1.00	0.28	1.13
Age	0.02	0.01	3.25	1.00	0.07	1.02
Gender	-0.48	0.33	2.09	1.00	0.15	0.62

*Table 16-5. Binary logistic regression model for Romani language use at home*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Traditional affiliation	1.36	0.17	64.66	1.00	0.00	3.91
High school graduate	-1.36	0.32	18.50	1.00	0.00	0.26
Urban residence	-0.16	0.16	1.07	1.00	0.30	0.85
Has Romanian or Hungarian family members	-1.08	0.17	40.33	1.00	0.00	0.34
Long-term consumer goods	-0.05	0.05	1.18	1.00	0.28	0.95
Age	0.01	0.01	1.30	1.00	0.25	1.01
Gender	0.30	0.16	3.56	1.00	0.06	1.35

*Table 16-6. Binary logistic regression for being “very proud” of Roma/Gypsy ethnicity*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Uses Romani at home	0.63	0.16	15.12	1.00	0.00	1.87
Traditional affiliation	0.40	0.16	6.46	1.00	0.01	1.50
High school graduate	0.13	0.27	0.23	1.00	0.63	1.14
Urban residence	-0.01	0.15	0.00	1.00	0.95	0.99
Long-term consumer goods	0.03	0.05	0.31	1.00	0.58	1.03
Age	-0.01	0.01	3.18	1.00	0.07	0.99
Gender	0.21	0.15	1.93	1.00	0.17	1.23
Constant	-0.83	0.26	9.78	1.00	0.00	0.44

*Table 16-7. Binary logistic regression model for teaching Romani language in schools for all Roma pupils (“totally disagree”)*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Traditional affiliation	-0.71	0.21	11.12	1.00	0.00	0.49
Uses Romani at home	-0.39	0.20	3.75	1.00	0.05	0.68
High school graduate	0.37	0.30	1.54	1.00	0.22	1.45
Homogenous Roma neighbourhood	0.79	0.24	11.19	1.00	0.00	2.21
Urban residence	-0.06	0.19	0.11	1.00	0.74	0.94
Has Romanian or Hungarian family members	-0.37	0.22	3.01	1.00	0.08	0.69
Long-term consumer goods	0.12	0.06	4.36	1.00	0.04	1.13
Age	0.00	0.01	0.44	1.00	0.51	1.00

*Table 16-8. Binary logistic model for teaching Roma history and culture in schools for all pupils*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Traditional affiliation	-0.65	0.24	7.43	1.00	0.01	0.52
Uses Romani at home	-0.24	0.22	1.16	1.00	0.28	0.79
High school graduate	0.06	0.35	0.03	1.00	0.87	1.06
Homogenous Roma neighbourhood	1.01	0.28	12.72	1.00	0.00	2.75
Urban residence	0.16	0.21	0.57	1.00	0.45	1.17
Has Romanian or Hungarian family members	-0.15	0.24	0.39	1.00	0.53	0.86
Long-term consumer goods	0.12	0.06	3.56	1.00	0.06	1.13
Age	0.01	0.01	0.70	1.00	0.40	1.01
Gender	-0.17	0.21	0.65	1.00	0.42	0.84

*Table 16-9. Binary logistic regression model for experience of ethnic discrimination: socio-demographic variables*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Uses Romani at home	0.17	0.14	1.43	1.00	0.23	1.18
Gymnasium graduate	0.14	0.15	0.86	1.00	0.35	1.15
Urban residence	0.27	0.14	3.87	1.00	0.05	1.31
Long-term consumer goods	-0.10	0.04	5.85	1.00	0.02	0.90

*Table 16-10. Binary logistic regression model for experience of ethnic discrimination: social interaction variables*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Employee in an organization	0.61	0.21	8.29	1.00	0.00	1.84
Homogenous Roma neighbourhood	-0.46	0.16	8.78	1.00	0.00	0.63
Long-term consumer goods	-0.13	0.04	8.46	1.00	0.00	0.88

*Table 16-11. Binary logistic regression model for accepting Romanian-ethnic persons as family members: socio-demographic variables*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Traditional affiliation	-0.43	0.17	6.60	1.00	0.01	0.65
Uses Romani at home	-0.69	0.14	24.05	1.00	0.00	0.50
Gymnasium graduate	0.32	0.14	4.93	1.00	0.03	1.38
Long-term consumer goods (nr.)	0.04	0.04	0.92	1.00	0.34	1.04
Urban residence	0.30	0.13	5.20	1.00	0.02	1.35

*Table 16-12. Binary logistic regression model for accepting Romanian-ethnic persons as family members: social interaction variables*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Uses Romani at home	-0.43	0.14	9.57	1.00	0.00	0.65
Employee in an organization	1.13	0.24	21.85	1.00	0.00	3.10
Has Romanian or Hungarian family members	1.04	0.15	50.14	1.00	0.00	2.83

#### 16.5.4 Binary Logistic Regression Models for Influences of Residential Segregation

*Table 16-13. Binary logistic regression model for educational segregation*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Roma district	0.32	0.33	0.96	1.00	0.33	1.38
Poor district	0.48	0.22	4.92	1.00	0.03	1.62
Roma neighbourhood	-0.28	0.30	0.85	1.00	0.36	0.76
Unkempt neighbourhood	0.93	0.23	15.56	1.00	0.00	2.53
Traditional affiliation	-0.18	0.22	0.65	1.00	0.42	0.84
Use of Romani at home	-0.14	0.21	0.47	1.00	0.49	0.87
No. of consumer goods	-0.14	0.07	3.82	1.00	0.05	0.87
Urban residence	0.63	0.21	9.08	1.00	0.00	1.87

*Table 16-14. Binary logistic regression model for electricity in the household*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Roma district	-0.49	0.41	1.38	1.00	0.24	0.61
Poor district	-0.20	0.26	0.55	1.00	0.46	0.82
Roma neighbourhood	0.57	0.39	2.20	1.00	0.14	1.77
Unkempt neighbourhood	-1.46	0.29	25.91	1.00	0.00	0.23
Traditional affiliation	-0.32	0.26	1.56	1.00	0.21	0.72
Use of Romani at home	0.08	0.27	0.09	1.00	0.77	1.08
No. of consumer goods	1.55	0.17	83.58	1.00	0.00	4.73
Urban residence	-0.44	0.27	2.80	1.00	0.09	0.64
Age	0.02	0.01	5.22	1.00	0.02	1.02
High school graduate	0.52	0.76	0.46	1.00	0.50	1.67

*Table 16-15. Binary regression logistic model for access to water outside the house or yard*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Roma district	0.54	0.26	4.20	1.00	0.04	1.71
Poor district	0.44	0.19	5.20	1.00	0.02	1.55
Roma neighbourhood	0.72	0.24	9.34	1.00	0.00	2.05
Unkempt neighbourhood	1.02	0.19	30.03	1.00	0.00	2.77
Traditional affiliation	-0.55	0.19	8.42	1.00	0.00	0.57
Use of Romani at home	-0.16	0.19	0.72	1.00	0.40	0.85
No. of consumer goods	-0.36	0.07	29.06	1.00	0.00	0.70
Urban residence	-0.73	0.18	16.29	1.00	0.00	0.48
Age	-0.01	0.01	2.60	1.00	0.11	0.99
High school graduate	-0.91	0.38	5.91	1.00	0.02	0.40

*Table 16-16. Binary regression logistic model for having Romanian or Hungarian friends*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Roma district	-1.35	1.18	1.31	1.00	0.25	0.26
Poor district	0.02	0.74	0.00	1.00	0.98	1.02
Roma neighbourhood	-0.81	0.99	0.68	1.00	0.41	0.44
Unkempt neighbourhood	-0.12	0.75	0.03	1.00	0.87	0.89
Traditional affiliation	-1.62	0.71	5.24	1.00	0.02	0.20
Use of Romani at home	-0.16	0.72	0.05	1.00	0.82	0.85
No. of consumer goods	0.19	0.25	0.56	1.00	0.45	1.21
Urban residence	-0.12	0.73	0.03	1.00	0.86	0.88
Age	0.08	0.03	5.53	1.00	0.02	1.08
High school graduate	7.07	28.34	0.06	1.00	0.80	1170.93

*Table 16-17. Binary logistic regression model for migration experience*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Roma district	0.06	0.35	0.03	1.00	0.86	1.06
Poor district	-0.29	0.32	0.79	1.00	0.37	0.75
Roma neighbourhood	0.12	0.32	0.14	1.00	0.71	1.13
Unkempt neighbourhood	-0.34	0.29	1.32	1.00	0.25	0.71
Traditional affiliation	0.33	0.26	1.54	1.00	0.21	1.39
Use of Romani at home	0.50	0.29	3.08	1.00	0.08	1.65
No. of consumer goods	0.41	0.08	29.74	1.00	0.00	1.51
Urban residence	0.17	0.25	0.45	1.00	0.50	1.18
Age	-0.02	0.01	5.01	1.00	0.03	0.98
High school graduate	0.50	0.36	1.89	1.00	0.17	1.64

*Table 16-18. Binary logistic regression model for short-term migration intentions*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Roma neighbourhood	0.52	0.24	4.67	1.00	0.03	1.68
Unkempt neighbourhood	-0.04	0.21	0.04	1.00	0.85	0.96
Traditional affiliation	0.30	0.20	2.19	1.00	0.14	1.35
Use of Romani at home	-0.63	0.20	9.59	1.00	0.00	0.53
No. of consumer goods	0.05	0.06	0.69	1.00	0.40	1.05
Urban residence	0.02	0.19	0.01	1.00	0.93	1.02
Age	-0.04	0.01	27.46	1.00	0.00	0.96
High school graduate	-0.26	0.34	0.60	1.00	0.44	0.77

### 16.5.5 Education Level

*Table 16-19. Binary logistic regression model for high school graduation, Roma sample*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	0.64	0.16	16.03	1.00	0.00	1.90
Aged 30-60	0.32	0.16	3.93	1.00	0.05	1.37
Urban residence	0.09	0.16	0.31	1.00	0.58	1.09
Affiliation to traditional neamuri	0.39	0.17	5.12	1.00	0.02	1.48
No. of long-term consumer goods	0.38	0.04	73.36	1.00	0.00	1.46
Use of Romani language at home	-1.32	0.18	51.55	1.00	0.00	0.27
Has repeated at least one school year	-1.24	0.52	5.79	1.00	0.02	0.29

*Table 16-20. Binary logistic regression model for gymnasium graduation, Roma sample*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	0.41	0.09	19.89	1.00	0.00	1.50
Aged 60 or over	-1.32	0.22	34.63	1.00	0.00	0.27
Urban residence	0.09	0.09	1.00	1.00	0.32	1.10
Affiliation to traditional neamuri	-0.02	0.10	0.05	1.00	0.83	0.98
No. of long-term consumer goods	0.27	0.03	92.36	1.00	0.00	1.31
Use of Romani language at home	-0.78	0.10	64.32	1.00	0.00	0.46
Has repeated at least one school year	-0.15	0.18	0.69	1.00	0.41	0.86

*Table 16-21. Binary logistic regression model for high school graduation, comparative sample*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	0.55	0.09	34.02	1.00	0.00	1.73
Aged 60 or more	-1.64	0.11	228.65	1.00	0.00	0.19
Urban residence	0.58	0.10	36.72	1.00	0.00	1.79
No. of long-term consumer goods	0.49	0.03	267.52	1.00	0.00	1.63
Has repeated at least one school year	-2.60	0.78	11.19	1.00	0.00	0.07

*Table 16-22. Educational level by sub-group affiliation*

	No affiliation (percent)	Assimilated affiliation (percent)	Traditional affiliation (percent)	Rudari (percent)
None or incomplete elementary	31	29	38	12
Elementary, incomplete gymnasium or special school	34	39	32	25
Gymnasium, or incomplete high school	28	23	22	37
High school or more	7	9	8	25
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of cases	1121	326	997	106

*Table 16-23. Binary logistic regression model for pupil literacy (ability to read and write); Roma pupils aged 6-18*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	-0.21	0.35	0.36	1.00	0.55	0.81
Urban residence	-0.43	0.35	1.54	1.00	0.21	0.65
Affiliation to traditional neamuri	0.78	0.40	3.89	1.00	0.05	2.19
No. of consumer goods in the household	-1.28	0.35	13.40	1.00	0.00	0.28
Use of Romani language at home	-1.39	0.42	11.14	1.00	0.00	0.25
The majority of class pupils are Roma	-1.62	0.36	20.49	1.00	0.00	0.20
Has repeated at least one school year	-0.43	0.49	0.80	1.00	0.37	0.65

## 16.5.6 Housing

*Table 16-24. Binary logistic regression model for living in a house with no contracts whatsoever – Roma sample*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Urban residence	-0.30	0.23	1.74	1.00	0.19	0.74
Roma neighbourhood	0.86	0.29	8.63	1.00	0.00	2.37
Gymnasium graduate	-0.63	0.26	5.80	1.00	0.02	0.53
No consumer goods in the household	1.12	0.23	23.25	1.00	0.00	3.08
Aged 60 or over	-1.02	0.36	8.10	1.00	0.00	0.36
Use of Romani language at home	-0.47	0.23	4.39	1.00	0.04	0.62
Constant	-2.21	0.31	49.82	1.00	0.00	0.11



*Table 16-25. Linear regression model for the number of long-term consumer goods in the household – Roma sample*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
No of educational cycles attended (from 0 to 5) by the head of household	0.56	0.05	0.34	11.22	0.00
“Does any member of your household have experience in working/living in abroad?”	0.89	0.12	0.20	7.30	0.00
Head of household is employee in an organization	0.58	0.15	0.11	3.89	0.00
Urban locality	0.30	0.10	0.08	3.00	0.00
Number of household members	0.05	0.02	0.08	2.82	0.00
Household use of Romani language	-0.19	0.10	-0.05	-1.82	0.07
Age of head of household	-0.01	0.00	-0.06	-2.23	0.03

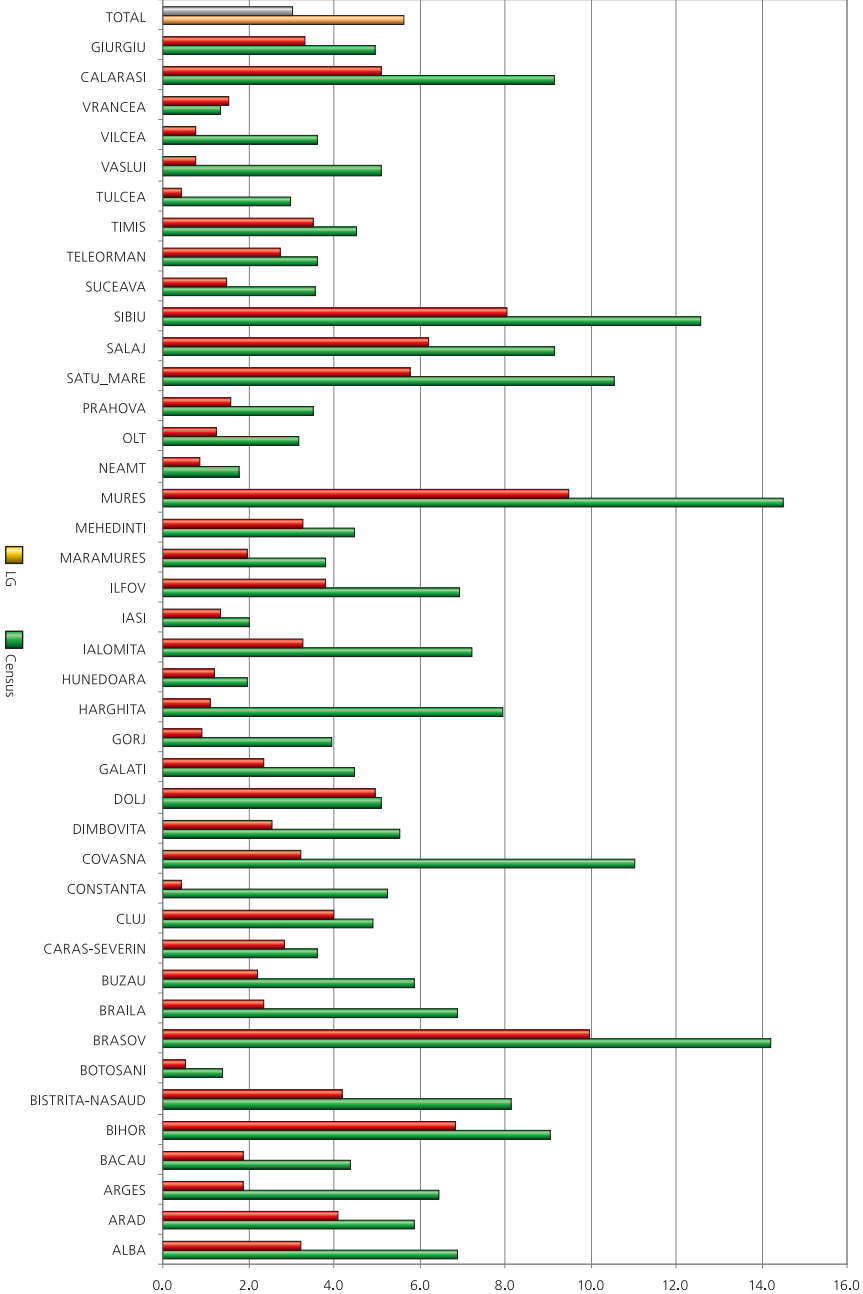
### 16.5.7 Health

*Table 16-26. Linear regression model for age at first birth – all women in the Roma and in the comparative sample*

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Exp(B)
Education categories	0.69	0.10	0.19	7.05	0.00	1.68
Number of long-term consumer goods in the household	0.18	0.05	0.08	3.25	0.00	0.96
Roma ethnicity	-1.98	0.21	-0.23	-9.24	0.00	1.35

# 16.5.8 Local Authorities Survey

Chart 16-2. Rate of Roma people by counties in Census data (2002) and in LA dataset\* (2007), percentage



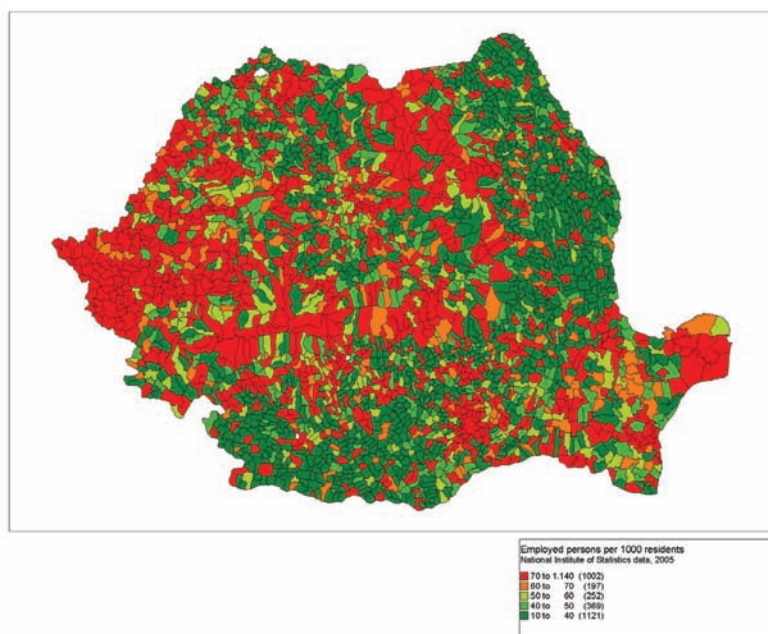
\* The LA dataset does not include data from Bucharest local authorities

*Table 16-27. Distribution of public assistance and development interventions in Roma communities, Pearson correlation coefficients (LA dataset)*

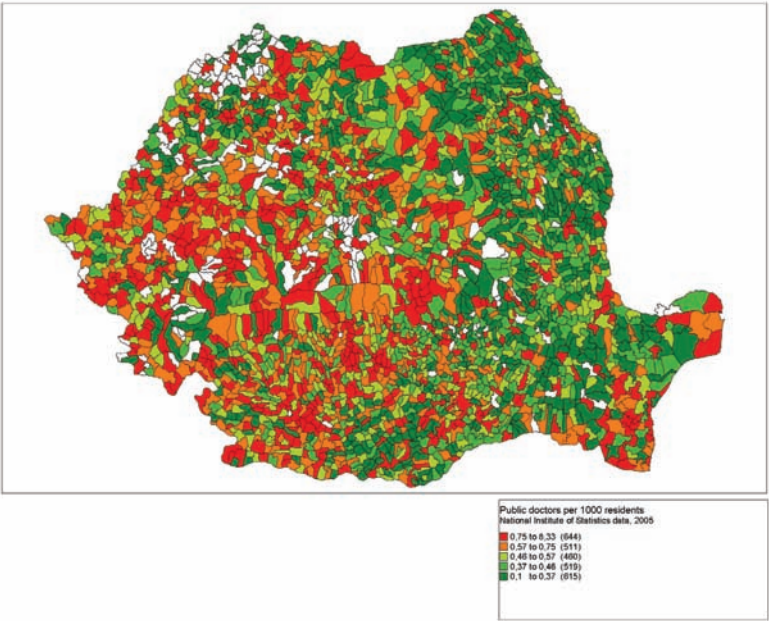
	Roma experts employed in Local Authority	Have there been best-practice programs involving Roma?	First community - % households with Minimum Guaranteed Income
Roma experts employed in Local Authority	1	0.295	
Have there been best-practice programs involving Roma?	0.295	1	
First community - household number	-0.207	-0.177	
In the last year have there been conflicts related to Roma people?		-0.091	
% households connected to electricity			
% households with access to own water source			-0.144
% households without land titles	0.144	0.155	
% households with access to common water source	0.114		0.128
% people without birth certificates		0.119	
First community - % illiterate people aged 16 and over			0.161
First community - % households with Minimum Guaranteed Income			

*All coefficients included in the table are statistically significant for  $p=0.05$ . Coefficients that were not statistically different from zero have been deleted, for greater legibility*

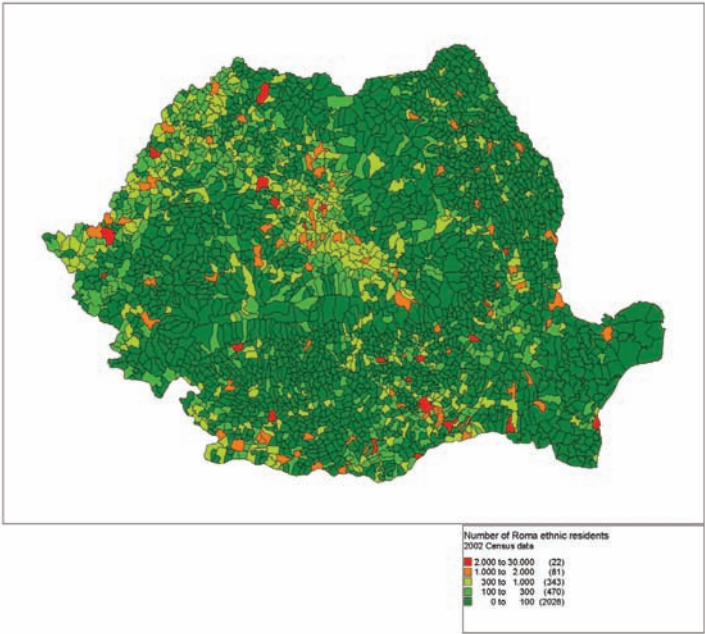
*Map 16-1. Number of employed people per 1000 residents (NIS data, 2005)*



Map 16-2. Number of public doctors per 1000 residents (NIS data, 2005)



Map 16-3. Number of Roma-ethnic residents in locality (number of people, Census data, 2002)



Map 16-4. Proportion of Roma-ethnic residents in locality (percentage, Census data, 2002)

