POVERTY AND LIVING. ROMA POOR NEIGHBORHOODS IN ROMANIA AND HUNGARY

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The first part of our paper is a theoretical debate of the most important research results concerning the Roma population in Romania and Hungary, while in the second part we proceed to the interpretation of our own empirical research data.

Methodologically, our research is based on sociological survey. Data concerning sociooccupational characteristics of Roma communities have been collected by means of a questionnaire based survey of active aged Roma population from Oradea and neighbouiring rural localities in Romania and Hungary (Osorhei, Ineu de Cris, Biharkeresztes, Told).

The paper concludes with policy reccommendations aimed at the members of the target group.

This paper presents the outcome of an euroregional comparative research conducted in 2010 in two neighboring border areas: Bihor (Romania) and Hajdu-Bihar (Hungary), financed by a grant awarded by the European Regional Development Fund. The first part of the paper includes a theoretical overview of important research most concerning the Roma population in Romania and Hungary, while in the second part we proceed to the analysis of our own empirical research data. Methodologically, our research is based on the sociological survey. Data concerning socio-occupational characteristics of Roma communities have been collected by means of a questionnaire based survey of active aged Roma population from Oradea and neighboring rural localities in Romania and Hungary (Osorhei, Ineu de Cris, Biharkeresztes, Told). Due to the fact that data set is very large and complex we will focus on data concerning living conditions in poor neighborhoods.

1.1. Introduction

The Roma (or Gypsies) are a unique minority in Europe. Unlike other ethnic groups, they have no historical homeland and live in almost all countries in Europe and Central Asia. The origin of the Roma in Europe is widely debated. Historical documents indicate that Roma have migrated in waves from northern India to Europe between the 9th and the 14th century. On the other hand, historical studies show that the Roma were very much persecuted by the majority from the very beginning of their arrival in Europe. The measures taken against them ranged from hanging, drowning, reddening with iron, imprisonment, enslavement, deportation. The Western Europeans were more drastic in their measures against the Roma than the more permitting Turks, who invaded the South-East and parts of Central Europe⁹. Perhaps this explains even in today Europe a greater

⁹ Fraser, Angus, 2010, **Ţiganii**, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, p. 190

concentration of Roma in the Cenral and Eastern European countries.

Roma is an extremely diverse population with multiple subgroups based on language, history, religion and different occupations. While in some countries Roma are nomadic, most of them in Central and Eastern Europe have become sedentary – some of them in the days of the Ottoman rule and others in the socialist period. ¹⁰

Estimating the size of the Roma population is a complicated issue. Census data are intensely disputed as many Roma do not identify themselves as Roma in surveys. On the other hand, the official figures, the results of the population censuses are contradicted by other studies which aimed to estimate the number of Roma population¹¹. Some estimates show that the number of Roma increased up to 6 and 9 percent in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Slovakia and Romania. These percentages may increase for the foreseeable future because of the difference between fertility rates in populations of Roma and non-Roma. Romania has the largest Roma population in Europe, estimated figures ranging from 1 to 2 millions. A large Roma population (between 400,000 and 1 million) lives in Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Turkey and Serbia. The largest population of Roma in Western Europe is in Spain (about 630,000), France (310,000), Germany (70,000) and Italy (130,000). In total between 7 and 9 million Roma live in Europe - a population equal to that of Sweden or Austria.

The Roma population in Romania and Hungary has some special characteristics compared to other minorities. By tradition, it is a population with a low social status, typical object of comparison as the poorest category of population and strongly exposed to discrimination and social exclusion. To these one should add other features, such as failure of modernity or difficulties of identifying the exact size of the Roma population. ¹³

Historically, the Roma population had a disadvantaged position over the centuries. While by the end of the XIXth century, Roma were slaves on the estates of Romanian or Hungarian nobles (Transylvania), in the last centuries, this population experienced a period of emancipation, have been offered equal rights with the majority population and small land plots. In the socialist period the situation of Roma populations improved to some extent. These policies resulted in a relative improvement of their education level and the beginning of their involvement in the formal economy. However, the price they paid was forced integration and a loss of cultural specificity. 14 The post-communist transition has caused many changes in the life of Roma communities. Some Roma even regret the socialist regime; even if they were not recognized as a national minority, the assimilation policies were offering them at least some degree material safety. In contrast, the post-socialist period was full of changes and paradoxes for Roma. On one hand, it allowed the recognition of Roma identity, politically and culturally, on the other hand, it emphasized the economic and social marginalization and rejection of this community. 15

In the present context, the Roma issue is not a simple one. Several economic and social factors are combined here; while the ethnic dimension of the problems can not be

Ringold, Dena, Orenstein, Mitchell, Wilkens, Erika, 2003, Roma in an Expanding Europe. Breaking the Poverty Cycle, The World Bank, p.1

Preoteasa, Ana Maria, 2003, Prezentarea unei cercetări internaționale cu privire la starea romilor în Europa Centrală și de Est, in Calitatea Vieții, XIV, no.2, p.265

Ringold, Dena, Orenstein, Mitchell, Wilkens, Erika, 2003, Roma in an Expanding Europe. Breaking the Poverty Cycle, The World Bank, p.1

Voicu, Mălina(coordinator), 2007, Nevoi şi resurse în comunitățile de romi, Soros Foundation Romania, București, 2007, p.7

¹⁴ Ibidem

Pons, Emanuelle, 1999, Ţiganii din România, Editura Compania, Bucureşti, p. 137

ignored, it stems to great extent from the crisis crossed by Romania and Hungary during the transition period, which has a particular effect on the Roma population. Viewed in economic terms, we can say that Roma are the poorest population in Romania and Hungary, perceiveing the economic vulnerability and social exclusion as their main problems. 16 The poverty level of this ethnic group is a combinated outcome of several factors. As Marian Preda stated, poverty can be considered only a specific dimension of social exclusion, the financial one¹⁷. Other forms of exclusion are also involved: exclusion from the democratic and legal system, labor market exclusion, exclusion from the state welfare system, exclusion from the family and community system.

According to recent research, the causal factors seem to have mainly an individual determination and to a certain extent, a cultural one, pointing to self-exclusion ¹⁸. The economic vulnerability of Roma is thus caused by a complex of factors such as low educational and vocational training, the precarious position on the labor market, the great number of children in Roma families, their discrimination by the majority group and the involvement in the informal economy. One can speak of a vicious circle in the case of the Roma. Being poor in the vast majority, they do not have the resources to complete their educational and professional training. Many of them not having jobs, they get involved in the informal economy, or immigrate to western countries.

1.2. Roma in the sociological literature

The sociological literature on the problems of the Roma community is rich. The research

Voicu, Mălina(coordinator), 2007, Nevoi și resurse în comunitățile de romi, Soros Foundation Romania, București, p.7 developed on the Roma communities is achieved both by quantitative and qualitative methods. Both approaches appear to have pros and cons. Quantitative methods are useful to illustrate comparisons between the populations of Roma and non-Roma, both at a national and a European level. On the other hand, information on Roma can not be regarded as the most reliable data and they are also difficult to be obtained. Due to statistical problems related to ethnic selfidentification, the quantitative research has serious limitations. However, the quantitative data provide possibilities for comparative analyses of welfare measures that can improve the elaboration and implementation of social policies.

While quantitative research shows that Roma poverty is distinct, it does not provide an adequate basis for understanding the specific dynamics circumscribing Roma economic vulnerability. In this field of study, qualitative research might have a higher effectiveness in identifying social processes, mechanisms and relationships between variables that are difficult to be emphasised by using exclusively quantitative methods. Qualitative research, however, has also certain disadvantages. It tends to focus on just one specific issue, focusing on a limited number of factors. That is why a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can provide a complementary set of perspectives leading to a better understanding of social problems and policies. 19

A remarkable comparative research project on the Roma community in six Central and Eastern European Countries (Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland, Russia and Romania), both quantitative and qualitative, has been conducted between 1999 and 2000, coordinated by Ivan Szelenyi (Yale

¹⁷ Preda, Marian, 2002, Politica socială românească între sărăcie și globalizare, Editura Polirom, Iași, p. 101

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 168

Ringold, Dena, Orenstein, Mitchell, Wilkens, Erika, 2003, Roma in an Expanding Europe. Breaking the Poverty Cycle, The World Bank, p.4

University). 20 Some interesting methodological conclusions for the study of Roma communities have been drawn. During one year, the researchers analyzed between 10,000 and 19,000 Roma households. In the same time a questionnaire was applied on an oversample of Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania. The researchers have also made some qualitative studies of communities in extreme poverty in these countries.

In 1993 people in all countries experience a similar deterioration in living standards compared to 1988. Since 2000 the trend is a decrease of the poverty in countries that have implemented more rigorous liberal reforms, for instance Hungary and Poland, as well as in countries with slow progress to the model of liberal capitalism.²¹

The study revealed that transnational differences are as important as the ethnic differences. For example, Roma in Hungary are slightly poorer than non-Roma in Bulgaria. In all the countries, Roma are overrepresented in the poorest deciles of population. However, most of the very poor people consist of non-Roma. There is also a significant category of Roma who has a good enough standard of living in all the countries mentioned. The conclusion of the researchers is that the Roma who have successfully maintained the traditions were more likely to avoid the trap of poverty than those assimilated to the fringes of society.

One of the most quoted qualitative studies in the international literature studying the Roma the English anthropologist Michael Stewart's, presented in "The Time of the Gypsies" (1997), a remarkable social ethnography of the Roma in the Hungarian town of Harangos, located at north of Budapest, a survey using the method of participatory observation. The English anthropologist developed the research through a field work conducted during 18 months between the years 1984 and 1985. During this period he lived with his wife and children in an area called "*The third class*" in a Roma neighborhood of the town, a town where, according to a census of that time, around 1000 Roma lived.

Until 1989 the official communist policy was to integrate the Roma in the "leading" class, the communist working class. However, Roma have found ways to maintain their own identity. Michael Stewart's book examines the refusal of Roma to abandon their lifestyle and assimilation to the majority population. Forget, Michael Stewart warns us early in the book, about the carefree freedom of caravans and campfires. These men lived hard and brutal sometimes. They dreamed of richness gained through gambling and stealing horses, but in reality were poor as a church mouse. They lived in ghettos, but their names and law argued that the Roma are working people, often working for low wages in industry and collective farms. And despite the marginal position and sufferings they endured they preserved the dignity and the iov of being Roma. 22

Michael Stewart's book describes the cultivation, celebration and reinvention of the cultural difference and diversity of some people deemed by their superiors too stupid and uncivilized to have their own culture. Since the beginning of the Second World War there were two dramatic ways to solve the "gypsy problem". Between 1941 and 1945, the Nazis exterminated about 500,000 Roma in their effort to clear the "degenerated" and "antisocial" way of life. Between 1957 and 1989, said Stewart, a different type of anti-Gypsy campaign took place in the Eastern Europe. Nobody was made prisoner, left to die alone. Repression and discrimination did not exist in the plan of the communist reformers. But the final goal was strikingly similar to the fascist one, the Gypsies

²⁰ One outcome of this research is a work entitled *Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender in Transitional Society* (2002).

²¹ Ibidem, p.9

²² Michael Stewart,1997, **The Time of the Gypsies**, Westview Press, Colorado, p. 1

disappearance. The East European communists' task in 1957, says the English anthropologist, was really Herculean: the cultural assimilation of millions of people who had suffered discrimination for centuries. The former Yugoslavia being partially an exception, Gypsies had been subjected to a systematic campaign of assimilation. Czechoslovakia, Poland, Soviet Union, Romania and Hungary pursued almost identical policies. 23

The English anthropologist notes, however, that, ironically, far from being assimilated in the working class, the problems associated with the Gypsies became larger as the campaign of assimilation continued. Stewart noted that in the Hungary of the period the research was held, the Gypsy issue was given greater importance than ever, since the 1930s. Two sources led to this attitude. First there was a dramatic gap between the theory of social inclusion and the reality of increasing social differentiation. The Communists told to the non-Roma that they had done much to improve the lives of Roma and their disappearance could be expected soon. But there was little evidence in this case. Two: the policies reproducted in a new form the old ideas about gypsies being "others". The economic and social system entered into crisis in 1980s, the Gypsies otherness became clearer and more ominous.

The Romanian literature on the Roma issues is related especially to the researches carried out by the Institute for Quality of Life in Bucharest.²⁴ The work coordinated by Elena

and Cătălin Zamfir, Gypsies between worry and neglect (1993) can be regarded as the first and perhaps the most extensive analysis of the problems of Roma in Romania, based on a quantitative research on a representative sample of Roma households. In this book a number of issues concerning the Roma are considered, such as housing, education, professions and occupations, family and living conditions of the children.

Nine features are invoked - social-economic trends of the Roma population - which have an overwhelming effect on their their opportunities: decreased access to jobs offered by the modern economy, labor market niches that Roma have a special access (traditional professions, businesses on their own, unskilled jobs), precarious and uncertain nature of many economic resources traditionally exploited by the Roma, marginal even deviant exploitation of the community, increasing crime, its organized character and violence, antagonizing relations between the majority population and Roma population, the number of children, poor housing conditions and migration to cities and the risk of "pockets" of poverty and chronic juvenile with a strong ethnic coloring. The conclusion of the whole analysis is that the Roma population faces serious social and economic crisis. The traditional life strategies provide only the chance of survival in this crisis, but not for its overcoming.

1.3. Living in poor areas

The analysis of the poor areas as living spaces is an integral part of any discourse on new poverty and its focus on clearly defined territories. To validate an area as poor assumes the presence of deprivation concerning the housing and the prevalence of precarious living conditions. In this regard, the poor areas are described as areas with no or poorly equipped facilities, poor natural environment, the house in an advanced state

²³ Ibidem, p.5

²⁴ After 1990, a number of research papers on this area appeared: Cătălin Zamfir and Elena Zamfir, *Gypsies between worry and neglect* (1993), Cătălin Zamfir and Marian Preda, *Roma in Romania* (2002), Marian Preda, *Romanian social policy between poverty and globalization* (2002), Manuela Stănculescu and Ionica Berevoiescu, *Poor as a church mouse, looking for another life* (2004). In the work *A new challenge: the social development* (2006), coordinated by Cătălin Zamfir and Laura Stoica, there is a chapter signed by the sociologist

Mihai Surdu on school segregation and schools with Roma students.

of degradation and poorly provided with urban facilities. The specific phenomena for the poor areas are housing insecurity and overcrowded housing.²⁵

There are several important analyses on living in poor areas in the international literature. In the West sociologists primarily concerned with the poor areas of the urban, often called ghetto or banlieue. As William Wilson, an African-American sociologist considers, the concentration of black people in the ghetto is the result of the reduced access to employment socialization. European sociologists such as Loic Wacquant, are adding another element, namely the already mentioned stigmatization of people living in poor areas of large urban agglomerations. The Dutch researcher Eva van Kempen also mentions a fourth factor, the limited access to social rights²⁶.

In connection with the topic discussed, there is a recently completed European project coordinated by Ronald Van Kempen, a Dutch urban geographer at the University of Utrecht, entitled Large Housing Estates in Europe: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Cities and Neighborhoods. The main objectives of this project (which includes case studies in cities in Hungary) were to identify the social and economic changes that took place in the social world of the blocks built after the Second World War and the development of some items which proved to be important in the success or failure of the social policies applied to the areas of blocks²⁷. The researchers concluded With regard to housing problems in the poor areas of Romania (most papers on this topic focusing on the housing problems of Roma communities), I should mention the work of researchers like Cătălin and Elena Zamfir (1993), Cătălin Zamfir and Marian Preda (2002), Manuela Stănculescu and Ionica Berevoescu (2004), Cătălin Berescu and Mariana Celac (2006) or Cosima Rughinis (2008). The main issues considered by these works are: poor housing, housing density, documents of the buildings and land ownership and access to utilities. The main findings of the authors are the significant differences between the statuses of Roma and and also the significant differences between rural and urban areas, the Roma living in the rural environment having poor living conditions. We will see to what extent some of these findings could be verified on the cases studied by us in Bihor and Hajdu Bihar.

²⁵ Stănculescu, ManuelaSofia, Berevoescu, Ionica, 2004, Sărac lipit,caut altă viață!, Editura Nemira, București, p.128

1.4. Roma in Bihor and Hajdu-Bihar1.4.1 Bihor County

Bihor County is the third in Romania according to the percentage of the Roma per population (5.01%), after Mureş County (6.96%) and Sălaj County (5.01%). There are around 30,200 Roma in Bihor County. Most of them live in Oradea, 6,000 to a total of 206,000 inhabitants. The most concentrated Roma communities are in Săcuieni (3,700),

that these areas of blocks concentrate people with modest incomes and a low stock of social cultural and political capital. The block areas are also characterized by a higher rate of unemployment and crime and a higher level of social exclusion. Although the researchers found that the block areas are in a state of failing all over Europe, there are also situations where deprivation, bad construction and management do not result in revocation. Second, East-West differences are noticed in terms of social cohesion and solidarity of the inhabitants of the blocks in the projects of rehabilitation of buildings and layout of the green spaces surrounding these buildings.

²⁶ Van Kempen, Eva, în Marcuse, Peter şi Van Kempen, Ronald, 2002, **Of States and Cities**, Oxford University Press, p.245

Murie, Alan, Siedow-Knorr, Thomas, Van Kempen, Ronald, 2003, Large Housing Estates in Europe.General Developments and Theoretical Backgrounds, Utrecht University, p.11

Tinca (2,500), Diosig (1,500), Batăr (1,500), Sânmartin (1,070), Aleşd (1,000), Suplacu de Barcău (900) and Ineu (850).

Roma, statistically a minority, are 89% of those who abandon school in Bihor County and, according to police estimations, 8 of 10 offences are committed by Roma. Only 10% of the Roma are employed and only 50% of them have an identity card. These are some statistical data which illustrate a dramatic reality of this minority. As in the other parts of Romania, the problems the Roma have to face in Bihor are the low level of education, the dropout, the precarious position on the labor market, living and health problems.

In recent years, two qualitative studies have been conducted on the Roma in Bihor: The first study (Olah, 2004) focused especially on the dropout, stressed that education is a major factor for the modernization of the Roma's life, maybe the decisive factor, and that the low level of education is strongly correlated with the precarious integration of the Roma on the labor market and with the juvenile delinquency. An important conclusion of the study is that Roma elite with high education should be the solution for the change of the dramatic situation of the Roma communities²⁸. The second study (Olah-Baltatescu 2008) focused on the problems of the Roma in Oradea²⁹. The data analysis confirmed that the problems of the Roma are related to:

- improper conditions of living
- extreme poverty
- the precarious health (especially contagious diseases like TBC)

- lack of professional training, the precarious position on the labor market, low incomes due to the lack of professional training
- the precarious education.

The initiative of the Romanian Government in 2000-2004 to create some special places for the students of the Roma communities seems to be efficient. There is also needed a more active involvement of the NGOs, Town Halls, leaders of the Roma communities.

The main reasons of the dropout in Bihor are: poverty, low level of education of the parents in the Roma community, the parents' lack of interest for school problems, family life disorganization, the tradition in the Roma community, the wrong attitude of some teachers towards some pupils, especially Roma, the low number of school psychologists in the schools of Bihor and the friends of the pupil.

Both mentioned research papers are underlining the necessity of continuing the social projects for the Roma, developing the NGOs which carry out such projects and forming the elite of the Roma community who will support the disadvantaged communities by involving them in such projects.

1.4.2. Hajdu-Bihar County

In Hajdu-Bihar, 10 836 persons declared Roma identity at the latest census (in 2001), comprising 5,7 % of the total Roma population of Hungary. The share of Roma within the county's total population is 2 %. However, the number of those who live a specific Roma way of life is much higher. A nationwide representative survey conducted by the Hungarian Statistical Office in 2003 found that in Hajdu-Bihor county 44 200 persons (8, 2% of the total population) are assigned a Roma (Gypsy) identity by their immediate neighborhood. According to this indicator, Hajdu-Bihor is the county with the fifth largest Roma population in Hungary.

The Roma population of Hajdu -Bihor country is confronting to a large extent with

²⁸ Olah, Şerban, 2009, The School Dropout in Bihor county. A Qualitative Approach, Revista Universitara de Sociologie, Craiova, Romania, Year VI, nr.1(11), p.101

²⁹ Olah, Şerban, Băltățescu, Sergiu, 2008, **Nevoi și** servicii sociale în comunitățile de romi. Studiu calitativ în municipiul Oradea in Revista de Asistență socială (nr.3-4), București, ISSN 1583-0698,p.34

the same problems as their co-ethnics at the other side of the border:

- Comparatively very high rates of fertility combined with high rates of mortality, which results in a rather young age structure compared to that of the county's total population
- Much lower educational level than the county average
- Extremely reduced level of economic activity/employment

A survey of 200 Roma families conducted by the Department of Sociology at the University of Debrecen³⁰ found that the rate of Roma employment is six times lower (in case of female population seven times lower) compared to the general rate of employment. Most of the Roma subjects questioned during the survey expressed their desire to work, but complained of lack of job opportunities.

Beyond this general image, however, a rather perceptible generation-related differentiation has been observed. Members of the middle aged generation who had been occupied in economic activities during communist times are more likely to be employed today as well, compared to the members of the new generation socialized after 1989, who tend to prefer social benefits instead of work. Most of them never had any legal job.

As far as perception of the employers' attitudes is concerned, 72% of the respondents said they never experienced any discrimination while looking for a workplace, however 26% of those questioned indicated that they were not hired due their belonging to the Roma population. Among the surveyed families 40% have some links with agriculture: 18% is cultivating a piece of land, 10 % are occupied with livestockfarming, and 12 % are doing both. In the case they would receive free of charge agricultural

land for personal use from the local government, 25% declared that they would not cultivate it, but 72 % said that they would. (41% would produce only for personal use, 31% even for the market)

The survey found that in the preceding month 10% of the respondents had some income originating from occasional, usually agricultural work. One working day in the local agriculture is normally 10 hours long, and the per diem payment stands at 3000 forints (approximately 12 euros). Persons belonging to the poorest strata of Roma population, most of who also suffer of various illnesses, cannot access even this rather modest work opportunity.

On the other hand, the results of research show that in certain conditions occasional work might also become a resource of upward social mobility. For example, in one rural locality (Bagamer), 50 Roma workers employed in agriculture on day to day basis managed to learn how to produce horseradish, and subsequently used this knowledge in order to start their own small farms, in pieces of land bought from or lent by local inhabitants. A social land-lease program by the county authorities encouraged Roma communities to start agricultural initiatives (such as poppy seeds cultivating or goat breeding) in other localities as well. Some of these endeavors proved successful, but others failed, mainly due to the lack of Roma agricultural tradition and business skills. In order to maximize the outcome of these programs, members of the Debrecen University research team suggested that as a first step it would be more beneficial and sustainable to focus on producing for family consume, rather than for the market.

1.5. Quantitative Data Analysis

How satisfied are Roma with their life? Is the quality of life of Roma in Hungary higher than that in Romania? Which is the quality of Roma living in the two countries? What is the relationship between the Roma and various items of labor? Which is the level of

³⁰ Beres, Csaba, 2004, **A Hajdu-Bihar megyeben elo Roma lakossag helyzete.** http://www.romaweb.hu/doc.../szociologiai_tanulma ny hbm.doc

education and occupational training? What work experience they have in the formal economy? What incomes do they have? How healthy they are? How religious they are?

These are only a few of the starting questions of a quantitative research conducted between January 10 to March 7, 2010 in several urban and rural areas in Romania and Hungary. The research is an integral part of a cross-border project called *Roma Employment*, funded by the European Regional Development Fund. This project analyses the integration of the Roma into the labor market in Romania and Hungary and includes both a research component (data collection, a test of occupational skills, applying a questionnaire, conducting focus groups) and practical activities such as organizing two job fairs for Roma (Oradea and Biharkeresztes).

The quantitative research aimed at collecting data on quality of Roma life in settlements with a high density of people belonging to this category: Oradea, Osorhei, Ineu de Cris in Romania and Biharkeresztes and Told in Hungary. It should also be noted that in most of these places Roma live in neighborhoods where they are the majority. We have to mention that interpretation of our research data is based on comparative analysis of two samples of Roma, one from Romania(Bihor county) and another from Hungary(Hajdu-Bihar county). The sampling method used is the non-probabilistic one and involves the snowball principle. Only persons able to work and who are seeking employment, aged between 18 and 55, were selected. In total, a number of 322 subjects answered to the questions.

As collected data are numerous and extremely complex, in thi paper we focus only on those related to living conditions. We aim to realize the presentation and analysis of the full set of quantitative and qualitative data in a volume dedicated to the study of Roma in Romania and Hungary.

In our research we will test several hypotheses which we shall mention below.

H1. There are significant differences between the housing conditions of Roma in Romania and Hungary.

H2. There is a significant relationship between satisfaction with life and satisfaction with housing.

H3: There is a direct link between satisfaction with housing and income.

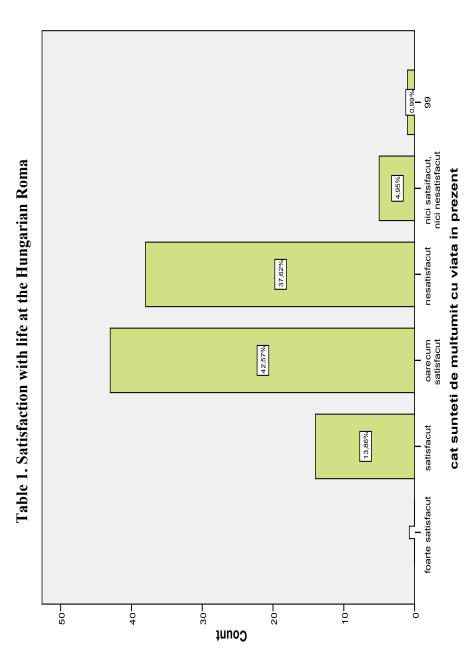
H4: There is a direct link between the size of dwelling and income.

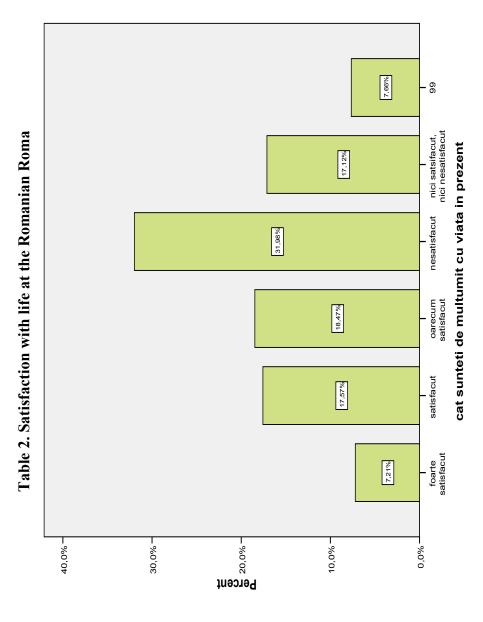
H5: There is a negative correlation between the number of persons in the household and the income.

1.5.1. Satisfaction with life

How satisfied are Roma with their life? What are the determinants of the satisfaction with life? The research results drawn from the research samples in Romania and Hungary are shown in the tables below.

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We can see in the two tables that on the one hand, the share of very satisfied in Romania is higher (7. 21% vs 0%) and also the percentage of those dissatisfied is lower (31. 98% compared to 37. 62%). Is this happening because of a higher quality of life or the effect of other factors? We will give an answer along the way.

1.5.2 The economic vulnerability of the Roma

A first step we need to make is to see the perception of the Roma on poverty.

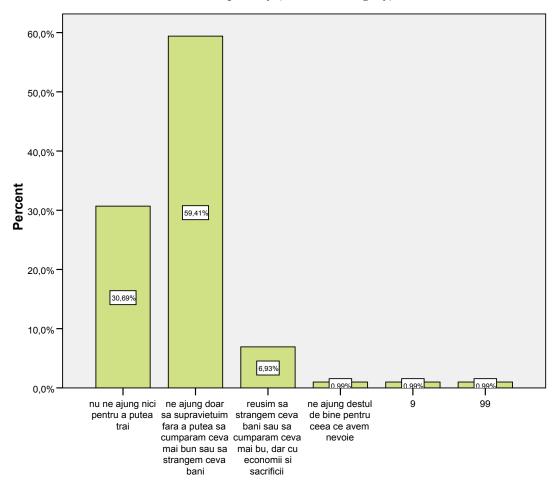


Table 3. Income poverty (Roma in Hungary)

Gândindu-va la veniturile totale ale familiei, puteti spune ca va ajung sau nu?

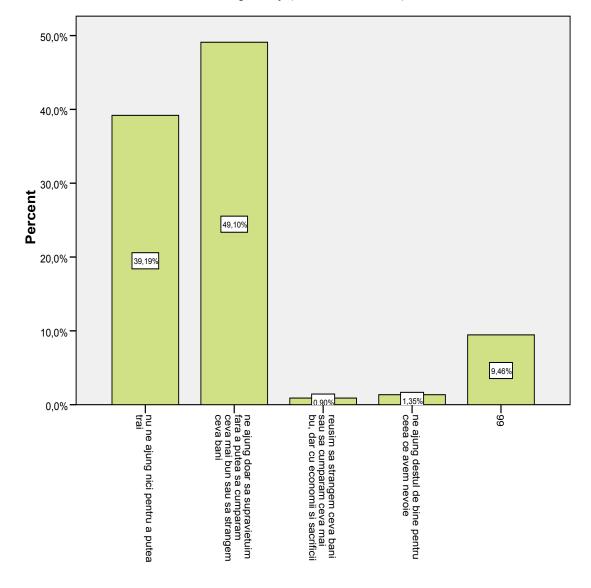


Table 4. Income poverty (Roma in Romania)

Cândindu va la vaniturila tatala ala familiai nutati anuna aa va aiuna aau

Comparing the two tables, we can see that the Roma in both countries perceive themselves poor and very poor. If we observe the first two items, the percentages are quit similar in the two countries (about 88. 29% in Romania compared to 90% in Hungary). If we take items 3 and 4 however, the situation is more favorable for the Roma in Hungary (8%) compared to 2. 25% for the Roma in Romania.

1.5.3. Housing conditions

A first step towards interpreting the above mentioned surprising situation is to inquire about the living conditions in the two countries. How satisfied are the Roma with their home? Here are the data from Hungary.

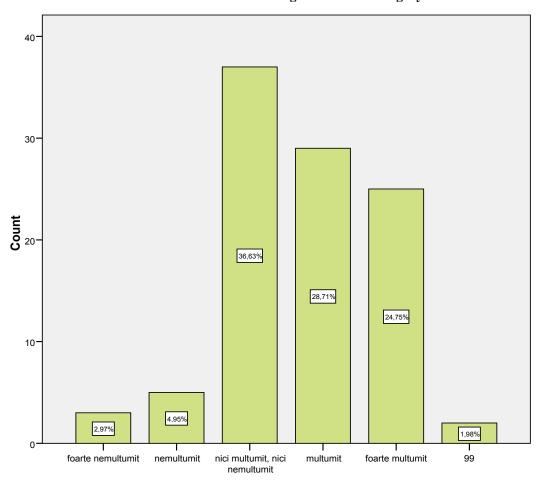


Table. 5 Satisfaction with housing at Roma in Hungary

multumirea cu locuinta

A question to be raised is how the satisfaction with life is associated with the satisfaction with housing. The regression model applied to the data from Hungary proves a significant combination, but not a strong link between the two variables, as will appear in the data presented in the annex 1.

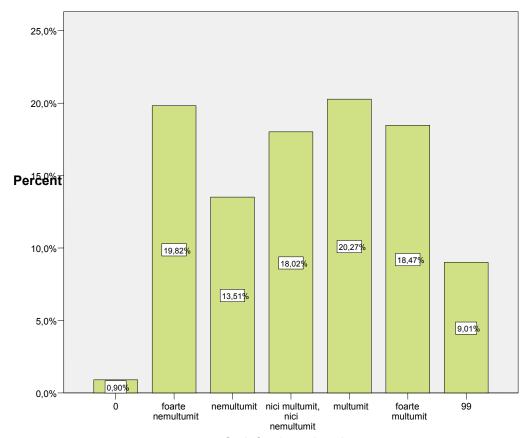


Table 6. Satisfaction with housing at Roma in Romania

Satisfacția cu locuința

We can notice in the two graphics, on the one hand, that the percentage of satisfied and very satisfied is higher in Hungary (26. 71% and 24. 79%) compared to Romania (18. 47% and 20. 27%, and secondly that the percentage of dissatisfied and very dissatisfied is much higher in Romania (19. 82% and 13. 5%) compared with those in Hungary (4. 95%, respectively 2. 97%). Perhaps this is due to issues such as housing density, housing size, number of rooms and the materials the houses are made of.

One of our assumptions is related to the direct link between satisfaction with life and satisfaction with housing. Making a regression analysis on the data from Romania, we can see that the association between the two variables is significant and, as shown by the data in the table below, the correlation between the two variables is over 0.79, so it is quite strong. The comparison between the two regression analysis (the Romanian and Hungarian cases) shows a stronger association between the data from Romania than in those from Hungary.

In most studies the income seems to be the best predictor of satisfaction with life, so it would be interesting to have a look at the results of the regression model between the income and the satisfaction with life(annex3). The correlation coefficient (r=0,99) proves a very strong link between these two variables. On the other hand the regression model between the income and satisfaction with housing (a significant combination and a very strong connection)

proves that in the case of Hungary, the income variable is a better predictor of life satisfaction than the satisfaction with housing(annex5).

Applying the same regression analysis for Romania, we notice a significant association and a stronger link (although the values are very close) than that between satisfaction with housing and satisfaction with life. The differences that arise between the situation in Romania and Hungary are likely due to differences in income between the Roma in the two countries, but also to the way the Roma minority relates to their neighbors. The data presented in this paper show us that the Roma in Romania live in neighborhoods with Roma majority, while the Roma in Hungary live in ethnically rather mixed areas.

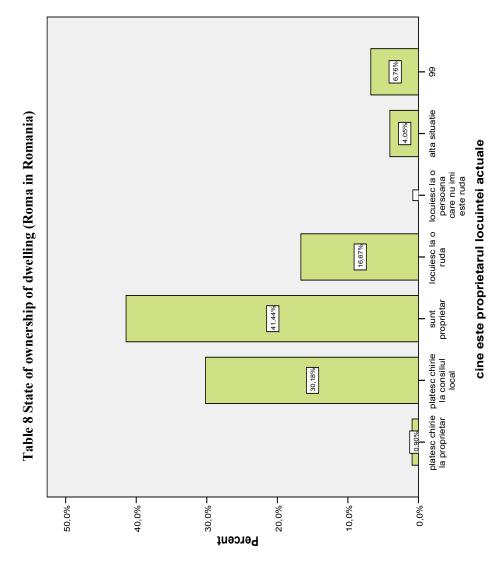
Further we proceeded to test the link between housing and income satisfactionin Romania (annex 6). The data demonstrate a significant association between the two variables and also a strong connection. This assumption/hypothesis is valid Hungary. The data demonstrate a significant association between the two variables and also a strong connection, in the case of Romania. So, this hypothesis is valid for Romania, too. We note in the case of Romania a stronger value of the correlation coefficient, but the difference from the coefficient of Hungary is too small (0.813 vs. 0. 701) for giving rise to any interpretation. An important item in many inquiries about

An important item in many inquiries about housing in poor areas is the state of dwelling ownership.

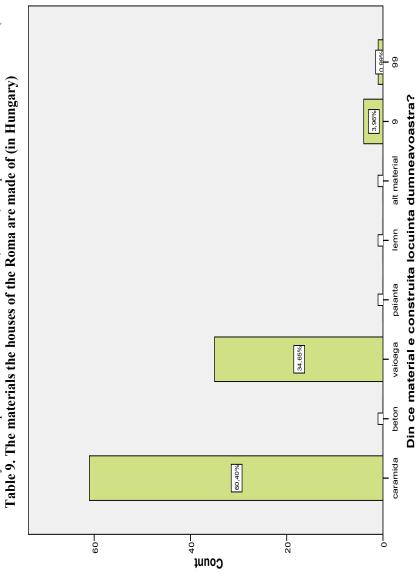
60 50 40 51,49% 41,58% 20 10 locuiesc la o platesc chirie platesc chirie sunt locuiese la o alta situatie 99 la proprietar persoana la consiliul ruda care nu imi

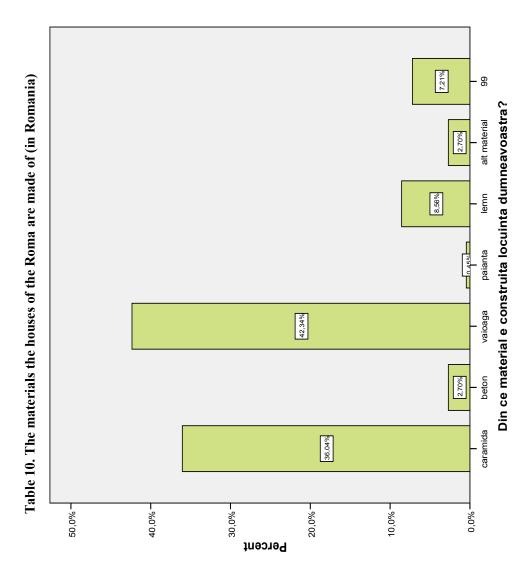
Table. 7 State of ownership of dwelling (Roma in Hungary)

cine este proprietarul locuintei actuale

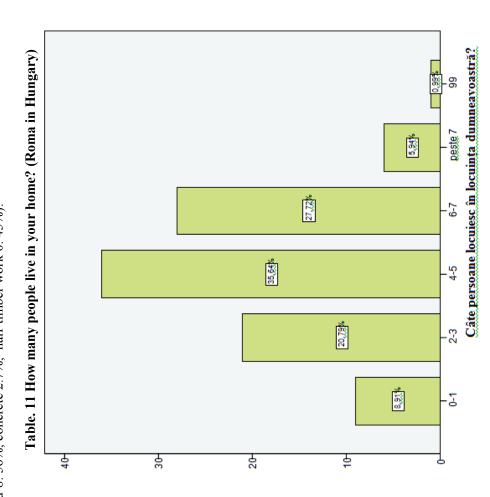


City Council (30. 18%) compared to a very small percentage, 0. 99% in Hungary. The percentage of those who are owners is more favorable for Hungary, 51. 49% compared to 41. 44% in Romania, while in Hungary there are many more cases when the family lives at a When comparing the two situations, we can notice some aspects. First, in Romania there are several cases in which they pay rent to the relative, 41. 58%, and when the family lives at persons who are not relatives, 2.97%, compared to Roma in Romania (16. 67% and 0%).

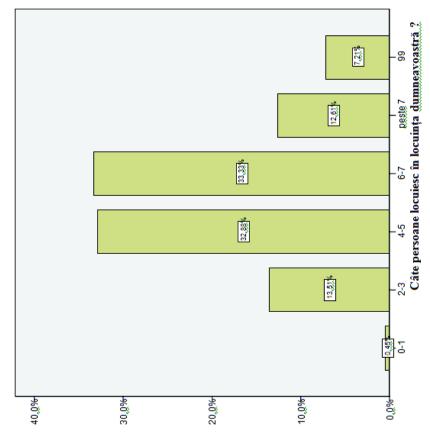




We can see in the two graphs that the Roma in Hungary have more modern houses, built mostly of brick (60. 40%) and a smaller proportion of adobe (34. 65%), while the dwellings of the Bihor County Roma are mainly made of adobe (42. 34%), brick (36. 04%), but also other materials (wood-8. 56%, concrete 2.7%, half-timber work 0. 45%).

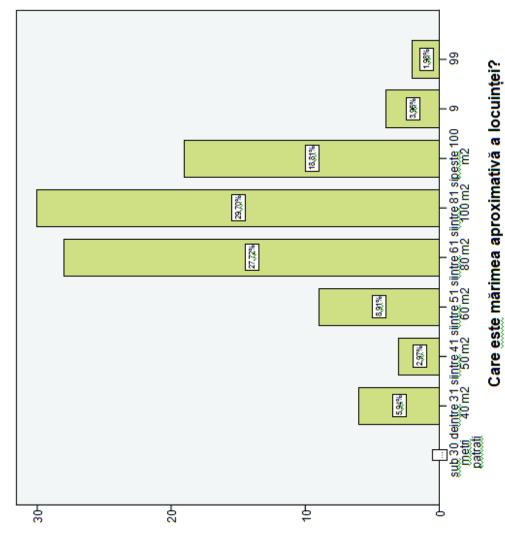


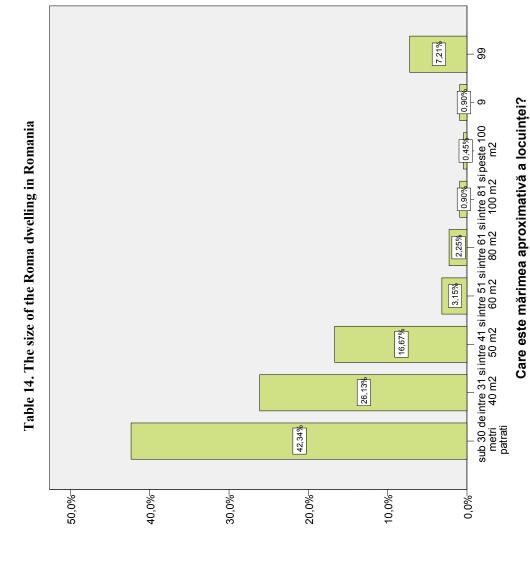




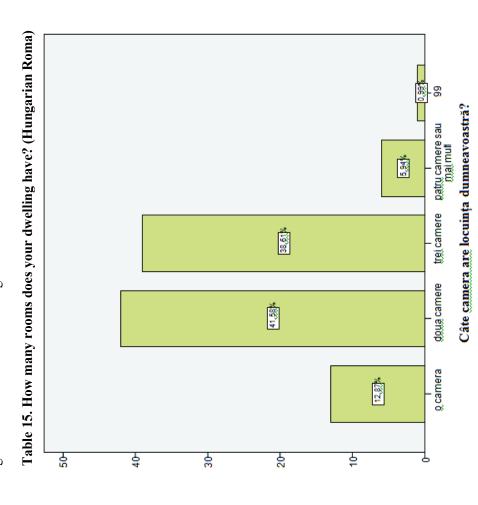
the household, the share of cases in Romania (33. 33% and 12. 61%) being higher than in Hungary (27. 72% respectively 5. 94%). On the other hand, for 1 or 2-3 persons in a house, the situation in Hungary is comparatively better (8. 91% and 20. 79%) than in Romania (0. 45%). We can notice in the two tables that housing density is higher in Romania than in Hungary, as in the case of 6-7 or more than 7 persons in respectively 13. 5%). These data should be added to those on the dwelling area, number of rooms and facilities.

Table 13. The size of the Roma dwelling in Hungary





sq.m. in Hungary.It seems that the size of housing is a significant indicator of the gap which separates housing conditions and more generally the civilizational integration levels of the Roma living in the two countries. We can notice in these two tables that while in Romania the housing size is mainly under 60 sq.m., the prevailing housing area is over 60



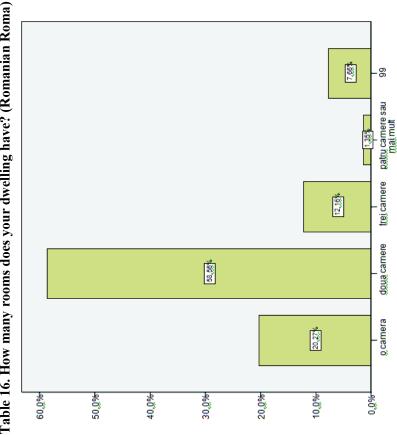


Table 16. How many rooms does your dwelling have? (Romanian Roma)

Câte camere are locuința dumneavoastră?

while the corresponding percentage in the Romanian sample is only 13.4%. However, the situation is rather different in the case of houses Again the difference is very high between the two samples. A share of 44.4% of Hungarian Roma live in houses with three rooms or more, with one or two rooms (79% of Roma in Romania and 64.4% in Hungary).

According to the results of regression analysis in both countries there is a significant link between the housing size and income and also between the number of persons in the dwelling and the income(annexes 7 to 10). This outcome denotes the frequent occurrence of multiple disadvantaging factors(such as precarious living conditions, high number of family members living in small size dwellings and extremely low level of income).

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Locuinta dumneavoastra este dotata cu grup sanitar?

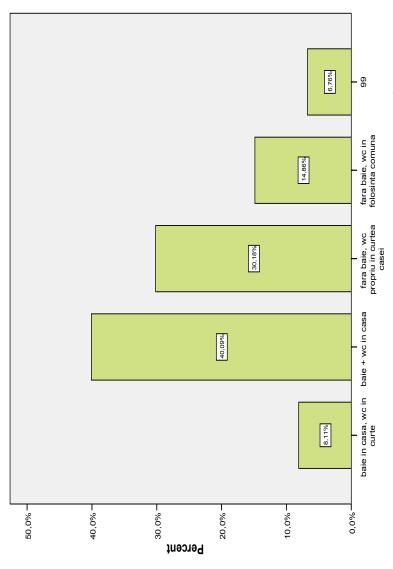
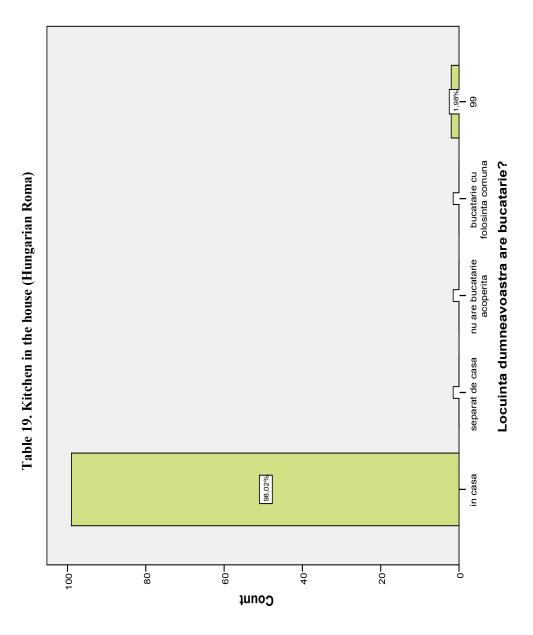
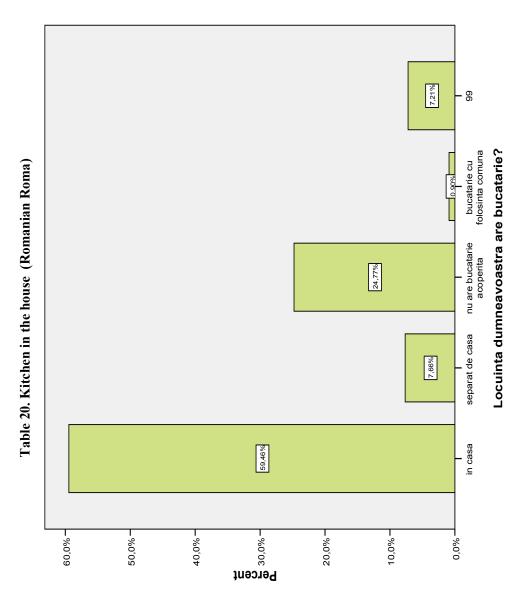


Table 18. Dwellings with bathroom facilities (Romanian Roma)

Locuinta dumneavoastra este dotata cu grup sanitar?

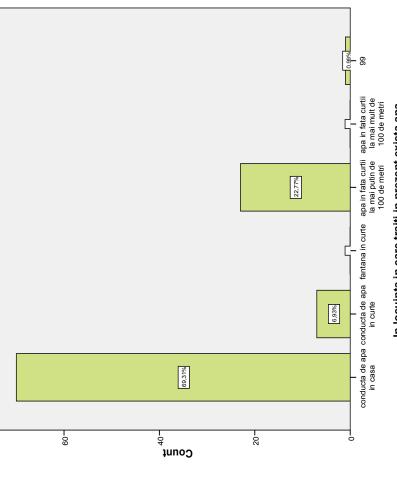
with the best conditions, i.ee with bathroom and toilet in the house, the weights of the two samples are 69.31% in Hungary and 40.09% in Romania. If we compare instead those with the worst conditions, in other words those who do not have a bathroom in the house and a toilet The two tables show very clearly that the Roma in Hungary have better living conditions than those from Romania. If we compare those in common usage, the corresponding values are 14.86% in Romania, respectively 1.99% in Hungary. Another important housing facility is the home kitchen. The following two tables illustrate the situation in the two cases.





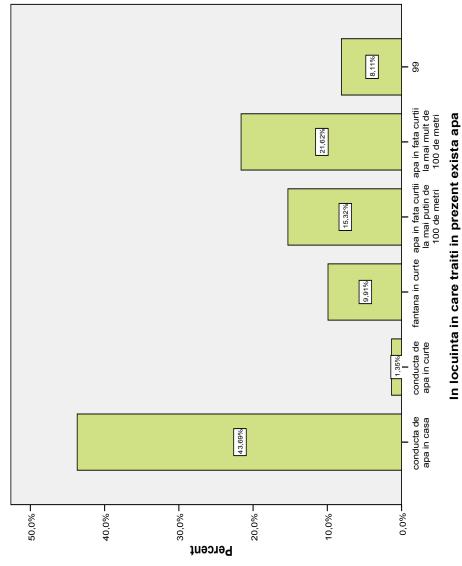
have a kitchen in the house, this is happening only in 59. 46% of Roma in Romania. Instead we have here a percentage of 7.66% of cases in which the kitchen is separated from the house, 24.77% have a not covered kitchen and even a small percentage (0.90%) use common kitchen with other families in town. Comparing the situation in the two contries, some important differences occur again. Thus, if 98.02% of Roma households in Hungary

Table 21. Is there current water in the household you actually live? (Roma in Hungary)



In locuinta in care traiti in prezent exista apa

Table 22. Is there current water in the household you actually live? (Roma in Romania)



In terms of water use in the home, there are also significant differences between the two cases. Thus, in Hungary 69.31% compared to 43.69% in Romania are endowed with water pipe in the house. 9.91% have a fountain/well in the courtyard in Romania compared to zero percent in Hungary. 15.32% of the Roma households in the Romanian sample are using the water source in the front of the courtyard at less than 100 meters compared to 22.7% in the Hungarian sample. 21.62% of the Roma households in the Romanian sample have water in the front of the courtyard at more than 100 meters compared to 0% in the Hungarian sample. Again, big differences appear between the two cases.

1.5.5. The poverty of the neighborhood

The Roma of the samples selected from the two countries live, in most cases, in poor neighborhoods compared with the majority. In our survey we inquire about the perception of the Roma on the neighborhoods in which their dwellings are.

Table 23. The perception of the poverty of the neighborhood (Hungarian Roma)

Care din urmatoarele afirmatii descrie cartierul in care locuiti in prezent?

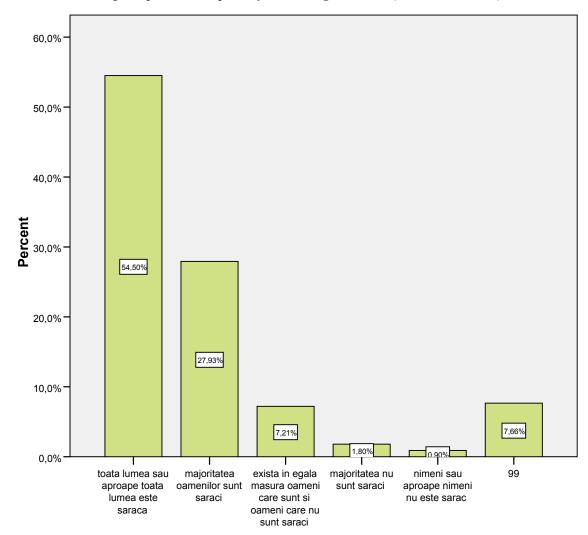


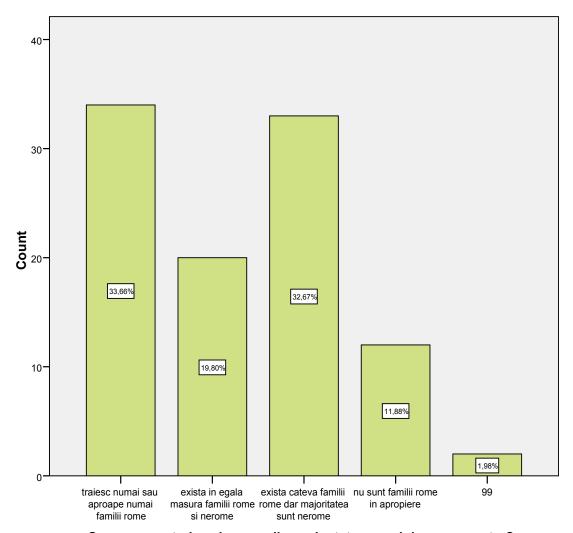
Table 24. The perception of the poverty of the neighborhood (Romanian Roma)

Care din urmatoarele afirmatii descrie cartierul in care locuiti in prezent?

It can be clearly seen that the perceived level of poverty is much higher in the Roma neighborhoods in Romania compared to that in Hungary. If we take the first two items (Everybody or almost everybody is poor and Most of the people are poor), their percentage is definitely higher for Romania, 82.4%, compared to 52.4% for Hungary. As far as item 4 is concerned (Most of them are not poor), we notice that the relevant percentage is lower in Romania (1.80%), than in Hungary(7.92%).

To have a better idea about the neighborhood of the Roma households, let's see who the neighbors of the subjects of our sample are (Roma or non-Roma neighbors).

Table 25. Who are the neighbors of the Roma? (Hungarian Roma)



Ce persoane traiesc in zona din vecinatatea casei dumneavoastra?

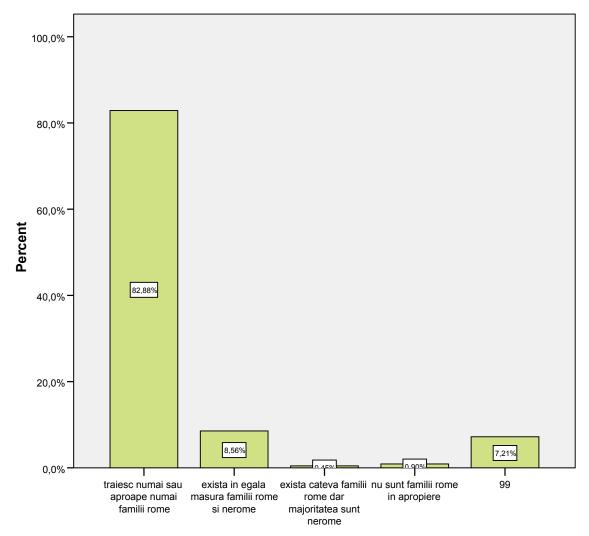
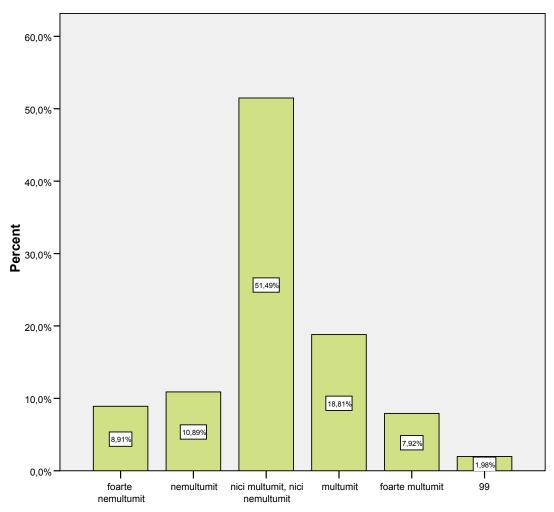


Table 26. Who are the neighbors of the Roma? (Romanian Roma)

Ce persoane traiesc in zona din vecinatatea casei dumneavoastra?

Although the localities were selected by Romanian and Hungarian experts on the criterion of poverty and occurence of social problems of the Roma communities, we can notice differences in the ethnic composition of the neighborhoods. In Romania, the Roma tend to live in compact areas with Roma majority population (82.88%), while in Hungary the percentage is only 33.66%. However if we take items 3 and 4, the situation is clearly different for the two countries (44.55% in Hungary and 1.35% in Romania).

Table 27. Satisfaction with the neighborhood (Roma from Hungary)



multumirea cu cartierul

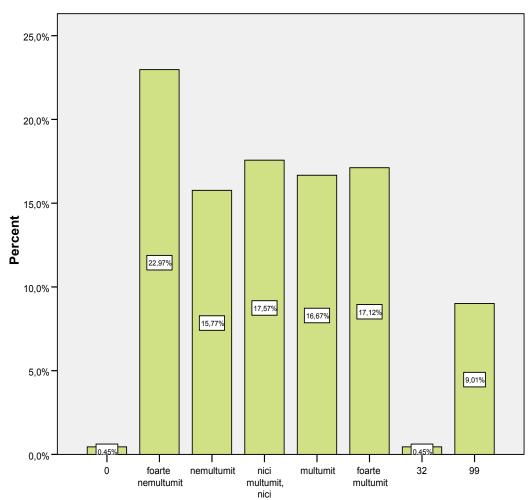


Table 28. Satisfaction with the neighborhood (Roma from Romania)

multumirea cu cartierul

Concerning the satisfaction with the neighborhood, we notice again that the percentage of those very dissatisfied and dissatisfied is much higher(almost twice as high)in Romania than in Hungary (about 38.77% compared to almost 20%). It is interesting to notice that the percentage of those satisfied and very satisfied is greater in Romania (around 33.79% compared to almost 27%).

nemultumit

1.5. Conclusions

Analyzing the data on the Roma communities living in Romania and Hungary, we can find some significant differences. Even if Roma in Romania are more satisfied with their life, perhaps as the consequence of their more traditional life outlook, but also due to the ethnic composition of their neighbourhood, the Roma living in Hungary seem to be more satisfied with their dwellings. In terms of most objective indicators (ownership status, building materials, the number of rooms, the number of persons in the household, the hygiene, the posession of bathroom, toilet, kitchen, heating), Roma in Hungary are living in comparatively better conditions.

In contrast with their co-ethnics from Romania. Hungarian Roma live in neighborhoods that include both Roma and non-Roma, an aspect that has a great importance in their integration into society. Although according to Michael Stewart they resisted assimilation during socialism, our data demonstrate that today they seem to be much closer to the civilizational level of the larger society than ever before. It is worth to mention that they define themselves mostly as Hungarian Roma ("magyar cigany"), unlike Roma from Romania, who mainly identify with their traditional community belonging (neamuri). The higher level of integration of Roma in Hungary is also proved by the attachment of most of them to the mainstream churches, while in case of Romania the influence of Neo-Protestant religious communities is much higher among the Roma population.

One indicator of integration is the one related to housing quality. From this point of view too, Roma in Hungary are socially more integrated than the Roma in Romania. Their dwellings indicate a serious lag compared both to the Roma in Hungary, but also to the majority group. Roma in Romania seem to be much more traditional if we analyze all these indicators of housing quality.

In terms of differences between localities, they are more pronounced in Romania, where, according to our data, the community of Osorhei seems to be the poorest, having worse conditions not only compared to Oradea, but also to Ineu de Cris. Relatively small differences can be noticed in Hungary, between the communities of Biharkeresztes and Told, may be due to geographical proximity and to the fact that Told is a rural community while Biharkeresztes became a town only recently, still having mostly semi-rural community features.

Housing is an important indicator of the quality of life, influencing the health status, the participation in education and perhaps to some extent also the level of integration into the formal economy. For the development of the quality of housing, a more active involvement of the Government and of the local authorities, as well as the involvement of NGOs and Roma leaders is needed, even if the home's quality primarily depends on the income level of each family, and that is a problem in each case.

It is true that the same issue depends also on the neighborhood. If Roma see that the neighbors are poor and do not make efforts to improve their living conditions, they are tempted to do the same. If instead their neighbours belong to another ethnic group and Roma see that they have higher living conditions, this may also be an incentive for Roma. This fact is influencing to a large extent the difference between housing conditions of Roma in Hungary compared with those from Romania. Roma in Romania live in compact areas with a high density of social problems and a serious shortage of modernity. Perhaps a solution would be that Roma in Romania live in ethnically mixed neighborhoods or areas. Roma in Romania isolated, marginalized, segregated compared to other ethnic groups both in terms of housing, participation in education or integration into the formal economy. On the other hand, there is also a dissociating mechanism probably related to their traditional values.

Probably long-term solutions would be largescale investments in educational and also social economy programs, which could promote a better integration into the formal economy and to the successfull securing of sustainable sources of income leading to better housing and civilizational conditions as well.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Simple regression analysis between satisfaction with housing and satisfaction with life (for Hungary)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,696(a)	,485	,479	6,891

a Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction with housing

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4419,361	1	4419,361	93,063	,000(a)
	Residual	4701,312	99	47,488		
	Total	9120,673	100			

a Predictors: (Constant), Satisfac tion with housing

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B Std. Error		Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1,518	,743		2,042	,044
	Satisfaction with housing	,497	,051	,696	9,647	,000,

a Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

Annex 2. Simple regression analysis between satisfaction with housing and satisfaction with life (for Romania)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,795(a)	,632	,630	15,515

a Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction with housing

b Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90903,165	1	90903,165	377,662	,000(a)
	Residual	52954,006	220	240,700		
	Total	143857,171	221			

a Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction with housing

Coefficients(a)

	•	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model	1	В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	2,118	1,131		1,872	,062
	Satisfaction with housing	,735	,038	,795	19,434	,000,

a Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

Annex 3. Simple regression model between income and satisfaction with life (for Hungary)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,990(a)	,981	,980	1,336

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8944,003	1	8944,003	5011,926	,000(a)
	Residual	176,670	99	1,785		
	Total	9120,673	100			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

b Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

b Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1,549	,138		11,190	,000,
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,974	,014	,990	70,795	,000

a Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

Annex 4. Simple regression model between income and satisfaction with life (for Romania)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,829(a)	,688	,686	14,292

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	98920,358	1	98920,358	484,291	,000(a)
	Residual	44936,813	220	204,258		
	Total	143857,171	221			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	2,682	1,026		2,614	,010
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,740	,034	,829	22,007	,000,

a Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

b Dependent Variable: how satisfied are you with your present life

Annex 5. Simple regression between income and satisfaction with housing (for Hungary)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,701(a)	,491	,486	9,596

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model	-	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8791,698	1	8791,698	95,468	,000(a)
	Residual	9116,996	99	92,091		
	Total	17908,693	100			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?b Dependent Variable: satisfaction with housing

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	2,860	,994		2,876	,005
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,965	,099	,701	9,771	,000

a Dependent Variable: satisfaction with housing

Annex 6. Simple regression between income and satisfaction with housing (for Romania)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,813(a)	,662	,660	16,079

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	111217,744	1	111217,744	430,183	,000(a)
	Residual	56877,918	220	258,536		
	Total	168095,662	221			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?b Dependent Variable: satisfaction with housing

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	3,167	1,154		2,744	,007
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,785	,038	,813	20,741	,000,

a Dependent Variable: satisfaction with housing

Annex 7. The regression model for the relationship between housing size and income (Roma in Hungary)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,698(a)	,488	,483	9,474

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8464,729	1	8464,729	94,299	,000(a)
	Residual	8886,717	99	89,765		
	Total	17351,446	100			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

b Dependent Variable: which is the approximate area of the dwelling?

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	4,703	,982		4,790	,000,
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,947	,098	,698	9,711	,000

a Dependent Variable: which is the approximate area of the dwelling?

These tables show a significant association and also a strong relationship.

Annex 8. The regression model for the relationship between the number of the persons in the dwelling and income (Roma in Hungary)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,991(a)	,981	,981	1,322

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9058,863	1	9058,863	5184,618	,000(a)
	Residual	172,978	99	1,747		
	Total	9231,842	100			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1,205	,137		8,796	,000,
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,980	,014	,991	72,004	,000,

a Dependent Variable: How many persons live in your house?

b Dependent Variable: How many persons live in your house?

Annex 9. The regression model for the relationship between housing size and income (Roma in Romania)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,800(a)	,641	,639	15,124

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	89746,698	1	89746,698	392,372	,000(a)
	Residual	50320,261	220	228,728		
	Total	140066,959	221			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?b Dependent Variable: which is the approximate area of the dwelling?

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1,355	1,086		1,248	,213
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,705	,036	,800	19,808	,000,

a Dependent Variable: which is the approximate area of the dwelling?

Annex 10. The regression model for the relationship between the number of the persons in the dwelling and income (Roma in Romania)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,862(a)	,743	,742	12,589

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	100782,651	1	100782,651	635,916	,000(a)
	Residual	34866,520	220	158,484		
	Total	135649,171	221			

a Predictors: (Constant), Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not? b Dependent Variable: How many persons live in your house?

Coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	В	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	2,274	,904		2,516	,013
	Thinking about the total family income, can you say that it is enough or not?	,747	,030	,862	25,217	,000,

a Dependent Variable: How many persons live in your house?