

# FACES AND CAUSES OF ROMA MARGINALIZATION

## Experiences from Romania

Enikő Vincze

The “**Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Local Communities**” inquiry explored the economic, political, demographic, and social forces at municipal and community level which shape practices and consequences of social exclusion and potential pathways to inclusion. **Phase 2** of this research focused on a representative sample of municipalities (20–30 per country) in Hungary, Romania, and Serbia to explore basic local social services and infrastructure provisions, conditions of political participation of the Roma, and local interventions targeting Roma inclusion. This research phase relied on structured field research collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. This short country report is based on the **Final Country Report on the Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Romania**, edited in June 2013 by Enikő Vincze, with contributions from Cătălin Dîrțu, Adrian-Nicolae Furtună, Margareta Herțanu, Iulia-Elena Hossu, Elena Mihalache, Rafaela Maria Muraru, Florina Pop, Mihaela Preda, and Daniel Tudora. The Short Country report is also co-authored by this group in the sense that these colleagues collected and processed the field data. However, overall interpretation and presentation of the data was done by Enikő Vincze (the coordinator of the Romanian research team), therefore, this report is single-authored. The text refers to “us/we” or “I” according to fieldwork knowledge or interpretation. The Romanian research team also included Ramona Făcăleț, Andrei Mihail Tudor and Elena Trifan (as a volunteer) at the level of localities, and Nicolae Arsene, Violeta Dumitru, Victor Făcăleț, Marcela Șerban and Alina Tuța at the county level.

For the full volume resulting from this research please see Szalai, Júlia and Violetta Zentai, eds. (2014) *Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Local Contexts*. Budapest: Center for Policy Studies, Central European University.



# 1. Introduction

Phase 2 of the research 'Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Local Settings' identified a series of intersecting factors in Romanian localities that (re)produce the ethno-spatial segregation or separation of Roma. These sometimes are interwoven with economic deprivation or extreme poverty. By analyzing data collected in 25 settlements (covering five of the eight Romanian development regions) our aim was to offer insights into the ways advanced marginality created economically deprived and excluded (Romani) communities at local level (Wacquant 2008).<sup>1</sup>

While focusing on localities, one has to also note that these area-based constellations are representative of the broader stage of Romania's post-1990 political economy. Although also characteristic of regimes prior to 1990, Roma marginalization is viewed here as part of a complex transformative process that began with the collapse of socialist industries and agriculture, which saw the birth of a market economy and which now is shaped by the global neoliberal model. This restructuring of the state and society has had a profound impact on virtually everything, including the creation of structural injustices—particularly affecting Roma—related to labor, housing, schooling and political representation. This was done by extending 'free' market principles to all spheres (i.e. sustained by legislation supporting the private sector in general and multinational companies in particular, or the privatization of public goods, which thereby reduced citizen access to socio-economic rights and weakened the welfare state). Without fulfilling its promises regarding democratization and economic competitiveness, the regime change in Romania failed to elaborate a new and adequate social contract based on solidarity and justice. Instead of improving living standards for all—out of the former socialist shortage economy and authoritarian political order, and under the impact of the current global economy—it created a system that produces instances of severe social exclusion. In the case of marginalized Roma, this phenomenon overlaps with ethno-territorial ghettoization.

Our research in Romania revealed the diversity of Roma marginalization and exclusion (Fraser 2007).<sup>2</sup> Its forms are situated on a continuum from the economically deprived (at the most, adversely incorporated) (Murray 2001; Bracking 2003)<sup>3</sup> to the excluded marginal (impoverished, neglected and cut out of society with regards to developmental investments and human rights). In addition, during our field research we encountered better-off Romani communities, often territorially separated from the rest of society as a result of their historical evolution and voluntarily decisions. We also met ethnic Roma living and working in integrated urban or rural spaces. Even though they were not members of a spatially marked community, they symbolically

- 1 This approach is inspired by Wacquant's (2008) definition of advanced marginality being a new form of social exclusion in neoliberal regimes, characterized by accumulation of economic penury, social deprivation, ethno-racial divisions, and public violence in the same distressed urban area. This type of expulsion does not stem from economic crises or underdevelopment; it is rather the resultant of economic restructuring and its unequal economic effects on the lowest faction of workers and subordinated ethnic categories.
- 2 In making a distinction between marginalized and excluded, I am following the approach of Nancy Fraser (2007). According to her, there is a difference between those who are marginalized or subordinated, but can still participate with others in social interaction (although not as peers), and between those who are excluded (i.e. are not even in the game).
- 3 According to some critics of the social exclusion paradigm (for example Murray 2001; Bracking 2003), when investigating chronic poverty the notion of "differential" or adverse incorporation into the state, market or civil society is more appropriate than the idea of "social exclusion". In this context, I am using the term in order to suggest the difference between those poor who are participating in society, in the market or in the public agenda however, their poverty perpetuates inter-generationally, and between those classes of poor that are not even present or visible on these terrains.

assumed a belonging with a Romani imagined community or at least self-identified as Roma. These instances are important to consider in the analysis of the process of Roma marginalization, because the actors involved—consciously or otherwise—played a role in this, and in some instances they were racialized (i.e. conceived as the ‘racial other’) by the majority society together with their socially excluded ethnic fellows.

The process of Roma marginalization is prevalent at the crossroads of structural conditions characterizing the different regions, counties, neighborhoods and urban and rural settlements, as well as of the institutionalized power relations and mentalities affecting (non)belonging at local and trans-local level. Our qualitative analysis does not capture a representative sample of Romania, but it describes in contextual detail how and why marginality is constituted, and it alerts policy-makers how to handle this as a mass phenomenon. While looking for data collection and evaluation tools on Roma exclusion and on the implementation of public policies for Roma inclusion, policy-makers should necessarily focus on these instances of advanced marginality that cannot be eliminated through a traditional target-group or vulnerable group approach (Kabeer 2000, 27).<sup>4</sup>

Among the structural conditions producing marginality in our contextual research we focused on: the economic underdevelopment of immediate and surrounding areas, including the acute lack of job opportunities due to economic restructuring; precarious housing circumstances belonging to territorially isolated zones with extremely low access to quality public services and goods; and the lack of political will and/or technical competency to elaborate or implement evidence-based, inclusive and cohesive development policies. Regarding institutionalized power relations and mentalities, we could highlight: the historically embedded inter-personal and inter-group relationships sustained through several life domains (e.g. school, labor, administration, etc.) between people identified on the basis of their social status and ethnic belonging, as well as cross-generational cultural conceptions about cohabitation that matter at particular levels (e.g. social status and ethnicity).

## 2. Romanian geographic sample and data accessibility

In the construction of the Romanian geographic sample we sought a compromise that, on the one hand, satisfied the principles proposed by the research coordinators (i.e. that localities should be selected from the 2011 UNDP survey sample, that each of them should include one small city and four villages, and that they should act as a cluster) and, on the other hand, that it responded to the realities of Romanian territorial administration. Given that the biggest territorial administrative unit in Romania at local level is the county (*județ*), we selected our clusters so that localities belonged to the same county. Despite the fact that regions in Romania do not act as administrative units, they function as so-called developmental areas and reproduce the disparities between the historical regions of the country—this is why we opted for localities/clusters/counties belonging to different developmental regions. As a result, we conducted the research using the following sample:

4 This conviction is underlined by concepts of social exclusion according to which exclusion accounts for both economic and socio-cultural processes of impoverishment, it addresses groups who suffer from both economic disadvantage and forms of symbolic devaluation that are reproduced in everyday social practice, and it “adds concerns with social inequality to longstanding concerns with poverty” (Kabeer 2000, 27).

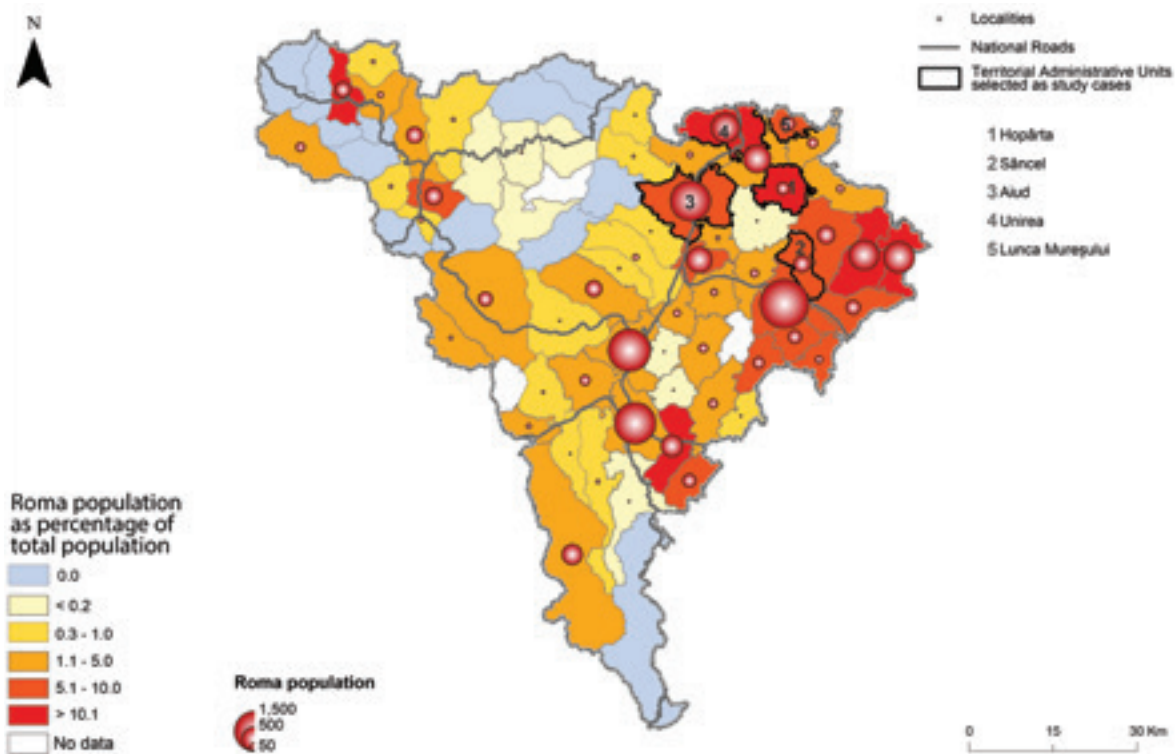
Table 1. The Romanian sample

Cluster	County (historical region)	Locality	UNDP 2011 sample	Distance to the cluster's urban setting in km	Percentage of ethnic Roma	Risk of poverty in the Developmental Region
1. Iași cluster	Iași (Moldova)	Târgu Frumos	Yes	—	9.59%	50% (North-East, highest in Romania)
		Mironeasa	Yes	76	8.24%	
		Lungani	No	15	33.85%	
		Stolniceni-Prăjescu	No	32	7.21%	
		Ciohorăni	No	50	24.54%	
2. Arad cluster	Arad (Banat)	Curtici	Yes	—	11.81%	32% (West)
		Covășinț	Yes	52	25.33%	
		Șiria	Yes	45	12.15%	
		Pilu	Yes	48	12.78%	
		Macea	No	6	8.81%	
3. Dolj cluster	Dolj (Oltenița)	Calafat	Yes	—	4.62%	42% (South-West Oltenia)
		Bârca	Yes	62	24.44%	
		Cetate	Yes	29	19.55%	
		Negoi	Yes	42	43.32%	
		Sadova	Yes	100	23.02%	
4. Alba cluster	Alba (Transylvania)	Aiud	Yes	—	6.45%	28% (Center, second lowest in Romania)
		Lunca Mureșului	Yes	25	11.91%	
		Unirea	No	16	17.93%	
		Hopârta	No	15	17.86%	
		Sâncel	No	42	9.39%	
5. Călărași cluster	Călărași (county with the second highest % of Roma in Romania, 8.1%)	Oltenița	No	—	8.79%	41% (South Muntenia)
		Frumușani	Yes	40	22.02%	
		Spanțov	yes	17	32.75%	
		Chirnogi	Yes	7	21.40%	
		Curcani	No	15	36.23%	

This is not a representative sample in the statistical sense of the term. But it included localities whereby using qualitative and quantitative fieldwork methods<sup>5</sup> our research team could identify processes and forms, and even patterns of (Roma) marginalization and exclusion representative of the current Romanian context. The localities of the sample were grouped into clusters according to the counties they belonged to—they did not act as clusters in the sense that the small cities could have functioned as centers of attraction or development poles for the composing communes (including, in turn, several villages). Data on this sample is also reflected in our maps presented below,<sup>6</sup> which display the spatial distribution of the ethnic Roma population in the 5 counties and 25 localities as mirrored by the 2011 Census.

Map 1. Mapping Roma in Alba county and cluster

Spatial distribution of Roma population in Alba County

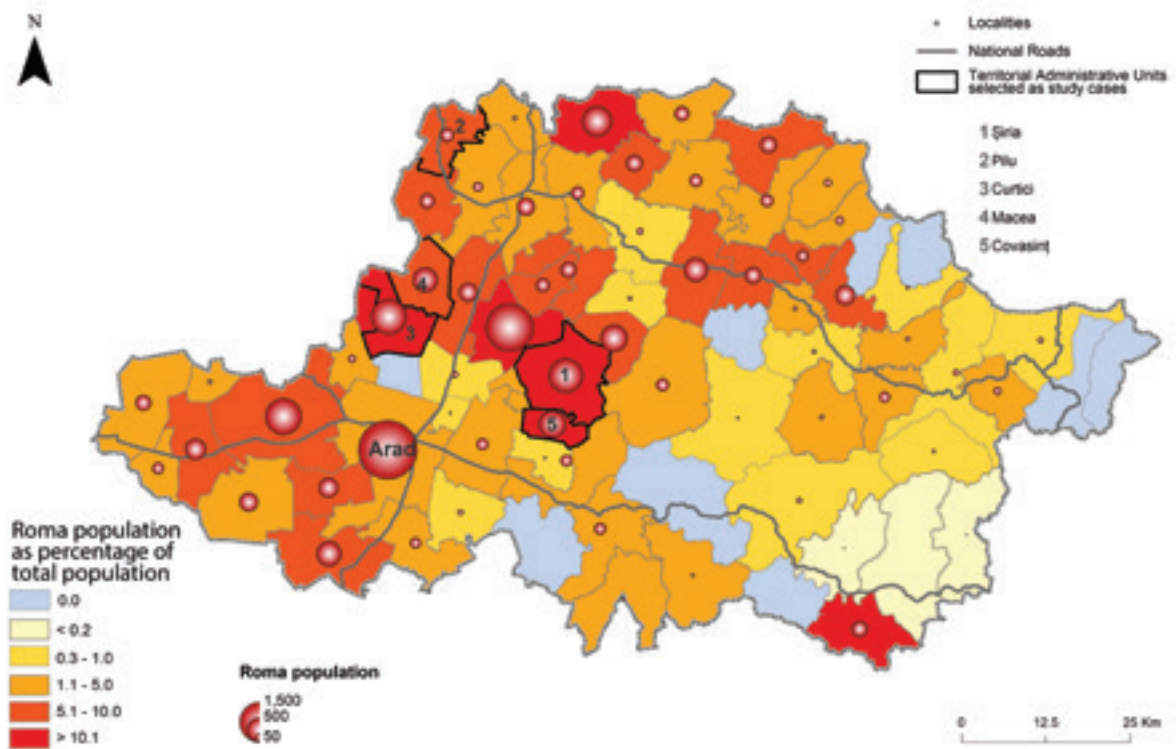


5 In the light of its main objectives, “all elements, routines and tools applied in Phase 2 were designed to serve the dual goal of revealing new results and establishing new procedures of enquiries so that members of the Roma communities can utilize them without high-level training in social science research” (Szalai 2013). The applied methodology started with the so-called socio tours (discussions with various representative actors within the local society, and their maps about the socio-ethnic divisions of their localities). It continued with formal and informal talks with representatives of the City Hall and local council (legislative and executive leaders, as well as public servants, including Roma employees such as Roma experts or health mediators), of local schools and employers, and also with members of Roma communities. Through these discussions (recorded or not), we requested from our interviewees a multitude of information that we supposed they might possess (statistical data collected by them or by others, quantitative evaluations regarding people’s material and housing conditions, their participation in school education and in the labor market, as well as perceptions and interpretations of the experienced realities in what regards interethnic relations, and forms of Roma participation and representation in the local social, economic, cultural, and political/administrative life of the locality).

6 Map courtesy of Daniel Tudora.

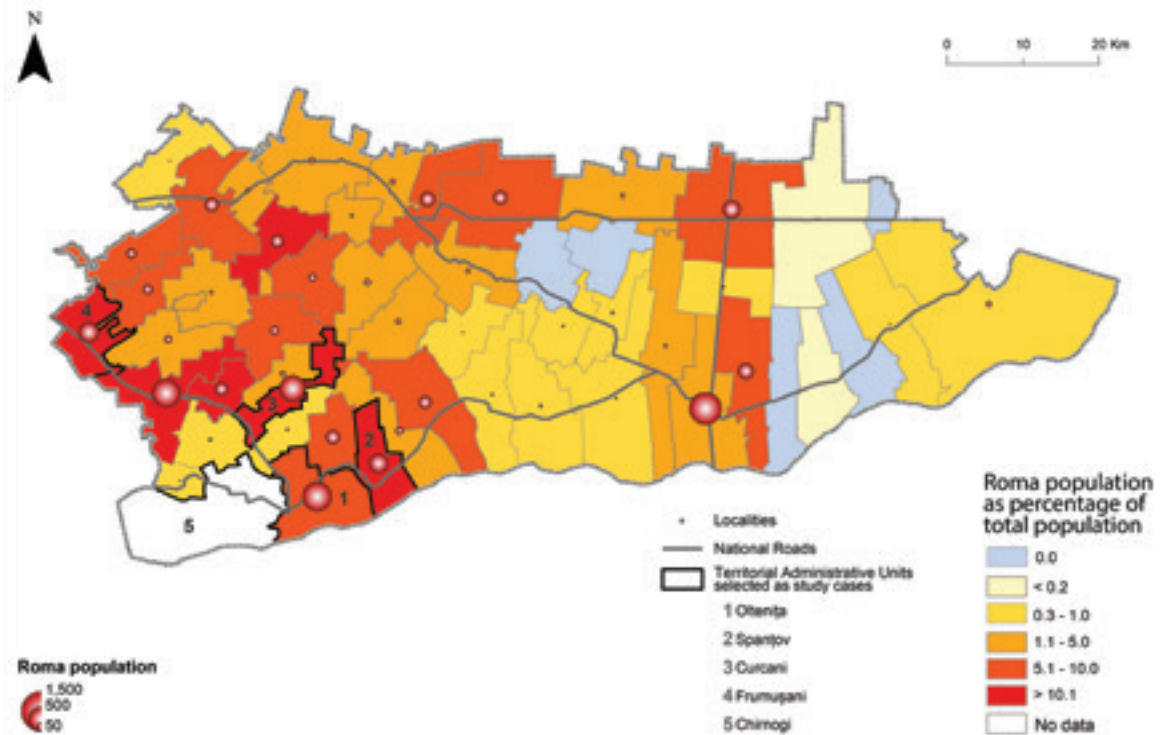
Map 2. Mapping Roma in Arad county and cluster

Spatial distribution of Roma population in Arad County



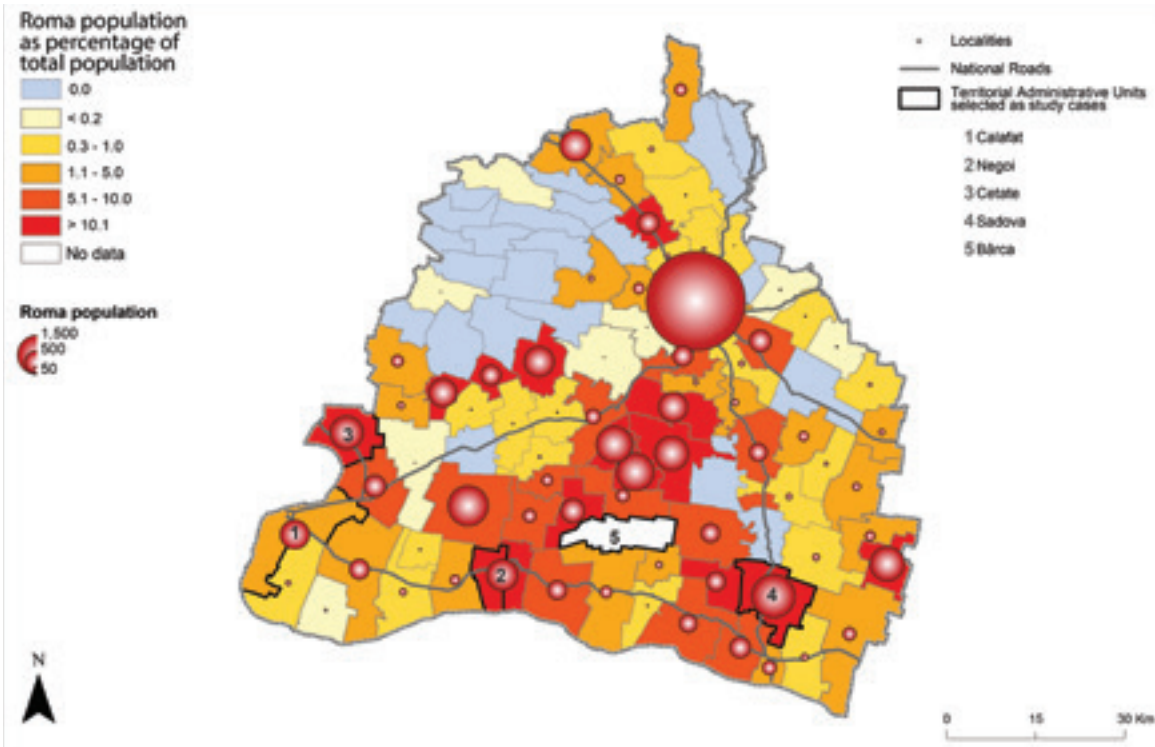
Map 3. Mapping Roma in Călărași county and cluster

Spatial distribution of Roma population in Călărași County



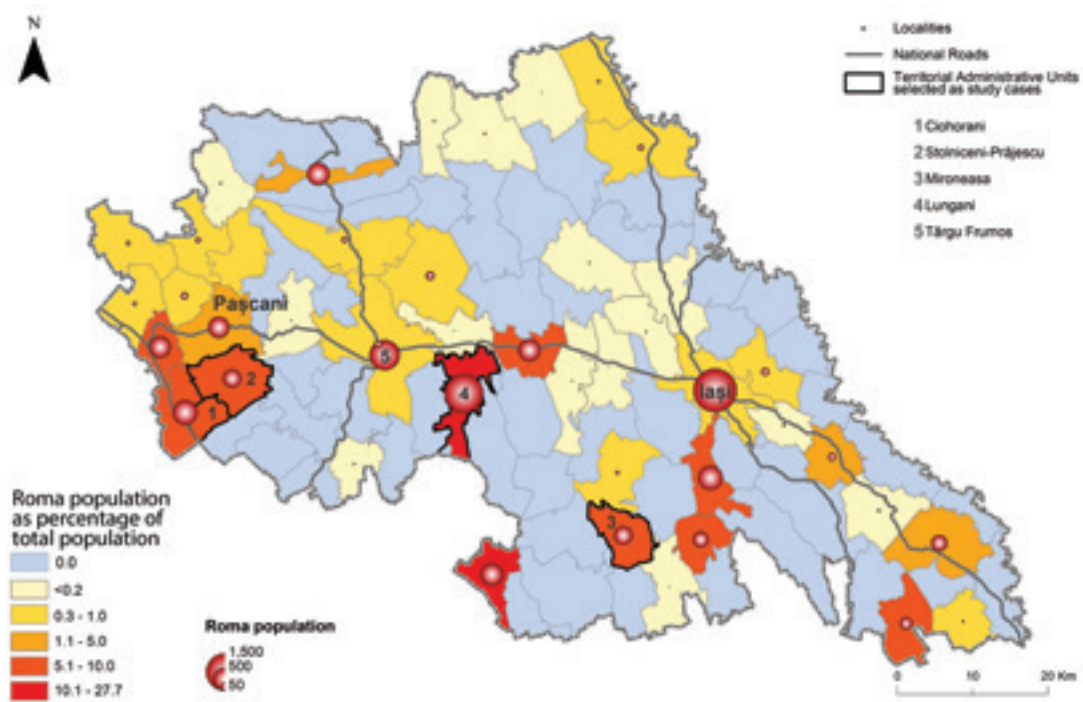
Map 4. Mapping Roma in Dolj county and cluster

Spatial distribution of Roma population in Dolj County



Map 5. Mapping Roma in Iași county and cluster

Spatial distribution of Roma population in Iași County





A lack of (up-to-date) statistical data characterizes all of the localities in our clusters. There is no ethnically disaggregated data or data on different areas within localities that could reveal their internal socio-territorial disparities. Authorities claim that ethnic data collection would be discriminatory and that they treat everyone in the same manner regardless of their ethnicity. However, they often provide informal estimates about the socio-spatial distribution of Roma across the localities, even going so far as to affirm that Roma residential segregation is a *"natural state of affairs"*. Moreover, when it comes to characterizing people's socio-economic status, authorities have suggested that it is mostly ethnic Roma who *"undeservingly benefit from social welfare"*, and *"are a burden on society"*.

The association of Roma with the „socially assisted“ (a term with negative connotations in a system that pretends to be meritocratic) is a means of blaming the poor because they are poor and it is a manifestation of racializing poverty. By racialization of poverty we mean here the practices of coupling ‘the Roma’ perceived as the ‘racial other’ with ‘the poor’, and of explaining ‘Roma poverty’ as a ‘natural result’ of the cultural traits of an ‘inferior race’ trapped in pre-modern (meaning ‘non-civilized’) forms of existence. This trend is even stronger in cases where a distinction is made among the poor themselves, between the poor who *"deserve"* and the poor who *"do not deserve"* social protection (respectively Romanians on the one hand and Roma on the other). Or put differently, between the poor that deserve to live in poverty (like Roma who *"do not like to work"*) and the poor who became poor through no fault of their own (the non-Roma who *"are victims of economic restructuring or of the financial crisis"*).

Altogether, institutions avoid disseminating (or even collecting) information that could harm their public image. This is especially true around topics for which in the past they were accused of promoting or obfuscating Roma segregation or discrimination. Collecting data at local level regarding budgets and development programs was decidedly challenging. Finding employers who would speak with us was even more difficult. The data that do exist, usually by dint of national or local research initiatives, are seldom known by decision-makers or are not properly used in policy-making processes. This is true for several reasons, including: a) trying to hide negative realities to maintain Romania's 'European image'; b) a lack of political will to recognize them as a starting point for structural development programs; and c) indifference regarding impoverished (Roma) people. Therefore, we might conclude that there is a lack of trust in the social utility of such research. As a result, there is a need to conduct participatory and inclusive action research with all stakeholders involved at all phases of the investigation in order to then elaborate meaningful development programs.

Even if formal or informal Roma leaders provide information to public authorities on their community needs (though by doing so they are often suspected by their fellows of only serving their personal interests), this information is unlikely to be considered of high priority on the local public agenda. But in some cases, neglecting the needs of particular Roma groups stems from how the so-called Roma representative or Roma leader determines to either represent only his/her own group, or all the Roma groups<sup>7</sup> in that local context.

Our research team was comprised of specialists with various field-work experience, access to local information, knowledge of Roma communities and a shared commitment to understanding and eliminating Roma marginalization. Each of our local teams working in the clusters included

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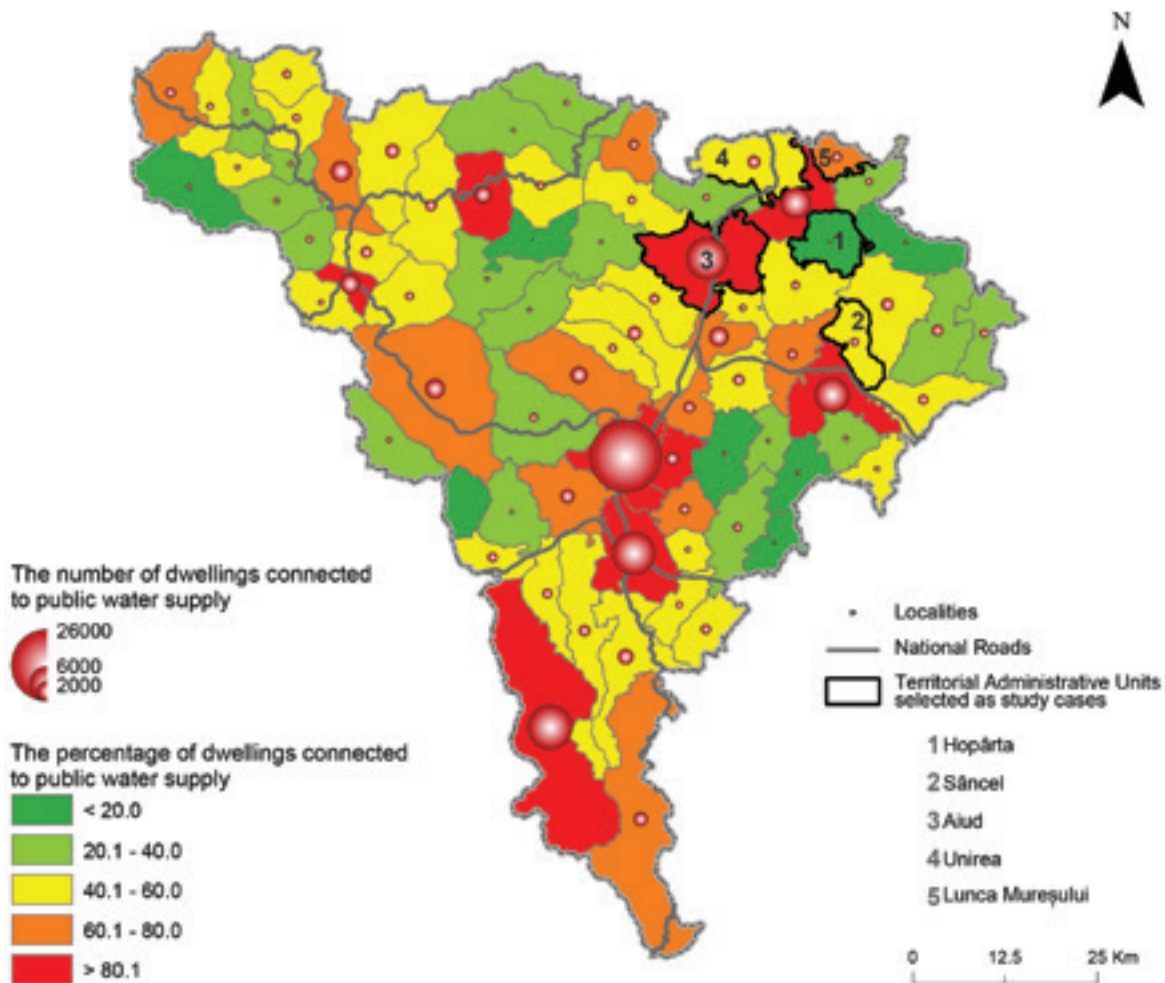
7 The distinction within Roma communities between *"traditional"* versus *"assimilated"* takes many possible forms in local contexts, such as *"spoitori"* versus *"rudari"*, or *"cărămidari"* vs. *"cărămizari"*, or *"băieși"* vs. *"geambași"*, or *"căldărari"* vs. *"caștalăi"*.

a member who assumed his/her Roma identity. In this way, we assured the ethnically mixed character of the groups and we offered those who ordinarily would not have had the chance to participate in an academic or research program to be involved in this initiative (as a form of empowerment). Additionally, due to the nature of Romania’s public administration (and that the localities in our clusters are most connected to county level institutions and organizations), we decided to include on each team a member to collect data at the county level. We tended to collaborate with individuals that previously held some formal Roma positions within the relevant institutional structures.

Unfortunately, the results of the 2011 Romanian Census were not made public in advance of our Final Report (May-June 2013), so the only current statistical source for ethnically disaggregated data was not accessible to us—with the exception of the percentage of ethnic Roma population in the 25 localities (that we used to build up the maps displayed above). We collected official statistics from old and new data sets from the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Statistics, and the Commission for Combating Poverty and Promoting Inclusion that facilitated the mapping of some characteristics of localities (for example the creation of the maps from below on the access to public water supply,<sup>8</sup> but as well on other accessibilities, such as spatial access to schools, or to ambulance services).

*Map 6. Access to public water supply in Alba county and cluster*

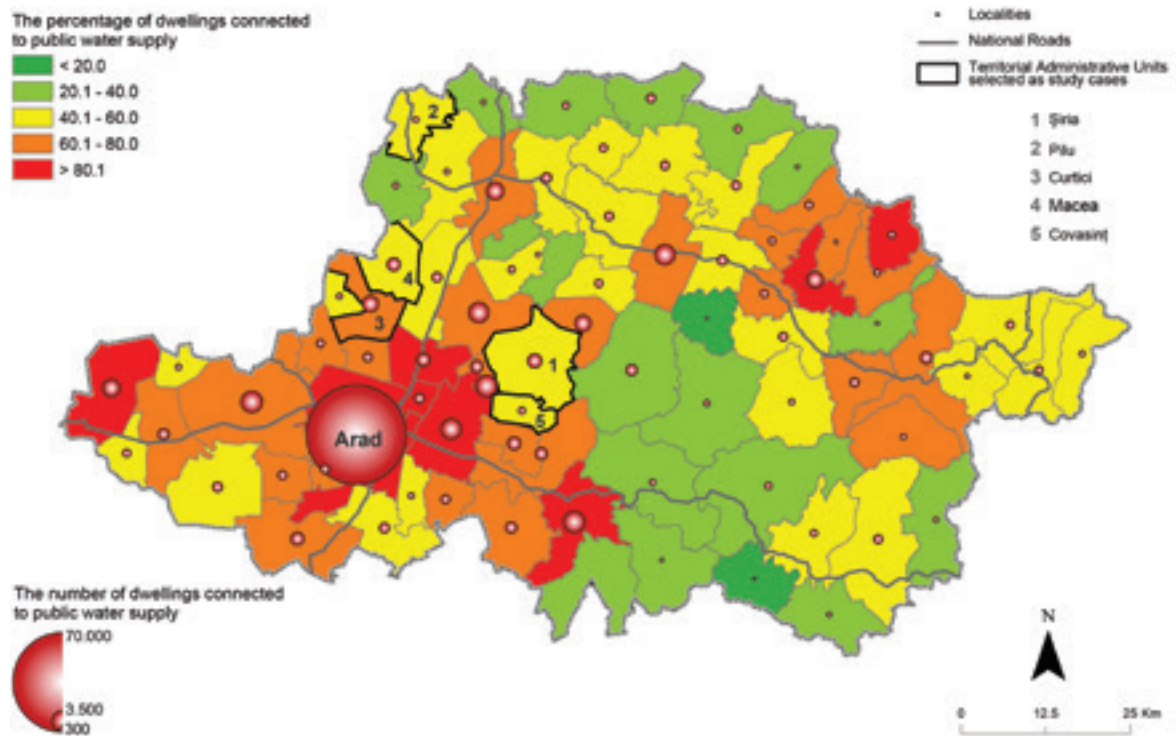
The percentage of dwellings connected to public water supply



8 Map courtesy of Daniel Tudora.

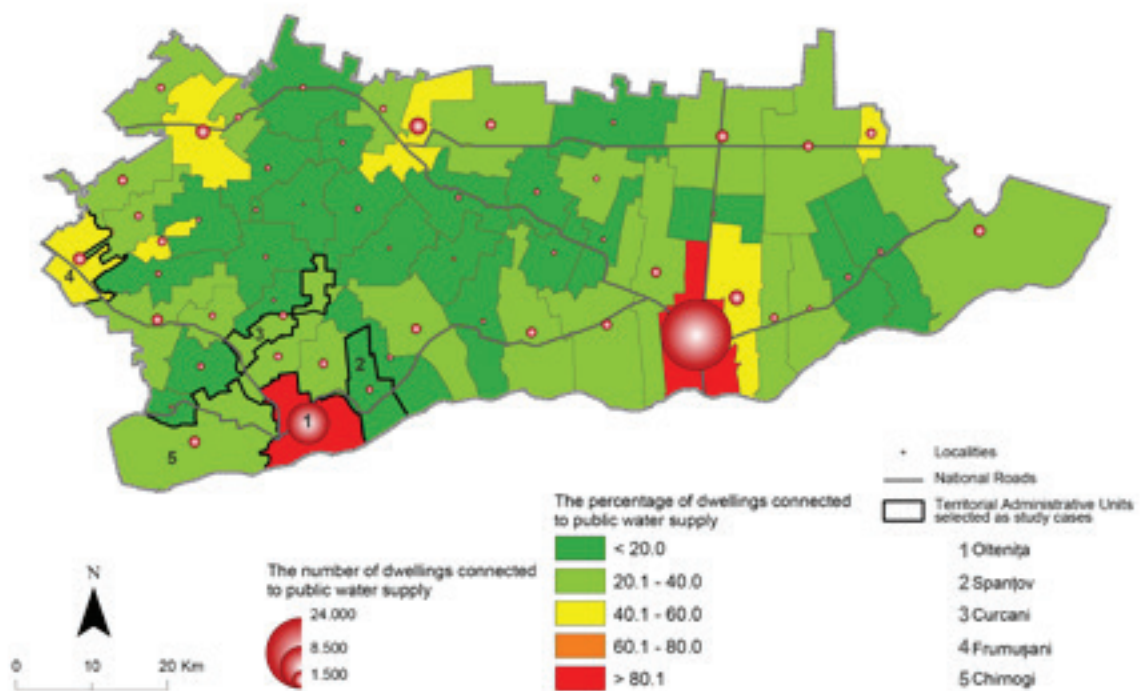
Map 7. Access to public water supply in Arad county and cluster

The percentage of dwellings connected to public water supply



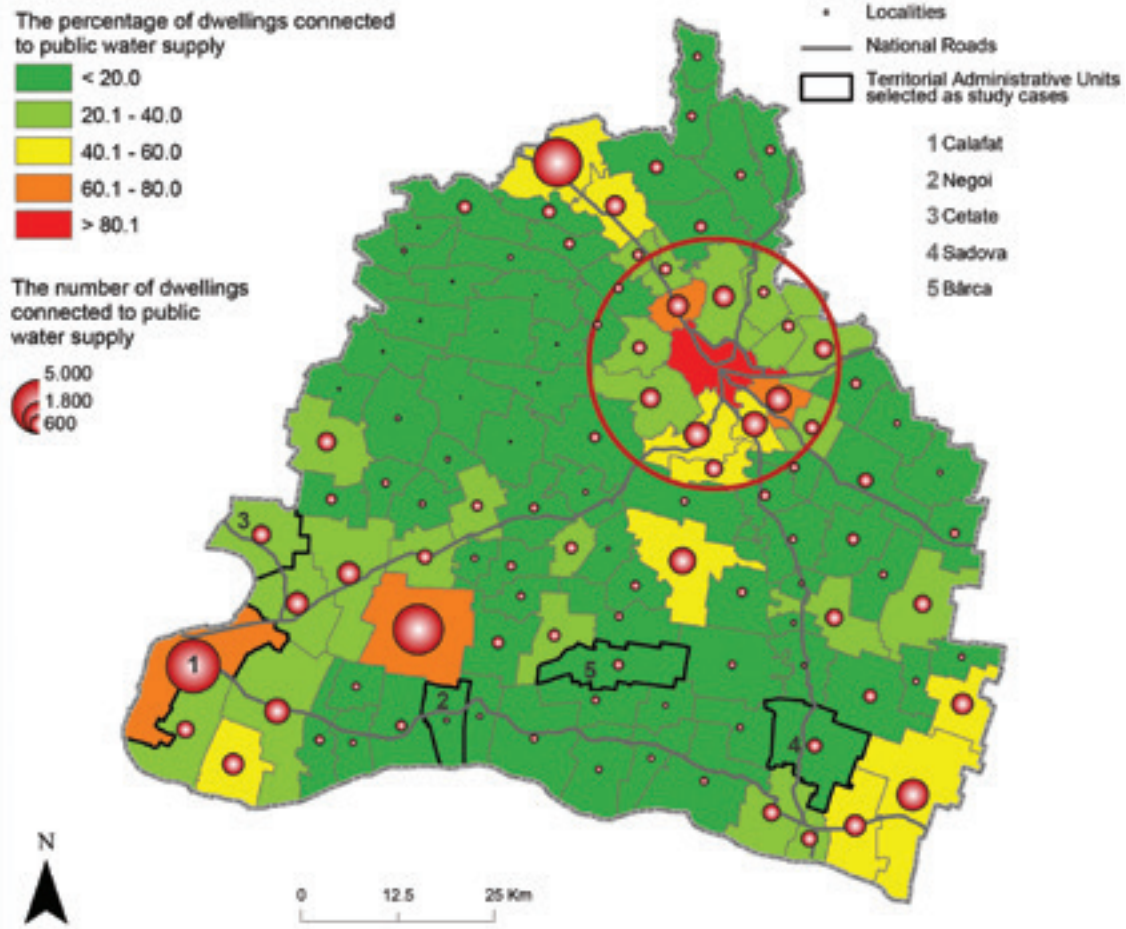
Map 8. Access to public water supply in Călărași county and cluster

The percentage of dwellings connected to public water supply



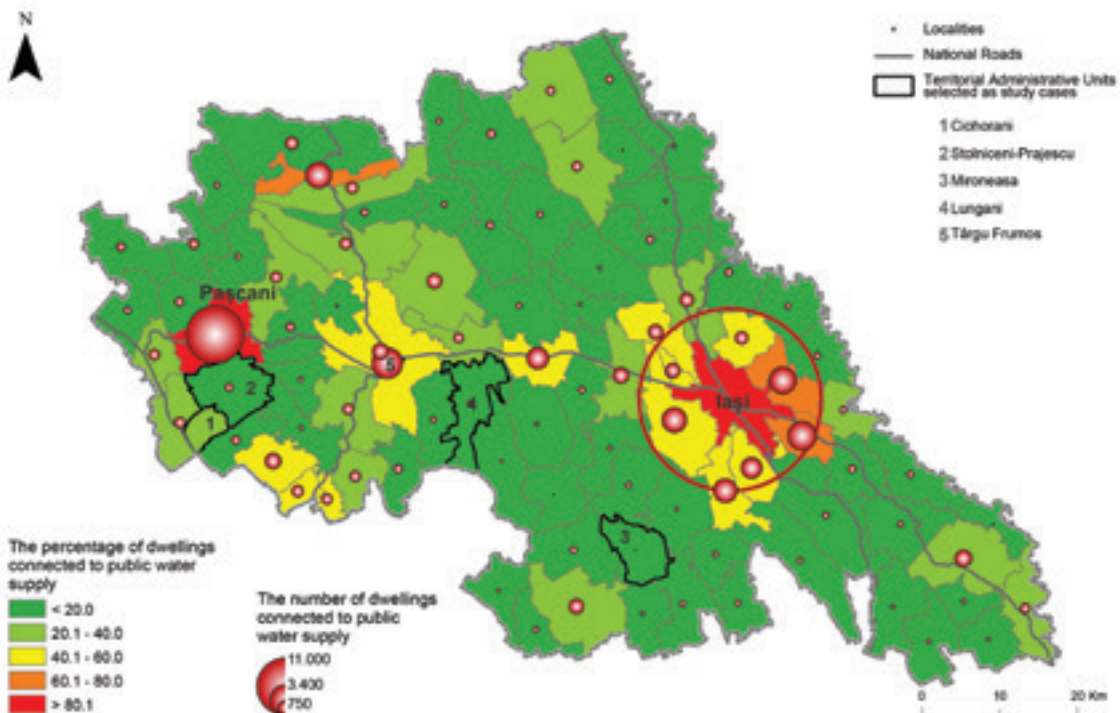
Map 9. Access to public water supply in Dolj county and cluster

The percentage of dwellings connected to public water supply



Map 10. Access to public water supply in Iași county and cluster

The percentage of dwellings connected to public water supply



Romanian data collected across the 25 localities were processed through the analytical frame jointly elaborated by the principal investigator of the whole research and the country team leaders. In addition, its interpretation was informed by the critical investigation of some of the aspects of neoliberal capitalism affecting Romania, too (such as uneven development, accumulation and dispossession, Harvey 2006; advanced marginality, Wacquant 2008; ethno-spatial exclusion and ghettoization,<sup>9</sup> Vincze and Raț 2013).

## 2.1 Reduced employment opportunities across localities

The (lack of) availability of formal jobs in our settlements is reflected by the low number of employers with over five employees, as table from below reflects.

Table 2. Number of companies over five employees in the clusters

Cluster	Total in the small cities of the cluster	Total from the rural areas of the cluster	Total number of companies over five employees
Alba	112	15	127
Arad	24	29	53
Călărași	135	10	145
Dolj	51	10	61
Iași	36	0	36

Source: *The List of Firms from Romania, Borg Design, 2011*

Across the five counties, the median unemployment rate in 2011 was 9%, which was close to the national average. The maximum unemployment rate was reached in the Negoii commune in the Dolj cluster (35%), and the lowest rate was found in the city of Curtici in the Arad cluster (2%). The diagrams form below display relevant data in the case of these clusters.

9 This perspective is articulated in and by the research “*Spatialization and racialization of social exclusion. The social and cultural formation of ‘Gypsy ghettos’ in Romania in a European context*” ([www.sparex-ro.eu](http://www.sparex-ro.eu)), supported by a grant from the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS—UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0354.

Diagram 1. Unemployment rate in Arad cluster

Observation. Localities of Arad cluster are marked with red bullets, and are compared to the other clusters from left column, to other localities from Arad county in the middle column, and to other localities from other clusters in the right column.

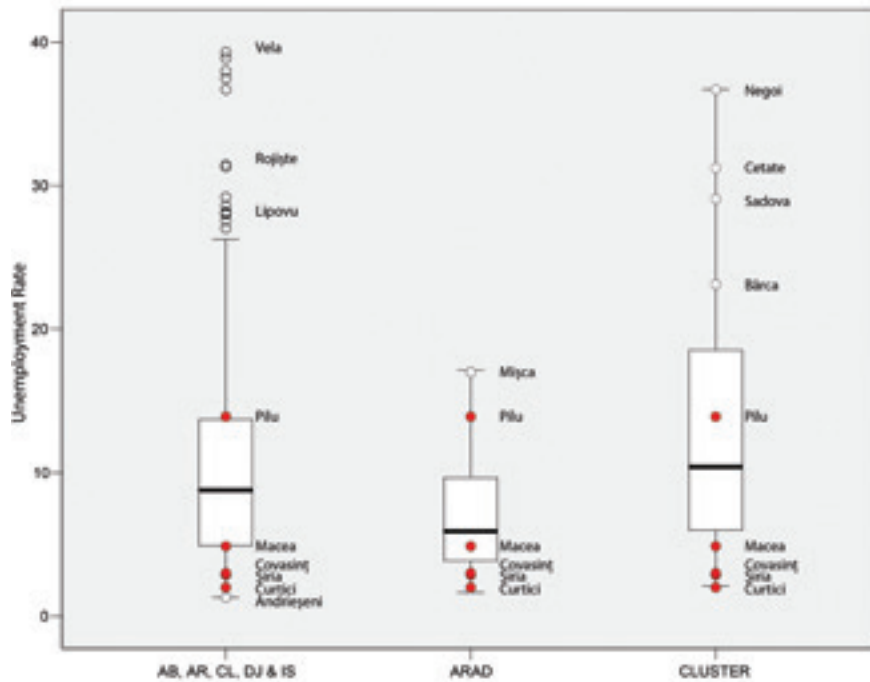
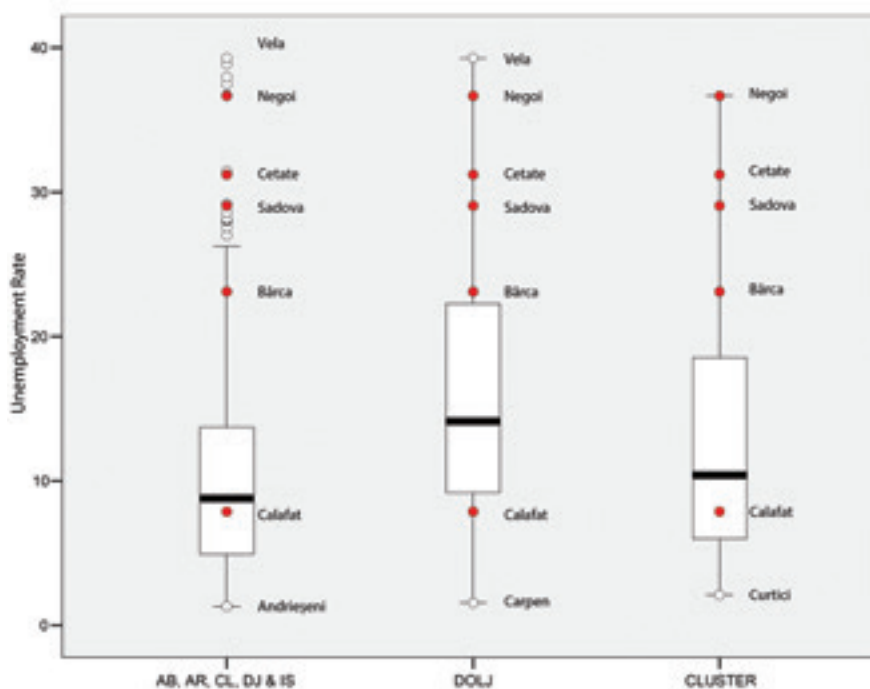


Diagram 2. Unemployment rate in Dolj cluster

Observation. Localities of Dolj cluster (marked with red bullets) are compared to the other clusters (left column), to other localities from Dolj county (middle column), and to other localities from other clusters (right column).



Data on localities provided by the National Institute of Statistics show that Arad county is leading the list regarding the employment percentage of the active aged population (35%), and this percentage is lowest in Călărași county. Arad county shows the highest rates of employment among the researched localities; however, the relevant percentage from the city of Oltenița in Călărași (30%) is quite close to that observed in the city of Curtici (31%) which is the second best place among the cluster's small cities from this point of view. Arad county seems to offer a relatively high potential for employment in its rural areas, too—each of the communes shows a percentage of employees out of the active aged population that hovers around 15%. Lunca Mureșului and Sâncel (Alba), Spanțov (Călărași), Bârca and Sadova (Dolj), and Ciohorăni, Lungani and Stolniceni-Prăjescu (Iași) show the lowest potential for absorbing a labor force in the local market (below 5%, or even 4% in the case of Sadova).

The nature and pervasiveness of the problems that local communities encounter (i.e. impoverishment from systemic unemployment and/or underpaid jobs, limited capacities of local administration to generate satisfactory and inclusive local budgets, and common shortcomings of the Romanian social protection system) are beyond the control of local administration or local non-governmental organizations. Nevertheless, at the local level we observed no direct connection between the evidence-based diagnosis of problems on the one hand and development programs and local budgets that might respond to those problems on the other. In the majority of cases—although somewhat less at county and municipal levels in Dolj—our team had difficulty accessing and assessing local budgets and development programs.

Personnel at City Hall tend to be well aware of the state and condition of local infrastructure (roads, public water supply, sewerage, buildings, etc.) towards which it directs most local investment. Furthermore, infrastructure projects usually generate the largest financial and political capital for local authorities. Occasionally, those investments reach or target the Roma communities living on the peripheries of the locality. But there are also communes where local development programs run by public authorities or civil society organizations are chronically absent. In many of our sample localities, election results were influenced by Roma voters who were mobilized by local churches or Roma leaders, and in some cases through political bribes or promises. Infrastructure programs are the most frequent electoral promises made to the Roma electorate, but few of them ever materialize.

Given the dearth of jobs and developmental programs, individuals are left to the responsibility of their families, and families themselves are resigned to survival strategies (regardless of their ethnic background). Labor migration (mostly seasonal and generally abroad) is at the core of such strategies. Faced with economic shortages (both as households and as whole localities deprived of economic production), people resort to various informal income-generating activities, often taking advantage of weak niches in the local market (from collecting scrap iron, to day-laboring for better-off families, to trading used cars or smuggled cigarettes). These economic micro-strategies are not limited to Roma, even if they are sometimes perceived as such.

## **2.2 Territorial disparities within settlements**

The differences between the localities in our clusters result from various factors, including the fact that their spatial distribution includes placement in counties and regions with different levels of economic (under)development (which itself reflects the uneven spatial distribution of resources across territorial divisions throughout Romania). Nevertheless, we could observe

that—with the exception of the cities of Curtici (Arad) and Calafat (Dolj), and the commune of Frumușani (Călărași) near Bucharest—the locally identified multiple “Roma segments” belonged to economically relatively disadvantaged larger territories, while showing different degrees of poverty and exclusion.

Named as distinct neighborhoods within the localities of the Iași cluster *Nucărie* and *Pieptănari* (Tg. Frumos), *Brustureț* and *Frunziș* (Mironeasa), or *Pe Muchie* (Ciohorăni), or representing whole villages such as *Crucea* and *Zmeu* (belonging to the Lungani commune) or in the case of the village of *Cozmești* (from the Stolniceni-Prăjescu commune), our team identified several Roma communities living in marginal areas, separated from the non-Roma population. These communities are the poorest and suffer from the worst infrastructure (aside from the schools), and have weak representation at, and insufficient participation with, the local administration. This cluster belongs to a developmental region measuring the highest indicator of poverty risk in Romania.

In the commune of Covăsînt located in the Arad cluster people make a distinction between the “poor” uptown Gypsies (“țigani de sus”) and the “better off” downtown Gypsies, (“țigani de jos”). The component village of Macea commune, *Sânmartin*, is mostly populated by poor Roma. In the economically better-off city of Curtici, the area called *Livezilor* features a poor Roma community suffering from spatial and school segregation. Roma from Pilu and Șiria are mostly assimilated, and have a living standard similar to that of the mainstream population (which is generally poor). This cluster from the West Development Region belongs to the group of four Romanian regions that have a lower risk (i.e. 30% or less) of poverty (Bucharest-Ilfov, Center, West, North-West) compared to the other four regions which have poverty risk levels of 40% or higher (South-Muntenia, South-West Oltenia, South-East and North-East).

In Dolj cluster, city of Calafat has much better economic potential than nearby rural locations, but that potential has gone unrealized for the past 25 years since it does not function as a labor force point of attraction. Its Roma communities are located in two separate areas: in the district of *Spoitori* live the better-off Roma, while in “*Rudărie*” reside the poorer Roma. In Cetate commune, Roma are divided into two territorial communities called “*Banat*” and “*Vale*”. Commune Negoi features two groups practicing the same craft, brick-making, but one of them kept, while the other lost their cultural traditions. As a result, the two groups do not intermarry. In Bârca commune, we met Roma families on almost every street in the village, but Roma lived concentrated in two areas, called “Gypsyhood” (“*Țigănia*”) and “*Drăgălina*”. Sadova commune has an area called *Ghețea* where Roma live and a village called *Sadovei Peak* [*Piscul Sadovei*] which hosts the poorer Roma community. This cluster belongs to a developmental region with the third highest percentage of poverty risk in Romania.

In each of the selected locations within Alba county we could identify at least one residentially segregated compact Roma community. These are: the village of *Silivaș* in Hopârta commune hosts two different Romani groups; the villages of Sâncel commune, *Luncii* and *Iclod*; and the Roma village *Unirea 2* or *Vinț*, composing Unirea commune, or the *Lăutari* poor community situated in the commune itself. City of Aiud displays the phenomenon of forced evictions (*Poligon* community) and of the administrative unification with the formerly separated units (village of *Feleud*, or *Aiudul de Sus*), due to which segregated areas inhabited by mainly ethnic Roma were created. Lunca Mureșului commune hosts three Roma communities in *Dealul Țiganilor*, *Drumul Țării* and *Gostat*. Our fieldwork identified impoverished and severely excluded Roma communities in this cluster; however, the latter belongs to a developmental region that features the second lowest percentage of poverty risk in Romania, after the capital.



In city of Oltenița located in Călărași cluster live some 4,000 Roma, organized in two segregated communities: *Spoitori* and *Rudărie*, the latter being the poorer one, while *Spoitori* displays a stronger sense of belonging and a higher self-esteem based on their better-off material condition and traditions. In Curcani commune, Roma constitute more than 50% of the total population, and are organized in two separate communities. The *Zavragii* community is the wealthier of the two, and is where the Roma mayor of the settlement comes from. Chirnogi commune has three Roma communities: *Rudărie*, *Țigănie* and *Teveu*. *Teveu* is segregated at its outskirts, while *Țigănie* benefits from development investments. The poorest locality in the cluster, Spanțov commune, has two Roma communities: *Clinciu* and *Stancea*. Frumușani commune hosts three Roma communities: *Țigănie Frumușani*, *Țigănie Sătuc* and *Țigănie Pasărea*, the latter being integrated. The biggest one, *Țigănie Frumușani*, counts more than 2,000 inhabitants. Altogether, Frumușani commune enjoys some privileges due to its proximity to the country capital.

### 2.3 Typology of ‘Roma segment’—formation across the geographic clusters

We identified 11 patterns of processes that resulted in the formation of ‘Roma segments’, or spatial divisions that are perceived at local level as being inhabited by ethnic Roma. These occur in different combinations across and within the cluster locations. They represent the spectrum of marginalization from (adverse) incorporation characterized by poverty, to severe exclusion where people are overtly discriminated against. Roma separation resulted from:

1. Historical divisions that intersect with current unequal territorial development policies that increase the disadvantages of Roma segments in isolated neighborhoods of a city or in the poor villages within a larger commune (e.g. Iași, Dolj, Arad, Alba).
2. Poor Roma groups sharing territories with impoverished Romanians in a disadvantaged commune (Arad).
3. Restricting assimilated and impoverished Roma to the underdeveloped margins of a city or to a less developed village of a commune by means of housing and school policies (Arad, Dolj, Iași, Călărași, Alba).
4. Forcibly evicting impoverished Roma groups from centrally placed urban areas and relocating them to the margins of localities, usually in polluted and isolated areas (with or without providing them alternative—sub-standard—housing), or from the communal center to a less developed village (Alba).
5. Unifying neighboring villages (inhabited by different Roma groups with different financial capabilities) with a city and, by doing so, transforming them into underdeveloped urban outskirts (Alba).
6. Splitting the same Roma “nation” (“*neam*”) into two or more groups of residential areas separated by village borders (Dolj, Alba).
7. The ghettoization of particular urban residential areas (usually substandard blocks of flats), inhabited by the poorest Roma and non-Roma, perceived at local level as “Gypsyhoods” (“*țigănie*”), characterized by the lack of any sense of belonging (besides that of living in poverty) and human dignity (Călărași).

8. Historically formed Roma segments that have been reinforced by the voluntary separation of better-off traditional Roma groups which benefit from infrastructural development as a result of being more centrally located (Arad, Dolj, Călărași).
9. Better-off Roma groups living in informal settlements on the outskirts of their locality, but placed in the proximity of important urban centers and thus benefit from sources of income and social mobility (Călărași).
10. Better-off traditional Roma living in segments shared with majority Romanians, who communicate with the outside world and facilitate social mobility (Călărași).
11. Roma groups belonging to the same “nation” (“*neam*”) classified into two or more different groups, are placed differently on the local socio-geographic map of the locality on the basis of their financial capabilities: the poorer sub-group being the more stigmatized and inferiorized (Dolj, Călărași).

In each of the above-mentioned cases, material deprivation (class-based inequality) and cultural stigmatization (ethnic-identity based misrecognition) are juxtaposed to different degrees, and ethnic-based inferiorization ‘justifies’ the differential and unfair treatment of Roma. These factors contribute to the structural reasons leading to the economic marginalization of Roma. Together these factors produce and maintain different forms of socio-spatial separation. Moreover, such forms are also created and/or reinforced by unequal territorial development policies. The latter are linked to the general deregulation policies practiced at national level as a result of which some territories are totally neglected by authorities, while they do not present interest either to any of the local political actors looking for their direct economic profit. At local level, the attention of policy-makers towards the territories that should be developed and those that should not benefit from infrastructural or human resource-related investments might also be shaped by racist conceptions. These ‘justify’ the neglect of the residential areas inhabited by “*undeserving Roma*” who supposedly “*like living in poverty*” (without water, electricity etc.) or in “*dangerous areas*” (such as landfills, polluted environments, water treatment plants, or areas with high rates of criminality). It is not possible to organize the settlements of the clusters, or even the clusters themselves, into a hierarchy according to the degree of exclusion their Roma population faces or even according to the type of ‘Roma segment’ formation. One location might offer better educational programs, while another might offer some employment prospects, Roma political representation, or infrastructural investments (as described in the next two chapters). But altogether each of them produce a continuum of marginalization, and at least one instance of Roma exclusion manifested in ethno-spatial segregation, while displaying a whole range of processes leading to their formation.

However, one may observe other types of trends in these clusters and settlements which might be classified or ranked according to their degree of ethno-spatial segregation and economic deprivation. Our research has shown that irrespective of location, traditional Roma groups with high degrees of ethno-spatial segregation (or separation in cases where they are not enforced by external factors), are materially better-off than the poorest strata of the settlement. Wherever placed, Roma communities living in relatively integrated areas (that display low degrees of segregation) tend to be economically less deprived, unless they are settled in a location that is altogether impoverished. Finally, Roma communities subjected to high levels of poverty are most likely segregated ethno-spatially if they are situated in a more favorable larger environment; but they might be more integrated if they belong to an impoverished settlement.

### 3. Marginalization at the crossroads of schooling, housing and labor

As already observed, marginality is an intersectional phenomenon. On the one hand, this means that in the case of Roma, it is both class-based and ethnic-identity based. The class-based economic deprivation of Roma, resulting from their subordinated and exploited positions on the labor market, might be partially caused by discriminatory and exclusionary practices that ethnically inferiorize or portray Roma as 'racial others'. This form of cultural misrepresentation characterizes Roma people as not wanting to work, or whose natural environment is the landfill, or who might be underpaid because their job prospects are minimal, or who might be offered insecure working conditions because they are used to it. These are the underlying economic injustices to which Roma are subjected to.

On the other hand, the intersectionality of Roma marginality also refers to the multiple domains of life where it is (re)produced, such as labor, housing, schooling and political participation. In cases where severe socio-territorial exclusion overlaps with ethno-spatial segregation, housing exclusion, school segregation, precariousness of labor and a lack of political participation are strongly interconnected, mutually reinforcing and are transmitted inter-generationally. Put differently, those who are not excluded in a way that is territorially fixed have a different perspective on acts of discrimination experienced at school (e.g. repetition of a grade), or in the labor market (e.g. loss of a job), than those who have more resources from which to get by. Eventually, I conclude that forms of discrimination and segregation occurring in each domain play a role in this chain, but one may observe that in some cases this is more strongly linked to structural forces than others.

#### 3.1 Marginalization and segregation in schooling

Marginalization within education (e.g. poor infrastructure; rampant discrimination; segregation; low quality of educational services; inferiorizing power relations between teachers, parents and students of different ethnic backgrounds; etc.) is a phenomenon that needs to be eliminated. But its structural elimination strongly depends on the many factors (e.g. economic, housing, health) at play within the larger socio-economic and policy context. Due to the educational policies of the past 20 years (shaped partially under pressure from non-governmental organizations), and to EU-funded programs (e.g. Phare) implemented across the country, we encountered a visible discrepancy between the state of the material infrastructure of schools (which was quite acceptable) and the general poverty characterizing the everyday life of the communities. Below we present how the major problems of school enrollment and participation continue to challenge families, schools and decision-makers regarding educational policies.

In Iași cluster, as elsewhere, we observed that school dropout rates were high, albeit often hidden. Children enrolled in schools, appeared as if they would attend, but in reality often they did not go to class. Both absenteeism and abandonment were high. Within traditional Roma communities, girls often abandon school around the age of ten due to cultural norms regarding womanhood, including a "cult of virginity", "protection" of girls, and early marriages. Within impoverished communities, the cause of school abandonment is related to the inability of families to cover the costs of school attendance. For example, commuting has now become a problem even

at the level of primary education, because many village schools have been merged with schools in the communal centers and transport is not always provided by the County School Inspectorate. Additionally, it is not uncommon for families to use their eldest children to help with household or agricultural work, or to care for the younger children at home. Sustained school participation is hampered by seasonal migration as well. Schools are taking some measures to reduce abandonment rates. They are having more success in instances where the locality or school has hired a mediator, such as in Lungani commune or in Tg. Frumos at the Ion Creangă School. A Phare project focused on the access of disadvantaged children to school resulted in the renovation of schools and educational infrastructure alongside teacher training for schools enrolling Roma children. As a result, for example, Ion Creangă school from Tg. Frumos ended up enrolling many Roma children which generated undesired consequences. In 2004, after the launch of the first ministerial order regarding the elimination of school segregation as a form of discrimination, the European Roma Rights Center initiated a large campaign against the form of school segregation known at this school. Under pressure, Ion Creangă School suspended its segregated class. In 2008, the Bucharest-based organization Romani Criss released a report together with UNICEF stating that among the 134 schools monitored across several counties, Ion Creangă School and the school in the village of Zmeu from Lungani featured segregated learning (Surdu 2008). The report stated that—according to the definition of segregated schools used by Romanian regulations (more than 50% of the student body is of Roma origin)—the former is a case of both school and class segregation, and the latter is a case of school segregation. As a result, Ion Creangă School changed its policies. Its website now states: *“the mission of our school is to assure education for all, the understanding and acceptance of ethnic, cultural, religious and individual diversity in an open, tolerant and friendly environment ... for this we aim at transforming our school into a community development center through which we might offer proper educational assistance to the students and their families”*. Mironeasa is an isolated commune both socially and geographically. The roads to and from the commune are nearly impassable (even road indicators are missing) and these conditions foster Roma school segregation. Stolniceni-Prăjescu, on the other hand, is a commune with an aging population: the school principal happily hosts Roma children saying that *“nowadays Roma are the only ones making children”*.

In the Arad cluster we encountered only one case of school segregation, which stemmed from the residential segregation of Roma communities. School no. 2 in the city of Curtici enrolls mainly children from the nearby community but also pupils from elsewhere including those who were expelled from other schools due to disciplinary problems. After eight grades, the graduating students in this school do not continue their studies, even though the Romanian educational system increased the years of compulsory education to ten. Children from traditional Roma families who use Romani language at home suffer language difficulties at school where the language of instruction is Romanian. Students in this school do not have access to remedial educational programs: there is no after-school program and they are not admitted to the day-care center downtown. In the Arad cluster schools, the enrollment of Romani children seems to be crucial if they wish to keep them operational—as since 2010 the Ministry of Education has ordered the merger of schools with less than 250–270 pupils. There are no special schools in Arad cluster. However, we observed a tendency to place multiple disadvantaged children in separate groups that benefit from the assistance of a substitute teacher. Asked about the post-school careers of their graduates, teachers and principals could not offer any information. We assume that at this point Roma graduates are disadvantaged, given that when it comes to finding employment, the social capital of the job seeker (i.e. his/her social networks and perceived trustworthiness and stature in the eyes of employers) matters even more than their educational capital (Vincze et al.

2011). This is even truer in smaller localities where informal relationships shape the position and destinies of community members.

In the schools of Dolj cluster, the percentage of Roma at risk of failing a grade is high, and school abandonment is frequent, according to the estimates of community members. Rarely do students continue their studies beyond the 8th grade. The highest percentage of Roma students is found at the level of primary education; however, school abandonment often starts by the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Poverty, traditional culture, migration patterns and a lack of effective role models contribute to this reality. One other cause for school abandonment is the dissolution of schools situated in isolated villages. Many parents have decided to keep their children at home instead of sending them to a school located at a greater distance from the commune center.

The statistical data received from the schools within the Alba cluster show a high percentage of Roma attending and graduating school. It is interesting to observe that even though teachers talk about school absenteeism and abandonment in the case of Roma children, this is not reflected in the data they provide. In Lunca Mureșului commune, where teachers declared that their graduates continue on to high school 95% of the time, community members considered this to be patently false. The discrepancy might be due to the tendency to keep (Roma) children enrolled even if they do not attend school in order to ensure sufficient numbers to keep the school running. While in some schools Roma participation was addressed in a non-discriminatory manner, there were locations where teachers racialized the difference between Roma and non-Roma school participation and performance, saying that *"this is something genetic... and there are many mentally ill among them who cannot concentrate, their intellectual capacity is not like ours,"* or that *"we should leave them to repeat the grades; generally they do not learn."* In the city of Aiud, the majority of Roma children are enrolled in one of the local schools called *"școala țiganilor"*, or *"Gypsy school"*. Teachers explain this by stating that Roma live in a compact community in the vicinity of the school, and that *"this is their natural environment where they feel better"*. They also note that *"it is better for them here because they would not manage in other schools, where there are 30–40 children in a classroom, and where teachers might not pay enough attention to them."* Likewise, they consider this school to have lower expectations of students *"because everybody knows that they are Roma, or they are from a poor family"*. Most importantly, they complain that the children are bad and that it is not possible to control them. The Roma school mediator is generally pleased with this situation (that Roma children are all in the same school) and appreciates the effort made by the teachers. Parents choose this school due to its proximity to their homes, but they believe that their *"children's teachers are not as good as they are in the city center."* However there is no special school in Aiud, even if in one of its schools teachers created a *"special Roma class"* called *"clasa de rom"*. Officially, this class does not exist anymore, but during this academic year, against the will of the parents, a separate class was formed for the 1st grade Roma children. Two of the better evaluated high schools declared that they do not accept Roma anymore and are pleased that they *"got rid of Roma."* Representatives of public authorities explain school segregation in two ways: parents prefer enrolling their children in the school closest to home; authorities lack funds to assure public transport needed for any potential school desegregation plans.

In the rural localities of Călărași cluster, the majority of children graduate primary education. The costs of secondary education are higher and access is narrowing, considering that the high schools are based in Oltenița, Giurgiu or Bucharest. In Oltenița, most of the pupils graduate secondary education, but few can cover the costs associated with tertiary education, which might imply studying in Bucharest or other university centers. Few Roma graduated from higher education anywhere we investigated. In Spanțov and Curcani, we identified only four high school

graduates and/or students. In Frumușani, respondents spotlighted cases of severe discrimination in school. Other complaints were related to weak educational process and under skilled teachers. In Frumușani, Curcani and Spanțov, a European Social Fund project offering after school programs has been implemented by the Roma Education Fund and the Center for Education and Social Development. To avoid school segregation, the local authorities in Frumușani harnessed public transportation resources to bring children to schools outside of their residential vicinities. In recent years official school dropout rates tapered off. But school attendance is questionable in each locality. In the Spoitori community, there are numerous cases of school abandonment. Segregationist policies are inclined to be implemented in Oltenița and specifically in the Spoitori community at School no. 6 located in the vicinity of the community. The school director suggested that cultural differences between Roma and non-Roma children were the cause of this state of affairs, noting *"it is better for Roma children to be segregated"*. There are no special schools in the Călărăși cluster. Classes for pupils with visual disabilities were organized in Oltenița, but no Roma attended. Pupils with special education requirements have been integrated into the mainstream educational environment, including Roma. Altogether, in this cluster we observed that Roma parents are inclined to enroll their children in the schools nearest to their community. But the schools abutting the Roma community are also the weakest, and are attended mainly by Roma pupils. Local authorities monitor the schools in order to prevent the formation of Roma-only schools. In many of the surveyed schools within the Roma-concentrated communities, 70–90% of the pupils are Roma. In Oltenița's vocational high school, 20% of the students were Roma. The high school continues to provide instruction on such topics as naval mechanics and textiles even though the shipyard and the wool factories have been closed down and such skills are no longer demanded by the local labor market.

### 3.2 Juxtapositions of residential segregation and economic/labor deprivation

Neither spatiality nor poverty are the ultimate explanatory factors of the formation of advanced marginality, or of instances when (Roma) people, dispossessed of adequate homes, citizenship and basic services, are forced to experience the cumulative deprivations of an excluded life. It is true that encapsulated spaces and precarious living conditions produce exclusion, and vice versa. But ultimately, it is the intersection of the systemic processes of neoliberalization and racialization that create, by economic, cultural and political means, "Gypsy ghettos" as spatialized and racialized forms of social exclusion whose inhabitants are subjected to multiple and disempowering forms of injustice (Vincze 2013).

By conducting this research at local level, we could notice that people's conditions—marked by their high degree of ethno-spatial separation—could be both characterized by severe economic deprivation (mostly in cases of forced segregation), or by better-off material circumstances (when this separation is proudly assumed). The occurrence of one or the other depends on many factors (briefly described below), the local constellation of which might explain the position of Roma persons and communities in the societal order or on the map of the locality.

The economic (under)development of the broader local context within the settlements and their surroundings, characterized by a lack of available jobs in the formal or informal labor market, circumscribes the limits within which individuals are enabled to make a living. This also includes the opportunities to migrate, domestically or abroad, to locations offering more promising prospects. These opportunities are shaped by people's material resources and social capital (in

addition to legal and transport considerations). If we compare our five clusters from this point of view, we might place them on a continuum ranging from situations in which decent jobs are available in the formal labor market (including small enterprises and the social economy) and where living conditions above the poverty line are feasible, through examples where contracted jobs of any kind (even if insecure, part-time and underpaid) exist, to cases where the informal economy is the entire economy (i.e. petty commerce within the locality or across country borders such as scrap iron collection, seasonal day laboring in agriculture, waste collection etc.).

The cities within our clusters hold the most potential as far as formal labor markets are concerned. However, this potential often goes unrealized for Roma due to limited educational attainment over the past two decades, which itself stems largely from school abandonment brought about by the limited material opportunities of Roma families. As such, they may not possess the necessary qualifications to be employed. Moreover, they might be refused employment due to the pervasive negative stereotyping of “Gypsies”. Employers often opt for forms of informal employment or part-time employment schemes with low salaries for their employees. Furthermore, as scrap iron collection and the selective collection of waste becomes more and more profitable for companies, people making a living out of this activity are increasingly excluded from these niches, too. In the settlements within the Iași, Călărași and Arad clusters, situated near Romania’s international borders with Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Hungary, there is an abundance of petty (and mostly illegal) cross-border commerce, another insecure income generating activity available for those excluded from other sources of income.

The (lack of) combination of ethno-spatial separation with high levels of economic deprivation is also determined by inter-generational practices between Roma and non-Roma or patron-client relationships related to employment. Memories passed down from the 1950s demonstrate that people connect their current position in society to their position as recalled from the past. This is especially so in rural areas, where all Roma groups had well-defined functions in the local economy in decades past. Many were brick makers, construction workers, comb manufacturers, day laborers, fruit pickers, etc. On the basis of this cooperative past, Roma are still invited by their non-Roma neighbors to provide help in the domestic spheres or with seasonal labor. But, as more and more people suffer from impoverishment and restrict their economic activity to subsistence agriculture, they need less and less involvement of this kind. In rare cases, better-off Roma returning from abroad hire non-Roma neighbors to construct their homes, called by locals “Gypsy palaces” (“*palate țigănești*”).

The internal divisions and competition between local Roma groups also partially explain why some Roma are poorer and others are better-off under the same context. But to understand these Roma-Roma cleavages, one needs to observe this within a larger context and notice how such instances are abused by non-Roma who happily use this distinction in order to exclude the poorest of the poor. To some extent, the perseveration of group solidarity around traditional values generates more capacity to cope with current economic shortages because it may provide self-esteem and it may activate the self-organizing potential (even if this is about creating authoritarian internal systems, marked by internal injustices and exploitation). This might contribute to the explanation as to why traditional Roma groups might be better-off than those Roma groups whose internal bonds are only based on shared poverty. In part, these groups are also differentiated according to their inherited occupations and to the extent that they might persevere with their traditions, or transform old skills into new capacities adapted to the current labor market. Moreover, the ability of some Roma groups to sustain themselves economically and to act independently even during times of crises is also rooted in the degree to which,

during socialist times, they kept their economic autonomy in the context of an overarching state-owned economy. Those Roma, who today claim to be assimilated or integrated, underwent an unfinished process of proletarianization during socialist times, which was long enough to develop a strong dependency on the economic activities and welfare benefits that collapsed after 1990. This is particularly so if they were socialized as workers in mono-industrial settlements or in agricultural cooperatives, and were not possessing properties during the pre-socialist period. Many Roma did not enjoy the benefits of property retrocession after 1990 and they entered into market competition from a highly disadvantaged position which has only increased since then.

#### 4. Deficiencies of Roma representation and participation in public administration

Our full-length final report reflects on multiple forms of Roma participation and representation in local public life, but here we focus only on Roma roles in public administration, i.e. elected local councilors and designated Roma experts. In principle, they could be decisive actors helping to steer local decision-making and/or mediating between majority society and the Roma population. In this sense, they might have the potential to represent the needs and interests of Roma communities and mitigate marginalization trends. But in reality their impact is hindered by many factors.

First, it is worth mentioning that these positions reflect how Roma are politically organized, as well as how the Romanian governmental structures respond to the national Roma inclusion strategies. Across our clusters, in places where Roma have elected representatives in their local council, they are predominantly members of non-Roma political parties. At the time of writing our analysis, there were two national Roma “political parties”—one was established in the early 1990s and the other after 2010, both as civil society organizations. The former also has the right to enter national elections, while the latter is only permitted to engage in local elections as it has not been formally recognized by the relevant authorities in 2012 as a so-called “non-governmental organization with public utility”. The oldest Roma organization participating in elections, the Roma Party (*Partida Romilor*), engages mainly in politics related to informal local networks and attempts to influence local interests from these shadow positions. The Democratic Alliance of Roma from Romania explicitly assumed a platform of ethnic mobilization as a tool for Roma empowerment, but this has not yet been successful enough in engaging in the existing structures and mechanisms of political deal making. As such, these political structures and this type of Roma representation have not resulted (yet) in the elaboration and implementation of evidence-based development programs to benefit and empower marginalized and excluded Roma communities.

Second, persons designated as Roma experts occupy positions with no decision-making power. At most, they might informally influence the mayor and the local councilors, depending on the power constellation of the locality, on their background and networks, and on their economic and social capital. They can be successful if their degree of embeddedness in the local community is sufficient and they have the ability to assure the participation of their (marginalized) community in defining problems, priorities, solutions and advocating for them on the public agenda of the municipality.



Our empirical observations showed that in Iași cluster, despite the relatively high number of Roma with voting rights, the degree of misunderstanding and conflict within Roma families and between informal leaders eventually resulted in splits and fights between the “nations” (“*neamuri*”) locally sometimes (pejoratively) called “*clans*”. The result has been no unified leadership acting on the behalf of the whole community. People’s trust in political parties or civic organizations that appear at local level with promises has decreased over the years as those promises have gone largely unfulfilled. This is true for the whole population regardless of ethnicity. And everybody knows that politicians are manipulating people for votes, but this continues to occur at every election. Public authorities sometimes communicate with the Roma community by convening them at the commune’s cultural center. This happens rarely, and when it does happen, it unfolds in a humiliating manner. For example, public officials use such occasions to accuse members of the community of stealing in the village.

In Curtici, within the Arad cluster, there are no elected Roma councilors on the local council, but in 2012 the mayor hired an ethnic Roma as a referee. Between 2002 and 2007, the city had a Roma leader representative, the personal councilor of the then mayor, and during that period Roma communities benefited from infrastructure development including the paving of roads, access to public water supplies, public illumination, the extension of the sewage system, and the refurbishment of the school. Members of Roma communities are rarely, if ever, consulted regarding decision-making processes. From time to time, they used to be informed about matters related to the guaranteed minimal income or the renewal of identity cards, issues that representatives in City Hall considered major problems for local Roma. In the rural areas of Arad cluster, local authorities observed that each Roma individual approaches the City Hall with his/her individual problems. The Roma community does not come forward with collective requests.

Given the size of the Roma population in the Dolj cluster, one would expect it to have formal representation in the local administration. In reality, however, that is not the case. In the city of Calafat, there are no Roma elected councilors or Roma experts in the administration. The driver of the mayor acts informally as the representative of local Roma communities. There are school and health mediators, of which the latter is of Roma background and together with the driver is respected and accepted by both Roma communities in the town (*Cositorari/spoitori* and *Rudari*), as well as by public authorities. The driver is a member of the Roma Party, and a founder of the non-governmental organization “*Calafat Romi*”. He cooperates with the County Office for Roma from Craiova. With the exception of the Calafat and Bârca communes, Roma in rural areas have elected local councilors, but their existence does not automatically mean that they act on behalf of marginalized Roma communities. Often the informal Roma experts, as a result of their strong informal relationships with the local mainstream leaders, have a bigger influence on decision-making on behalf of Roma than a would-be local councilor would have. The effectiveness of Roma representation ultimately depends on the personal relations and involvement of the individuals occupying one position or another.

Aiud is the only locality in the Alba cluster where there is a Roma representative on the local council. Being well known in the community because of the NGO he is involved with, he decided to join the National Liberal Party, which is the same as the Mayor’s, and thus he managed to be elected as a local councilor. Members of the Roma community fear that, because he was promoted and in turn has supported the mayor during the local election process, he might be less likely to challenge the mayor on Roma issues, if needed. In the same locality, there was previously a Roma expert at City Hall, but he was recently accused of corruption and arrested. Members of the Roma community explained that this happened when the Roma expert was in charge of dis-

tributing land parcels to local Roma on behalf of City Hall. In the communes of Hopârta, Sâncel and Lunca Mureşului, there is no Roma representation at City Hall or related to schools. The informal leader of the Roma community in Lunca Mureşului explained that he has tried for years to get elected to the local council, but never received sufficient support from the mayors. He noted that if he is alerted to a case of Roma abuse in the village, he always contacts the Prefecture in Alba Iulia as opposed to the local City Hall in Lunca Mureşului, or the Roma Party.

Oltenița and Spanţov communes from the Călăraşi cluster do not have a local Roma expert to oversee and monitor the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion, nor do they envisage appointing one. In Oltenița, the responsibilities of the Roma expert are performed by a social worker, who happens to be Roma; in Spanţov, nobody was designated to perform this job. As far as local Roma experts are concerned, their position at the mayoralty is not secure enough to put the sensitive topic of Roma on the public agenda or to be critical about the lack of local policy measures serving Roma. As with any other public servant, their positions have been threatened by the recent austerity measures (significant layoffs and salary cuts), which endangered their jobs. The influence of elected local councilors is based on their personal relationship with the mayor, as in the Frumuşani case. In all five localities, there is at least one local Roma councilor: in Curcani there are four, in Oltenița there are two; and in Frumuşani, Chirnogi and Spanţov there is one. Curcani's mayor is also Roma. These councilors are, by and large, subsumed to their respective mayors. In four out of the five localities, the local councilors are not interested in Roma communities, nor are they skilled enough to elaborate effective proposals to address local council meetings. The only local Roma councilor empowered with such skills represents Frumuşani. He is a Roma activist with more than 15 years of experience dealing with Roma inclusion. The mayoralty actions towards Roma communities were made precisely due to these personal relationships acquired during the elections, when they mobilized to attract the Roma votes.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Intersectional and multiple Roma marginalization

Roma marginalization is both social class and statute, and ethnic-identity based. It is both spatialized and racialized. It is a type of social marginalization and economic deprivation that is manifested in territorial (residential) segregation/isolation, which is reproduced and exacerbated—among others—by the spatial exclusion itself. And it results in the creation of marginalized spaces that are defined/stigmatized locally as “Gypsy neighborhoods” (“ţigăanii”). The inter-linkages functioning in this process and the possible outcomes are illustrated by the matrix below. The vertical axis portrays the ethno-spatial segregation and the horizontal axis represents economic deprivation. Local examples depicted from our investigation are given for each pattern:

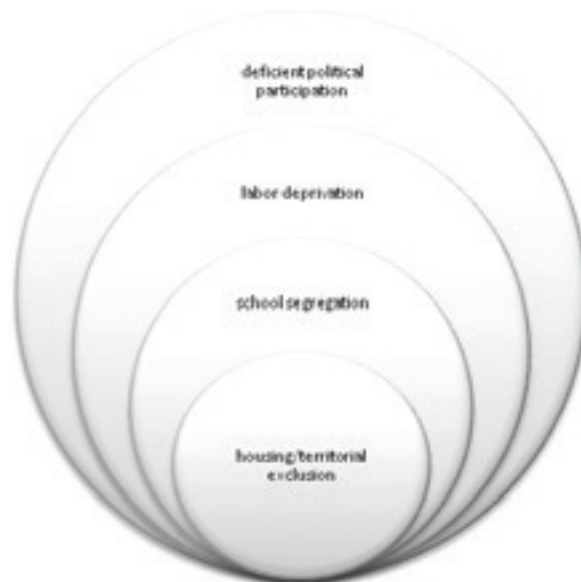
Matrix 1. Patterns of the juxtaposition of ethno-spatial segregation and economic deprivation



When we talk about marginalized Roma communities in local areas we refer to groups of people or (extended) families sharing a space demarcated from the rest of the municipality by local signs and practices. They are characterized by various types and degrees of deprivations and reduced opportunities. These areas are generally referred to as “Roma neighborhoods” or “Gypsyhoods” by the people living in the rest of the community. In the 25 scrutinized settlements, we observed poor Roma communities that were by-and-large accepted by their broader—but also economically deprived—neighbors, so that their social marginalization was not necessarily connected to ethno-spatial segregation. We also encountered poor communities in better-off surroundings who were connected to the social life of the locality on specific domains (e.g. schooling), but otherwise disconnected (e.g. by labor and housing). In these instances, social marginalization and ethno-spatial segregation partially overlapped. We also encountered poor communities that were severely excluded into segregated peripheries.

The amplification of exclusion is also a result of the juxtaposition of several areas where people experience marginalization and/or segregation due to their social status and/or ethnic background. Housing/territorial exclusion, school segregation, labor deprivation and deficient political participation might intersect in diverse ways creating different degrees of nonparticipation in the local society. The size of the circles composing the below diagram does not reflect the hierarchy of the importance of the factors generating exclusion. In fact, these factors do not act hierarchically, but intersectionally, one through the other(s), mutually reproducing each other while their interaction generates and maintains, or even deepens, advanced marginality. The placement of the circles into the diagram suggests that these processes affect all the domains and institutions through which marginalized individuals and groups live their lives. They internalize the negative features imposed from outside through housing exclusion, school segregation, precarious labor and deficient political participation. From their home and its immediate environment shared with significant others, through the schools and jobs that are accessible to them, to the inadequate or missing forms of political participation and decision-making, and back.

*Diagram 3. Intersectional factors producing social exclusion*



Aside from the already mentioned structural factors, the place/position that these economically deprived (Roma) communities occupied on the socio-geographic map of their settlements was largely dependent on the ways in which their members participated in the formal and informal economic and political life of the locality. Their position was also shaped by the internal stratification of the local Roma society: while constructing a hierarchy, different groups of different social statuses and economic wealth identified with each other also in ethnic terms differentiating among Roma groups with different occupations, traditions and connectedness to the broader environment. These demarcations nurtured from within were frequently taken advantage of by the majority society in order to justify the differentiated treatment of the so-called “deserving” and “undeserving” Roma. This has led to the perpetuation of a severely excluded category of people who do not benefit from any developmental investments or human considerations—either from majority society or their better-off ethnic fellows.

## 5.2 The role of interethnic relations in reproducing marginalization

Relations between Roma and non-Roma function as ethnic relations where there is a consensus among people on both sides that ethnicity matters in the way in which they perceive/classify themselves and each other, or that ethnicity is and should be used as a classificatory system for creating differences and similarities, or the sense of (non)belonging to the local society. In the Romanian ethno-political context (as in many other countries), ethnicity is defined by shared language, history and culture. But Roma groups are not necessarily recognized or identified locally by the use of Romani language, or by respecting a joint set of cultural norms, or by cultivating a sense of shared past, even if some elites try to construct a “Roma nation” or a Roma political identity by nurturing Romani and Romanipen or common historical origins. Instead, in the face-to-face relations or in political discourses, Roma tend to be identified by so-called “physiological” and “social” features; and this is an act of racialization: they are “recognized” by skin color, and are stigmatized as people with anti-social practices. There is public consensus around the supposition that the former is deeply rooted in some sort of biological and/or cultural “*Gypsy essence/blood*” and that eventually all Roma are the same regardless of the “nation” (“*neam*”) to which they belong. Therefore, as already demonstrated in this paper, Roma are rarely considered as an “ethnic other”, but instead are inferiorized as “another race” that is radically different from “us” (“civilized” ethnic Romanians, Hungarians or Germans). This is a racialization of ethnicity or of “othering”. Despite this, as we often noticed in rural communities shaped by memories of long cohabitation and face-to-face informal relationships, and mostly in the local contexts characterized by generalized poverty—in the course of everyday life Roma and non-Roma relate to each other as individual fellows or as members of the families from the neighborhood or as former classmates or as co-workers. As happens in other cases of ethnic identification, (Roma) identification is situational and relational, with the difference being that in the case of the latter this intersects, in accordance with the local context of social and power relations, with tendencies of racialization.

At the level of our clusters, we observed that Roma were discursively defined through supposedly shared “racial” characteristics (e.g. dark skin), as well as specific attitudes and behaviors regarding schooling, work, social benefits and poverty. But their place and perception locally also depended on their percentage of the local population (if they mattered or not as voters), and it was also shaped by their relative wellbeing and ability to exert themselves in the political economy of the larger community.

Nonetheless, when non-Roma spoke about the broader Roma community, they tended to offer racialized arguments, such as: “*Roma have many children*”; “*they are a large community, so they are important voters*” or “*they are important to assure the existence of schools*”; “*Roma do not like to work and that is why they deserve to live in poverty*”, or “*Roma undertake illegal activities to get rich*”; or “*we have to clean our cities and villages of Roma who are embarrassing and dirty*”, or “*we may use the cheap labor force of Roma because they are ready to do anything*”.

## 5.3 Translocal processes advancing marginality

As a result of this research, we learned that—in the particular context of local economies and administration, which showed important differences across but also within the clusters—what mattered most in placing ‘Roma segments’ and ‘Roma communities’ on the socio-geographic map of the localities was, on the one hand, the way in which Roma and non-Roma could find

their complementary niches in the local markets, and, on the other hand, the internal cohesion of Roma groups that could provide individuals with a sense of dignity, belonging and solidarity. “Assimilated Roma” (“*romi asimilați*”) who lost their community ties due to ways in which their integration was sought during socialist times, and who after 1990 slowly lost their social function in the local communities due to economic restructuring, are having more difficulty coping with the current challenges of marginalization.

On the basis of our analysis, we might conclude that those Roma groups could impose their interests on their respective local societies and could acquire a higher degree of acceptance from the mainstream population, who managed to act as a cohesive group possessing a sense of dignity. Different groups of “traditional Roma”, raised in the spirit of independence from the majority but also in the spirit of providing services to them while nurturing a sense of internal tradition, or different groups of Roma adhering to neo-protestant churches while creating new ties within and across the boundaries between them and the majority, were capable of finding more internal sources and external solidarities than the “groups” that are bonding only through their shared experiences of impoverishment. At the time of our investigation, we found very few instances in the local contexts (for example in the case of Frumușani and partly in Aiud) where dignifying unions were built around other kinds of community values or actions, such as social activism for rights, or cultural manifestations for recognition, or local action groups for participation. This does not mean that such self-organizing would not have the potential to transform minority people’s self-perception and the way they are perceived by the mainstream society; rather, it means that these very local contexts were not resourceful from this point of view. But it also denotes that, generally speaking, and not only in the case of Roma, under times of widespread insecurity “religious faith” and “cultural traditions” prevail as meaningful offers that people ‘chose’ to identify with.

Social inclusion policies (especially when understood as social protection and social assistance measures) on their own, without being completed by dignifying recognition and representation in politics, fail to place Roma individuals/ families/ groups into positions from which they might be empowered to negotiate their rules of cohabitation. Unfortunately, in the local contexts studied, social inclusion policies, if any, were understood by decision-makers in a way that reproduced the association of Roma with social problems (poverty). No wonder this perpetuated the belief that the social system in which Roma live is acceptable, and it is only Roma who need to change, since “they are the problem”. Our contextual inquiry in Romania appeals to these stakeholders to engage in inclusion policies that address the structural causes of exclusion and, accordingly, that focus on the majority population and on how institutions (including authorities) function. In addition, by identifying the causes of marginalization and what it means in the case of different Roma groups, we call to the attention of decision-makers at national and local level the need to conceive of inclusive and rights-based development policies that carefully respond to the heterogeneity of (local) communities shaped by both the (power) relationships between the ethnic majority and minority, and those between different Roma groups.

When addressing local processes of marginalization and exclusion, one should also consider how trans-local mechanisms are shaping the local contexts even if their effect might be hardly neutralized by local interventions. As post-socialist Romania aligned to the current global trends of neoliberalism, inclusion and exclusion (of Roma) reflect a new societal order, which has also manifested in spatial (urban) arrangements. This order privileges the winners of the privatization and marketization of public goods, and it is inclusive of people, places, and societal areas that might be better included into the profit-oriented political economy of capitalism (as a labor

force, as geographical zones worthy of investment, as domains which deserve development). But it is exclusive towards those who were rendered “surplus”, “redundant” or “needless” from the point of view of those in power and of the capital, or who became so vulnerable that their labor rights could be exploited due to their socio-spatial position, wedged in between the borders of legality and human dignity.

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