

Roma poverty and deprivation: the need for multidimensional anti-poverty measures

Andrey Ivanov, Sheena Keller, Ursula Till-Tentschert¹

Introduction

Defining, estimating and quantifying Roma poverty is a highly policy relevant issue. A decade ago the reduction of Roma poverty was put on the political agenda of several governments and formulated as an explicit commitment of the countries participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. In 2011 the European Commission put additional political weight behind the attempts to lift Roma out of poverty when it issued its Communication on an EU Framework on national Roma Integration Strategies.

Two years later, on 9 December 2013 the European Council adopted its first Recommendation specifically addressing Roma integration.² The Recommendation preamble situates Roma integration firmly within a human rights perspective referring to the Union Treaties' articles on equality and non-discrimination. The document also links efforts to improve Roma integration to the EU's strategy for sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020) providing guidance to Member States on enhancing the effectiveness of their measures to achieve Roma integration, so that tangible progress is achieved reducing gaps between Roma and the general population in the core areas of employment, education, housing and health. The Recommendation stresses the importance of monitoring and evaluation as key elements in the efforts to achieve tangible results.

A week later the message of this Recommendation was reinforced by the adoption of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). This Regulation ring-fences allocation of 20 % of the European Social Fund resources of each Member State for 'promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination' and sets the 'ex-ante conditionalities' that Member States must apply in regard to improvement of the situation of marginalised communities, such as Roma.³ These include the implementation of a National Strategic Policy Framework for Poverty Reduction (Conditionality 9.1) and a national Roma Inclusion Strategic Policy Framework within the objective Promoting Social Inclusion, Combating Poverty and Discrimination (Conditionality 9.2).

The policy framework for Roma integration, which includes poverty reduction, is therefore wide-reaching and matched by resources. However, the robust and comprehensive monitoring frameworks that would allow for properly capturing the results of poverty alleviation policies and interventions are still to be developed. In order to respond to questions like "which interventions have contributed to change?" or "what part of the change might be attributed which particular interventions?", one needs to capture change first. Was there any progress? If yes, in which areas and of what magnitude?

¹ The authors are staff at the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors alone and not those of the Agency. The authors are grateful for the support received from Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, Monica Ghitiu, Justin Kagin, Jaroslav Kling, Magdalena Kostova and László Ulicska in developing this paper. Corresponding author: Andrey Ivanov, andrey.ivanov@fra.europa.eu.

² Council of the European Union (2013), Council Recommendation 378/1. 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, OJ 2013 C 278, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/139979.pdf.

³ Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013, available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2013.347.01.0320.01.ENG.

These apparently easy questions are difficult to answer for a number of reasons.

Measuring progress on Roma integration

Progress in what? Integration vs. inclusion

Two concepts – “inclusion” and “integration” – are often used interchangeably in respect to Roma-targeted interventions, but they can have different meanings. “Integration” is often used to refer to the involvement of the representatives of the minority in dominating structures with limited elements of diverse identity retained and the resulting involvement is often limited as well. In that case the external system is more tolerant to diversity but remains static – it **accepts** certain elements of diversity but this acceptance doesn’t entail change in the system itself. “Inclusion” on the other hand entails a dual track process in which both the minority and the system adjust – the former preserves the core identifiers of its identity (but not all) and the latter becomes **responsive** and **accommodative** to those elements of unique identity. In the EU policy language the increasingly dominating term “integration” but not entirely. The Member States have their “National Roma Integration Strategies” but in the national languages in many countries these are “inclusion strategies,” which brings them closer to the real meaning of the process.

Clarifying the terminology is important for constructing ‘progress’ indicators (obviously, the question “progress in what?” precedes “measuring how?”). Seen from fundamental rights perspective, ‘integration’ indicators have a narrower scope focusing on the individual and the respective group (the status in regards achievements, distance vis-à-vis other groups in the society etc.). ‘Inclusion’ indicators however need to go beyond the individual and the group, they should allow for tracking also the accommodative changes in the societal structures.

In this paper we deal with the challenges related to the first (narrower) dimension of ‘measuring progress’ – namely, how to capture changes in the status of Roma poverty and the distance between Roma and the other groups in the society.

Progress of who? Defining the target group⁴

Defining the target group in social research is often fraught with difficulties and uncertainties. This may reflect the absence of legal categories, as in the case of most ethnic groups, but also others, such as ‘immigrants’ and a (resulting) difficulty or inability to identify persons belonging to such groups in population registers in order to draw robust statistical probability samples.

Defining the ‘target group’ (and respectively, the universe of study) is even trickier. Part of the challenges are related to the vast diversity of groups and sub-groups broadly defined as “Roma.” The term “Roma” used at the Council of Europe “refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies” (CoE 2012: 4). The same definition is used also by the European institutions, but its benefits of openness comes at a cost – it is not particularly useful for operational purposes (like building a sample frame).

One of the reasons is the vast diversity of groups and sub-groups broadly defined as “Roma.” Another (even more important) is the fact that Roma identity is a multidimensional concept, a complex construct that can be associated with numerous different elements, constructing complex and dynamic combinations. Also, Roma identity is not a static picture. It gains different connotations in different historical contexts. The same applies also to the way Roma present themselves to others making Roma identity quite situational and reflective defined vis-à-vis the non-Roma (the Gadzo). Finally, Roma people are an alphabetic example of ‘dual identity’ and asking the potential respondent

⁴ This section is based on Ivanov et.al., 2012: 9-10.

the question “Are you Roma?” might put the respondent in an uncomfortable situation to choose between two different aspects of their shared identity.

Two approaches are usually used to define one’s affiliation (ethnic or other): self-identification or external identification. One is a “result of choice”, the other – of “ascription” (Rughiniş 2011). In the first case the individual respondents are asked directly “To what ethnic group do you belong?” or indirectly “With which group/culture/community do you affiliate?” The most common application of ethnic self-identification is the population census. In the second case, outsiders make a judgment on the identity of the person or the entire community – “Is he or she a Roma?” or “is the neighbourhood over there a Roma one?”

Both approaches, which are used in various surveys, yield different results. The universe of “self-identified Roma” is often smaller than the “externally identified as Roma”, for various reasons. One – and most obvious – is the stigma associated with “belonging to Roma” and the experience of past and present misuse of ethnic data (Makkonen 2007: 50). But this unwillingness to reveal Roma identity is reinforced also driven by more pragmatic reasons. It is easier to integrate with other minorities constituting a majority at the local level (like the Turks in Bulgaria – in which case the Roma living in Turkish-dominated settlements usually self-identify as Turks). Another could be better protection of group rights (for example, in countries such as Greece, where Roma would self-identify as ‘Muslims’ rather than Roma, since only Muslims have specific minority rights).

Ideally, self-identification is the ‘gold standard’ and is indeed used by most countries to identify Roma populations through self-identification in censuses. The censuses are the largest-scale data collection efforts that rely on self-reported affiliation. It is usually thought that censuses underreport Roma populations because they are conducted by the state with whose structures Roma are cautious in sharing information with given their bitter experience from the past (OSI 2010; Škobla et al., 2009).

In practice, it is not that straightforward. Reporting the affiliation to an ethnic group bears obvious costs – those who indicate their ethnic difference from the majority population “undertake some collateral disadvantages, social exclusion, various forms of discrimination which are historically coded in societies of this region of Europe” (Koller 2012: 1). This is why census data (the source usually used by the government which needs formalized data sources) notoriously and significantly differ from “experts’ estimates”. On average, the difference can be as large as four-fold.⁵ Depending on the specific circumstances, it can change in scope and coverage. If the circumstances suggest that there is a certain risk associated with “being Roma”, the estimates get lower; if there are some potential benefits (preferential access to services for example) – the estimates get higher. This phenomenon called “strategic ethnicity” is not unique for Roma. Examples as distant as Jews in 1939 Germany and being in a train with hooligans from the oppositional football team share the same logic. Deliberate campaigns by NGOs to promote self-awareness, pride of one’s identity and to dispel the fears about revealing it may also push the figures recorded in censuses up.

Unlike censuses, sample surveys are conducted by non-state actors and have lower level of mistrust on the side of the respondents. But even in that case there is a discrepancy between the self-reported and expert (external) identification of Roma ethnicity. For example, 95% the respondents who self-identified as “Roma” in the monthly ‘omnibus’ surveys conducted by TNS BBSS (member of WIN/GIA) in 2009-2011 were similarly identified by the enumerators. However only 78% of the respondents identified as “Roma” by the enumerators self-identified as “Roma” (12% self-identified as “Bulgarians”

⁵ One of the most frequently cited source of population estimates on “Roma” is the Council of Europe. It provides estimates of the “Roma” population for countries of CoE area, for EU member states and Europe in total. The ratio between the “minimum estimate”, “maximum estimate” and “average estimate” to and the official census data (for countries which register main ethnicity in their censuses) is respectively 2.7, 5 and 4. <http://www.coe.int/fr/web/portal/roma/> See also Liegeois 1997.

and 9% – as “Turks.”⁶ In addition, the universe of those “self-identified” as Roma is not a simple sub-sample of the “real Roma,” identified “externally”. There is a group who self-identify as Roma but is not seen as Roma by outside observers (Rövid 2011: 8).

An acceptable compromise between the two extremes (‘self-identified – but underreporting the real numbers’ and ‘externally ascribed identification – but imposed’) is a mix of the two used in the FRA and UNDP sample surveys. Both use multistage probability sampling. At the first sampling stage, based on census data of population that self-identified as ‘Roma’, the sampling frame was defined as the settlements with Roma population higher than the national average.⁷ Based on it, a list of Primary Sampling Units in individual municipalities was drawn and the number of interviews was allocated reflecting the structure and distribution of the entire self-identified Roma population. At the second stage, using local NGOs’ and experts’ assessment, the exact locations of the PSUs (the places where Roma populations actually live) were determined within the individual municipalities. At the third stage the individual respondents were selected using ‘random route’ procedure. After identifying a household as Roma, the interview, a screening question was asked the household head. In the case of FRA, it was “Are any Roma living in your household?” If the answer was “no”, the interview was cancelled and the next respondent was addressed. In the case of UNDP the screening question was “We are conducting a survey among the Roma population. Would you mind to be interviewed?” If the head explicitly denied being Roma by saying, for example, “I am not Roma, why should you interview me?” the interview was discontinued. A willingness to participate in the interview was seen as an implicit endorsement of Roma identity and the robustness of the identification process.

Thus each of the two approaches is reasonable but reflects only part of a complex reality. This is why they are often used as complementary. Indeed, the censuses underestimate the absolute number of Roma but at least reflect adequately the distribution and density of the population. Based on that – and using additional identifiers, such as ‘mother tongue’ or ‘language used in the household’ or ‘cultural roots/affiliation’ – one might build a sample frame and reach reliable estimates of basic indicators, like poverty or unemployment rates that can be used for monitoring progress in respective areas. Rates are not sufficient though because when prioritization and allocation of resources are at stake, policy-makers need absolute numbers. This is why, from policy perspective, sample surveys cannot be the sole source of data.

Populating the indicators: what data, from what sources?

A number of misunderstandings regarding data are floating around the issue of collecting and using data disaggregated by ethnicity. One misconception is that there are no quantitative data on the situation of Roma households. In reality a lot of data exists, both from censuses and various surveys. What is missing is comparability and methodological consistency. Rarely studies use the same (or similar enough) methodology and tools. Data from different “Roma targeted” surveys is rarely comparable, both between individual surveys and between them and the standardized statistical tools such household budget surveys or labour force surveys.

Another misunderstanding is related to prohibition of ethnic data collection. Indeed, data protection is becoming increasingly sensitive issue with the spread of ICT, ‘big data’ and increasingly easy access to personal information. The laws and regulations on statistics follow the EU standards such as the EU Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC,⁸ which prohibits the processing of sensitive personal data, and

⁶ Source: working communication with TNS BBSS.

⁷ In those countries where the Census data are very old and some more accurate information about the Roma population exists, this more accurate information was used.

⁸ Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. Official Journal of the European Communities No L 281/31. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/privacy/docs/95-46-ce/dir1995-46_part1_en.pdf

are designed to protect individual data integrity and privacy. The standards lay down explicit criteria, which need to be followed so that data collection is legitimate and lawful.

These criteria are built on the combination of ‘prohibition’ and ‘exemptions’. While data protection legislation may prohibit the collection of data on ethnicity, the EU Data Protection Directive, for example, also allows for some exceptions to this rule under certain conditions where such data may be collected. For example, if safeguards are in place, if the data subject has given explicit consent to processing of those data, or if processing is necessary for the purposes of carrying out the obligations and specific rights of the controller in the field of employment. There are differences in national practices, although in general the legislation protects individuals against the collection and processing of data which may be used for wrong purposes or violate their privacy. In nearly all EU Member States, legal provisions restrict the processing of sensitive data on ethnicity, but national legislation does not generally prohibit the collection of this type of data, but rather restricts it and makes it conditional on the respect of certain safeguards.

Thus, the aim (reflected in the spirit of the law) “is not to prevent the processing of sensitive data, but to establish safeguards. The argument that data protection laws prohibit the collection of sensitive data under all circumstances is therefore an over-simplification and limited interpretation of the legal provisions. The laws’ ambiguity is entirely due to their insistence on imposing a prohibition, which perpetuates doubt as to the lawfulness of collecting such data” (Simon 2007: 20). In other words, collecting such data is possible, mostly permissible, and even advisable, provided that basic standards of data protection are followed. It means that data should be anonymized (not allowing to identify individual from a data set) and used for purposes strictly specified by law. Even in countries, which do not apply the concept of “ethnicity” in their censuses or official statistical instruments, questions on ethnic identity or proxies can be (and are) used in surveys. What is not possible is to apply one single standardized approach to different country contexts.

The approaches discussed in this paper are referring to the experience of the five central-European countries with the highest Roma populations in the EU (increasingly often referred to as the ‘G5’). All five are either applying or have the technical prerequisites for applying approaches to collect data on ethnicity as outlined below, namely a question on ethnic identity (a) included in the census questionnaire, (b) in standardised European social surveys and (c) administering custom surveys on Roma samples. In addition, some countries apply territorial mapping of Roma population (Roma Atlases in Slovakia) or of ‘socially vulnerable population’ (in the Czech Republic).

Territorial mapping of Roma population

Slovakia produced its first ‘Atlas of Roma Communities’ in 2004 and it was updated in 2013 by a team of Presov University (UNDP 2014).⁹ The Atlas provides information on the localities populated by Roma population in the country. Data were collected through direct field work in 1070 municipalities (out of 2890 in Slovakia) – municipalities identified in Atlas of Roma communities in Slovakia 2004, municipalities identified by the Office of the Roma Plenipotentiary’s desk research and municipalities where at least 30 people self-identified as Roma in the Population Census 2011. The fieldwork was implemented by 30 researchers with prior direct experience in working with the Roma population at local level. The information was collected using structured questionnaire filled in through interviews with the local informants (mayor, employee of the local administration) and verified through Roma NGOs and local activists. The fieldwork lasted between September 2012 and August 2013.

The Atlas provides a typology of Roma populated localities: a) segregated settlements, b) settlements on the edge of town/village, c) settlement (residential concentration) inside the town/village, d) Roma living dispersed among majority population, e) information on the town/village with the presence of

⁹ The Atlas and related documents is accessible from <http://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/socialne-vylucene-spolocenstva/dokumenty.html>

the above mentioned types of localities. For each locality the Atlas provides information on total population of settlement; number of houses and apartments, type of dwellings (bricked, wooden, shacks, etc.); basic demographic information on population (e.g. age distribution); educational profile of settlement's residents; technical infrastructure (water pipelines, sewage, electricity, gas, waste disposal, etc.); schools (types of schools in the settlement/village/town, number of Roma students); access to services (availability of doctors, shops, pharmacy, bus stops, ATMs, cultural house, church); political participation (ethnic composition of the council, political parties); presence of NGOs, community centres, field social work; unemployment rate, employment opportunities (main employers, Roma employers), etc.

The Atlas should not be considered in any way as the Census of Roma population. It collected the information on territorial units, not individuals. The data on population are only expert estimates. The methodology used complies with the personal data protection regulations since the ethnicity of individuals and individual data were not collected. The Atlas represents only certain inventory of the localities that are perceived by the surrounding population as populated by Roma people (group assigned ethnicity, not individually self-declared ethnicity).

Data are envisaged to serve the public administration for the evidence based policy making. It has been used for the programming of the EU funds distribution in Slovakia during 2014-2020 programming period, within the Operational Program Human Resources. It is also being used for constructing sampling frames of Roma targeted sample surveys.

Romania is also working on an 'Atlas of Roma communities' expected to be completed in beginning of 2016. In November 2014 the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (*Institutul Național pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale*), a governmental body tasked to conduct inter- and multidisciplinary studies and research on the national minorities living in Romania, started the implementation of a two-years project entitled "Socio-graphic mapping of the Roma Communities in Romania for a community-level monitoring of changes with regard to Roma integration".

Censuses

Censuses are still untapped in regards data on the socioeconomic status of Roma populations. Indeed, censuses have their problems. In many cases censuses underreport ethnic identity for various reasons. The situation also varies from country to country in regards the legal frameworks (permitting questions on ethnic identity or not, applying indirect ethnic identifiers or not). The robustness of the data, when self-identification or indirect methods of capturing ethnic identity are applied in censuses, varies (an useful proxy in that regard is the degree of discrepancy between the number of Roma who declared "Roma" as their ethnicity and the experts' estimates used by the Council of Europe to determine the absolute number of Roma populations).

Table 1: Absolute number of population self-declared as Roma in censuses in the 5 countries with highest Roma populations

Country	2011 census data	CoE estimate	
		Minimum	Maximum
Bulgaria	325,343	700,000	800,000
Czech Republic	11,718	150,000	250,000
Hungary	308,957	500,000	1,000,000
Romania	619,007	1,200,000	2,500,000
Slovakia (1991)	105,738	380,000	600,000

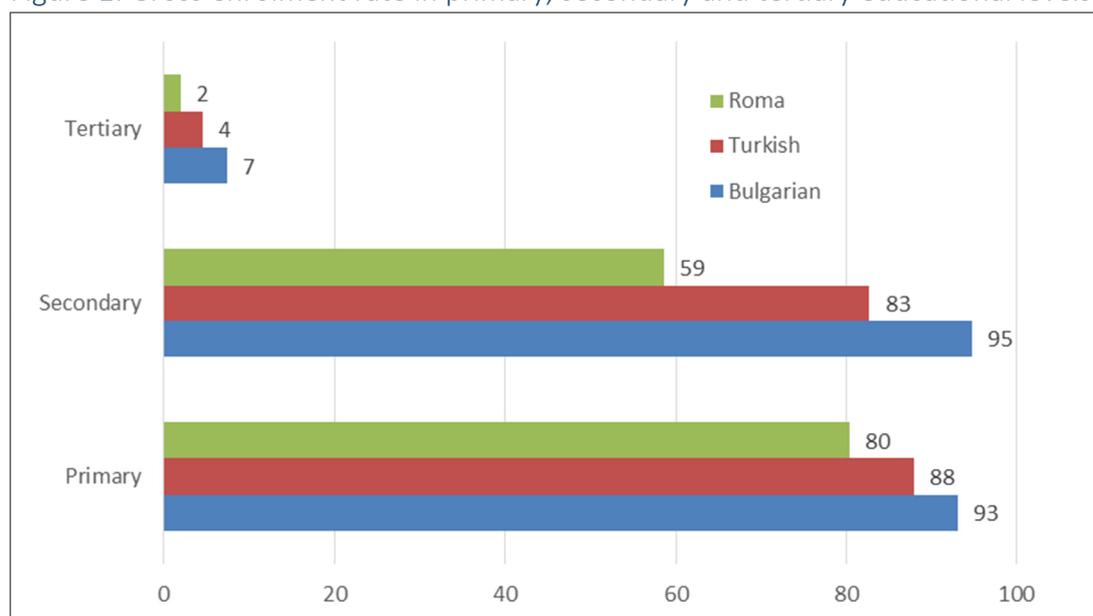
Source: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma/>

Another challenge is related to the concept of identity – if the choice of ‘dual identity’ available as an option. In the 2011 census, the Czech Republic and Hungary allowed for dual choice (both in regards to ‘ethnicity’ and ‘mother tongue’). The issue was most elaborately addressed in Hungary where the respondents were asked about their ‘mother tongue’ and also “In what languages do you usually speak with family members or friends?” In Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia the respondents had only one ‘ethnicity’ and ‘mother tongue’ option to choose.

Despite these differences, a number of countries do ask for ethnic identity and the potential of using them for generating statistics disaggregated by ethnicity is still not used. For example, Bulgaria used a question on ethnicity in its 2011 census and 325,343 Bulgarian citizens self-identified as “Roma” making it the third largest ethnic group (after the Bulgarian and Turkish communities).¹⁰

The available data allows for calculating some basic socioeconomic characteristics and observe the differences between groups.¹¹ One priority area of Roma inclusion is education and the census provides detailed picture of the inter-group disparities in that regard. For example, 84.4 % of the persons who self-identified as ‘Roma’ aged 16 or above declared to be literate (99.5 % among those declaring ‘Bulgarian’ ethnicity and 94.6% among ‘Turks’). The gap in literacy is definitely related to gaps in enrolment. As Figure 1 shows, the gap between the three groups is small for primary education but increases dramatically for higher educational levels. The data on the highest completed education (visualised in Figure 2) illustrates the outcome.

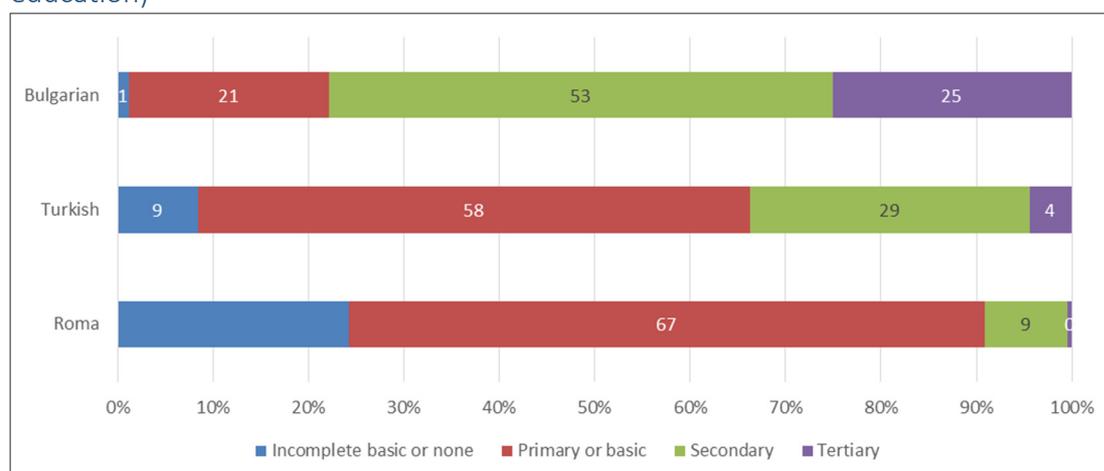
Figure 1: Gross enrolment rate in primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels



¹⁰ NSI, 2011 population census, http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/PDOCS2/Census2011_ethnos.xls

¹¹ The indicators for Roma and non-Roma in Bulgaria presented in this section were calculated by Magdalena Kostova from the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute.

Figure 2: Highest achieved educational level (population aged 7 and above who are not in education)



Only 0.5% of the Roma aged 18 and above who are not in school or training have completed tertiary level of education (Bachelor, masters, PhD or equivalent). Table 2 summarises the highest completed education for other educational levels.

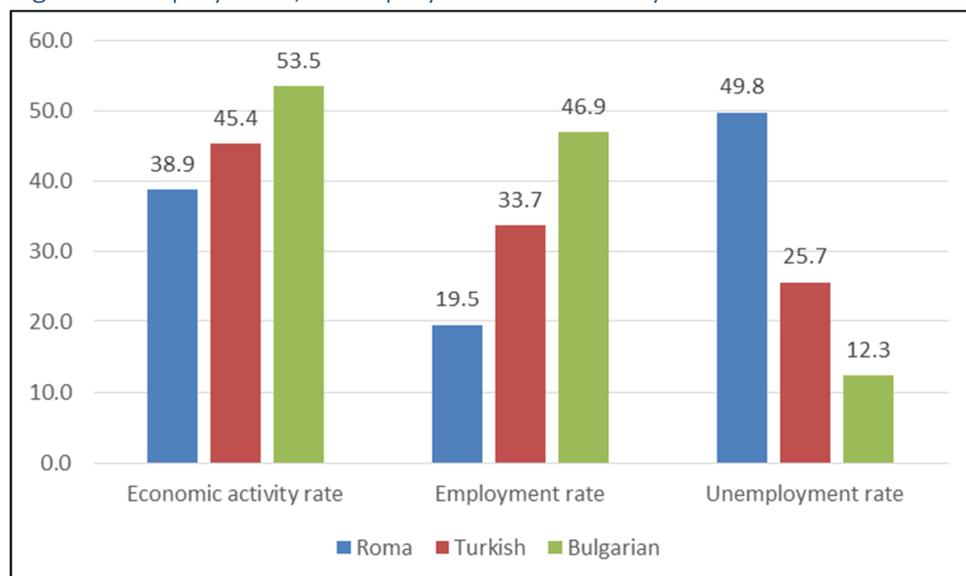
Table 2: Highest educational level achieved

Share of the persons with the respective educational level out of all older than 7 years of age			
Educational level	Roma	Bulgarians	Turks
Post-secondary, non-tertiary	1.8	0.1	0.3
Secondary (special) vocational	24.0	2.3	9.6
Secondary vocational	12.5	2.8	10.2
Upper secondary general	12.9	3.1	8.0
Vocational training with entrance after 8 th degree	1.3	0.3	0.9
Vocational training with entrance after 6 th degree	0.4	0.2	0.3
Lower secondary (basic)	17.3	38.6	43.9
Primary	3.7	28.1	14.0
Uncompleted primary	0.6	11.8	4.0
Illiterate	0.5	11.5	4.2

Source: Bulgarian Census 2011

Census data makes possible monitoring also long-term changes in employment status. Figure 3 illustrates the results. Given the high number of observations, in-depth analysis is possible and the individual indicators can be correlated with other variables (level of education achieved, characteristics of the household, socioeconomic characteristics of the locality, distribution of resources from ESIFs etc.).

Figure 3: Employment, unemployment and activity rates



Census also provide detailed information on the housing situation – access to basic infrastructures, possession of household items. Data show that only 0.5 % of the Roma population in Bulgaria live in dwellings without electricity and 7.7 % do not have water supply (inside or outside of the dwelling). 17.5 % of the Roma do not have any sewage system (connected to public sewer, septic shaft, another purifying installation or a cesspit). 70.9 % do not have running hot water and 57.8 % do not have any bathing facilities (in the dwelling, outside the dwelling but in the building or outside the building).

Data reveals interesting picture regarding possession of household amenities. The least absent item is a TV – only 4.5 % of the Roma don't have one. It is followed by a cooking stove (28.5 %), telephone, incl. mobile (30.5 %) and refrigerator (37.2 %) don't have them. The least popular items are dishwashers (only 1.4% of people live in households that have one), AC (4.2 % have one) and internet (13.2 % have access). The share of people living in households with a computer is slightly higher (15.4 %). Table 3 provides the shares of the population by different ethnicity in Bulgaria lacking access to some basic infrastructures or household amenities.

Table 3: Share of population living in dwellings without...

	Bulgarians	Roma	Turkish
Electricity	0.0	0.5	0.0
Water supply in the dwelling	0.3	7.7	1.4
Running hot water	0.3	7.7	1.4
Sewage	1.8	17.5	6.3
Toilet in the dwelling	0.8	6.2	1.3
Running hot water	11.7	70.9	39.3
Bathroom	5.5	57.8	21.4
TV set	1.9	4.5	2.4

Aerial or cable TV	25.3	53.4	52.2
Satellite dish	78.2	60.0	39.2
Audio or video recorder	62.8	79.0	80.3
Telephone, incl. mobile	7.2	30.5	13.8
PC	40.5	84.6	61.3
Internet connection	43.5	86.8	66.0
Cooker	4.9	28.5	18.7
Refrigerator and/or freezer	4.7	37.2	13.4
Automatic washing machine	16.6	57.3	26.0
Dish-washer	87.8	98.6	96.3
Air conditioner	71.4	95.8	91.6
Car/minibus	43.1	77.9	54.1

Source: National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria, Census 2011

Thus, the census data allow for calculating some core indicators and correlating different variables (like education level and employment status). It does not allow for calculating, for example, poverty rates – but has some of the core components of a material deprivation index. Most of all, it yields sufficient information based on which more sophisticated modelling can be done, like small areas estimation or propensity score matching. Some countries (like Hungary) are actively making use of these opportunities (see (Tóth, Vékás 2014, KSH 2014).

Given the different approaches to defining ‘ethnicity’ and the differently formulated questions from country to country, census data are hardly comparable across countries. Ideally harmonised questions on ethnic identity might be developed for future censuses to allow comparison between countries and to be optionally applied by countries. Such comparable set of questions could be extremely useful for observing longer-term trends and thus could allow for capturing the aggregate outcomes of Roma-targeted policies in the Member States with the highest number and share of Roma population. In addition, the census data makes possible constructing robust sampling frames for sample surveys that are widely used for generating data on the status of Roma populations between censuses.

Standardized European social surveys¹²

Questions on ethnic identity can be applied also in standardized European social Surveys, (particularly in large-sample surveys). It makes possible constructing sub-samples of individuals (respondents and/or household members) self-identifying as ‘Roma’. This opens the way to calculating core socioeconomic indicators for Roma populations. Hungary is one of the countries pioneering the usage of approach. In order to address the need of statistical information needed for a robust monitoring of the national social inclusion strategy, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office included in 2013 the question on ethnicity in large sample surveys. The Labour Force Survey covered 67,600 people aged 15–74 years in 38,000 households. Two questions were used to ask for ethnic identity in order to measure dual ethnic identity (common in Hungary). In total 3,700 respondents identified themselves as ‘Roma’ and only 241 refused to answer the ethnic identity questions. The ratio of Roma in the total sample was 3.8 % (slightly higher than the 3.2 % in the population census). In 2014 the European Health Interview survey and EU-SILC applied the same approach. The EU-SILC in 2014 covered 20,000

¹² This section is based on the inputs provided by László Ulicska, Ministry of Human Resources, Hungary

people aged 16 years or more in 10,000 households. Due to the large reporting burden on respondents (more than 200 variables), it used only one question on ethnicity with 2 answers option that still provided the respondents with the opportunity to indicate dual identity. The ratio of Roma in the total sample EU-SILC in Hungary was 4.2 %.¹³ Figures 4-5 visualise some of the results regarding employment.

Figure 4: Labour market participation of Roma and Non-Roma in Hungary, 2013 (based on LFS data)

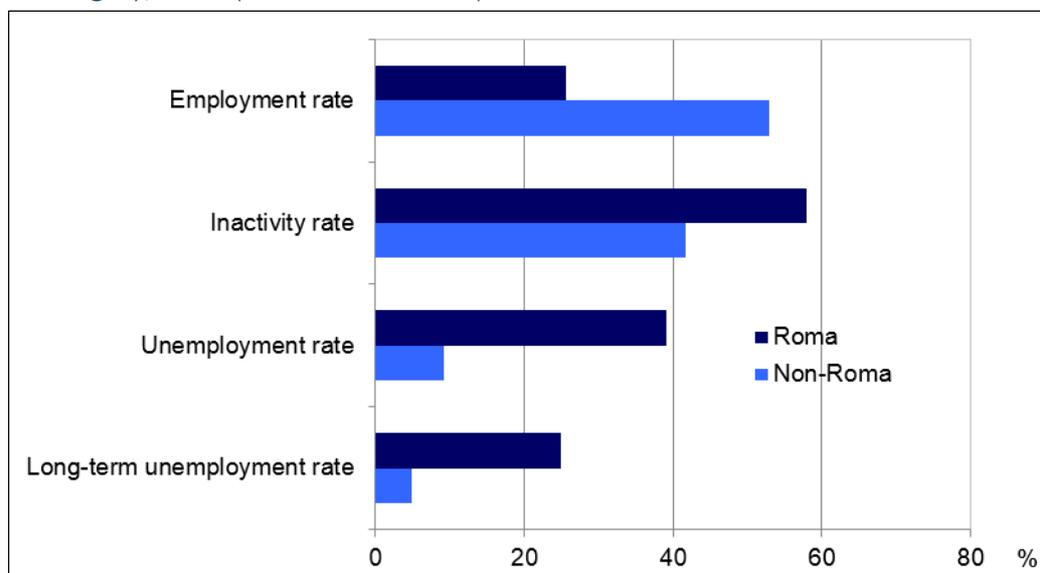
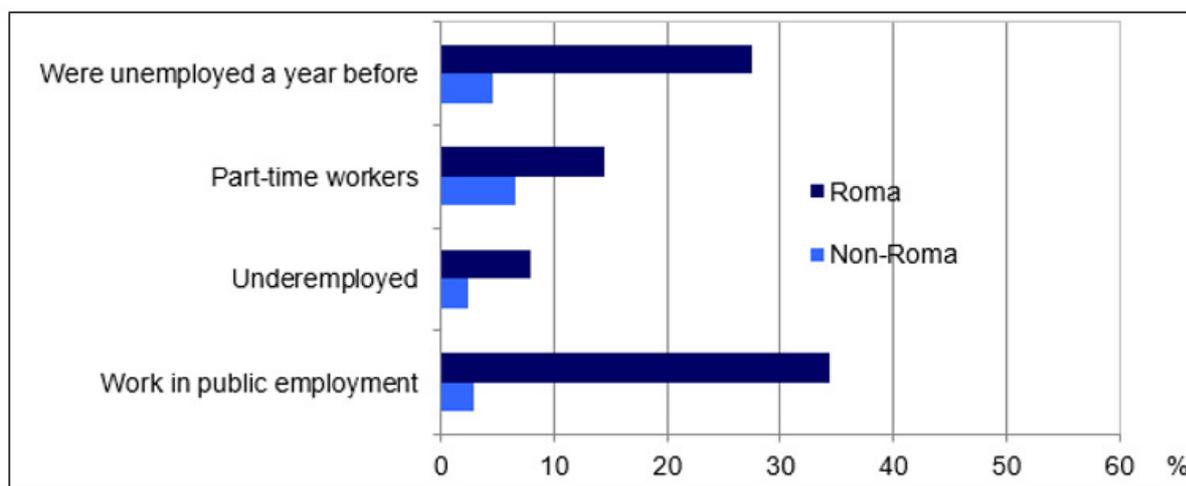


Figure 5: Security of employment among Roma and Non-Roma in Hungary, 2013 (based on LFS data)



Source: LFS Hungary 2013

In 2015 Bulgaria is also including a question on ethnic identity to its EU-SILC. It does not allow however for reporting dual identity. The results are expected in early June.

Custom sample surveys administered on Roma samples

Including questions on ethnic identity in European Social Surveys can sufficient information on major socioeconomic characteristics of Roma populations. This approach however has several drawbacks. First, it is possible in countries with big Roma populations which is not the case in most EU Member States. Second, in only a minority of the Member States national legislation permits applying ethnic tags. Third, European social surveys do not cover important aspects of Roma inclusion, such as discrimination, prejudice or agency.

Custom sample surveys administered on Roma samples can address these two drawbacks and are being used instead to address in-depth specific issues (like FRA 'Roma Pilot' with a focus on discrimination or UNDP 'Regional Roma Surveys' with a focus on human development and socioeconomic status or UNICEF MICS). But the benefits associated with them come at a price: smaller samples and higher costs.

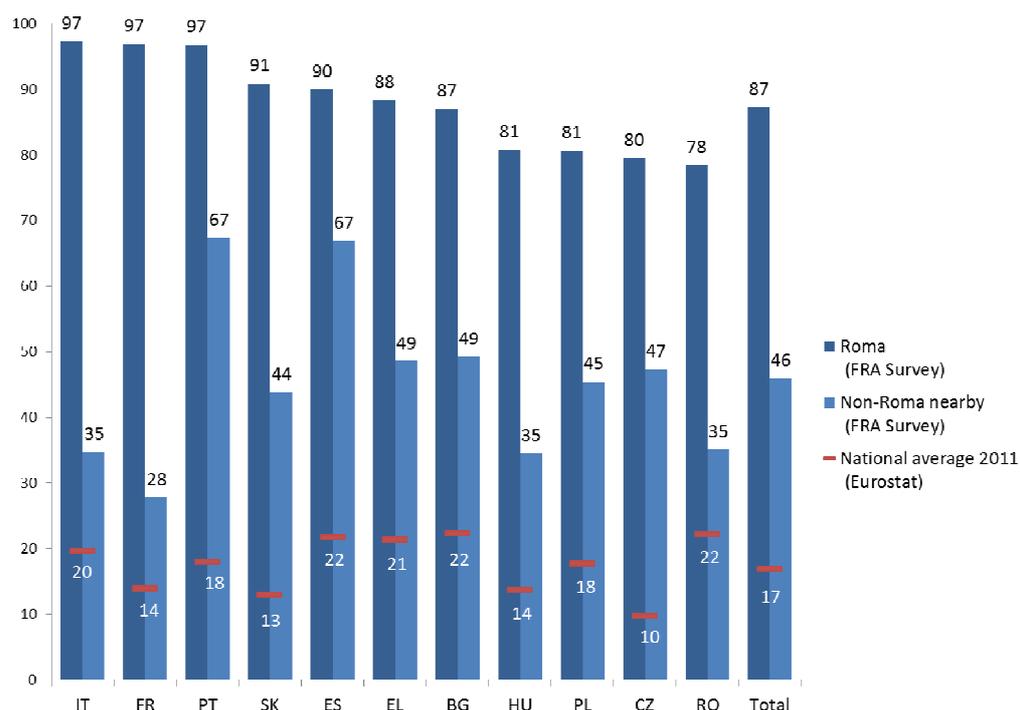
One of the first surveys of that kind to integrate socioeconomic aspects and perceptions of discrimination was UNDP's Regional Roma Survey 2004 (Ivanov et al., 2006). This survey included nine Central and Eastern European countries. It was the first to cover two samples – Roma at risk of marginalization and non-Roma living in close proximity and sharing the similar local socioeconomic conditions.

In 2011, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) – in cooperation with the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank adopted the same approach and conducted a survey of Roma populations in 11 Member States on discrimination and living conditions focusing employment, education, health and housing. For comparison, a sample of neighbouring non-Roma populations was included in the survey. The survey also collected detailed information on segregation, poverty and deprivation (see FRA 2014a and FRA 2014b). Figures 6-9 visualize some of the results.

Figure 6 presents "at risk of poverty" rate (a lead indicator of the Europe 2020 target to combat poverty and social exclusion) for Roma and their non-Roma neighbours. The Roma survey asked how much the household has on average to live on each month. While this may be considered a good approximation of the relative income position, it generally underestimates the amount of annual income which is used for the conventional at-risk-of-poverty indicator that Eurostat uses.¹⁴ Equivalised income was calculated on the basis of the modified OECD scale to account for economies of scale in larger households. The modified OECD scale assigns a weight of 1 to the first adult, 0.5 for each additional adult and 0.3 for each child. For consistency, the analysis takes the national thresholds of 2010 published by Eurostat, as they were the ones available at the time of the interviews. The at-risk-of-poverty rates calculated upon the Roma survey data are likely to slightly overestimate the at-risk-of-poverty rate. The figure on the results show that the at-risk-of-poverty rate is a not very distinctive measure for poverty of Roma. One of the reasons is related to the construction of the samples – they cover 'Roma at risk of marginalization' and not 'general Roma populations'. Thus the results cannot be generalized for 'all Roma people'.

¹⁴ The monthly income does not cover irregular incomes or lump sum payments and, given that the survey only asks one question on this topic, it is likely that smaller income components are not included.

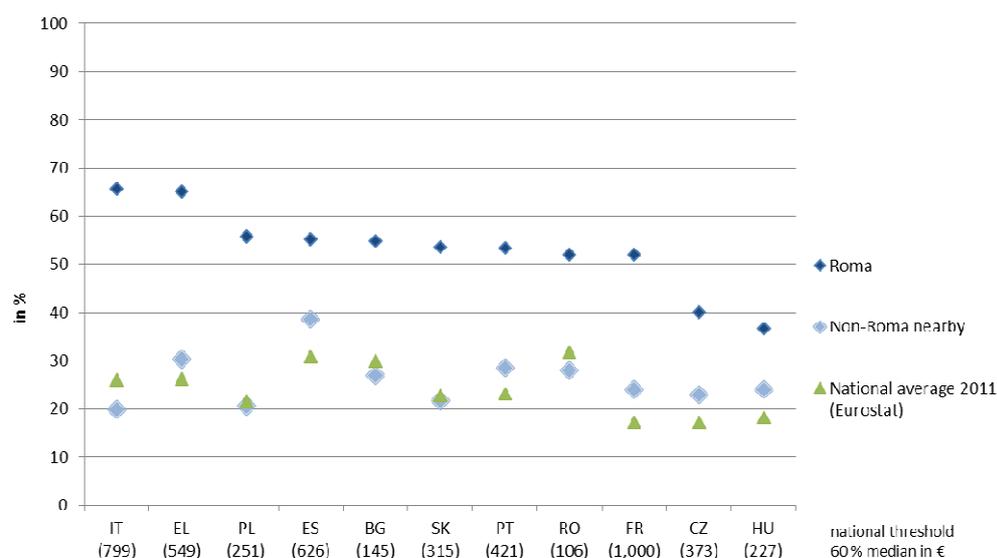
Figure 6: At risk of poverty (below 60 % of the national median), by EU Member State (%)



Source: FRA Roma survey, 2011, persons in households; Eurostat EU-SILC, 2011

Another example is 'at-risk-of-poverty gap' (Figure 7). This indicator gives an indication of the intensity of the poverty risk due to low income. It shows the median distance between individual household income and the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold. In Italy, half of the Roma who are at risk of poverty have an income 66 % below the Italian threshold. This means that a single person household needs more than €527 per month simply to reach the Italian threshold. In Romania, the national threshold is only €106 per month. Here the at-risk-of-poverty gap amounts to 52 %, meaning that half of the Roma at-risk-of poverty must survive on less than €51 per month (per single person equivalent). Considering the actual cost of living in these Member States it becomes apparent that the income of Roma households surveyed which is below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold is not sufficient to cover basic needs. For non-Roma neighbours the at-risk-of-poverty gap is much closer to the national threshold.

Figure 7: Relative at-risk-of-poverty gap, by EU Member State (€)¹⁵



Source: FRA Roma survey, 2011, persons in households

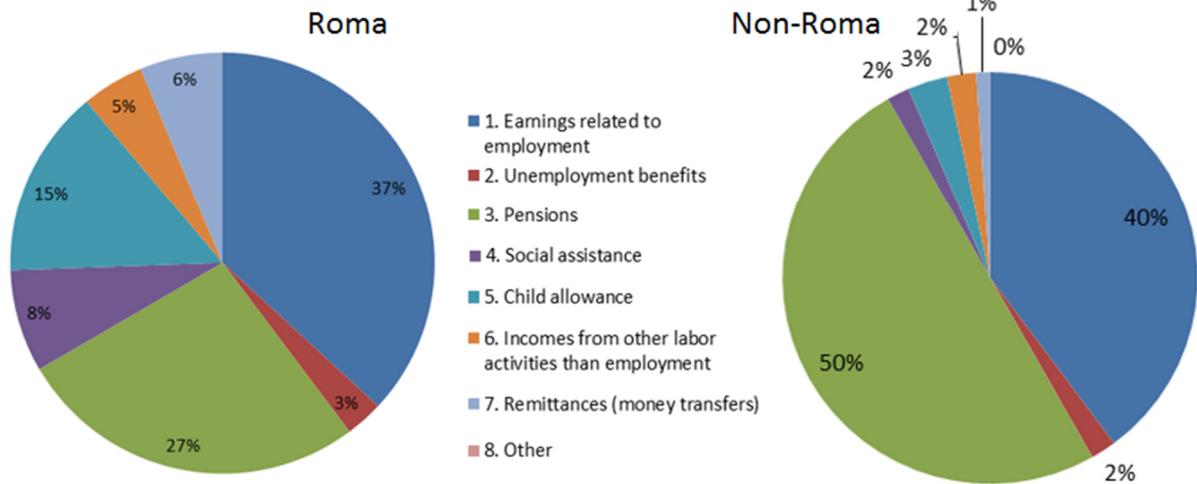
One possible explanation for this huge income difference could be the uneven age distribution and low or non-existent pension entitlements in Roma households. Pension payments in most countries contribute significantly to household income, preventing poverty.

UNDP/WB/EC data supports this hypothesis. The questionnaire administered in this survey had more elaborate income section and allows for analysing the household income by source. Data on the five countries with most sizeable Roma populations summarised in Figure 8 indicates that Roma have far fewer pension benefits compared to non-Roma households, a fact which may intensify financial retrenchment. Furthermore it can be expected that a lower share of household incomes come from pensions for Roma than for non-Roma – because of Roma’s lower life expectancy. The data from the survey on average age of Roma and non-Roma provide some indication of this. Further research with a closer focus on the impact of pension benefits now and in the future may enhance our understanding of poverty dynamics.

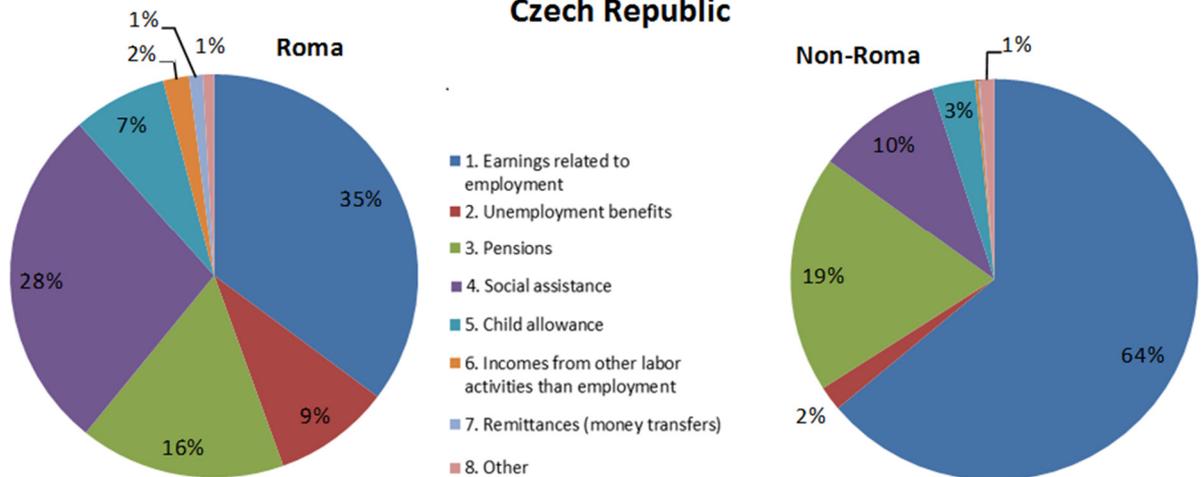
¹⁵ Notes: *Median of the relative at risk of poverty gap of the monthly equivalised income to the national at risk of poverty threshold (Eurostat 60% median threshold for a one-person household per month in Euros). To directly compare countries’ living standards, purchasing power differences need to be considered.

Figure 8: Incomes structure of Roma and non-Roma households in the 5 EU Member States (total, 2011)

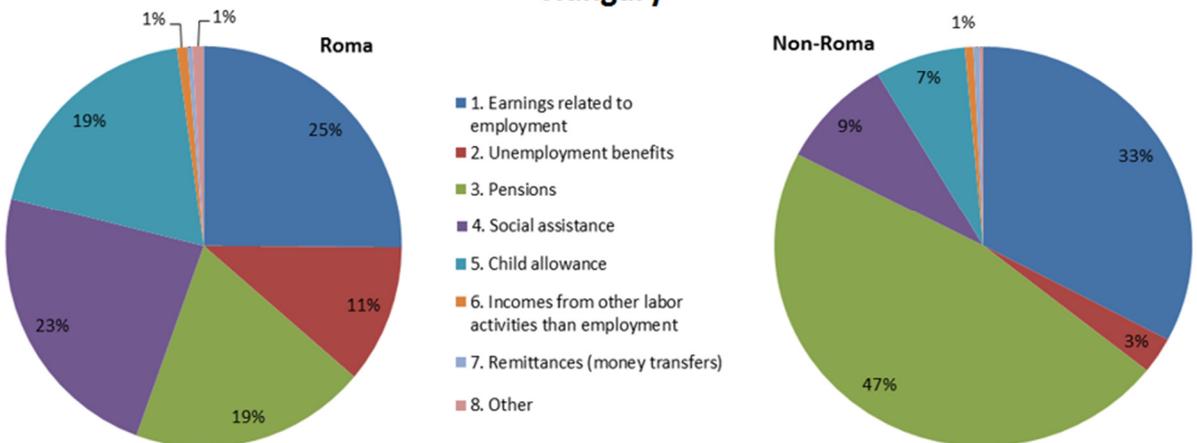
Bulgaria



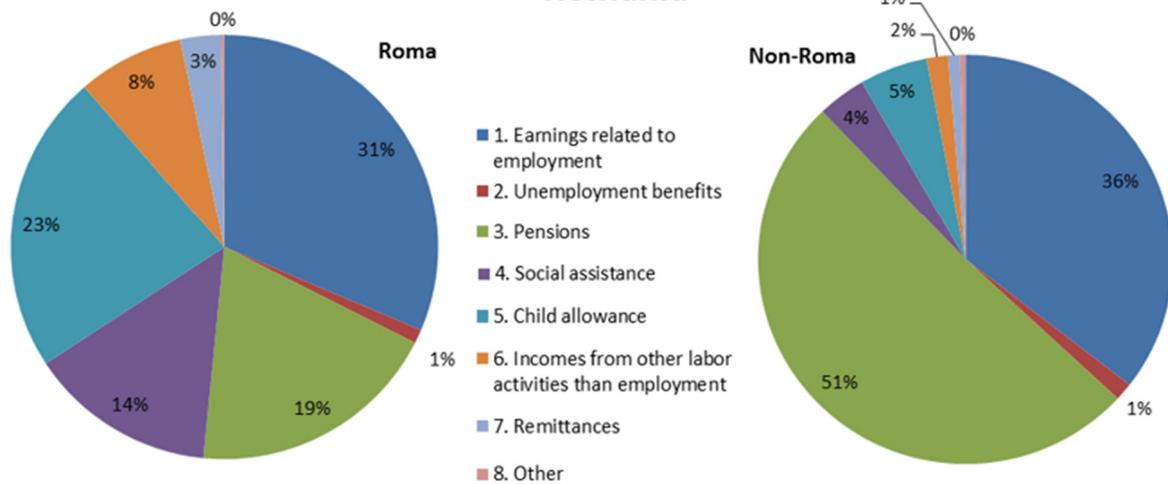
Czech Republic



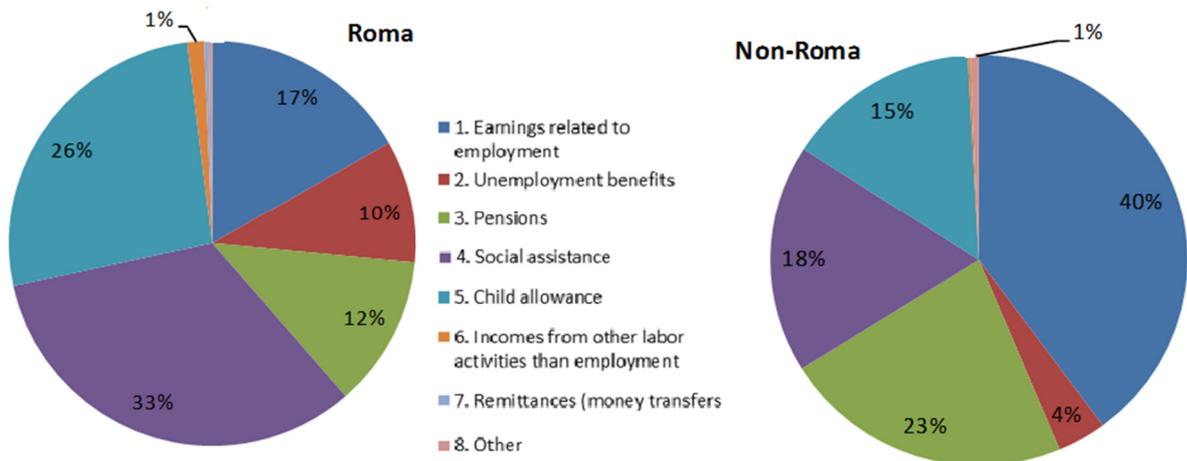
Hungary



Romania



Slovakia



Source: UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey

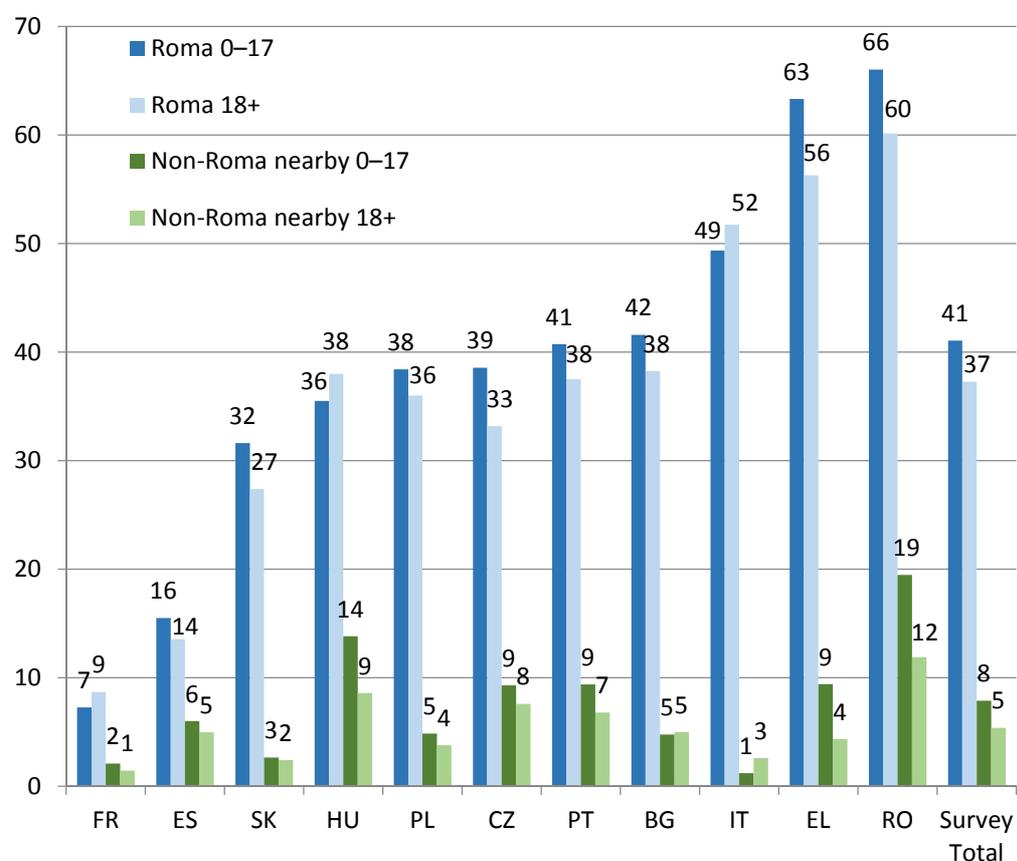
Tackling child poverty and breaking the cycle of disadvantage are key policy goals for the European Commission to ensure that the rights of the child as defined in the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the UN Convention of the Rights of Child are respected, protected and fulfilled. The 2013 European Commission Communication 'Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage' calls on Member States to focus on children who face increased risks due to multiple disadvantages, such as Roma children. The proportion of Roma children who live in households falling below the national at-risk-of-poverty line is twice as high as that of non-Roma children living nearby. Of the Roma who are at risk of poverty, 42 % are under 18 (for non-Roma households the figure is around half, 22 %).

The labour market participation of women is often seen as a crucial complementary tool to bring children out of poverty. The at-risk-of-poverty rate rises with the number of children. The impact of women's employment on the at-risk-of-poverty rate for households with children, however, is modest, reaching for households with four or more children an at-risk-of-poverty rate close to 100 % (FRA 2014c).

The Europe 2020 indicator on poverty and social exclusion encompasses as a third component – 'severe material deprivation' – which is assumed if a person cannot afford basic needs reflecting more directly marginalised living conditions. The choice of items to measure severe material deprivation,

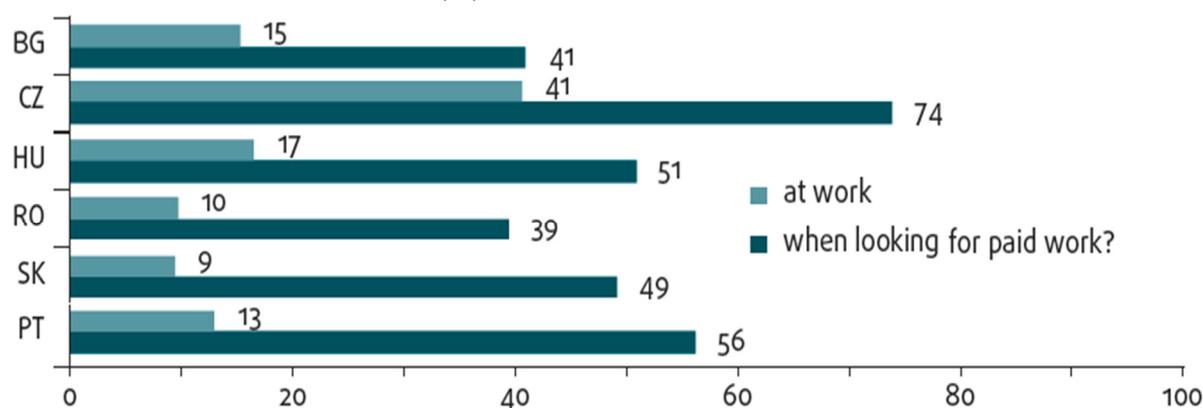
however, was driven by distribution and prevalence in the general population. These choices are, therefore, unable to capture the extreme living conditions of Roma in many of the areas covered by this survey. In line with other studies the survey results show that a number of Roma live in marginalised and impoverished conditions more reminiscent of some of the poorest regions globally rather than 21st century Europe. This is strikingly illustrated by the share of children under the age of 18 who live in a household in which at least one person ‘had to go hungry to bed, because there was not enough money to buy food’ (Figure 9). Childhood hunger rates are at least three times higher for the Roma than for the non-Roma populations surveyed. This also shows the limits of a relative poverty measure benchmarking the average living conditions in a country. Absolute poverty such as suffering from hunger and extreme deprivation demands different measures and policies of intervention.

Figure 9: Incidence of hunger (least one person in the household who went hungry to bed at least once in the last month, by EU Member State, %)



In access to and in employment, many Roma also experience discrimination. A significantly higher share of Roma than non-Roma have felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity when looking for work. Eleven years after the adoption of the EU’s Racial Equality Directive, more than half of the Roma respondents looking for work said they had experienced discrimination because they are Roma. Many Roma also face discrimination at work by their employers or work colleagues. Very few Roma (41%) actually report instances of discrimination at the workplace when they have been discriminated against because of being Roma. However, the rates of perceived discrimination at work is much lower than the rate of perceived discrimination when looking for work.

Figure 10: Experience of discrimination in employment in the last five years because of being Roma in the 5 EU Member States (%)



Source: FRA 'Roma Pilot' 2011

The examples above suggest that custom surveys on Roma samples may generate data similar to that from the standard European social surveys but for populations that have low probability of being captured by random samples. In many EU Member States Roma are hard-to-reach populations for which custom surveys provide an acceptable alternative. They also can generate important information on the socioeconomic status and fundamental rights of the non-Roma populations living in close proximity to the Roma (and thus sharing similar socioeconomic conditions). Observing the gap between households with comparable characteristics from the two groups gives an idea of the magnitude of prejudice against Roma resulting in worse socioeconomic status compared to their non-Roma neighbours.

Using multidimensional poverty approach for capturing aggregated outcomes of Roma inclusion

The sections above suggest that sufficient data exist already to populate a broad variety of indicators. The real question is to what extent these indicators serve the purpose of adequately reflecting the specific challenges of Roma poverty and the progress in addressing it. There are three reasons for doubts in that regard.

First, data from surveys is always an approximation and differ from survey to survey for various reasons (different sampling models, differences in the formulation of the questions, impact seasonality etc.). So the value of the same indicator (for example, poverty rate or unemployment rate) usually differ between surveys administered by different organizations basically providing the users with a choice of which to trust.

Second, different ways of defining and quantifying poverty yield different results and contribute more to the confusion around the issue than helping explain the root causes of poverty. The choice of the method and poverty thresholds has an obvious impact on the outcomes of the analysis and its policy implications. Table 4 summarises the various approaches to poverty estimation can be applied – all of them legitimate.

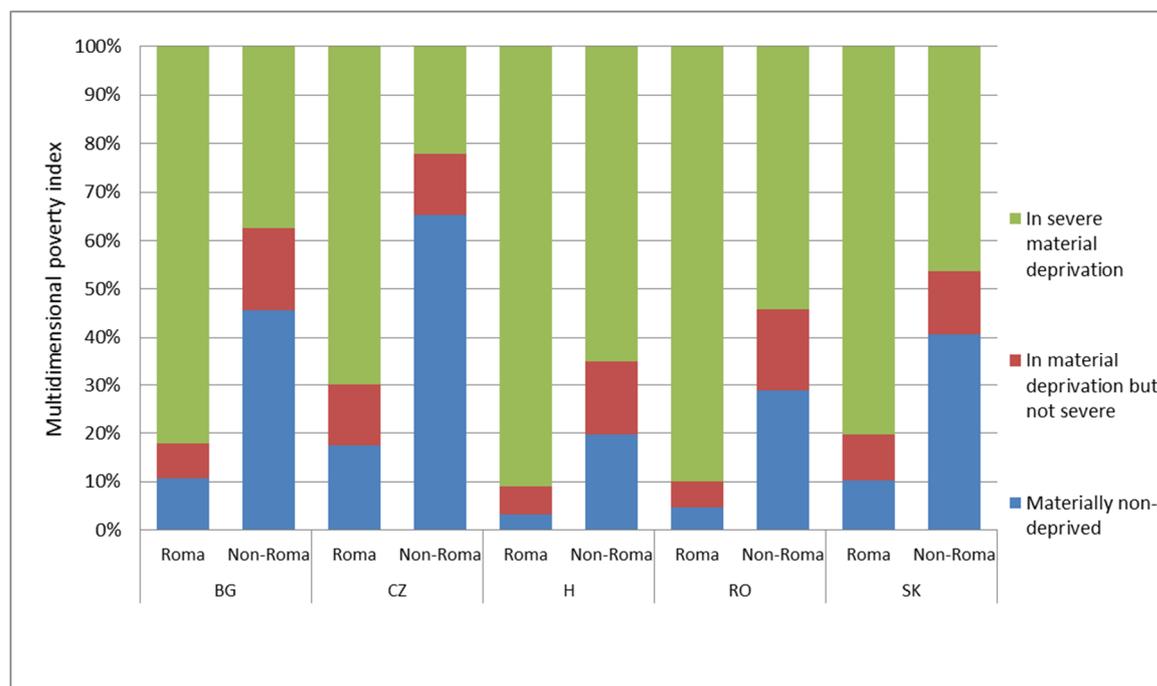
Table 4: Summary of various poverty concepts

Uni-dimensional	Monetary	Income based	Absolute poverty lines	National thresholds specific for individual countries, in the national currency	1. Nationally specific income-based poverty rates
				Internationally comparable thresholds	2. Severely poor with income below 2.15 PPP\$
			Relative poverty lines	60% of the median income	3. "Just poor" with income below 4.30 PPP\$
					4. Severely poor (below 40% of the median income)
				5. "At risk of poverty" (below 60% of the median income)	
		Expenditure based	Absolute poverty lines	National thresholds specific for individual countries, in national currency	6. Nationally specific expenditure-based poverty rates
				Internationally comparable thresholds	7. Severely poor with expenditures below 2.15 PPP\$
			Relative poverty lines	Share of the median expenditure	8. "Just poor" with expenditures below 4.30 PPP\$
					9. Severely poor (below 40% of the median expenditures)
				10. "At risk of poverty" (below 60% of the median expenditures)	
Food energy intake (FEI)				11. Nationally specific FEI-based poverty rates (varies by climate conditions, rural/urban distribution, type of occupation etc.)	
Multidimensional	Basic needs and human development				12. HPI1 and HPI2
	Social exclusion				13. Social exclusion index
	Multidimensional poverty estimates – internationally comparable (following the methodology developed by OPHI and used for international comparisons and in the Global HDRs published by UNDP)				14. Multidimensional poverty index
	Nationally specific, following the methodology developed by OPHI				15. Severely poor
				16. "Just" poor	

Third, most importantly, the traditional poverty measures are not reflecting adequately the multidimensional nature of Roma poverty. Roma poverty is not just a lack of financial resources, unemployment, sub-standard housing, or poor access to social services. It is about a combination of all these factors, which are both outcomes of past spells of exclusion and determinants of future deprivations—reinforcing the vicious circle of poverty. A composite index, like the EU Material Deprivation Index (Figure 11) is a step forward compared to the monetary approaches to poverty but still does not reflect adequately the vicious circle of Roma exclusion. This circle is reinforced by prejudice and discrimination, specific behavioural traits, limited opportunities to participate in political processes, etc. If a composite measure of wellbeing (like the EU material deprivation Index) could capture the multiple dimensions of deprivation, prejudice and discrimination or the missing opportunities to exercise fundamental rights remain still 'unaccounted'. In the case of Roma

populations these constitute a critical dimension. These are the reasons why a multidimensional poverty index might be more appropriate for monitoring and analysing Roma poverty.

Figure 11: EU Material Deprivation Index of Roma and their non-Roma neighbours in the 5 EU Member States



Source: UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey

The multidimensional nature of Roma poverty and its determinants calls for a “human development” and not just “basic needs” approach. It should also integrate reduction in material deprivation with agency and a fundamental rights agenda. Unemployment, social exclusion, and marginalization are interlinked with (and are mutually reinforcing) discrimination, anti-gypsyism, limited access to justice, and segregation.

In order to capture these aspects of Roma deprivation, a multidimensional poverty index has been developed and tested following the standard Alkire and Foster (2007) methodology. This index integrates important aspects of human poverty and reflects the specifics of Roma exclusion appropriately.

Construction of the index¹⁶

This index reflects the status of the individuals (and their characteristics) living in households (with their characteristics) and facing a number of deprivations. It combines 12 equally weighted indicators which reflect their status in six critical dimensions based on a human development perspective (basic rights, health, education, housing, standard of living, and employment). The status of the individual in each dimension is tracked with two indicators per dimension. The first three dimensions cover “human capabilities” of which basic rights, education, and health emerge as particularly important. The second group covers the major aspects of “material well-being.”

Obviously, the entire palette of fundamental rights is far richer than the two indicators. It includes the right to work, protection of individual security, etc. However, both indicators reflect the presence or absence of the necessary conditions for the realization of other fundamental rights. The understanding of “capabilities” is also slightly different from the traditional definition adopted in the

¹⁶ This section is based on Ivanov and Kagin (2014).

capability approach reducing them to personal characteristics and excluding material aspects of capability. But since the individual dimensions are equally weighted, this distinction has no material significance for the index.

The index is calculated on the basis of the “individual status of each member of the household”. This status reflects either the personal characteristics of the individual in question, or the condition of the entire household shared by all its members and extrapolated as an individual parameter to each household member. Table 5 summarises the specific indicators, dimensions, and areas as well as the information required for the individual indicators (individual or household).

Table 5: Dimensions and indicators of the “Roma multidimensional poverty index”

Area	Dimension and weight	Indicators	Criterion of deprivation and threshold	Level of observation
Human capabilities	Basic rights (1/6)	Civil status	Having an ID – yes/no (personal document, birth certificate etc.)	I
		Discrimination	HH member lives in a HH where a member has been discriminated against while looking for a job	P
	Health (1/6)	Disability status	A household member having a disability – yes/no	I
		Limited access to medical services	Any HH member living in a HH responding "yes" to the question "were there any periods in the past 12 months when you couldn't visit a doctor when you needed?"	P
	Education (1/6)	Highest completed education	For adults: any HH member above schooling age who hasn't completed primary education or lower secondary For children: children in school age who are not in school	I
		Self-declared illiteracy rate	Any HH member stated as unable to read and write	I
Material wellbeing	Housing (1/6)	Access to basic infrastructure	A composite indicator –any HH member living in a HH without two of the three (toilet or bathroom inside the house; running water; electricity)	H
		Shares of the population not having access to secure housing	Any HH member living in "ruined houses" or "slums"	
	Standard of living (1/6)	Extreme poverty	Any HH member living in a HH that experienced that in the past month somebody ever went to bed hungry because they could not afford enough food for them	H
		Access to various HH amenities	Any HH member living in a HH, which doesn't possess four of six categories falling in the "Material deprivation" index	I
	Employment (1/6)	Unemployment	Any HH member living in a household with none of the adult HH members employed (16+).	H
		Lack of working experience	Any HH member living in a HH in which the HH head or his/her spouse has no working experience	H
<p>Level of observation of the respective indicators:</p> <p>I – individual status of each household member</p> <p>P – the experience and perception of the main respondent extrapolated to all household members</p> <p>H – the status (vulnerability) of the household along a certain parameter extrapolated to all household members</p>				

In determining multidimensional poverty status, one cut-off line with two levels was applied: one for “multidimensional poverty” and one for “severe multidimensional poverty”. People experiencing 5-7 deprivations were considered “multidimensionally poor”; those experiencing eight or more deprivations were considered “severely multidimensionally poor”. Unlike the Alkire-Foster MPI methodology, no cut-off within dimensions was applied, because of the limited number of deprivations in each dimension (2) and the dichotomous nature of most variables.

This methodology allows for integrating in a single index the poverty rate (the share of people experiencing five or more deprivations) and the severity of poverty (the average number of deprivations experienced by those in poverty). The MPI is the share of the poor multiplied by the average number of deprivations. Figure 12 presents the value of the multidimensional poverty headcount (severe and not severe poverty) and the value of MPI for Roma and their non-Roma neighbours in the five countries with highest number of Roma population. The data show that multidimensional poverty is not a serious issue among non-Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia – but is a challenge in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

Figure 12: Multidimensional poverty incidence (unsevere and severe, bars left scale) and MPI (right scale) for Roma and Non-Roma, 2011

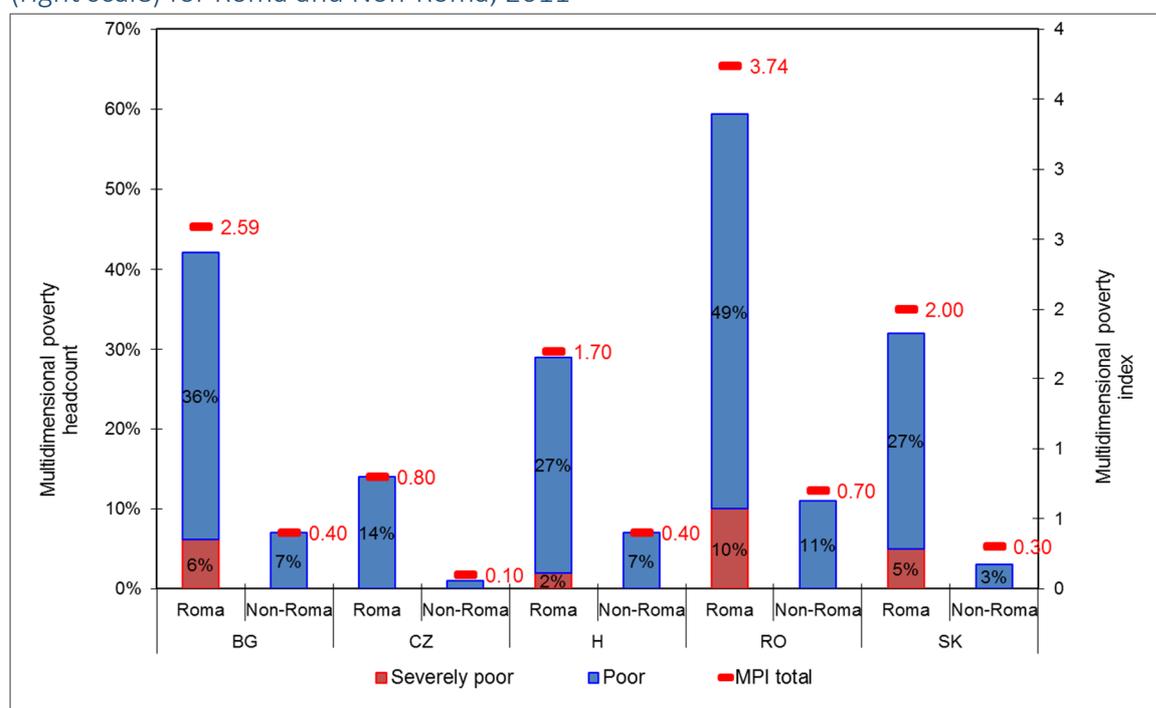


Figure 13 provides in-depth view into multidimensional poverty of Roma in Romania and Bulgaria illustrating the how poverty headcount, MPI the average number of deprivations were changing between 2004 and 2011. As the Figure shows, the multidimensional poverty of Roma declined in the two countries, both as poverty headcount and as value of MPI. MPI declined by the same rate but the outcome was achieved in different ways. In Bulgaria it was largely due to the decrease of the headcount of the (not severely) multidimensionally poor. The average number of deprivations remained almost the same between 2004 and 2011. In Romania however the biggest contribution to the decrease of multidimensional poverty comes from the decrease of severe poverty headcount. This change is reflected also in the value of the average number of deprivations that shows much steeper decline in Romania than in Bulgaria.

Figure 13: Multidimensional poverty rate and its composition for Roma (non-severe and severe, bars left scale) and the value of MPI (right scale)

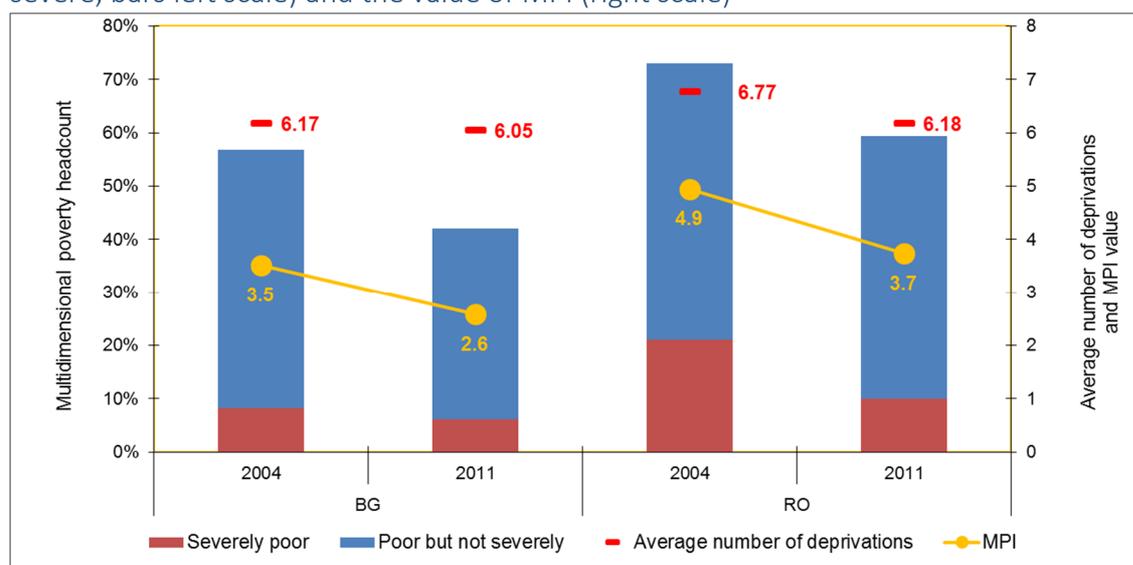
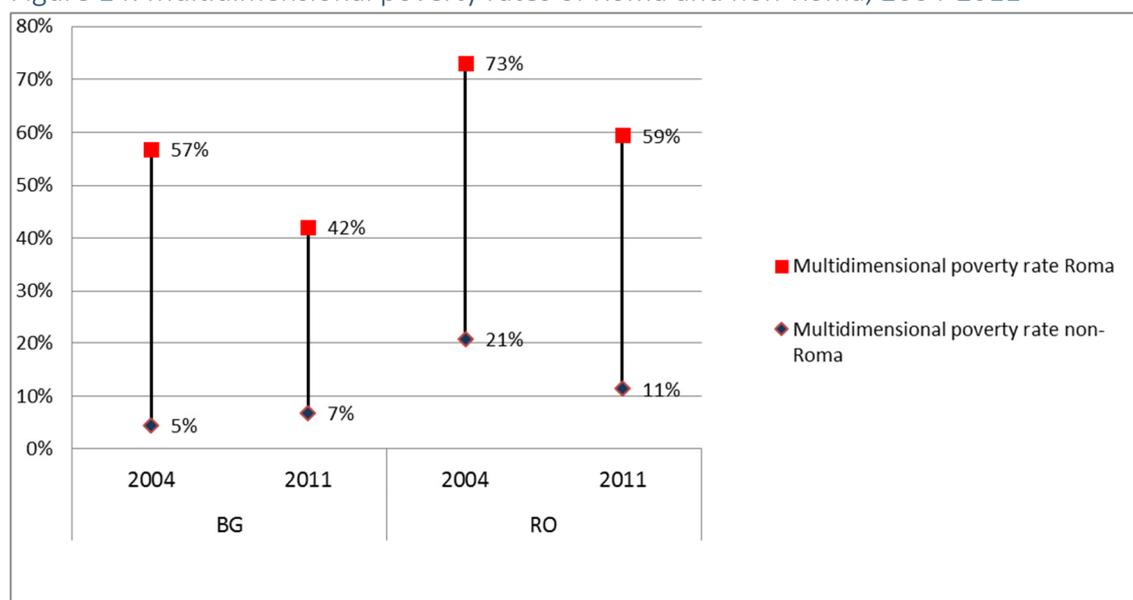


Figure 14 shows yet another perspective on the issue in the two countries. In both Romania and Bulgaria multidimensional poverty rates of Roma decreased by similar magnitude – as it did for their non-Roma neighbours in Romania. In Bulgaria however multidimensional poverty among non-Roma increased over time. Two percentage points increase may look like negligible but seen in relative terms (as poverty is seen at local level), this is a disturbing tendency that needs to be addressed. Bridging the gap between the two groups should be achieved through bringing the status of Roma to that of non-Roma – and not the other way around. Otherwise the support for Roma-targeted poverty alleviation measures may be eroded.

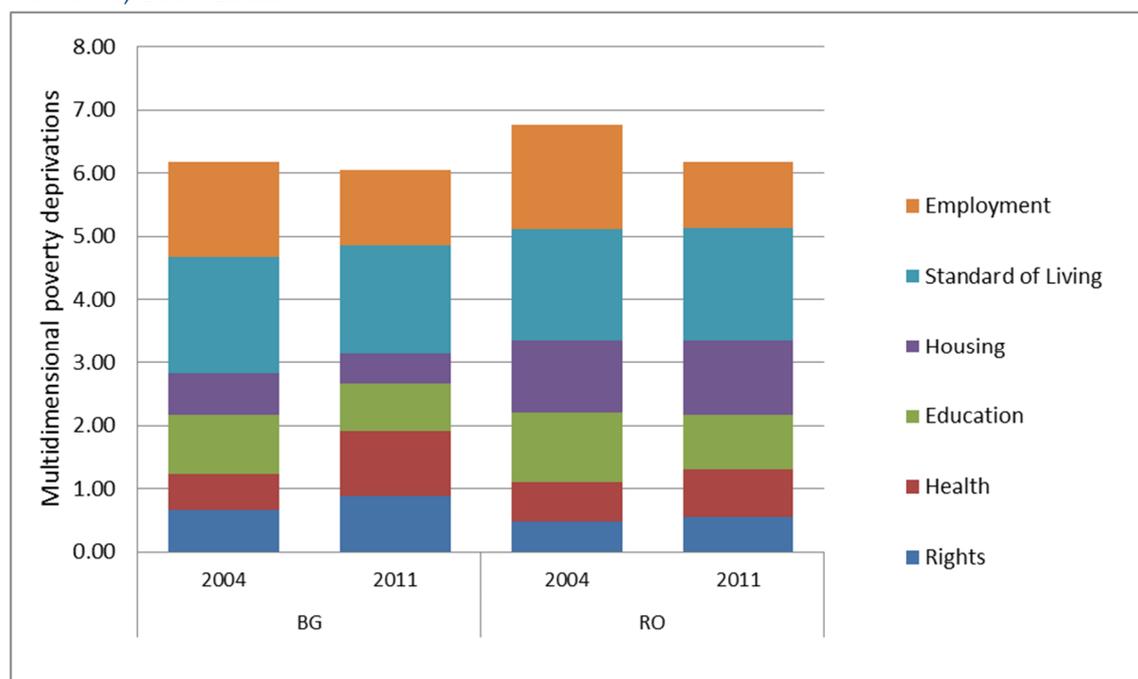
Figure 14: Multidimensional poverty rates of Roma and non-Roma, 2004-2011



The data in Figure 15 show which deprivations contribute most significantly to these poverty trends, and suggest which areas might be prioritized in poverty reduction/Roma inclusion efforts. In Bulgaria the average number of deprivations almost stagnated but the contribution of individual dimensions

changed. The contribution of access to employment, of education and housing vulnerability declined but was offset by an increase in deprivation in health and in individual rights. Romania followed similar pattern but the improvement in employment and educational vulnerability was more pronounced than the deterioration in access to health and individual rights. This is why the average number of deprivations – and respectively, the value of MPI – declined.

Figure 15: Changes in multidimensional poverty deprivations structure of Roma in Bulgaria and Romania, 2004-2011



Tracking the impact of individual sector-specific policies on poverty is a major contribution of the proposed methodology. It makes possible linking the individual sector-specific interventions to the overall multidimensional poverty reduction outcome. In that way policy interventions can be prioritized and allocation of resources devoted to poverty reduction can be optimized.

Comparing different poverty estimates

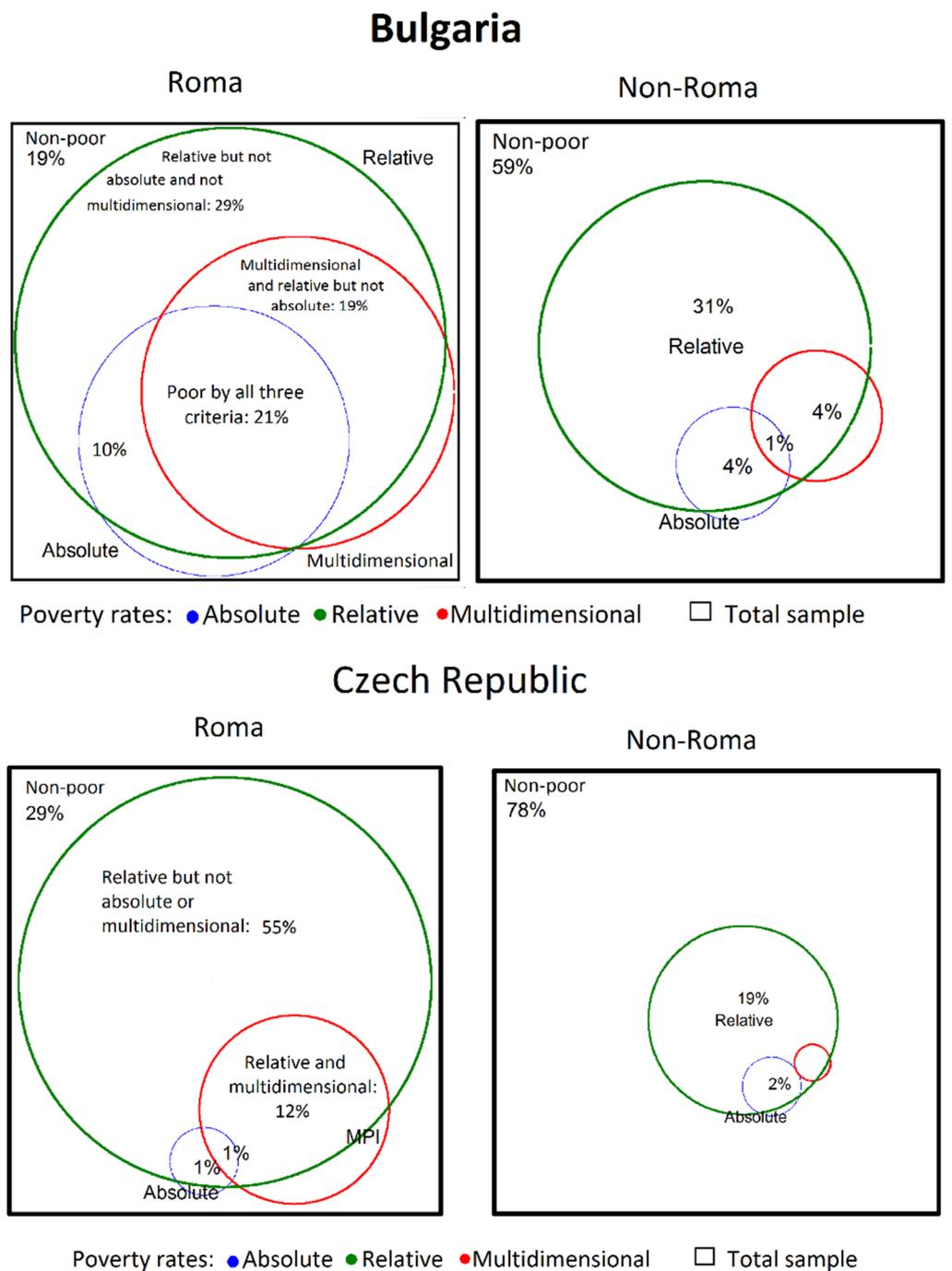
Ideally, different poverty concepts should not yield too diverging results. It would be logical to expect that a poor person different poverty measures would yield different – but not dramatically different – results. Table 6 and Figure 16 suggest that this is not the case.

Table 6: Poverty rates by different poverty concepts

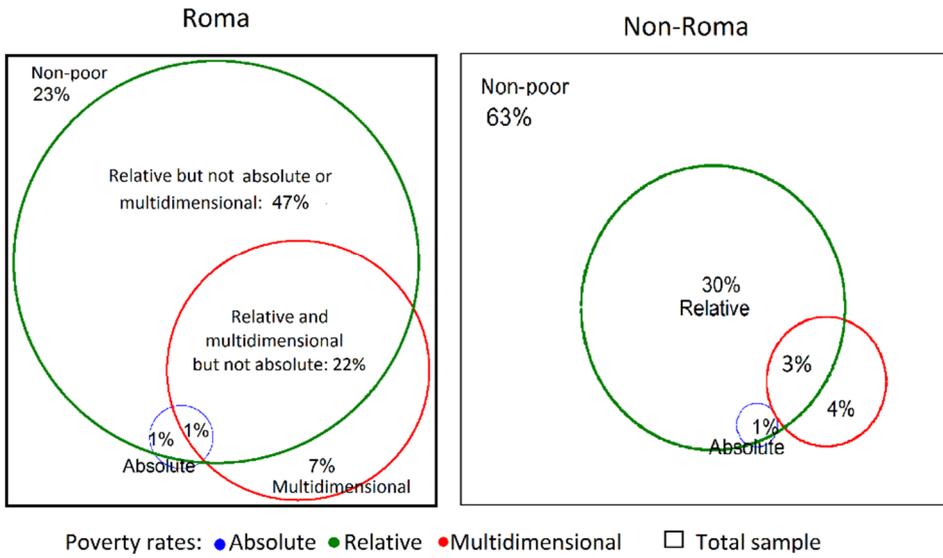
Country	Share of household members who are 'poor'					
	By all three poverty concepts		By relative and multidimensional but not absolute poverty concept		By relative and absolute but not multidimensional poverty concept	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Bulgaria	21	1	19	4	10	4
Czech Republic	1	0	12	1	1	2
Hungary	1	0	22	3	1	1
Romania	40	4	12	2	13	9
Slovakia	2	0	33	3	4	7

The figure visualises the shares of household members falling below the poverty lines when different poverty concepts are applied. As the figure shows, absolute poverty rates (calculated using \$4.30PPP internationally applied poverty rate) is of limited relevance and only for low-income countries (Bulgaria and Romania). Relative poverty concept on the other hand tends to produce much higher poverty rates than multidimensional concept. This can be explained by the fact that in both cases (Roma and their non-Roma neighbours) part of the resources needed for the households' daily living do not come from the market-intermediated channels (and thus are not reflected in monetary poverty estimates).

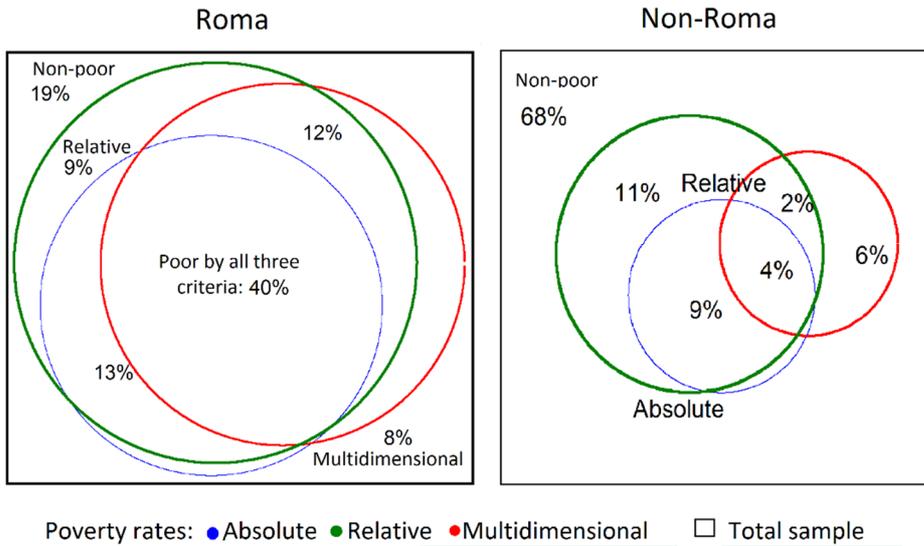
Figure 16: Overlaps between relative, absolute and multidimensional poverty measures



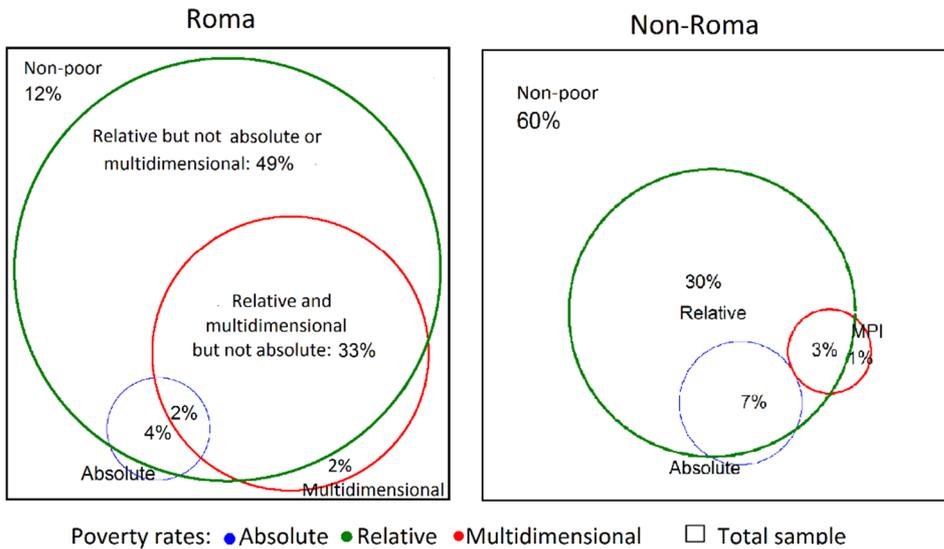
Hungary



Romania



Slovakia



From 'multidimensional poverty' to 'fundamental rights' indicators

Most of the indicators presented above reflect various aspects of the socioeconomic **status** (of individuals and households). This is important from the perspective of fundamental rights but is not sufficient. Indeed, differences in status reflect different individuals' opportunities to exercise their fundamental rights. But registering the differences in status between groups is not sufficient – even when matched by questions on perceived or experienced discrimination or prejudice that prevented the respondent from exercising those rights. In addition to differences in status and perception of discrimination, a comprehensive system of fundamental rights focused indicators should capture two more aspects: agency and aspirations.

Both are missing from the standard human development, poverty or vulnerability, indicators. Aspirations can be captured relatively easy through questions regarding the desired level of achievement in different areas of respondents' children. Applying the concept of *agency* is much more a major challenge and generating robust data to populating appropriate indicators of *agency* is an even bigger one.

All of the above contributes to a “status bias” in human development indicators at the expense of *agency*: the tendency to quantify and monitor **the status** and the magnitude of deprivations in various dimensions rather than the opportunities people have (or lack) to reach their desired status and realize their aspirations. Achieved status may be seen as a proxy of limited opportunities (and thus, violation of fundamental rights), but only to a limited extent.

Agency may be defined as the aspirations of an individual (or a group), matched by the resources and opportunities required to reach those aspirations. Seen from this perspective, it would be hard to find a group more in need of explicit *agency* focus than the Roma, who face a vicious circle of high levels of deprivation in virtually all spheres of life that are mutually determining and reinforce each other (UNDP 2002: 42). These deprivations lead to low aspirations that can be met through “low *agency* strategies” and thus additionally fuel the cycle of exclusion, replicating its patterns over generations. Roma life takes place in an “*agency*-hostile” context, with powerful interests vested in keeping the Roma in a subordinate status and preventing them from taking their destinies into their own hands without the need of permanent support from various intermediaries from within and outside their communities.

The standard approach uses sample surveys to capture the degree to which respondents feel that they have “control over their lives,” or their perception of the optimal balance between the role of the state and that of the individual in achieving personal success and realizing one's aspirations (see Alkire 2005; Ibrahim & Alkire 2007; Samman & Santos 2009). Indeed, these aspects are critical to the perception of *agency*, but such data exist only for national level samples and rarely for group-targeted research. What is more important, such questions are not particularly useful if detached from the effects of complex internal group dynamics, local, social and political context, as well as the patterns of interaction among various stakeholders. Historical experience of prejudice and discrimination also powerfully affects the range of individual aspirations. Table 7 provides an example of such an ‘agency’ bloc of questions that may generate sufficient data to complement the status profiles of the respondents.

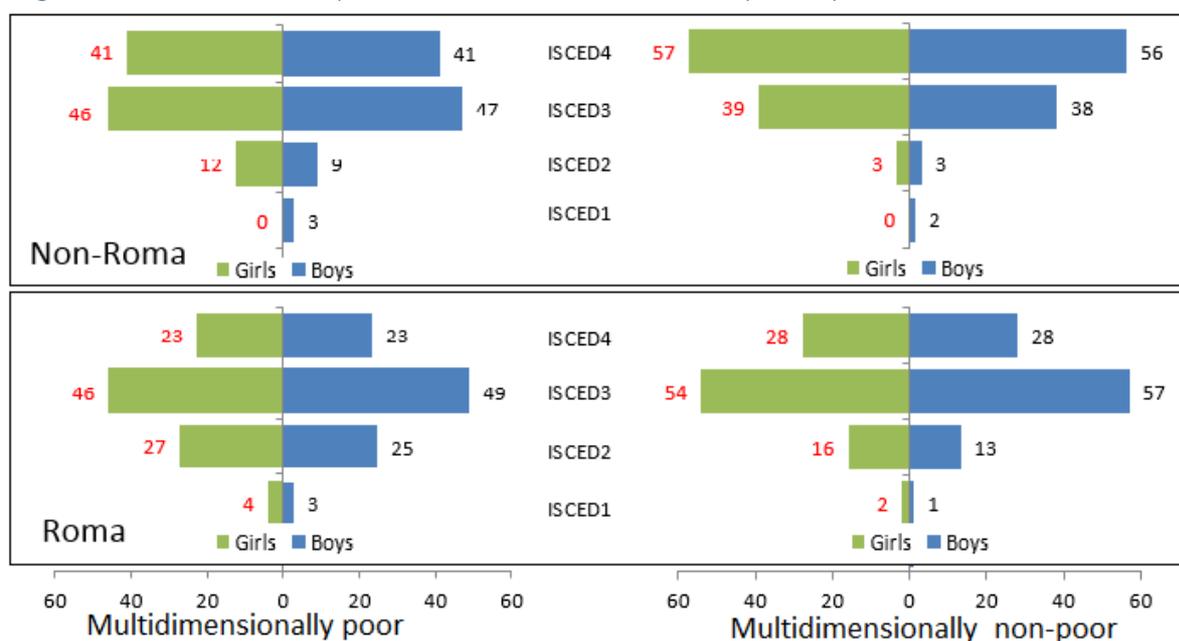
Table 7: Do you feel you can change the following aspects of your life – if you want to?

Aspect of life	Control (can/cannot change)	Reason	Aspiration (want/do not want to change)
1. Your job			
2. The place of your residence (moving to another city/town in your country)			
3. The country you live			
4. The mayor of the place you live			
5. The school your children attend			
6. The provider of the health services your household uses			
7. Your spouse/partner you live with			
8. Other (is there any other aspect of your life you feel you cannot change?)			

Codes for “reasons” in case “cannot change” option is chosen for any of the aspects:
 (a) Financial; (b) Group belonging/peer pressure; (c) Family traditions (d) Religious believes; (e) Formal status (possession/lack of respective documents); (f) Personal safety concerns

Addressing aspirations is equally important. UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey in 2011 included such a section capturing the aspirations of the respondents through the vision of their children future. Figure 17 visualises the results regarding educational aspirations for multidimensionally poor and non-poor Roma and their neighbours (the figure visualises the data of unweighted regional sample).

Figure 17: Educational aspirations and multidimensional poverty



Conclusions

Roma integration is an area that will see increasing policy attention and availability of resources. Thus adequately capturing progress in Roma integration is a highly policy-relevant task facing a number of challenges. Two of them stand out.

The first is data needed for monitoring progress. A variety of approaches can be used to tackle the paucity of ethnically-disaggregated data and indicators. The three major approaches (censuses, standardized European social surveys and custom sample surveys) serve different purposes and should be used in complementary manner. Censuses can provide reliable and robust data for monitoring long-term changes. In-between censuses, the standardized European surveys, in particular LFS can yield data with higher frequency.

Currently these tools can be used only in a limited number of EU countries that allow ethnic self-identification in surveys. In cases when questions on ethnic identity cannot be included in Censuses or standardised European or national surveys, custom sample surveys can fill the gap providing comparability across countries. The potential of these custom surveys for comparability with general population data can be increased by synchronising the three sources of ethnically-disaggregated data to the extent possible. One important area in that regard to develop more standardised approaches when collecting data on ethnic identity and applying identical core set of questions for generating data on issues that are important for monitoring progress on Roma integration.

The choice of indicators (and the poverty concept behind them) constitute the second challenge. Multidimensional poverty concept reflects better the specifics of Roma exclusion. Utilizing its benefits however requires addressing the 'agency' and 'aspirations' dimensions. Data for these dimensions may be generated through the thematic components in the standardized European social surveys (like EU SILC).

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