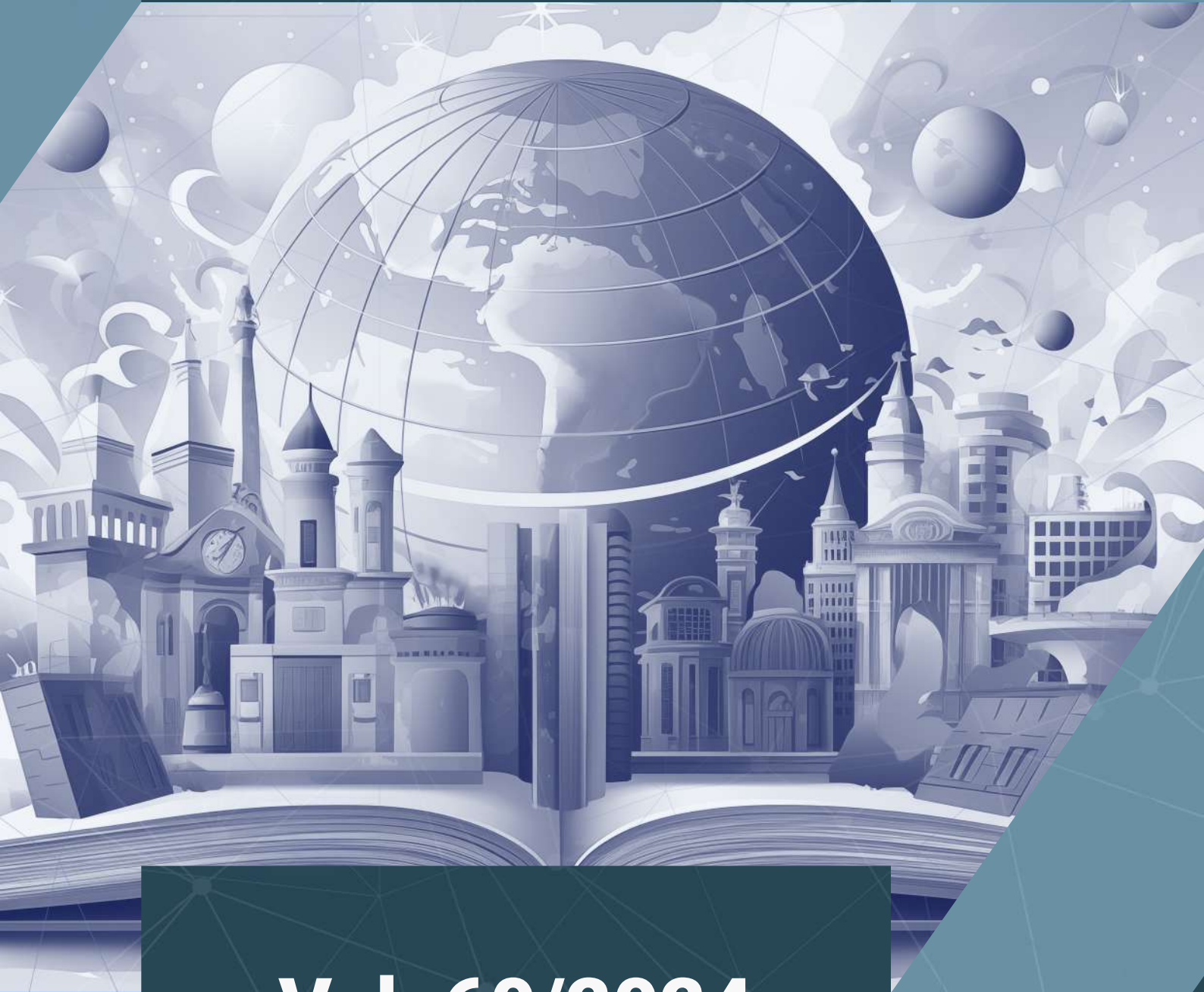




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## Comparative study of the Roma population Romania vs Spain

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**Abstract.** A comparative study of the Roma population in Romania and Spain can provide a detailed insight into the different aspects of the life of these communities in the two countries. This research could be conceived using a mixed approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain a comprehensive and contextualized image.

**Keywords.** Roma population, comparative study, education, health, labour

### Introduction

Examining access to education for Roma children, analysing graduation rates, literacy levels and specific challenges in education systems in Romania and Spain.

Assessment of the health status of Roma communities, including access to medical services, prevalence of specific health conditions and factors affecting health status.

Investigating the labour force participation of the Roma population in the two countries, identifying barriers to accessing employment and analysing the predominant industries in which they work.

### Research design

**Case Studies and Qualitative Interviews:** Conducting case studies in Roma communities in different regions of Romania and Spain, followed by qualitative interviews to gain individual and contextual insights into everyday life, problems and aspirations.

**Analysis of Official Documents:** Review of official statistical data, government policies and other relevant documents to gain broad context and assess the impact of policies on Roma communities.

**Research Ethics:** Ensuring respect and confidentiality during research is essential, taking into account the history of discrimination faced by Roma communities. Researchers should involve communities in the research process and obtain informed consent from participants.

**Relevance of Research:** Such a comparative study could provide key information for the development of public policies and programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of the Roma population. By highlighting differences and similarities, research could help create more effective strategies tailored to the specifics of each community.

## Results

Despite the obvious differences between Romania and Spain, there are also common elements in the experience of Roma communities in both countries. These elements can provide an understanding of cross-cutting issues that transcend national boundaries and highlight the fundamental issues facing these communities in Europe.

**Marginization and Social Exclusion:** A common aspect in both countries is the significant degree of marginalization and social exclusion of Roma communities. They often live in precarious conditions, informal settlements or segregated areas, which contributes to their social and economic isolation.[1]

**Discrimination and Stigmatisation:** Roma communities in Romania and Spain face systematic discrimination and stigmatisation. Prejudices, stereotypes and negative attitudes hamper their integration into society and affect their access to opportunities in various fields, from education to employment.[2]

**Limited Access to Quality Education:** Problems with limited access to quality education are common in both countries. Roma children face discrimination in the education system, and insufficient resources and lack of adequate support contribute to low graduation rates and educational disparities.

**Health Issues:** Roma communities in Romania and Spain face significant challenges in accessing health services. Discrimination in the medical system, lack of health information and poor living conditions can lead to serious health problems and high rates of some conditions.[3]

**Limited Employment:** Ethnic Roma in both countries face significant barriers to accessing jobs and developing their professional careers. Discrimination in the hiring process and the lack of training and professional development opportunities contribute to high rates of unemployment and underemployment.

**Preservation of Cultural Identity:** The Roma communities in Romania and Spain are united in their efforts to preserve their distinctive cultural identity. They pass on their cultural traditions, language and practices from one generation to the next, representing a resistance to assimilation and an affirmation of cultural belonging.

**The need for Awareness and Education:** In both Romania and Spain, there is an acute need for awareness and education among the majority population on the issues and contributions of Roma communities. Improving mutual understanding can play a crucial role in combating stereotypes and discrimination.

**Lack of Access to Adequate Housing:** Ethnic Roma in both countries face difficulties in providing adequate housing. Many communities live in precarious conditions with limited access to infrastructure and utility services, reflecting the need to address housing issues.

**Need for Cooperation and Inclusion:** Roma communities in Romania and Spain face complex and interconnected challenges, and solutions require a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Their active inclusion in decision-making processes, as well as close collaboration between governments, non-governmental organisations and communities, are essential to develop effective and sustainable strategies to improve living conditions.

By exploring these common elements, research could contribute to the development of policies and programmes that better respond to the specific needs of Roma communities in the European context, promoting cultural diversity and social inclusion.

Although there are common elements in the experience of the Roma communities in Romania and Spain, the differences between the two countries are also, significant and requires

careful consideration to understand specific contexts and develop effective strategies for improvement.

**Cultural and Linguistic Aspects:** One of the obvious differences is related to cultural and linguistic aspects. Roma communities in the two countries may show differences in traditions, dialects, and cultural practices. These variations reflect not only the internal diversity of the Roma ethnicity, but also the specific cultural influences from the historical and geographical environments of each country.

**Background History and Legislation:** Historical background and legislation on ethnic minorities can significantly influence the experience of Roma communities. Romania and Spain have had different histories regarding their relationship with Roma, and this historical context can influence the way these communities are perceived and treated today. Differences in national and local law may also have an impact on their rights and opportunities.

**Social-Economic Structure:** Differences in the socio-economic structure of the two countries can contribute to significant variability in the life of Roma communities. For example, Spain may have certain economic opportunities or dominant industries that influence employment and living conditions, while Romania may have specific economic peculiarities that affect how Roma communities integrate into the economy.

**Regional Diversity:** Regional differences within each country can also play an important role. Urban and rural areas can provide different contexts for Roma communities, with distinct challenges and opportunities. For example, Roma communities in urban areas may be exposed to other cultural influences and benefit from easier access to certain services.

**Economic Development Level:** Differences in the level of economic development between Romania and Spain can influence the availability of resources and facilities. A more developed economy can provide more opportunities for education, employment and access to medical services, while a weaker economy can deepen problems related to poverty and access to essential resources.

**Education System:** The structure and quality of the education system can vary significantly between the two countries. Differences in teaching resources, the inclusive education approach and support for students with special needs can affect how Roma children have access to education and can influence their academic path.

**Government support and NGOs:** The level of support provided by government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may vary. Differences in government policies, inclusion programs, and efforts by non-governmental organizations can determine the degree of support and resources available to Roma communities in each country.

**Demographic Dynamics:** Demographic characteristics such as birth rate and age structure may vary by country. These demographic differences can affect pressure on social systems, access to services and specific challenges related to the Roma population.

**Interaction with Majority Population:** The degree of interaction and integration with the majority population may vary. Cultural and historical differences can influence how Roma communities are accepted or rejected in the surrounding society.

**Community involvement and Internal Organisation:** The degree of internal organisation of Roma communities and their involvement in decision-making processes may vary. Differences in social structures and the way Roma communities self-manage may influence their ability to meet challenges and support their specific needs.

Analyzing these differences, research can provide a solid basis for developing policies and programs tailored to the specific context of each country. Deep understanding of variability

is essential to address the complex needs of Roma communities and promote a more effective and sustainable approach to improving living conditions.

### **Models of good practice**

There are good practice models that have been successfully implemented in various contexts to improve the living conditions of Roma communities in different European countries, including Romania and Spain. These models have brought positive changes in various fields and have served as inspiration for the development of effective strategies.

An effective model involves close collaboration between governments, non-governmental organisations and Roma communities to develop and implement policies and programmes that address their specific needs. This model is based on the principles of active inclusion and community participation in decision-making processes that affect them.

Another successful model was the one that focused on education and equal access to educational opportunities. Programs aimed at removing barriers to school access, providing additional resources and individualized educational support have had a positive impact on the graduation rate and quality of education for Roma children.

As regards access to health services, good practice models have involved the development of community health services that are sensitive to the specific needs of Roma communities. Training health professionals on cultural diversity and creating preventive programs have helped improve the health of these communities.

Successful employment programmes have involved partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and Roma communities to create employment, training and professional development opportunities. These programmes directly addressed barriers to access to employment and promoted the active inclusion of Roma in the labour market.

In terms of culture and identity, good practice models have promoted understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, both within Roma communities and in the surrounding society. Projects highlighting the contributions of Roma culture to the common heritage have played an important role in combating stereotypes and promoting mutual respect.

Implementing housing policies aimed at improving living conditions for Roma communities was another aspect of successful models. These included initiatives to build adequate housing, facilitate access to infrastructure and utility services.

Another model of good practice involved the development of cultural and artistic programs in which Roma communities were actively involved. These programmes included events, festivals and cultural projects that promoted Roma identity and provided platforms for artistic and cultural expression.

Good practice models were generally holistic, addressing the needs of Roma communities in an integrated and collaborative way. They were characterized by adaptability and flexibility, taking into account the specificities of each community and trying to create customized solutions.

In conclusion, good practice models that were successful in improving the living conditions of Roma communities were characterized by a comprehensive and participatory approach. They focused on collaboration, including in decision-making processes, and aimed at removing barriers to access key opportunities such as education, health and employment. [4] The implementation of these models requires long-term commitment, adequate resources and a deep understanding of specific contexts.

### **Conclusions**

More ways in which Romanian Roma could improve their image and promote more effectively their traditions and culture in Romanian society. Your proposals are varied and reflect a strong desire for integration and positive change in Roma communities. Let's develop some ideas that you brought up:

**Identity papers and personal documents:** It is crucial that Roma community members have access to identity papers and birth certificates. This is fundamental to enable them to participate fully in civic life, including voting and legally engaging. Your proposal to have a project supported by Roma political representatives to obtain funds for these acts is very pertinent. This could improve not only their legal status, but also their perception within society.

**Involving Roma elites:** The political and cultural elite of the Roma should play an active role in promoting the positive image of the community. These leaders can initiate and support educational and cultural projects that present the valuable traditions and contributions of Roma in various fields. They could also work together with the government and other organisations to develop inclusive policies and ensure adequate representation of Roma in public institutions.

**Education and integration:** Another important issue is access to education and integration into the labour market. Improving school graduation rates and promoting continuing education could reduce stereotypes and support better social and economic integration of Roma.[5] Initiatives to facilitate access to jobs and promote entrepreneurship in Roma communities would also have a significant impact.

**Communication and exchange of experiences:** Your proposals on the organisation of camps, workshops and seminars are excellent. These events could facilitate dialogue between members of Roma communities and majority society, promote tolerance and develop deeper mutual understanding. Also, creating publications, radio or television shows that showcase Roma culture in an authentic way could counter existing stereotypes.

**Culture and Tradition:** Developing cultural projects that include art, traditional music, dances and Roma literature could promote the pride and cultural identity of the Roma in the Romanian society. This could increase understanding and respect for cultural diversity among all citizens.

Finally, an integrated approach combining political, educational, cultural and social initiatives is essential to address the complexity of the problems faced by Roma communities in Romania. These proposals could provide a useful framework for building a more positive image and for integrating Roma more deeply into the social and economic life of the country.

A 25-year-old Roma man said: „A man without school is like a child without a mother or a plate of soup without a spoon”. If a Roma can say this, then why another could not say: “A man without school realizes his shortcomings, he said, and more people realize their shortcomings and will make sure that those of their ethnicity have school to realize their qualities.” Collaboration between Roma and Romanians, as well as with the main structures of the state, is essential for promoting a clear and real image of the Roma community. This collective effort could bring about significant positive changes.

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