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# ROMA INCLUSION IN THE CROATIAN SOCIETY

## Women, Youth and Children

Ksenija Klasnić - Suzana Kunac - Petra Rodik



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# **ROMA INCLUSION IN THE CROATIAN SOCIETY**

**Women, Youth and Children**

Ksenija Klasnić - Suzana Kunac - Petra Rodik

Zagreb, 2020

The views and opinions expressed in this book are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, nor the views of the institutions in which the authors are employed.

# Content

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1. Objectives of the study on women, youth and children.....	22
2.2. Data sources.....	23
2.3. Methodology of the study on women, youth and children.....	26
2.3.1. Regional division and population size estimation .....	26
2.3.2. Processing and analysis of quantitative data .....	27
2.3.3. Processing and analysis of qualitative data .....	28
<b>3. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF ROMA WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH .....</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1. Sociodemographic characteristics .....	33
3.2. Household members and structure .....	44
3.3. Household income and poverty indicators.....	45
3.4. Housing characteristics of Roma families .....	50
3.5. Types and infrastructure of Roma settlements .....	56
<b>4. SOCIAL POSITION OF ROMA WOMEN .....</b>	<b>60</b>
4.1. Education .....	61
4.2. Inclusion in economic life .....	65
4.3. Reproductive and sexual health and rights of Roma women.....	72
4.3.1. Reproductive health and prevention .....	77
4.3.2. Pregnancy and childbirth .....	80
4.4. Domestic violence.....	91
<b>5. YOUNG ROMA MEN AND WOMEN .....</b>	<b>106</b>
5.1. Education.....	107
5.2. Inclusion in economic life .....	125
5.2.1. Occupations of young Roma men and women.....	126
5.2.2. Paid work .....	128
5.2.3. Unemployment and work activity .....	132

5.3. Deviant and delinquent behavior.....	134
5.3.1. Violent behavior among family members.....	134
5.3.2. Delinquent behavior of young people.....	136
5.3.3. Behavioral disorders.....	138
5.3.4. Consumption of harmful substances.....	140
5.3.5. Education on the harmfulness of consuming drugs and other intoxicants for children and youth.....	147
<b>6. WELL-BEING OF ROMA CHILDREN.....</b>	<b>150</b>
6.1. Material well-being, poverty and child safety.....	151
6.2. Health.....	157
6.3. Education.....	160
6.3.1. Preschool education.....	161
6.3.2. Primary education.....	167
6.4. Peer relationships and risky behavior.....	178
6.5. Participation of Roma children in social life.....	185
6.6. Family relationships and children in vulnerable situations.....	190
<b>7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>200</b>
7.1. Main findings of the study and conclusions.....	200
7.2. <i>Policy</i> recommendations.....	211
<b>8. REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>218</b>
About the authors.....	234

# Abbreviations

<b>[G]OHRNM</b>	Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia
<b>AP</b>	Action plan
<b>CBS</b>	Croatian Bureau of Statistics
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CESI</b>	Center for Education, Counseling and Research
<b>CNIPH</b>	Croatian National Institute of Public Health
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>ESPAD</b>	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
<b>EU MIDIS II</b>	FRA's second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUROSTAT</b>	European Statistical Office
<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>HZZ</b>	Croatian Employment Service
<b>MDOMSP</b>	Croatian Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
<b>NOC</b>	National Occupational Classification
<b>NRIS</b>	National Roma Inclusion Strategy, for the period from 2013 to 2020
<b>NSBPSSI</b>	National Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia [2014–2020]
<b>NSPD</b>	National Strategy for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia for the period from 2014 to 2020
<b>NYP</b>	National Youth Program
<b>OG</b>	Official Gazette
<b>RNM</b>	Roma National Minority
<b>RoC</b>	Republic of Croatia



<b>SOZT</b>	Education, Science and Technology Strategy
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>VRH</b>	Government of the Republic of Croatia
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

The text of this report seeks to adhere to the common use of the term Roma adopted by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. In this report, the term Roma refers to a diverse community of related groups including Roma, Sinti, Manouche, Gitano, Resande, Romer, Romanlar, Domlar, Lomlar, Kaale, Egyptians, Ashkali, Tatars, Scottish Travelers, Mandopolini, Ghurbeti, Beyash [Boyash, Rudari/Ludari], Jevgjit and many others who are considered part of the wider Roma population, where the authors equally respect and appreciate each individual community. Readers should note that the use of the term in no way negates the diversity that exists among Roma groups, but the word Roma is generally used only for the sake of readability, especially when referring to the Roma people as a whole or to groups or individuals, e.g. Roma children, Roma families.

# 1

## Introduction



# 1. Introduction

The public *policy*<sup>1</sup> framework for the exercise of the rights of the Roma national minority is defined primarily by the 2010 Constitution of the Republic of Croatia [OG 76/10], which already states in the Historical Foundations that the Republic of Croatia is established “as the nation state of the Croatian nation and the state of the members of its national minorities”, where the Roma are explicitly listed as one of the national minorities, in contrast to the 1990 Constitution of the Republic of Croatia [OG 56/90] where the Roma were not listed as a separate national minority. Apart from the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, the most important act that defines the *policy* framework that promotes and protects the rights of Roma as a national minority is the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities [OG 155/02, 47/10, 80/10, 93/11, 93/11] and only after the amendments from the 2000 Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights of Ethnic and National Minorities, where Article 3 lists Roma as one of the 22 national minorities.

The first national document that specifically deals with the Roma national minority [hereinafter: RNM] is the 2003 National Roma Program. Two years later, a key international initiative adopted by eight countries from Central and Southeast Europe, including Croatia, and launched by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute, was the adoption of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015. At that time, the national Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 Action Plan was drafted, the adoption of and reporting on which was coordinated by the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities [hereinafter: [G]OHRNM]. This Action Plan sets out objectives in the areas of education, health, employment and housing by 2015.

The Republic of Croatia adopted the first National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the period from 2013 to 2020 [hereinafter: NRIS] at the end of 2012, guided not only by the European Union Framework, but also by the experiences and challenges of implementing the 2003 National Roma Program and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan 2005–2015. The general objective of the NRIS is: “to improve the position of the Roma national minority in the Republic of Croatia by reducing the

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1 Public policy is the dimension of policy that relates to content and is referred to as the rational dimension of policy. There are three basic understandings of public policies: 1) *policy* as a choice based on authority, 2) as a structured interaction, and 3) as a social construction [Colebatch, 2004]. The term *policy* will be used in the text.

multidimensional socioeconomic gap between the Roma and the rest of the population and to achieve full inclusion of Roma in all segments of society and community” [Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2012b:36]. In addition to education, employment, health care and housing as the four key areas of the European Union Framework (and the Decade of Roma Inclusion), the NRIS includes other topics in the field of social welfare, inclusion in social and cultural life and status resolution, combating discrimination and assistance in exercising rights in order to achieve this general objective. In a separate chapter, the NRIS addresses the improvement of the collection of RNM statistics, which is a rarity compared to such strategies of other EU Member States. As an integral part of the *policy* framework for the inclusion of Roma in Croatian society, the Roma Inclusion Action Plan 2005–2015 was adopted, which sets out objectives in the areas of education, health, employment and housing until 2015. The development of the new Action Plan for the implementation of the NRIS for the period from 2013 to 2020 was coordinated by the [G]OHRNM for 2019 and 2020, and this Action Plan covers more areas than the previous one. In addition to four key areas (education, health care, employment, and inclusion in economic life, housing and environmental protection), it also includes social welfare, spatial planning, inclusion of the RNM in cultural and social life, status resolution, combating discrimination and assistance in exercising rights, improving implementation and monitoring, as well as strengthening coordination activities and program coherence with international standards and accepted treaties in the field of human and minority rights.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the key documents of the recent *policy* framework for the promotion and realization of Roma rights for 2019 and 2020 are the NRIS and the NRIS implementation AP for the period from 2013 to 2020.

For a more precise description of this *policy* framework, we will use the typology of Theodore Lowi (1972) who divides public policies into four types: 1) constituent public policies are those that create patterns of action of the state and society; 2) distributive public policies deal with the distribution of state funds; 3) redistributive public policies focus on resource allocation among social groups; 4) regulative public policies deal with market regulation. Redistributive public policies include social policies. According to Kovačić [2015: 276], social policies “address special social groups and tend to reallocate social resources in order to integrate or improve the social, political and economic position of a particular social group”. Petek [2012] includes the following in social policies: health policy, social welfare and social assistance policy, pension policy, education policy, housing policy and urban planning, policy regarding women, policy regarding minorities and family

2 A total of HRK 125,167,979.00 is planned in the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for the implementation of the NRIS AP for the period from 2013 to 2020 in the years 2019 and 2020, of which HRK 57,171,761.00 in 2019 and HRK 67,996,218.00 in 2020 in the positions of competent authorities and measure holders.

policy. Social policies are redistributive because they focus on the social security benefits of the state and the overall welfare system, i.e. on the role of the state in providing welfare to its citizens. However, Petek [2011] argues that due to the constituent arenas of power in Europe dedicated to ending social exclusion that implies non-recognition of fundamental rights or denying access to the legal and political system necessary for the realization of these rights, redistribution objectives change into human rights issues. Therefore, social inclusion is defined as a long-term objective of the *policy* sub-regime of the new constituent policies. Thus, the NRIS can be viewed as a social public policy with a pronounced redistributive function, but also as a constituent policy because the notion of social inclusion connects material and immaterial aspects of the living standard since the problems of social participation cannot be reduced to lack of material resources [Šućur 2006a:27].

The text of the NRIS states that the strategy will be “periodically revised, given the fact that it needs to be supplemented with missing data and initial values, and in accordance with the observed needs and changes related to the position of RNM in general, but also the position of particularly excluded and marginalized groups within Roma communities [women, children, children with special needs, persons with disabilities, the elderly, marginalized Roma communities] in the Republic of Croatia” [Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2012b:2]. Therefore, the [G]OHRNM, as a body responsible not only for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the NRIS, but also for implementing the 44 strategy measures, conducted an evaluation which highlighted the need to define baseline data from which it will be possible to draw conclusions regarding the level of achieved objectives defined by both the implementation and the strategic document.

As an example of good practice and guided by the need to revise the strategy during implementation, the [G]OHRNM implemented the evaluation recommendations by carrying out the project “Collecting and monitoring baseline data for effective implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy”, in which the research component aimed to determine baseline values for the NRIS and the NRIS AP for the period from 2013 to 2015 at national, regional and local level.<sup>3</sup> The results of this research are summarized in the book “Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study” [Kunac, Klasnić, Lalić, 2018], with the [G]OHRNM making a big step forward in setting baseline values in order to more easily define indicators for monitoring the NRIS implementation. As indicated in the NRIS itself, the need to revise objectives, measures and activities is particularly relevant to

3 As there were only 11 defined baseline values [out of 111] in the NRIS AP, in relation to which the effect of implemented measures and activities can be measured in order to meet the set specific and general objectives, for the purpose of the NRIS baseline study a total of 115 indicators were set for the NRIS baseline values in all areas of the strategy and the stated specific objectives. The indicators have been modified so that the baseline indicators can be determined by a quantitative survey method [rather than by collecting data from different implementing bodies].

marginalized groups within the Roma community, and the [G]OHRNM ensured the continuation of the project and the production of additional publications<sup>4</sup> as part of the project “Meeting the preconditions for effective implementation of policies aimed at national minorities – PHASE I” which will build on the existing knowledge and based on the existing data enable the conceptualization of measures that would effectively contribute to reducing the gap between the RNM and the rest of the Croatian population.

As this publication addresses marginalized groups within the Roma community: women, young people and children, here we will briefly highlight the key dimensions of the NRIS related to Roma women, young Roma men and women, and children and present a public and political framework for these target groups in the Republic of Croatia with the aim of future clearer horizontal connection of objectives and measures of different policies and strategies in relation to the Roma population. In fact, their inclusion in other *policy* documents proves necessary in order to more effectively overcome the empirically determined gaps between marginalized groups within the Roma population and the majority population.

When it comes to **Roma women**, the NRIS states that they are particularly excluded because a very small number of them take leading roles and actively participate in the creation, implementation and evaluation of interventions. Furthermore, the NRIS claims that there is a traditional division of roles in Roma families, that the attitude towards women is not emancipated, that women are often marginalized and exposed to discrimination, which is reflected in the upbringing of children and family functioning, and that they do not have the possibility of family planning. In the NRIS, Roma women are still mentioned as one of the most deprived categories of the Roma population due to exposure to multiple discrimination and social exclusion based on race, gender and status. Gender and ethnicity have a large impact on the health status of Roma women and they are a group with a high probability of risk of exposure to inadequate health care. The health status of Roma women is worse compared to the health status of men in the Roma community, but also compared to women from the rest of the population. Women, young people and children are most extensively described in the chapter of the NRIS dealing with social welfare. Furthermore, in defining the objectives, measures and activities of women, the NRIS mentions women in the field of employment, health, social welfare and inclusion in social and cultural life, stating several specific objectives: 1) To increase the competitiveness and employability rate of Roma women; 2) To improve protection of women’s reproductive health, the health of pregnant women and children, and to reduce the pregnancy rate among minors; 3) To raise the quality, accessibility and timeliness of social services and services in the com-

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4 This concerns the development of five publications by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb for the benefit of the [G]OHRNM.

munity with special emphasis on women, children, adolescents, the elderly and people with disabilities; 4) To enhance the capacity of local Roma communities to recognize the risks of exposure to human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence with emphasis on women and children; 5) To raise the level of inclusion of the RNM, with particular emphasis on women, in the public and political life of local communities. Inconsistency with international and other *policy* documents that promote and protect women's human rights in the Republic of Croatia is evident from the above-mentioned areas in which the NSRU detects the problems of Roma women and the need to address these problems through measures and activities. For example, areas such as violence against women as defined by the Beijing Platform and Action Plan, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW],<sup>5</sup> the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence for 2017–2022 and other documents<sup>6</sup> are not specifically included in the NRIS. Recommendation no. 19 of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women emphasizes that “gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on the basis of equality with men” [UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1992:1]. In addition, women who have been victims of domestic violence are a doubly vulnerable group because they are more prone to falling into poverty and have limited opportunities in society and a high risk of social exclusion. When looking at the *policy* framework for the protection and promotion of women’s human rights in the Republic of Croatia, one of the key documents is the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2011–2015.<sup>7</sup> In that document, in Chapter 1.2. Improvement of the social position of women belonging to national minorities, it was stated in measure 1.2.3. that the number of scholarships and subsidies for secondary and higher education of Roma women will be increased, in accordance with their requirements, and in measure 1.2.4. that the collection of statistical data regarding the upbringing and

5 The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence is the first legally binding and comprehensive international mechanism to combat violence against women and domestic violence, but it was ratified after the adoption of the NRIS (in 2018). Certainly, some of the dimensions of that Convention should be included in the new NRIS.

6 In Croatia, the field of protection against domestic violence in terms of legislation is regulated by the provisions of numerous acts, the crucial being the Protection from Domestic Violence Act [OG 70/17], which, inter alia, stipulates the rights of victims of domestic violence, the scope of persons to whom the Act applies, determines the forms of domestic violence, as well as administrative and legal sanctions for protection against domestic violence, and it especially emphasizes the obligation to report domestic violence. In addition to this Act, domestic violence is also covered by the following: the Criminal Procedure Act [OG 152/08, 76/09, 80/11, 121/11, 91/12, 143/12, 56/13, 145/13, 152/14, 70/17], the Criminal Code [OG 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18] and the Family Act [OG 103/15, 98/19]. The Protocol on the Procedure in Cases of Domestic Violence and the Protocol on the Procedure in Cases of Sexual Violence are also relevant.

7 The national policy for gender equality for the period after 2015 has not been adopted yet, and there are no indications that it will be drafted in the near future. This is a clear indicator of the [ir] responsibility of decision makers towards gender equality and women’s human rights.

education of young girls and women belonging to the RNM will be improved. In the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence for the period from 2017 to 2022, Roma women were not singled out as a special target group.

There is an obvious inconsistency between the NRIS and other national strategic documents dealing with the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. However, the [too] small number of measures and activities aimed specifically at Roma women, as one of the most socially excluded social groups in Croatian society, also speaks of insufficient elaboration of topics and priorities in dealing with this target group. In this publication, we will analyze four key topics related to the social status of Roma women: education, inclusion in economic life, reproductive health and rights, and violence against women in order to provide evidence-based *policy* recommendations based on new statistical analyses conducted for the purpose of this study.

In a broader context, **youth** policies are a set of activities, measures and objectives by which the state influences the parts of society that young people encounter in order to facilitate their formative period and encourage them to participate in society and politics. Youth policy is relatively difficult to codify because its content goes beyond the traditional classification by departments. One of the key determinants of this policy is intersectorality. The underlying document of youth policy in Croatia is the National Youth Program [hereinafter: NYP], which aims to “improve the activities of state administration bodies and public institutions that, with their scope and competencies, contribute to meeting the needs of young people and raising their quality of life with the purpose of their optimal social integration.” [NYP, 2014–2017, 2014:18]. At the time of writing this book, the competent ministry [Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy hereinafter: MDOMSP] is drafting a new NYP for the period from 2019 to 2025, and so far only areas of activity have been defined. In addition to the NYP, it is important to mention the Youth Councils Act [OG 41/14],<sup>8</sup> as an act regulating “youth participation in decision-making on the management of public affairs of interest and importance to young people, active involvement of young people in public life and informing and counseling young people in local and regional self-government units” [stated according to Kovačić, 2015: 284]. The EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, Objective 3, states the following: to enable and ensure the inclusion of all young people in society, as one third of young people in Europe are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. In the 2014–2017 NYP, young Roma men and women are mentioned twice, in

8 Kovačić [2015] cites other normative acts that in some of their parts concern young people: the Volunteer Act, the Student Union and Other Student Organizations Act, the Primary and Secondary School Education Act, the Vocational Education Act, the Scientific Activity and Higher Education Act, the Associations Act, local and regional youth programs, Government decisions on the establishment of the Youth Council, Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. However, the author concludes that the NYP and the Youth Councils Act best meet the objectives of youth policies.



the context of particularly vulnerable groups of young people: “for example, they are low-educated young people, young mothers, people with disabilities and Roma people. These subgroups of young people face an increased risk of extremely low incomes, serial extension of fixed-term contracts or even work without a signed contract or ‘undeclared work’, which significantly jeopardizes the current social position of young people and their life chances because it does not allow them legitimate proof of work experience and does not provide access to pension insurance and financial benefits arising from employment [such as lending for the purpose of purchasing one’s own housing]” [NYP 2014-2017, 2014:26]. Young Roma men and women are mentioned in the 2014-2017 NYP only once more when referring to the high risk of social exclusion for some categories of young people, stating the following: “Today, there is a large number of young people at risk of social exclusion which do not necessarily belong to the existing classification of minority groups [young Roma, young people with disabilities, young people from the alternative care system, etc.]. Groups of young people, such as young people leaving three-year schools, young asylum seekers, often in the existing known classifications, remain ‘forgotten’ and thus responsible stakeholders do not meet their needs” [NYP 2014-2017, 2014:35]. Although recognized as a particularly vulnerable group in the NYP 2014-2017, young Roma men and women remained “forgotten” in defining measures and activities within the NYP.

In the NRIS, young people are the target group to which the specific objectives in the field of employment, education, social welfare and health relate, which aim at raising competitiveness and employability, increasing the coverage and completion of secondary and higher education, raising the quality of life, the quality and availability of social services and reducing the consumption of addictive substances. As with Roma women, the topics covered by the NYP and the EU Youth Strategy for the period from 2019 to 2027 are not consistently included in any national strategic document, which would be advisable to take into account when adopting both the NRIS and the NYP for the period from 2019 to 2025. This publication focuses on identifying empirical gaps related to education, employment and other indicators of social exclusion in order to finally provide concrete, empirically-based *policy* recommendations related to the inclusion of young Roma men and women in Croatian society.

When it comes to the *policy* framework for the protection of the rights of the **child**, it implies a commitment to addressing specific issues concerning children, horizontal cross-sectoral cooperation, coordination and decentralization. *Policy* documents thus address a number of specific risks to which children are exposed [sexual exploitation, violence, foster care, behavioral disorders...]. The underlying international document in the field of protection of children’s rights is the Convention on the Rights of the Child [1989], which Croatia ratified in 1991. The Republic of Croatia has constitutionally protected the rights of children [OG 56/1990, Art.

62] and established two permanent bodies: the Children's Council [1998] and the Office of the Ombudsman for Children [2003]. The current National Strategy on the Rights of Children in the Republic of Croatia for the period from 2014 to 2020 [Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2014a] takes the Convention on the Rights of the Child as its basic starting point, and relies on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016–2021 in defining its objectives. The NSPD thus identifies areas of child-friendly services, elimination of violence, the rights of vulnerable children [identifying children belonging to the RNM as one of the target groups] and active participation of children as the main strategic objectives. In Croatia, the rights of the child are covered by strategic documents from several areas, where education and social welfare system should be emphasized, i.e. the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology [Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2014c], the National Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia [Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2014b] and several acts<sup>9</sup>. RNM children have been identified in the NSPD and the NRIS as one of the most vulnerable groups of children in Croatia.<sup>10</sup> The National Strategy on the Rights of Children also identifies RNM children as children at high risk of poverty. According to the same document, the latter group also includes children from unemployed families, children of persons receiving social welfare, children from low-income single-parent families, children without parental care, children with disabilities, children placed in institutions and children who live in large families, i.e. families with three or more children [NSPD, 2014: 66]. It should be noted that RNM children very often belong to more than one of the above risk categories at the same time and are also exposed to the risk of discrimination on the basis of nationality. This puts them in an extremely unfavorable position, even compared to other groups of social welfare recipients [see: Šućur, Kletečki Radović, Družić Ljubotina and Babić, 2015], and in the conclusion of the last Report on the work of the Ombudsman for Children for 2018 it is stated, among other things, that “research and data show that children belonging to the Roma national minority are among the most disadvantaged groups of children in Croatia” [Ombudsman for Children, 2019: 259].

The NRIS dedicates a section to children in preschool education where it is stated that Roma children are poorly included in the preschool education system; then in the primary education system where it is clearly indicated that Roma children attending segregated schools have a high chance of becoming unemployed or

9 The protection of the rights of the child in the Republic of Croatia is enshrined in a number of acts, among which the Family Act [OG 103/2015], the Protection from Domestic Violence Act [OG 70/2017], the Child Allowance Act [OG 94/2001] and the Social Welfare Act [OG 157/2013] should be singled out.

10 The same conclusion is reached by recent reports and research [Ajduković and Šalinović, 2017, Brajša – Žganec et al., 2015; Ombudsman for Children, 2019; Šikić-Mičanović, Ivatts, Vojak and Geiger-Zeman, 2015; Šućur, Kletečki Radović, Družić Ljubotina and Babić, 2015].

working in jobs that do not require a high level of skills, which are often typically practiced by Roma. Moreover, Roma children who attend mixed schools face the challenges of inclusion in the school program and integration into the rest of the population, while children attending “Roma classes” do not have the opportunity to experience positive peer influence, i.e. peer expectations in such classes rarely contain a component of successful school performance. In the chapter on health care, the NRIS devotes a chapter to children’s health, where it is pointed out that Roma children with disabilities face the same challenges as children with disabilities of the rest of the population, but due to generally poorer living conditions and segregation of Roma communities they are more frequently institutionalized than children of the rest of the population. The National Roma Inclusion Strategy states that, due to the conditions in which they grow up and often the impossibility of early socialization and preschool education that would equate their abilities with the abilities of the rest of the population, children of the same age are diagnosed as children with “mild mental retardation”, resulting in an unequal position in the school system and reduced opportunities for quality education. Children are especially singled out in the chapter Social Welfare of the NRIS, where it is pointed out that children without adequate parental care, children with disabilities and children exposed to parental neglect are particularly vulnerable groups of Roma children. The National Roma Inclusion Strategy, in the field of education, social welfare and health, defines several specific objectives aimed at children related to raising the inclusion in preschool education, raising the quality, efficiency and coverage of primary education of children and raising their educational achievements, abolishing classes attended by members of the RNM only, raising the quality of life, quality and availability of social services and reducing the consumption of addictive substances.

As can be seen from the specific objectives of the NRIS, children are primarily viewed through the prism of education, and some other developmental rights of children defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child are overlooked, such as the right to engage in play, the right to leisure, the right to cultural activities. On the other hand, the NSPD approaches Roma children quite differently in defining objectives and measures, addressing a wider range of issues: access to health care, protection from begging, social welfare, cultural identity, foster care, etc. The NRIS discusses and identifies same issues, but the “sectoral” approach to objectives and measures [education, employment, health...] leads to some areas of children’s rights and well-being remaining unaddressed in objectives and measures. Therefore, it would be worth considering the challenges and priorities in harmonizing the “target sectors” approach, which primarily follows the logic of individual state departments and the “target groups” approach, which takes as its starting point the needs and rights of specific groups [children, illiterates, victims of violence, etc.]. Also, when identifying indicators, it is necessary to take

into account that the problems are not evenly distributed in the territory of the Republic of Croatia and that some specific problems can be severe and rare. Examples include the specific infrastructural or health problems of individual Roma settlements. In structuring this book, we therefore approached the issue of protection of children's rights from the perspective of child well-being. This approach seeks to view children's rights and well-being integrally, taking as a starting point the very concept of children's rights defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, through regional analysis we sought to obtain information that could serve as guidelines when planning targeted decentralized approaches to individual problems, where necessary.

In the following chapters, the objectives and methodology of the research are presented, followed by the research findings in four chapters entitled: Sociodemographic Profiles of Roma Women, Children and Youth; Social Position of Roma Women; Young Roma Men and Women and the Well-Being of Roma Children, and finally concluding remarks with proposals for specific *policy* recommendations for the inclusion of Roma women, young people and children in Croatian society.



# 2

## Research objectives and methodology



## 2. Research objectives and methodology

### 2.1. Objectives of the study on women, youth and children

The purpose of this study is to expand the factual basis necessary for the preparation of a new national strategy for the inclusion of Roma in Croatian society, which refers to the specifics of the position of women, children and young members of the RNM.

The main objective of the study is to identify and determine the status of the three target groups and unite them in a single framework of recommendations for improving the social position of Roma women, children and young people in relation to the majority population and other minorities and their integration into Croatian society. Therefore, in this study we sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

- What is the material deprivation of Roma women, young people and children in relation to the general population and other EU countries?
- How do certain socioeconomic and cultural dimensions prevent Roma women from achieving a higher level of education, and thus employment?
- What is the level of reproductive and sexual health and rights of Roma women?
- How much is domestic violence present in Roma families and what are the risk factors for experiencing gender-based violence among Roma women?
- How do certain discriminatory practices in the education process affect the chances of achieving a better living standard for young Roma men and women?
- How common are the negative consequences of social exclusion among young people, such as deviant and delinquent behavior?
- To what extent are tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse present among young Roma men and women?

- How are housing conditions and general poverty related to children's educational achievement?
- To what extent do parental [in]competencies cause poorer educational outcomes and the level of education of children compared to the general population?
- What are the challenges for greater involvement of Roma children in kindergartens and preschools?
- What are the necessary preconditions for better educational outcomes of Roma children in primary schools?
- What is the degree of interaction of Roma children with the general population in their spare time?
- What is the health of Roma children in relation to the general population?

Interpretations of the findings include a comparative approach and show regional differences among RNM members in Croatia, differences between RNM members and the majority population, and, where possible, a comparative presentation of data on Roma in Croatia and data on Roma from other EU countries.

## 2.2. Data sources

The data presented in this book were collected as part of the project "Collecting and monitoring baseline data for effective implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy" which was carried out for the [G]OHRNM as a beneficiary during 2017 and 2018 by Ecorys Hrvatska d.o.o. and the Center for Peace Studies. As part of this project, a comprehensive empirical study was conducted in 2017 with the aim of defining baseline values for measuring the effects of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the period from 2013 to 2020 [NRIS] and the Action Plan [AP] of the NRIS at national, regional and local level, and defining the needs of Roma communities, as well as obstacles to the inclusion of the RNM at local/regional and national level. Part of the results of this research related to key baseline data was published in the book "Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study" [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić, 2018].

Given the importance of creating and expanding the factual basis for the development of an effective strategic framework for the inclusion of RNM members in Croatian society and focused consideration of the situation and needs, especially for the inclusion of Roma women, young people and children, this book presents the results of new analyses of data collected in 2017, which relate to indicators of the social position of Roma women, young people and children.



## **Data collection methods**

This empirical research from 2017 was conducted using the so-called mixed methodology and it included three main research sections: 1) Mapping of Roma communities in the Republic of Croatia, 2) Interviews and focus groups with representatives of the RNM, key persons in Roma communities and representatives of relevant institutions at the level of local self-government units, and 3) Surveys of Roma population on a representative sample of Roma households. This publication analyzes relevant data on women, young people and children from all three research sections.

A detailed description of the research methodology and each research section was published in Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić [2018], followed by a brief description of the implementation of individual sections, which is crucial for understanding the data presented in this book.

### ***1) Mapping of Roma communities***

The mapping of Roma communities was carried out with the primary goal of determining the Roma population as a prerequisite for quantitative sampling of the Roma population, but also to collect data on the specifics of individual localities inhabited by members of the RNM. The mapping of Roma communities was conducted during May and June 2017 using the methods of structured interviews and observations at a total of 134 localities in 15 counties of the Republic of Croatia. Informants [persons who provided information about localities] were members of the RNM, i.e. persons who live in these localities and are well informed about them, so they were selected to provide educated mappers with the necessary information according to questions in templates for population and community description. Three structured interviews were planned per each locality, i.e. an interview with three informants where at least one of them was supposed to be female. A total of 371 structured interviews were conducted [with 196 men and 175 women], so there were on average 2.8 informants per locality.

### ***2) Qualitative methodology – interview methods and focus groups***

The second research section was related to the application of qualitative methodology. Semi-structured expert interviews were conducted with representatives of relevant institutions at the level of local self-government units [141 in total] and semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives of the RNM and key persons in Roma communities [67 in total]. Seven focus groups were conducted with representatives of relevant institutions at the county level [a total of 73 people participated].

In interviews and focus groups, questions were asked about education, employment, health care, social welfare, children, space, housing and environmental protection, social and cultural life, status and rights, institutional environment, and needs and priorities for change.

### **3) Quantitative methodology – survey method**

The third and key research unit referred to quantitative research using a survey method [*face-to-face* technique] with members of the RNM in 12 counties of the Republic of Croatia. The survey was conducted during October and November 2017 at a total of 109 localities inhabited by members of the RNM. 1550 Roma households were included, collecting data on 4758 members of these households. Data on 38% of all Roma households registered in the mapping process were collected and on 21% of the total estimated Roma population in these counties.<sup>11</sup>

The survey questionnaire contained questions about the infrastructural, environmental and housing living conditions in Roma settlements, different economic and social characteristics of Roma households, about different sociodemographic, socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics of all household members, personal situation in employment, education, health and housing, about integration, discrimination, awareness of citizens' rights and issues, and questions about personal experiences and attitudes related to different areas of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy. Due to the extremely large number of topics and questions that the survey was supposed to cover, two versions of the survey questionnaire were used [the so-called A and B versions], therefore not all questions were posed to all respondents. The result, in technical terms, is different subsample sizes for different issues.

The sample of Roma population in the survey was constructed according to data on the survey population collected by mapping Roma communities and it is considered representative by age and gender for members of the RNM in 12 counties of the Republic of Croatia for localities inhabited by at least 30 RNM members.

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11 Detailed information on sampling and research implementation can be found in Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić [2018].

## 2.3. Methodology of the study on women, youth and children

### 2.3.1. Regional division and population size estimation

For the purpose of statistical processing and analysis, the results of which are presented in the following chapters, data from the county<sup>12</sup> level are grouped into six regions, taking into account their geographical proximity and certain sociodemographic specifics.

Given that this publication discusses the shares of members of the RNM in individual regions, in Table 2.3.1. estimates of the total number of RNM members in individual regions are presented, according to data collected by mapping Roma communities.<sup>13</sup>

**TABLE 2.3.1.** Regional division and population size estimation

Region	Counties	Number of localities in which mapping and the survey were conducted	Number of Roma households in which the survey was conducted	Estimation of population size, i.e. number of RNM members from mapping
Međimurje	Međimurje County	14	566	6368
Northern Croatia	Koprivnica-Križevci County and Varaždin County	17	156	2460
Zagreb and its surrounding area	City of Zagreb and Zagreb County	17	214	3539
Central Croatia	Bjelovar-Bilogora County and Sisak-Moslavina County	21	194	3655
Slavonia	Osijek-Baranja County, Brod-Posavina County and Vukovar-Srijem County.	25	296	4142
Istria and Primorje	Primorje-Gorski Kotar County	15	124	2322

12 Counties of research interest were determined by applying a combination of external and [expert] internal identification of localities inhabited by a minimum of 30 Roma [for details see: Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić, 2018: 53–55]. Such an approach did not identify any locality where at least 30 Roma live in any county in the Dalmatia region.

13 It should be emphasized that this is the sum of the mean values of the estimates of individual informants in each locality.

### 2.3.2. Processing and analysis of quantitative data

For the purposes of this study, data from mapping and survey research were combined into a common database, which allowed the simultaneous analysis of three types of characteristics necessary to obtain a comprehensive picture of the Roma population in individual areas:

- characteristics of localities [settlements] in which members of the RNM live
- characteristics of Roma households
- characteristics of RNM members  
[personal characteristics, experiences and attitudes].

Data in four central chapters [Sociodemographic profiles of Roma Women, Children and Youth, Social Status of Roma Women, Young Roma Men and Women and Well-Being of Roma Children] were analyzed at several levels using data collected at the level of individuals, households and localities.

Statistical analyses were conducted through univariate, bivariate and multivariate techniques, paying special attention to the nature and intertwining of the links between the studied phenomena. Most variables were analyzed at the level of regions, age cohorts, settlement type and gender, and appropriate statistical tests were performed to verify the existence of statistically significant differences or correlations.

Contingency tables were created for the nominal variables, and their correlations were tested using the Pearson's chi-square test or Fisher's exact test in the case of 2x2 tables. Parametric [t-test and ANOVA – analysis of variance] or non-parametric tests [Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis test] were used to test the inter-group differences on quantitative variables, depending on the appropriateness. For the variables that are crucial for a particular topic, predictor sets were analyzed, taking into account the content and the theoretical concept. For this purpose, multivariate regression analyses were used, i.e. linear regression analysis if the dependent variable is quantitative [e.g. number of births] and binary logistic regression if the dependent variable is dichotomous [e.g. experience of violence]. In some cases, the dependent variables have been modified to be suitable for individual processing. Thus, some categories were recoded and merged in order to obtain a smaller number of categories, but the meaning and suitability of such recodings for the interpretation of data were taken into account. The level of statistical significance of all statistical tests was determined at  $p < 0.05$  [i.e. 5% risk of inference from the sample to the population] and the obtained statistical indicators were presented only in tests that resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis, i.e. which indicated the existence of statistically significant effect. Data processing was performed in the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

The results of statistical analyses in the text are presented in three ways: in the form of descriptive analysis in the text [e.g. stating the percentages of individual response categories and indicators of measures of the central tendency of quantitative variables – average and median], tabularly and graphically.

### 2.3.3. Processing and analysis of qualitative data

The analysis of qualitative data – interviews and focus groups – was conducted using the approach of qualitative content analysis, guided especially by Schreier [2012], and in the second step for individual thematic units it was deepened by the analysis of patterns of relations between codes, based on Miles, Huberman and Saldaña [2013]. The choice of qualitative content analysis stemmed from the fact that it is particularly appropriate in cases where a large amount of textual material needs to be systematically analyzed, which is the case here, given that the qualitative analysis included a total of 208 documents (interview transcripts and focus group transcripts).<sup>14</sup> Secondly, this method includes elements of interpretive approach and quantification, which is why it is appropriate in the context of research using mixed methods. Finally, qualitative content analysis tends to provide a comprehensive and complete description of individual thematic units. In this respect it also seems an appropriate choice because the analysis focuses on a small number of clearly defined thematic units – women, young people and children. Two coders conducted the analysis using the MAXQDA 2018 Qualitative Analysis Software.

The initial steps in qualitative content analysis are the selection of relevant material and the creation of a code plan. These two steps can be done simultaneously or separately, and for the purposes of this analysis they were done simultaneously, given that the authors were already familiar with the material. During July and August 2019, both researchers read half of the material (in which interviews from all counties were evenly represented). In this step, it was important to mark all relevant parts of the interview texts and focus group texts, make initial code suggestions, and keep notes on the basis of which the code plan was subsequently developed. One researcher focused on the topic of Roma women and young people, and the other on the topic of children. The next step was to create a code plan that was used to analyze the entire material.

The version of the code plan prepared in this way included key topics [women, young people and children] within which there were subtopics that followed the planned chapters of the book [for example, topic “Children”, subtopic “Education”]. The subtopics included smaller thematic units, and those included one to

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14 This number is lower than the previously mentioned number of participants for two reasons: first, we analyzed the focus group transcripts as a single document and second, some of the interviews conducted referred to counties that were not later included in the analysis. In addition, it should be noted that in presenting the qualitative analysis results, we use the terms “documents” and “interview transcripts and focus group transcripts” synonymously.

two levels of codes depending on the complexity of the thematic unit. For example, within the mentioned subtopic “Education” we have thematic units “Preschool education”, “Primary school enrollment” and “Passing through primary school”, and then “Preschool education” at the “lower” level of the code plan is further divided into “Kindergarten” and “Preschool”, within which there are individual codes. This version of the coding plan was used in the next step: coding the whole material, where again one of the authors coded the part concerning women and young people and the other the part concerning children. In this step, the lowest level of codes was intervened into, where it was analytically necessary, but the “higher levels” of the code plan were not changed. Finally, coding reliability was ensured by both coders reading all coded citations to each other to check that they were adequately coded, and in case of disagreement, the final code was decided by discussion. Finally, the two thematic units [related to primary and secondary education] were analyzed in more detail, with the aim of building explanatory models that clarify the *relationships* between individual codes, for which the so-called network views [Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2013: 111] are especially convenient.

In the text, the results of the analysis are presented in three ways: in the form of descriptive analysis with examples, tabularly and as a network of relations between codes. Some more coherent thematic units are descriptively presented, where it was more important for us to support the interpretation of the complete unit with quotations, than to break them down analytically into individual aspects. Another way of presenting data is tabular format, where we present code frequencies and illustrative citations. We use such a presentation when we consider it important to show the frequency of individual codes within the thematic unit. In such presentations, frequencies refer to the number of documents [interviews and focus groups] in which the code appears. In other words, the unit of analysis is the document, not the number of occurrences of a single code. The third way of presentation is a graphical representation of code relations, i.e. visual representation of the entire problem based on network representations of the results [Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2013: 111]. When quoting individual research participants, we use pseudonyms in the form of a code in which three pieces of information is “entered” – the first part of the code indicates the county, using common and recognizable abbreviations of the name of the county; the second part indicates whether they are members of the Roma national minority [RNM] or Key non-Roma figures [KNF]. Since there were several participants from both subgroups [RNM and KNF] in each county, the last part of the code is a number, so that each participant has a unique code. For example, OB\_RNM\_01 denotes a participant from Osijek-Baranja County, a member of the Roma national minority, whereas OB\_RNM\_02 is the code of another participant who is also a member of the Roma national minority from Osijek-Baranja County. Additionally, for citations from focus groups, the beginning of the code is marked “FG\_”.



# 3

## Sociodemographic profiles of Roma women, children and youth





### 3. Sociodemographic profiles of Roma women, children and youth

This chapter describes the sociodemographic profiles of Roma women, young people and children according to key indicators of the social and economic context for these three groups of interest. Relevant variables were analyzed by gender and region, and data were presented for people aged 14 and older because they are considered an adult population that includes young people.

The topics we cover relate to individual characteristics, characteristics of Roma households, as well as characteristics of Roma settlements. When it comes to individual sociodemographic characteristics, the level of education, work, marital and parental status are described. After individual characteristics, the structure of Roma households with emphasis on the number of members and their structure is described, and then the material status of Roma households according to certain relevant indicators such as household income and indicators of material deprivation and risk of poverty is analyzed. This is followed by a description of the housing characteristics of Roma families, where we analyze the types, size and quality of housing. The chapter concludes with an overview of the types and structure of Roma settlements, i.e. localities inhabited by Roma, with an emphasis on the concentration of the Roma population and the hygienic and health conditions in the settlements.

The data presented in this chapter have the function of describing the context within which the key topics of this publication are analyzed in the following chapters. Therefore, the sociodemographic characteristics of the three interest groups [women, children and young people] are presented in this chapter at the regional level, taking into account gender differences, where possible. Where possible, the data collected in this study were compared with data from the general population of the Republic of Croatia and with data on the RNM in the European Union.

Because family life is not analyzed separately within the chapter on women and young people, the distribution by age groups is presented here, unlike other sociodemographic variables that are presented only by region and gender.

### 3.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

According to the data in this study,<sup>15</sup> the average age of Roma men and women is 22 [equal for women and men], while the median age for both women and men is 18. This means that approximately 50% of Roma men and women are younger and 50% are older than 18. By comparison, the average age in the general population of the Republic of Croatia [according to data from the 2011 Census] was 40 for men and 43 for women [42 for women and men together] [CBS, 2018b: 109]. It is clear that the Roma population in the Republic of Croatia is significantly younger than the general population. Their age varies by region,<sup>16</sup> so the highest average age of the Roma is in Zagreb and its surrounding area [average age 27 years, median 24 years], and the lowest in Međimurje and Northern Croatia [average age 19 years, median 15 years].

Roma men and women in Croatia mostly have a low educational status, whereby Roma men and women who did not complete primary school predominate in almost all regions [Table 3.1.1.]. Only in Zagreb and its surrounding area are there more men and women who completed than those who did not complete primary school, and this is also the case among men [but not women] in Central Croatia. The largest shares of Roma, especially Roma women without an education, are in Northern Croatia, where as many as 17% of Roma men and 30% of Roma women did not attend school at all. Slavonia is next in terms of the share of the uneducated with 15% of men and 28% of women without an education. The educational status of Roma men and women is somewhat more favorable in Zagreb and its surrounding area and in Istria and Primorje but still significantly less favorable compared to the general population in which [according to the 2011 Census] only 0.7% are men and 2.6% woman without an education.

Roma women are much less educated than Roma men. In all regions there is a big difference in the educational status of men and women, where in most regions the share of women is almost twice as high as the share of men in the category “without education” [in Istria and Primorje even trice as high], while the share of men is higher in all other categories of educational status. The largest share of Roma with secondary education is among men in Istria and Primorje [29%] and in Zagreb and its surrounding area and Central Croatia [22% each], but this is almost three times less than the share of men with secondary education in the general population, which is 60%. For women, these percentages are significantly lower,

15 To describe the age of the population, only data from version A of the survey which recorded the characteristics of all members of the surveyed Roma households were used [data from version B of the survey would distort the age estimate according to higher values because it represents only respondents aged 16 and older].

16 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $p < 0,001$ .

so the largest share of Roma women who completed secondary school is in Zagreb and its surrounding area [19%], and in other regions it ranges between low 4% and 13%, whereas the percentage at the level of the entire female population in Croatia is 46%.

If we analyze these data comparatively with the Roma population in the EU, we can say that Croatia is approximately in the middle of the scale of countries according to the level of education of Roma. In fact, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA, 2014a] data from 2011 show that, for example, in Greece, 44% of surveyed Roma [aged 16 and older] stated that they had never attended school, but in contrast, in the Czech Republic [1%], Slovakia [1%] and Hungary [3%], the share of Roma who stated that they had never attended school was very low. According to EU MIDIS II data from 2016 [FRA, 2018a], Croatia is fourth out of nine surveyed countries according to the share of Roma men and women over the age of 45 who have never attended school [46% of them], which puts it behind Greece [82%], Portugal [69%] and Spain [57%], and second regarding the age group of Roma men and women between 25 and 44 years of age, 28% of whom were without education in Croatia, and only Greece had a higher share [56%].

As for secondary education, in 2011 the largest share of Roma who completed secondary school was in Poland [23%] and the Czech Republic [21%], and the lowest in Portugal [1%], Greece [2%], Spain [3%] and France [4%] [FRA, 2014a]. The pattern emerging in this survey shows that, with the exception of Romania, the share of Roma completing their secondary education is relatively high in Central and Eastern European countries, but still low by overall EU standards: from 12% in Bulgaria to 23% in Poland. However, the publication emphasizes that the relative educational success of these countries is actually misleading because the gap between Roma and non-Roma is equal in most European countries, which is confirmed in our data. A recent EU MIDIS II survey from 2016 shows that, on average, in the nine EU countries analyzed, 18% of Roma men and women complete secondary education; fewest in Greece and Portugal [2%] and the most in the Czech Republic [31%] and Slovakia [32%]. In this survey, Croatia was roughly in the middle with 14% of Roma men and women who have graduated from secondary school [FRA, 2020].

TABLE 3.1.1. Highest completed level of education of men and women by region (aged 14+)\*

	Medimurje		Northern Croatia		Zagreb and its surrounding area		Central Croatia		Slavonia		Istria and Primorje	
	Men [n = 382]	Women [n = 402]	Men [n = 142]	Women [n = 136]	Men [n = 195]	Women [n = 204]	Men [n = 147]	Women [n = 168]	Men [n = 201]	Women [n = 235]	Men [n = 113]	Women [n = 102]
Without education	8.6%	15.7%	16.9%	30.1%	13.8%	23.5%	13.6%	27.4%	15.4%	28.1%	8.0%	25.5%
Did not complete primary school	45.5%	49.0%	49.3%	47.8%	29.7%	24.5%	26.5%	31.5%	44.3%	39.6%	31.0%	34.3%
Completed primary school	29.1%	26.4%	25.4%	16.9%	34.4%	31.9%	36.7%	31.5%	25.4%	20.4%	30.1%	26.5%
Secondary school	16.5%	9.0%	8.5%	4.4%	22.1%	18.6%	21.8%	9.5%	14.9%	11.9%	29.2%	12.7%
Higher education	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Data for a total of 2,427 people aged 14+ are shown, excluding those currently in school (N = 360)

TABLE 3.1.2. Employment status of men and women by region (aged 14+)

	Međimurje		Northern Croatia		Zagreb and its surrounding area		Central Croatia		Slavonia		Istria and Primorje	
	Men [n = 548]	Women [n = 529]	Men [n = 165]	Women [n = 152]	Men [n = 239]	Women [n = 245]	Men [n = 172]	Women [n = 190]	Men [n = 262]	Women [n = 289]	Men [n = 148]	Women [n = 138]
Employed	32.7%	9.5%	24.2%	8.6%	30.5%	22.9%	25.0%	8.9%	15.3%	3.5%	41.2%	18.8%
Unemployed	46.9%	23.3%	57.0%	38.2%	51.0%	24.9%	58.7%	37.9%	64.9%	43.3%	37.2%	37.7%
Non-active - taking care of the household	0.7%	52.7%	1.8%	41.4%	0.0%	30.6%	1.2%	40.0%	0.4%	32.5%	2.0%	23.2%
Non-active - secondary school and university students	11.9%	9.1%	7.9%	6.6%	8.4%	8.6%	8.1%	7.4%	9.2%	7.6%	7.4%	6.5%
Other non-active persons	7.8%	5.5%	9.1%	5.3%	10.0%	13.1%	7.0%	5.8%	10.3%	13.1%	12.2%	13.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

One of the four new indicators of the Development Index of local and regional self-government units in the Republic of Croatia [Bogović, Drezgić and Čegar, 2017 and the Decree on the Development Index (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2017b)] refers to the share of the population with higher education in the total population, aged between 20 and 65. According to this indicator, data for the Republic of Croatia from 2011 for counties of interest in this study show that the City of Zagreb is in first place with a rate of 39%, followed by Primorje-Gorski Kotar with 27% and Istria with 23%. The counties that make up the regions of Northern and Central Croatia, Slavonia and Međimurje are lower on the scale with between 13% and 17% of the highly educated population. For the Roma population, however, this indicator is significantly below the value of the general population and according to the data in this study, it ranges from 0% in Northern Croatia to 1% in Zagreb and its surrounding area, and 1.4% in Istria and Primorje.

The regional analysis of the employment status of men and women shows a clear trend: men mostly declare themselves as unemployed, while women are mostly non-active – they take care of the household, i.e. they declare themselves as so-called housewives [Table 3.1.2.]. The highest share of unemployed Roma is in Slavonia, where as many as 65% of men declared themselves as unemployed, and the lowest share, but still alarmingly high, is in Istria and Primorje, where 37% of men declared themselves as unemployed. Women, on the other hand, declare themselves as housewives in most regions, and most of them are in Međimurje [53%], followed by Northern [42%] and Central Croatia [40%]. Those women who do not declare themselves as housewives are mostly also unemployed. Only in Slavonia and in Istria and Primorje do more women declare themselves as unemployed than as housewives. By comparison, according to a 2011 Roma survey in France, Greece, Spain and Italy, more than 40% of Roma women surveyed identified themselves as full-time housewives, while Poland with 19%, Portugal with 28% and Romania with 35% also had a high share of women declaring themselves as housewives. Croatia is, therefore, in the group of countries with an extremely high share of housewives, i.e. non-active Roma women.

The unemployment rate is defined as the share of the unemployed in the working population,<sup>17</sup> and in 2017 in the Republic of Croatia it was 11%, i.e. 11.9% for women and 10.6% for men [CBS, 2019a: 16]. Data from this study show that unemployment rates among Roma men and women are many times higher, ranging from 47.4% for men in Istria and Primorje to as much as 81% in Slavonia, and for women from 52.1% in Zagreb and its surrounding area to extremely high 93% in Slavonia [Table 3.1.3.]. Slavonia also stands out in the general population as a region with high unemployment rates [from 21% to 24%] [CBS 2019a: 26], but not nearly as similar as those in the Roma population.

17 The working population (or labor force) are employed and unemployed persons aged 15 and older.

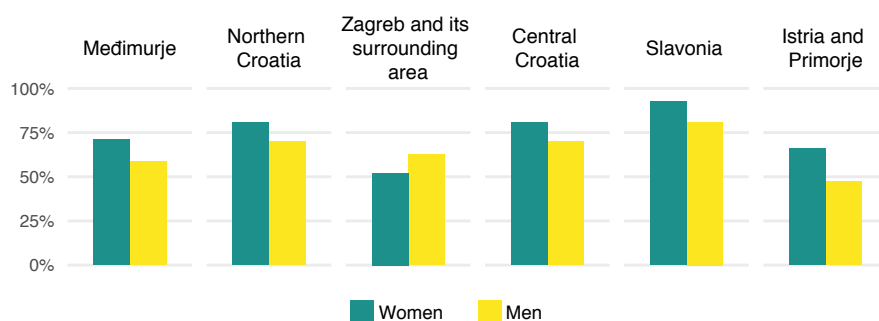


FIGURE 3.1.1. Unemployment rates for men and women, by region

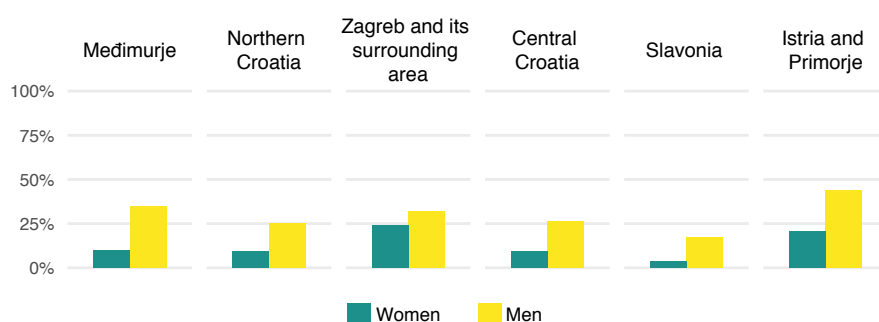


FIGURE 3.1.2. Employment rates for men and women, by region

On the other hand, the employment rate, i.e. the share of employed persons in the total population aged between 15 and 64, is considered a key social indicator in the study of labor market trends. In 2017, at the level of the entire Republic of Croatia, it amounted to 45% for women and 64% for men [CBS, 2019a: 17]. According to the data from this study, employment rates among Roma, and especially among Roma women, are extremely low. Roma men employment rates range from 17% in Slavonia to 44% in Istria and Primorje, and Roma women employment rates from 3.7% in Slavonia to 24% in Zagreb and its surrounding area [Figure 3.1.1.]. The largest share of employed men is in Istria and Primorje [41%], followed by Medimurje [33%] and Zagreb and its surrounding area [30.5%]. Overall, a very small share of Roma women is employed<sup>18</sup> – between 3.5% in Slavonia and up to 23% in Zagreb and its surrounding area, which is significantly lower than among men [Table 3.1.2.]. The region of Zagreb and its surrounding area, in addition to having the largest share of employed Roma women, also has the smallest gender

18 In this study employed persons are considered to be all those who answered the question *What is your employment status?* with one of the provided answers: Paid work – full time, Paid work – occasional part-time or temporary work, Self-employed, On maternity or parental leave and Works for family business/on a farm.

gap in employment. The gender gap in the employment of Roma men and women is present in all regions in the direction of higher employment of men than women, and it is most pronounced in Međimurje and in Istria and Primorje.

Data on Roma employment in the EU from 2011 [FRA, 2014b] show that the share of the employed Roma by country was as follows: Portugal 15%, Spain and Slovakia 21%, Poland 25%, France 28%, Romania and Hungary 29%, Bulgaria 30%, the Czech Republic 34%, Italy 35%, Greece 39%, which puts Croatia according to the data from this study with a total of only 16% of employed Roma men and women at the very bottom of this scale and well below the already low European average Roma employment of 28%. Also, these data are in line with the findings of the second EU MIDIS survey in 2016, which found that Croatian Roma have the lowest labor intensity<sup>19</sup> in the EU and that Croatia has the largest gap in labor intensity between the general population and the Roma population: as many as 78% of Roma live in low-intensity households compared to 15% of the general population [FRA, 2018a: 22].

In addition to the question on employment status, research participants were asked whether they do any form of paid work and what kind.<sup>20</sup> These data complement the picture of Roma participation in the labor market because they show that, even in those regions where the share of employed Roma men and women is slightly higher, it is mostly not permanent employment, but rather temporary, occasional or seasonal jobs. In other words, a large share of Roma men and women who perform some form of paid work face precarious working conditions. The share of men who have a permanent job is below 10% in Northern Croatia, Slavonia, Central Croatia and Međimurje, while in Zagreb and its surrounding area it is 17%, and 24% in Istria and Primorje. The share of women who have a permanent job is even lower than among men – below 3% in all regions except Istria and Primorje, where it is 5%, and Zagreb and its surrounding area, where it is 12%. Temporary, occasional or seasonal jobs are most common among men in Slavonia [63%] and Međimurje [55%], while among women they are most common in Zagreb and its surrounding area [29%] and in Istria and Primorje [28%]. Precarious work is also characteristic of Roma in other European Union countries [FRA, 2014b]. The fact that between 82% and 86% of women in Central Croatia, Međimurje and Northern Croatia never do paid work perhaps best reflects the economic position of Roma women in these regions. In the remaining regions, between 58% and 66% of women never do paid jobs, so there is still a significant majority.

19 Household work intensity represents the ratio of the total number of months in which all working-age household members worked during the reference income year and the total number of months that the same household members could theoretically work in the same period [Eurostat, 2018].

20 The answers offered were: Has a permanent job, Has a temporary job, Does seasonal work, Does occasional work [from time to time] and Never does paid work.



The analysis of the marital status of men and women by region shows that in most regions, especially in Zagreb and its surrounding area and in Central Croatia, married people predominate, especially among men, which is in line with the data for the general population where there are 58% of married men and 53% of married women [CBS, 2013].<sup>21</sup> In Northern Croatia, when it comes to marital status, persons who are in an extramarital union or cohabitation predominate, i.e. those who live together, but are not married, which shows a significant difference from the general population, but also from Roma in other regions because in that region the share of married Roma women and married Roma men is significantly lower [about 10%].

As expected, differences in marital status were expressed according to age groups. Among young people [14–29 years old], a quarter of boys and about 30% of girls are married, about the same number are in extramarital relationships, while about half of boys and a third of girls are single. In the middle age cohort [30 to 55 years old], slightly more than half of men and women are married, while slightly less than a third are in extramarital relationships. In the oldest age cohort [56 years and older], two-thirds of men are married, while this is the case with less than half of women. Women in this age group are significantly more widowed than men [37% of widows among women compared to 15% of widowers among men].

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21 The data are not directly comparable because no cohabitation response was offered in the 2011 Census.

TABLE 3.1.3. Marital life of men and women, by region [aged 14+]

	Međimurje		Northern Croatia		Zagreb and its surrounding area		Central Croatia		Slavonia		Istria and Primorje	
	Men [n = 556]	Women [n = 535]	Men [n = 167]	Women [n = 153]	Men [n = 246]	Women [n = 256]	Men [n = 176]	Women [n = 195]	Men [n = 266]	Women [n = 294]	Men [n = 149]	Women [n = 139]
<b>Married</b>	41.2%	45.0%	10.2%	10.5%	58.5%	51.6%	57.4%	47.7%	41.4%	41.2%	40.9%	36.7%
<b>Divorced</b>	1.4%	1.3%	0.6%	1.3%	6.5%	6.3%	0.6%	2.1%	5.6%	6.8%	3.4%	5.0%
In an extramarital union/ cohabitation/ they live together but are not married	29.3%	30.7%	59.9%	65.4%	12.6%	13.7%	15.9%	21.0%	16.9%	19.7%	23.5%	28.8%
<b>Widow(er)</b>	0.7%	4.9%	0.6%	3.3%	1.2%	8.2%	1.7%	8.7%	6.4%	7.5%	0.7%	9.4%
<b>Single</b>	27.3%	18.1%	28.7%	19.6%	21.1%	20.3%	24.4%	20.5%	29.7%	24.8%	31.5%	20.1%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**TABLE 3.1.4. Marital status of young Roma men and women**

	14–19 years old		20–24 years old		25–29 years old		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Married</b>	7.2%	14.4%	30.1%	37.0%	46.5%	47.9%	25.1%	30.3%
<b>Divorced</b>	0.3%	1.5%	1.3%	2.9%	3.3%	1.9%	1.4%	2.0%
<b>In an extramarital union/cohabitation/ they live together but are not married</b>	7.8%	16.5%	38.1%	39.5%	35.7%	41.2%	24.8%	30.2%
<b>Widow(er)</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%
<b>Single (never been married)</b>	84.7%	67.6%	30.5%	20.2%	14.6%	8.5%	48.6%	37.2%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The marital status of young people was further analyzed according to age subgroups. In the youngest age subgroup of young people, the largest gender difference is in the share of those who are married: among boys it is 7%, and among girls it is twice as much, i.e. about 14% of those who are already married [Table 3.1.4.]. This share increases significantly in the next age cohort, and the difference between boys and girls decreases, but there is still a gender gap in the direction of a higher share of married girls than boys. In the oldest age subgroup of young people, almost every other young Roma man and woman is married, and most of the others are in extramarital unions. There are very few single people in the oldest subgroup of young people (25 to 29 years old), but still slightly more among men [15%] than among women [8.5%].

UN Treaty bodies, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW Committee]<sup>22</sup> and the Committee on the Rights of the Child [CRC],<sup>23</sup> as well as the Council of Europe, consider marriages of persons under 18 to be forced marriages and violations of the human rights of women and children. In the case of Roma women and girls, such marriages affect their ability

22 The CEDAW Committee monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and entered into force on 3 September 1981 as a global and comprehensive legally binding international treaty.

23 The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC], adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and entered into force on 2 September 1990.

to continue their education in order to find decent work, and contribute to maintaining the cycle of poverty and social marginalization [FRA, 2019: 23 according to Hotchkiss, Godha, Gage, and Cappa, 2016]. Data from the EU MIDIS II survey indicate a tendency for underage marriage rates to decrease over time [FRA, 2019], but they are still present among Roma in the EU. Data in that study show that among young Roma in Croatia, 9% of underage boys and 17% of underage girls [aged 14–17] are already either married or in an extramarital union. In the same age group, 6% of boys and 10% of girls among Roma minors are already parents.

**TABLE 3.1.5. Parenting by gender and region [aged 14+]**

		Share of men who are parents	Share of women who are parents
Region	Međimurje	61.6%	68.5%
	Northern Croatia	62.9%	70.6%
	Zagreb and its surrounding area	71.7%	72.4%
	Central Croatia	65.0%	66.2%
	Slavonia	60.5%	68.5%
	Istria and Primorje	63.8%	73.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>63.7%</b>	<b>69.5%</b>

Slightly more than two thirds of adults [14 and older] are parents, and slightly more among women [70%] than among men [64%]. Regional differences in the share of parents between men and women are not very pronounced [Table 3.1.5.]. Among young people [14–29 years old], 51% of girls and 41% of boys are parents, while the shares of parents in the middle and older age cohort are significantly higher: 85% and 89% for men and 87% and 89% for women. Roma women become mothers very early. Between the ages of 14 and 19, 22% of them are already mothers [and 10% of young men are fathers]. In the middle cohort of young people aged 20 to 24, the share of parents rises sharply to 65% among women and 55% among men, and in the group aged 25 to 29 it is almost equal to the middle age cohort, i.e. 83% of women and 74 % of men became parents in that age. By comparison, in the general population of the Republic of Croatia, women on average give birth to their first child at just over 28 years of age<sup>24</sup> [Čipin and Međimurec, 2017; according to Eurostat, 2017].

24 Data for 2015.

## 3.2. Household members and structure

The total number of members of Roma households in our sample ranges from a minimum of one to a maximum of 20 members. The mean value [median] is five members, and the average is 5.2 people, which is significantly more than the average number of household members in the general population of 2.8 people [CBS, 2013]. About 30% of Roma households have up to three members while 56% of households have five or more members. Regional differences in the number of household members are statistically significant,<sup>25</sup> with Northern Croatia having the largest average number of household members [6.1 members] and Slavonia the smallest [4.3 members]. The highest average number of children under the age of six per household is in Northern Croatia [1.7 children], followed by Međimurje [1.4 children], and the lowest in Slavonia [0.8 children].<sup>26</sup> The highest average number of children aged 7 to 15 per household is in Northern Croatia [1.5 children], followed by Međimurje [1.3 children], and the lowest in Zagreb and its surrounding area and in Slavonia [1 child].<sup>27</sup> According to the structure of household members, those households in which couples with children live predominate [79%] while extended families are not much represented – only 13% of households are inhabited by three or more generations [Table 3.2.1].

**TABLE 3.2.1. Structure of Roma households**

Who lives in the household?	%*
More answers possible.	
One parent with children	10.3%
Both parents with children	78.9%
Grandparents	12.8%
Great-grandfather and/or great-grandmother	0.4%
Another family member	3.0%
Someone who is not a family member	0.3%
Married couple without children	8.0%
Extramarital couple without children	3.0%

\* Out of a total of 1,433 households surveyed [data on the family structure of household members are missing for 117 households]

25 ANOVA,  $F = 9.508$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

26 ANOVA,  $F = 11.920$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

27 ANOVA,  $F = 3.514$ ;  $p = 0.004$ .

### 3.3. Household income and poverty indicators

To determine the total monthly income of Roma households, the following question was asked: “What was the total cash income of your household in the previous month, regardless of the sources?” Respondents were offered 10 answer categories with amounts ranging from HRK 0 to more than HRK 12,000 per month. Data show that the largest part of Roma households, as many as 65%, have a total monthly income of less than HRK 3,000 [Figure 3.3.1.], and given that the average number of Roma household members is more than five, this can be considered a clear indicator of serious material deprivation of Roma households. Only 7% of Roma households have a monthly income of more than HRK 6,000, which was approximately the average net salary in Croatia at the time of the survey. Roma in Central Croatia have the lowest monthly income – as many as 83% of Roma households have incomes of less than HRK 3,000. There are 75% of such households in Slavonia, and 66% in Međimurje.

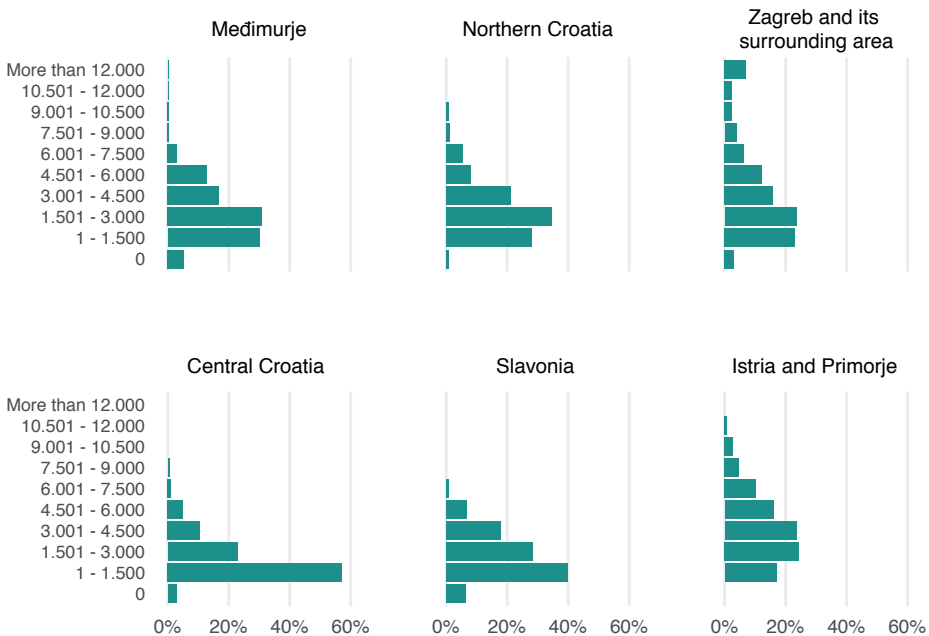


FIGURE 3.3.1. Regional differences in total monthly household income

Although the respondents in the survey were not asked for the exact amount of monthly income, but were asked to choose one of the offered categories of answers, based on the collected data, an estimate of the average monthly income per household for each region was made. Data on averages and medians of month-

ly household income should, therefore, be considered indicative. However, the data show that there are statistically significant regional differences,<sup>28</sup> with Roma households in Zagreb and its surrounding area having the highest average monthly incomes of around HRK 4,000, while the lowest incomes in Roma households are in Central Croatia with around HRK 1,700 per month [Table 3.3.1.].

**TABLE 3.3.1. Regional differences in total monthly household income [quantitative estimates]**

	Total household cash income of the previous month* [in HRK]	
	Average	Median
Međimurje	2538.61	2250
Northern Croatia	2745.00	2250
Zagreb and its surrounding area	4114.53	3750
Central Croatia	1720.83	750
Slavonia	2011.13	2250
Istria and Primorje	3877.36	3750
Total	2669.63	2250

*\*Quantitative estimates based on the class averages of the response categories offered*

Based on the collected data, the share of Roma households below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold was also determined.<sup>29</sup> Out of a total of 741 Roma households for which data needed to determine whether the household is at risk of poverty were collected, only 7.6% are above the at-risk-of-poverty threshold for 2017, while as many as 92% are below that threshold, i.e. at-risk-of-poverty [Table 3.3.2.]. There are statistically significant regional differences in the share of Roma households at risk of poverty:<sup>30</sup> most of them are in Central Croatia and Slavonia [as much as 97%], followed by Međimurje and Northern Croatia [96% and 95%], and the least in Zagreb and its surrounding area and in Istria and Primorje [although in fact still very many – more than three quarters of Roma households]. In the general population, in 2017, 20% of households were below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold [CBS, 2018a], which shows that even those regions where the share of Roma households below the poverty threshold is the lowest, it is still well above the national average.

28 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $p < 0,001$ .

29 The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is 60% of the national median of the disposable household equivalent income. It is determined by calculating the equivalent income per household member for all households and weighing 60% of the calculated average value of income, which in 2017 in Croatia amounted to HRK 28,070.

30 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $p < 0,001$ .

A survey of Roma in the European Union [FRA, 2014b] shows that the situation in Roma households in other European countries is not much better. In fact, a survey conducted in 2011 showed that about 90% of Roma respondents live in households with an equivalent income below national poverty thresholds. In Italy, France and Portugal, almost all Roma households had disposable income below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold, in Romania 78% of Roma respondents were at risk of poverty, followed by the Czech Republic [80%], Poland [81%] and Hungary [81%] [FRA, 2014b: 33]. A recent EU MIDIS II survey from 2016 showed that 80% of Roma still live below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold [FRA, 2018a: 9]. Roma in Croatia are therefore in an even worse position than the already alarming high average share of Roma households below the EU at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

**TABLE 3.3.2. Share of households below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, by region**

	Share of households at risk of poverty
<b>Međimurje</b>	96.4%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	94.9%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	77.7%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	97.5%
<b>Slavonia</b>	97.3%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	76.8%
<b>Total</b>	92.4%

In this study, three indicators of material deprivation of the household were measured, which refer to the ability of covering certain types of costs. The cost that cannot be afforded by the largest share of Roma households, more than 90% of them, is paid vacation away from home once a year for a week, while 81% of Roma households cannot pay for unexpected expenses with their own funds [such as buying a refrigerator, etc.] in the amount of monthly household income [Table 3.3.3.]. Almost every other Roma household cannot eat meat or fish every other day of the week for financial reasons. Data show that only 7% of Roma households can cover all three of these costs. One of these three costs cannot be covered by 11% of Roma households, 30% of households cannot cover two, and as many as 52% of Roma households cannot cover any of the three listed costs.

According to the average number of indicators of material deprivation, Roma households in Zagreb and its surrounding area have the lowest degree of material deprivation [1.84], while those in Slavonia [2.47] and Northern Croatia [2.41] have the highest.<sup>31</sup> There are also regional differences in all three individual indicators of material deprivation with the same pattern: Roma households in Slavonia and

31 ANOVA,  $F = 15.614$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .



Northern Croatia are the worst off by all indicators, while those in Zagreb and its surrounding area are in a relatively best position. However, this position is really only relative because there is a very large share of Roma households [from 50% to 70%] who are not able to finance some of the basic necessities of life.

**TABLE 3.3.3. Regional differences in material deprivation**

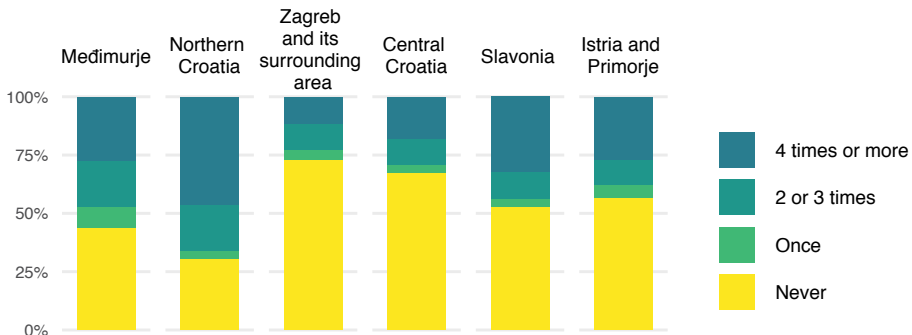
	Share of households that CANNOT cover expenses			Average value on the short index of material deprivation [range of possible values: from 0 to 3]	Share of households with severe material deprivation
	Paid vacation away from home once a year for a week	Eat meat or fish every other day of the week	Pay for unexpected necessary expenses with their own funds		
<b>Međimurje</b>	92.6%	50.2%	78.5%	2.04	41.0%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	98.7%	57.8%	88.9%	2.41	54.5%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	70.5%	47.9%	67.6%	1.84	45.3%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	93.2%	59.6%	80.6%	2.31	55.2%
<b>Slavonia</b>	95.9%	61.6%	91.5%	2.47	59.5%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	87.5%	55.9%	79.0%	2.14	51.6%
<b>Total</b>	90.4%	54.6%	80.9%	2.17	49.1%

Households that cannot cover any of the three listed expenses can be considered severely materially deprived. The share of such Roma households is the lowest in Međimurje and in Zagreb and its surrounding area [41% and 45%], and the highest in Slavonia, where almost 60% of Roma households are severely materially deprived [Table 3.3.3.]. We also analyzed the above-mentioned indicators of material deprivation of households according to the type of settlement in which the household is located and found statistically significant differences in all three indicators. However, these differences are generally not large, and material deprivation of households is present in all types of Roma settlements. According to the average number of indicators of material deprivation, Roma households in concentrated Roma settlements, which are separated from towns or villages, have a slightly lower degree of material deprivation [2.05] than others, followed by Roma households dispersed among the majority population [2.19] while households in concentrated Roma settlements located within or on the outskirts of cities have the highest degree of material deprivation [score 2.31 and 2.37].<sup>32</sup>

32 ANOVA,  $F = 8.433$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

Data on Roma in EU countries from 2016 [FRA, 2018a: 15] show that in most countries there are differences in the at-risk-of-poverty rate according to Roma concentration, i.e. that poverty is higher in areas where Roma live in concentration. There is also a trend according to which the differences in poverty according to the concentration of Roma are larger in countries with smaller shares of Roma households at risk of poverty. Croatia is a kind of exception, in a negative sense, because in our country there is a very high poverty rate of Roma households, but also noticeable differences in the concentration of Roma population. However, isolated Roma settlements are an exception to this trend because they are more similar to those in dispersed localities in terms of material deprivation.

Data on whether any member of the household went to bed hungry in the last month [at least once or more times] indicate worrying consequences of poverty – this happened in almost every other Roma household, i.e. in 48% of them. Regional differences are particularly noticeable here.<sup>33</sup> The lowest share of such households is in Zagreb and its surrounding area [27%], and significantly higher in other regions, ranging from 33% in Central Croatia, from 43% to 47% in Istria and Primorje and Slavonia, 56% in Međimurje to as many as 70 % in Northern Croatia. It is particularly worrying that most of these are not one-off situations, but members of these households go to bed relatively often hungry, especially in the region of Northern Croatia [Figure 3.3.2.]. By comparison, according to the 2011 EU average [FRA, 2014b], about 40% of Roma live in households where someone has had to go to bed hungry at least once in the last month because they could not afford food, and this share is the highest in Romania and Greece [around 60%], while data for the general population in all surveyed countries were below 10% [except in Romania around 12%] [FRA and UNDP, 2012: 26]. Recent European data from 2016 show that Croatia, after Greece, is the country with the largest share of Roma living in households where someone went to bed hungry, and the first in the frequency of responses that this has happened several times in the last month [FRA, 2018a: 16].



**FIGURE 3.3.2.** Share of households in which at least one person went to bed hungry the previous month, by region

33 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 99.208$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

We consider not seeking medical help for financial reasons as an additional indicator of poverty. Among those who in the last year were in a situation where they needed medical help and did not contact a doctor [which is 28% of all respondents], 36% of them [33% among men and 39% among women] as the main reason for not seeking medical help stated that medical assistance was too expensive for them, which makes financial reasons the most common reason for not seeking medical help in situations when it is needed.

The last indicator of poverty of the Roma population that we analyze is the use of social assistance and services. As many as 85% of Roma households in the sample use at least one form of social assistance or services, with statistically significant regional differences [Table 3.3.4.].<sup>34</sup> In Northern Croatia, as many as 98% of Roma households use at least one form of social assistance or social services, while this share is the lowest [although still very high] in the regions of Zagreb and its surrounding area [73%] and Istria and Primorje [77%]. The largest average number of forms of social assistance and services are used by households in Northern Croatia and Slavonia [around three].

**TABLE 3.3.4. Regional differences in the share of households using social assistance or services and the average number of forms of social assistance and services**

		The household uses at least one form of social assistance or service	Average number of forms of social assistance and services used by households
Region	Međimurje	90.6%	2.39
	Northern Croatia	98.1%	3.06
	Zagreb and its surrounding area	73.4%	1.75
	Central Croatia	79.9%	1.79
	Slavonia	87.2%	2.95
	Istria and Primorje	76.6%	2.27
	Total	85.9%	2.39

### 3.4. Housing characteristics of Roma families

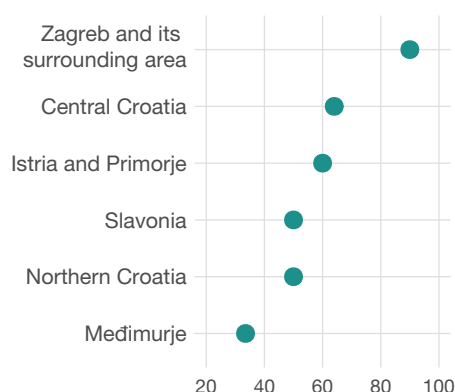
During the field survey, the interviewers recorded the type of dwelling in which the household is located for each household in which they conducted the survey. From these interviewers evaluations, it was found that most Roma families still live in houses that are, at least in appearance, in good or relatively good condition [63%],

34 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 72.210$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001.

but a significant part [about 28%] lives in houses that are in poor condition or are dilapidated, and another 4% in huts, sheds or shacks. Only 4% of Roma families live in apartments in residential buildings, and these are mostly localities where Roma live dispersed among the majority population. There are regional differences in the representation of the form and type of housing in which Roma live [Table 3.4.1.],<sup>35</sup> where it should be noted that the largest share of Roma houses in poor or dilapidated condition are in Slavonia, and the largest share of huts, sheds and shacks in Istria and Primorje.

**TABLE 3.4.1. Dwelling type [external evaluation], by region**

	Dwelling type [external evaluation]				
	Apartment in an apartment building	House in good or relatively good condition	House in poor condition or a dilapidated house	Hut/shed/shack	Other
<b>Međimurje</b>	0.2%	73.9%	22.9%	2.6%	0.4%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	0.0%	51.3%	47.3%	0.0%	1.3%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	13.2%	64.4%	15.6%	4.9%	2.0%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	2.6%	71.6%	24.2%	1.6%	0.0%
<b>Slavonia</b>	5.0%	48.4%	40.2%	5.7%	0.7%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	9.9%	48.8%	27.3%	12.4%	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	4.0%	63.1%	28.2%	3.9%	0.8%



**FIGURE 3.4.1. Mean size of dwellings, by region [m²]**

35 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 205.464$ ;  $df = 20$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

Data on the size of dwellings in which Roma live show that the mean size of Roma households is 50 m<sup>2</sup>, and the average is 67.4 m<sup>2</sup>, and it should be recalled that Roma households have an average of more than five members. By area, the largest Roma households are in Zagreb and its surrounding area [the median is 90 m<sup>2</sup>], and the smallest in Međimurje, where the median is almost three times smaller – 33.5 m<sup>2</sup> [Figure 3.4.1.]. By comparison, the total average size of inhabited dwellings in Croatia is significantly higher and amounts to 81 m<sup>2</sup> [CBS, 2017a: 16], although the average number of household members is significantly lower than in Roma households [2.8 persons] [CBS, 2017a: 18]. An additional indicator of household size with regard to the number of members is the number of square meters per household member, which in Roma households averages 10.6 m<sup>2</sup> per household member [mean value, i.e. the median is even lower and amounts to 7.7 m<sup>2</sup> per household member], while this number is almost three times higher in general population – about 29 m<sup>2</sup> per household member on average.

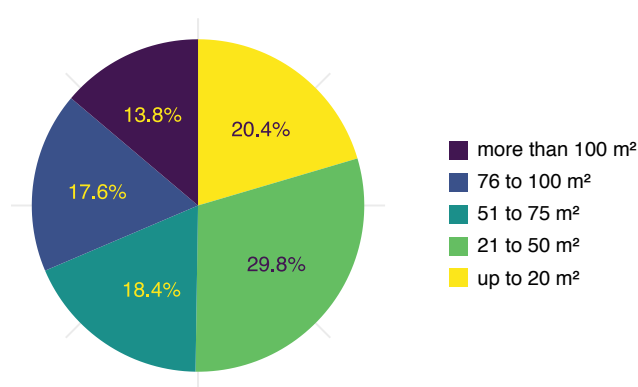


FIGURE 3.4.2. Size of dwellings of Roma households

Given that approximately half of Roma households are located in very small (up to 20 m<sup>2</sup>) and small [21 to 50 m<sup>2</sup>] dwellings, these households were analyzed regionally, and statistically significant differences in their representation were found:<sup>36</sup> households with small and very small dwellings are most common in Međimurje [61%] and in Northern Croatia [59%], with an average of five household members living in them, and they are least common in Zagreb and its surrounding area [24%], with an average of four household members living in them<sup>37</sup> [Table 3.4.2.].

36 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 99.814$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

37 Kruskal-Wallis test,  $p < 0.001$ .

**TABLE 3.4.2. Regional differences in the share of households with small dwellings**

	Share of households with small dwellings
<b>Međimurje</b>	61.4%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	59.1%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	24.3%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	39.3%
<b>Slavonia</b>	53.9%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	41.4%
<b>Total</b>	50.2%

The average number of rooms<sup>38</sup> per household member for all regions together is 0.5, the lowest being in Northern Croatia and Međimurje, with only 0.3 rooms per household member.<sup>39</sup> In the general population of Croatia, according to the 2001 Census, the average number of rooms per household member was 1.1, which put Croatia at the bottom of the list of European countries [Bežovan, 2008]. Data on Roma households in Europe place Croatia, together with Greece and Slovakia, in the group of countries with the lowest average number of rooms per person [FRA, 2018a]. The highest average number of rooms per Roma household member was recorded in Spain (0.9). Thus, this value in Roma households does not exceed 1 in any European country for which data were collected, whereas in non-Roma households it ranges from 1 in Romania to 1.9 in Spain [FRA, 2018a: 32]. According to our research, the average number of household members per room in Roma households in Croatia is as much as 3.3 people, which describes the problem of overcrowded dwellings even more vividly.

Housing deprivation is a dimension of social exclusion, and refers to housing equipment, possession of durable consumer goods and the existence of housing problems [Šučur, 2006b]. Housing problems are strongly present in Roma households [Table 3.4.3.]. The most pronounced problem is damp – two thirds of Roma households have damp walls, floors or foundations, while in every other Roma household the roof is leaking. About 42% of Roma households have rot in window frames, and a third of households do not have enough light. In terms of basic facilities, more than half of Roma households do not have a toilet in the house or apartment, and every other Roma household does not have a shower or bathtub in the dwelling. As many as 73% of Roma households are not connected to the sewerage system [some of them have septic tanks, but 48% have neither], 43% do not have water supplied through the water supply system, 20% of households do not have a kitchen in their dwelling, and 11% do not have electricity. By comparison, in the general population, 5% of households do not have a toilet in the apartment/house, 4% do

38 The question in the survey questionnaire was: "How many rooms does your household have, not counting the kitchen, bathroom, hallway, lobby and pantry?"

39 ANOVA,  $F = 27.031$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

not have plumbing, and 4.4% of households do not have sewage installations [CBS, 2017a: 23–24]. Housing equipment of Roma households in Croatia is among the worst in the EU – the share of households that do not have the most basic living facilities such as running water, toilets and showers or bathtubs is highest in Romania, followed by Croatia, Hungary and Bulgaria [FRA, 2018a : 33–34].

**TABLE 3.4.3. Housing problems and equipment of Roma households, by region**

	Housing problems				Equipment	
	Damp walls, floors or foundations	Leaking roof	Rot in window frames	The space does not have enough light, it is too dark	There is no toilet in the house/ apartment	There is no shower or bathtub in the house/ apartment
<b>Međimurje</b>	71.7%	45.9%	34.6%	33.4%	74.2%	68.9%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	78.8%	59.0%	46.2%	32.1%	76.9%	71.2%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	39.3%	29.9%	27.1%	23.4%	8.9%	17.3%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	61.9%	47.4%	38.1%	28.9%	64.4%	51.0%
<b>Slavonia</b>	71.6%	69.9%	65.2%	41.6%	37.8%	35.5%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	68.5%	51.6%	46.0%	39.5%	32.3%	25.0%
<b>Total</b>	66.5%	50.3%	41.9%	33.4%	53.9%	49.9%

Regional differences in the prevalence of these housing problems have also been identified. Thus, problems with damp, i.e. damp walls, floors or foundations, are most prevalent in Međimurje and Slavonia, where more than 70% of Roma households have these problems. Slavonia has the largest share of households in which there are problems with leaking roofs, rot in window frames and spaces that do not have enough light. The lack of toilets in the household is most common in Northern Croatia and Međimurje, as well as the lack of showers or bathtubs. As many as 70% of Roma households in Northern Croatia and 68% in Međimurje do not have water supplied through the water supply system, and more than 80% of households in Northern Croatia, Međimurje, Central Croatia and Slavonia are not connected to the sewerage system. According to most housing equipment indicators, the situation is the worst in Northern Croatia, where 40% of households do not have a kitchen in their dwelling, and 20% do not even have electricity.

Indicators of housing deprivation, both in Roma and other populations, differ in individual surveys, and here we present the results of three methodologies for calculating the housing deprivation index. Thus, for example, the EU Agency for Fun-

damental Rights [FRA, 2013: 20] uses the existence of water supply installations, connection to the sewerage system or septic tank and electricity in the household as indicators of deprived housing conditions in the analysis of material deprivation of Roma households. A household that does not have any of the listed facilities is considered deprived. If we apply these indicators to the data in this study, 59% of Roma households can be considered as housing deprived. By comparison, data regarding the Roma in 11 European countries from 2011 show that according to these criteria, 42% of Roma live in housing deprived conditions [FRA, 2013]. The FRA and the UNDP [2012] use a different group of indicators: kitchen in the house/apartment, toilet in the house/apartment, bathroom with shower or bathtub in the house/apartment and electricity, and those households that do not have any of the listed facilities are considered deprived. According to this methodology, data from this study show that 62% of Roma households are housing deprived. Eurostat [2019c] uses four indicators of housing deprivation: leaking roof, no bath or shower, no toilet and/or too dark a space. According to these indicators, as many as 78% of Roma households are housing deprived. We also analyzed regional differences in the representation of housing deprived households according to all three methodologies and came to the same conclusion in all three cases: regional differences in housing deprivation of Roma households exist, and the worst regions are Northern Croatia, Međimurje and Central Croatia.

The issue of housing problems in qualitative analysis is addressed from the perspective of their relation to hygiene problems. The following quotes from the survey participants best describe the link between poor housing and poor hygiene, but noting other important factors such as material status, number of children and the overburdening of women with child care, followed by comments on how cleanliness in Roma households is improving:

*[Hygiene conditions are] generally mediocre. But, of course, it varies from family to family. Some do not have any hygiene problems, some do. But, like, generally speaking, kind of mediocre. [When I talk about hygiene problems, if there are any], I think that some people do not have, for example, a bathroom and a toilet in their homes. Some people don't have that yet. There is a big difference from family to family. It depends, of course, on their financial situation. That's what I think. And it depends of maintaining hygiene in the homes, but I attribute that to the fact that there are a lot of children, so those women who are at home simply don't manage to clean their homes after the children. But it's not as dirty as it was before. They do care a little more than they did ten years ago. [BB\_KNF\_03]*

*There are, for example, people who are without water and without electricity, but somehow at least have something of their own, a room or two, but somehow, they manage. Hygiene conditions, how can I say, depend*



*on the household – it depends on the conditions each person creates for themselves, because the waste collection service is organized, so we can't say that it is ... but there is also the financial issue, this famous financial situation – they can't pay for electricity and water, so they cut off electricity and water supply and the waste collection service. [ZG\_RNM\_05]*

Other participants also notice these connections, and the focus is most often on children and what consequences housing deprivation has for them:

*They didn't manage to upgrade so they don't have a bathroom. Let's say that's a bit of a problem, but it's not that the kids are dirty or something. They wash themselves, there's always the good old washbasin. Bathrooms didn't always exist. Life is a bit more modern now, with showers and what not. So, children wash themselves in the wash-basin, it would take a lot of financial help to make things better and to help build, finish the house and the things that are missing. Some people still live in poor dilapidated houses. [BB\_RNM\_04]*

### 3.5. Types and infrastructure of Roma settlements

The largest part of the Roma population [about 46%] lives in isolated Roma settlements, i.e. settlements that are separated from the town or village in a separate location. About 29% of Roma in Croatia live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village, about 17% live in concentrated Roma settlements on the outskirts of a town or village, and about 9% live in concentrated Roma settlements located within a larger city or town.

There are regional differences in the representation of Roma with regard to the types of settlements in which they live [Table 3.5.1.]. Almost all Roma in Međimurje, i.e. 95% of them live in isolated Roma settlements, far from the nearest town or village. In Northern Croatia, slightly less than half of Roma [about 45% of them] live in isolated Roma settlements, while the rest live either dispersed among the majority population [27%] or in Roma settlements on the outskirts of towns or villages. In Zagreb and its surrounding area, almost all Roma live dispersed among the majority population [93%], while in Central Croatia approximately half of them live in dispersion, and the rest in concentrated Roma settlements at different distances from towns or villages. In Slavonia, slightly more than half of Roma live in Roma settlements on the outskirts of towns or villages [about 58%], the rest either dispersed among the majority population [22%] or in Roma settlements within towns or villages [16%]. In Istria and Primorje, about half of the Roma live in Roma settlements within the city, and about 30% of them live dispersed among the majority population.

**TABLE 3.5.1.** Share of Roma living in certain types of settlements, by region

	Settlement type			
	A settlement separated from a town or village in a separate location	A settlement on the outskirts of a town or village	A settlement within a town or village	Roma live dispersed among the majority population in a town or village
<b>Međimurje</b>	95.2%	0.0%	1.2%	3.6%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	45.6%	26.4%	1.3%	26.7%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	0.0%	5.5%	1.6%	92.9%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	15.1%	25.1%	12.0%	47.8%
<b>Slavonia</b>	3.5%	58.4%	16.0%	22.1%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	14.0%	5.7%	49.9%	30.4%
<b>Total</b>	45.7%	16.5%	9.1%	28.7%

The issue of hygiene and health risks in settlements was not surveyed by the questionnaire but was included as a question in interviews and focus groups and in the mapping of Roma settlements. Most of the interviewees and focus groups talking about this topic mentioned the problems of illegal dumps – of all the analyzed documents referring to hygiene and health risks [69 of them], in 30% of cases it was illegal dumps. Hygiene and health risks in Roma settlements include problems with polluted water, problems with sewage and septic tanks, and polluted air. Participants also cite the problems of stray dogs in Roma settlements, as well as rats, snakes and mosquitoes, but also lice and scabies. Approximately half of the participants who spoke on this topic stated that, to their knowledge, there are no dangerous conditions in Roma settlements in their county.

From the mapping of Roma settlements, we learn that out of a total of 109 Roma settlements in which the survey was conducted, 41 of them have a problem of polluted air, and 34 of them have polluted water. In 42 Roma settlements there is a problem of garbage piling up on the streets, near houses and in yards, and in 28 of them there is a problem of piling up bulky waste. For every other Roma settlement, informants stated that there were other unhealthy or dangerous living conditions present, such as abandoned dogs, rats and snakes, the proximity of farms [e.g. pigs] that cause odors, problems with overgrown plants such as ragweed, untidy canals with wastewater, the stench of septic tanks and flooded parts of the settlement during heavy rains.



# 4

## Social position of Roma women



## 4. Social position of Roma women

“Patriarchy among the Roma goes back centuries” (Ilić, 2000).

One of the more comprehensive sociological definitions of patriarchy [Walby, 1990: 20] says that it is “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women”, and that this system consists of six relatively autonomous but still causally interconnected structures. These are: 1) relations of domestic production and gender division of work in the household, 2) sphere of paid work, 3) culture and cultural institutions [education, religion, media], 4) sexuality [obligatory heterosexuality and double sexual standards], 5) male violence against women and 6) patriarchal relations in the state. These six structures of patriarchy form a conceptual framework for the analysis of the social position of Roma women in this study, with special emphasis on certain elements of the sphere of work, culture and violence. In the broadest sense, patriarchy is a manifestation and institutionalization of male domination over women and children in the family and an extension of male domination over women in society [Sultana, 2011]. Many feminist theorists and philosophers agree that the main institution and foundation of maintaining patriarchy is the family [e.g. Okin, 1989; Pateman, 1988]. “By mediating between the individual and social structures, the family exercises control and adjustment where political and other authorities are insufficient” [Galić, 2002: 229]. Despite certain differences between Roma communities in individual EU countries, patriarchal family systems are a common element in all Roma communities that subordinates women to men and restricts access to basic women’s human rights [Crowley, Genoa and Sansonetti, 2013]. One of the necessary consequences of patriarchal relations are pronounced gender socioeconomic inequalities in favor of men, and to the detriment of women. Gender socioeconomic inequalities are a type of social inequalities that arise from the unequal distribution of social and economic resources between women and men.

All existing data indicate very pronounced gender socioeconomic inequalities in Roma communities. In fact, one of the key findings of the analysis of the social position of Roma women in 11 EU countries [Crowley, Genova and Sansonetti, 2013]<sup>40</sup> was that the Roma patriarchal family model influences the access of Roma women to basic

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40 Data from the 2011 study by the UNDP, the World Bank and the European Commission.

human rights and exposes them to various forms of violence. “Due to patriarchal traditions, Roma women and girls still do not enjoy full respect for their freedom of choice in matters concerning the most basic decisions in their lives, and continue to face significant levels of discrimination and difficulties in all areas of life. Roma women/girls are still highly underestimated in their communities, regardless of which group/subgroup they belong to” [Crowley, Genova and Sansonetti, 2013: 10].

The basic determinants of the social position of women in society are usually considered to be the dimensions related to education, employment and wages, political power and family life. Data on the basic sociodemographic characteristics of the Roma population presented in the previous chapter show that a large share of Roma women have no education or only incomplete primary school, they get married early and have children, and they have many children, they are highly non-active in the labor market and they have a high unemployment rate. These data indicate a low potential for Roma women’s participation in social and economic life and are the basis for a deeper analysis of specific indicators of the social position of Roma women.

This chapter addresses several topics relevant to the presentation of the social position of Roma women in Croatia. Education and inclusion in economic life are two fundamental dimensions of social status. Given that studies show that gender socioeconomic inequalities are associated with violence against women [Costa et al., 2013] and poorer health [Hassanzadeh et al., 2014], we conclude the chapter with topics related to reproductive and sexual health and the rights of Roma women, as well as their experiences of violence. In the following chapter, we will apply three age categories for the analysis of the social position of Roma women, using the phrase *young Roma women* for those aged 14 to 29, the phrase *middle-aged Roma women* for those aged 30 to 55, and the phrase *older Roma women* for those aged 56 and older to avoid repeating age categories.

## 4.1. Education

Roma across the EU generally report low literacy rates. Data from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA, 2014a] from 2011 show that about a fifth of Roma respondents aged 16 and older said they could not read or write. In this study, statistically significant differences in the share of illiterate women between generations were found,<sup>41</sup> and in addition, same data indicate a very large discrepancy in literacy between Roma women and women in the general population. While in the Roma population among women aged 30 to 55 almost a quarter

41 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 209.016$ ; df = 2; p < 0.001.

of them [24%] are illiterate, in the general population they are represented by only 0.13% [or 2,645 women] (CBS, 2016). In the older generation of women, those aged 55 and older, illiterate women make up 1.07% [or 21,619 women] in the general population, while there are 45% of them in the Roma population.

According to the results of this study, there are a total of 17% illiterate Roma women, which is less than in other EU countries where Roma live.<sup>42</sup> However, there are almost 2.5 times more illiterate Roma women than illiterate Roma men [7%].<sup>43</sup> There are also more illiterate women [1.3%] than men [0.4%] in the general population of the Republic of Croatia (CBS, 2016: 116), but the shares of illiterates among Roma men and women are significantly higher. Among young Roma men and women, there is no statistically significant difference in the share of illiterate persons by gender, but in the middle-age generation,<sup>44</sup> and especially in the older generation,<sup>45</sup> women are much more illiterate than men. Among young people, 4.2% of women and 3% of men are illiterate. In middle age, 24% of women are illiterate, compared to 9% of men, while in the older age group as many as 45% of women and 15% of men are illiterate. Thus, the data show that the share of illiterate women decreases significantly in the younger generations, but there is still a gender gap in illiteracy in all generations. Similar to Croatia, data on Roma women in the EU (FRA, 2014a) show an increase in the share of literate women from generation to generation in all countries, and intergenerational differences are greatest in countries with the highest total share of illiterate women (Greece and Portugal).

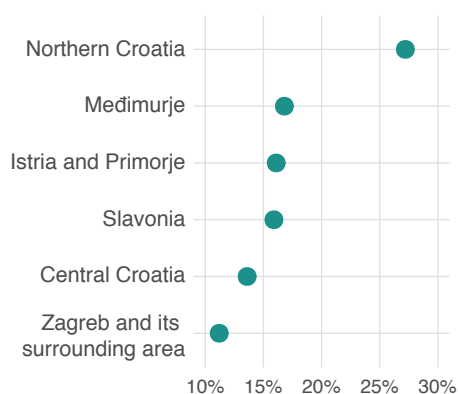


FIGURE 4.1.1. Women's illiteracy, by region

42 According to the FRA [2014a], 57% of Roma women in Greece are illiterate, 45% in Portugal, 36% in Romania, 29% in France, 23% in Italy and 18% in Poland.

43 Gender differences in the share of literate women and men were also tested, and it was found that there is a statistically significant correlation between illiteracy and gender. Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

44 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

45 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

In this study, the analysis identified statistically significant regional differences in the share of illiterate women.<sup>46</sup> As Figure 4.1.1. shows, the majority of illiterate women is in Northern Croatia, as many as 27.2%, while the least of them are in Zagreb and its surrounding area, but still 11.2%. The issue of female illiteracy is addressed directly in the qualitative analysis, interviews and focus groups. The following quotes speak of the perception of Roma representatives of the prevalence of illiteracy among men and women:

*My mom is illiterate. Those are older people. Most of them are women. My mom is illiterate, but she has earned her pension. She worked at the Sisak Ironworks for 22 years, she was a manual worker in the park.* [BP\_RNM\_02]

*[...] More than half... That's right, it's older people mostly... Illiteracy is quite high. Are there gender differences? There are because, of course, women are largely uneducated. There is a saying that the Roma use a lot – "women at home, men at work", meaning it's the duty of a man to support a woman.* [ZG\_RNM\_05]

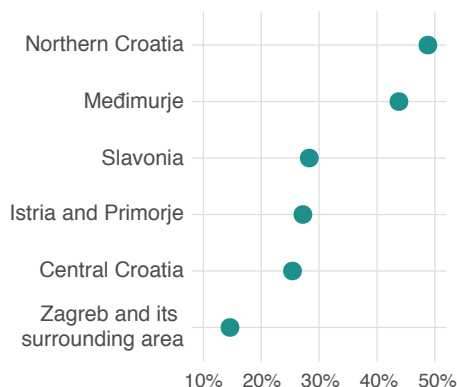
As shown in the chapter on sociodemographic profiles, Roma men and women in Croatia mostly have a low educational status, with almost all regions being dominated by those with incomplete primary school, and women are significantly less educated than men. High illiteracy rates are a consequence of the general low level of education among Roma women, which in turn is inextricably linked to the issue of dropping out of school. Therefore, we analyzed the frequency and reasons for Roma women dropping out of certain levels of education, with an emphasis on generational and regional specifics.

In the total population of Roma women, as many as 33% of them claim that they enrolled and then dropped out of primary school. Most middle-aged women dropped out of primary school, as many as 42%, while the share of young and older women is slightly lower – 28% of young women and 25% of older women dropped out of primary school.<sup>47</sup> It should be noted that these are percentages of all Roma women aged 14 and older, not just those who enrolled in primary school. In fact, the data presented in the chapter Sociodemographic profiles show that there is between 16% [in Međimurje] and 30% [in Northern Croatia] of Roma women without education, which means that they did not even enroll in primary school and could therefore not drop out.

46 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 19.075$ ; df = 5; p = 0.002.

47 There are statistically significant generational differences in women dropping out of school [Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 69.722$ ; df = 6; p < 0.001].





**FIGURE 4.1.2.** Women who dropped out of primary school, by region

The analysis found that there are statistically significant regional differences in women dropping out of school [Figure 4.1.2.].<sup>48</sup> Almost half of women in Northern Croatia [49%] and in Međimurje [44%] dropped out of primary school, while in Zagreb and its surrounding area the percentage of women who drop out of primary education is the lowest [15%].

**TABLE 4.1.1.** Generational differences in reasons for women dropping out of school [only 14+ women who dropped out of school]<sup>49</sup>

	Women aged 14–29 [n = 295]	Women aged 30–55 [n = 244]	Women aged 56+ [n = 36]	Women Total [n = 575]
Other reason	22.0%	32.4%	16.7%	26.1%
Marriage	27.1%	24.2%	8.3%	24.7%
Financial reasons	13.9%	19.7%	52.8%	18.8%
Poor educational outcomes	15.3%	7.4%	8.3%	11.5%
Pregnancy, becoming a parent	14.9%	2.9%	2.8%	9.0%
Health reasons	3.4%	6.6%	2.8%	4.7%
Moving to another environment	2.4%	5.3%	2.8%	3.7%
Work/employment	3.1%	3.3%	5.6%	3.3%
School is too far away	1.7%	3.7%	0.0%	2.4%
Bullying at school	1.7%	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%
Language problems – speaks Croatian badly	0.7%	1.6%	0.0%	1.0%

48 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 107.588$ ;  $df = 15$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

49 Statistically significant generational differences exist in the following reasons for women dropping out of school: financial reasons [ $p < 0.001$ ]; poor educational outcomes [ $p = 0.014$ ]; marriage [ $p = 0.046$ ]; pregnancy, becoming a parent [ $p < 0.001$ ]; other reason [ $p = 0.010$ ].

When looking at the key reason for dropping out of school for all women who have started some level of education, it was marriage of a quarter of Roma women that prevented them from completing their education. For almost one fifth of women, dropping out of school occurred due to financial reasons. Marriage and parenting in the 2011 EU Roma survey was also significantly more pronounced among women than men, especially in countries of Central and Eastern Europe [FRA, 2014a: 56], although relatively low on the list after economic reasons [education is too expensive and they need to find employment], as well as the belief that they are educated enough.

Older Roma women perceive poor financial conditions as key reasons for dropping out of school, while young women cite marriage [27%], poor educational outcomes [15%] and pregnancy and becoming a parent as key reasons that reduce their life chances and lead to dropping out of school [also 15% of them]. Almost one fifth of middle-aged Roma women consider marriage and financial reasons to be the main reason for dropping out of school. Among older Roma women, only 8% of women cite marriage as a reason for dropping out of school, while pregnancy and becoming a parent were the reason for dropping out of education for only 3% of women of that age.

## 4.2. Inclusion in economic life

In most approaches to women's work we find a multidimensional field that discusses the following: underrepresentation of women in the labor market (in the field of paid work, there have always been more women than men registered at the HZZ in Croatia. The highest unemployment rate of women compared to men since the 1990s to date was in 2008 when women accounted for 62% of all unemployed persons registered at the HZZ, while this percentage is slightly lower for 2018 – 57% [CBS, 2019b]); unequal salaries for the same work (according to the average monthly paid net salaries of employees in legal entities by activity, average 2017 [CBS, 2019b], women's salaries amounted to 82.5% of men's salaries in the same activity. This percentage is significantly lower in health care and social work where mostly women work and it amounts to 75%);<sup>50</sup> gender dimensions of employment trends (most women work in underpaid sectors that are in some way extended unpaid domestic jobs: women are thus caregivers, educators, care for the elderly and infirm, work in administration, etc.) and unpaid domestic work.

50 Klasnić [2017] presents data in his study "The impact of gender division of family responsibilities and household chores on the professional life of employed women" according to which "in approximately one quarter of relationships partners earn equally, in one quarter women earn more than their partners [but usually not much more], while in almost every other relationship the man earns slightly or much more than his female partner" [Klasnić, 2017: 56].

Here we will briefly indicate the characteristics of modern trends in the neoliberal capitalist and global labor market and the basic characteristics of the so-called unpaid domestic work because we consider them important for understanding the contribution of Roma women to Roma communities precisely because most Roma women are not included in the formal labor market.

As with the young Roma population, Roma women are facing an increasingly widespread modern phenomenon of flexible work schedules that increasingly presuppose unregulated working hours and work from home. According to Tomić-Koludrović [2015], these changes prolong the already long working hours of employed women outside the home and in the household, and the length of work should be added to the increased unpredictability of short-term distribution of work tasks and the inability to assess when they can be done. Increased work rhythm and unpredictability of work schedules are particularly difficult for people who have to reconcile their schedules with other obligations (and not only those towards work and the employer), and it is especially difficult for employed mothers with children. In such circumstances, women's work is concentrated in the area of greatest flexibility, i.e. in those "forms of work that simultaneously enable housework and paid work (*family-friendly work arrangements*), which is a step backwards in terms of the already achieved emancipatory effect of 'women leaving the house'." [Tomić-Koludrović, 2015: 105]. Given the socioeconomic and other indicators of the life of Roma women [(un)satisfactory housing conditions, widespread poverty, illiteracy and low educational structure], modern trends of the neoliberal capitalist market are an additional challenge for the employment of Roma women.

Numerous feminists have recognized the importance of dealing with issues of privatized social reproduction – unpaid domestic work, family work, etc. – subjecting them to theoretical consideration and extremely important creative research. Klasnić's [2017] results of a survey of 600 employed women living with their intimate partners, of different levels of education, from all regions of the Republic of Croatia, show that women in Croatia still perform a huge amount of unpaid work. Moreover, Klasnić [2017] states an interesting finding that, according to women's estimates, employed women spend about 24 hours in childcare activities during a typical week, while their partners spend only about 10 hours a week on the same activities. The biggest difference in the time invested between men and women is that in performing routine household chores such as ironing, cooking, cleaning, etc. A special type of work, the so-called "mental work", i.e. making sure that all the necessary work is done on time and in an appropriate way, is also mostly a woman's job. This is especially true of routine household chores and child care, in which women invest much more time and cognitive and emotional effort than men.

Considering that more than half of Roma women in middle working years do a "huge amount of unpaid work", i.e. they are defined as housewives who are en-

gaged in raising children and unpaid household chores, we considered it important to emphasize that the family division of labor and “mental work” are not significantly different in the majority population of women. Since most Roma women never do paid work, we analyzed the perception of representatives of relevant institutions and representatives of the RNM in qualitative data on the position of women both in the family and in the labor market. In fact, certain attitudes and beliefs towards the position of women within the Roma community make it difficult for women to leave the family, and thus impede greater chances both in the education system and later in active inclusion in the labor market.

In the section that follows, we will present quotations from a qualitative analysis related to unpaid women’s work as part of the context of the social and economic position of Roma women in Croatia:

*Women do their housework – cooking and getting children ready for school, being there when they return from school and so on... [BB\_RNM\_O4].*

*However, today when a Roma woman has to leave her husband and family for three months during the summer to do seasonal work, it’s difficult. They are still a patriarchal family where the father is a god and a saint and there’s not much you can do. So, women are still at home, and if they graduated from school, when they need to go to work, it falls on deaf ears [MD\_KNF\_O7].*

*Because the mother is the chief in the Roma community. She is the one through whom everything takes place. Husband, food, cleaning the house, educating the children, it’s all a mother’s job. So, she has neither the will nor the time to take care of herself [OB\_RNM\_O3].*

*He is constantly wandering somewhere, and the poor woman at home has no teeth or anything and has to take care of her children and of course that’s not good because they become poorer than they would otherwise be. He miraculously always has money in his pocket and he always brags to me how much money he has, but he drinks it, he doesn’t take it home to his kids. Their carelessness, their patriarchal way of life where a man lives his own life, he couldn’t care less, and the poor woman at home has so many children and doesn’t know how to deal with them. [...] [SM\_KNF\_12].*

*Well, you see, with us Roma, we are perhaps one of the most specific communities. The man has to work and contribute, and the woman is in charge of babysitting, raising children, cooking, washing and so on [ZG\_RNM\_O1].*

The above quotations show that the dominant beliefs about the position of women in Roma communities are still based on traditional and patriarchal stereotypes that a woman is “naturally” destined to have children and do unpaid household chores, and that she is the one whose primary task is caring for the family and thus for overall social reproduction. As Galić [2002] argues, all societies and cultures recognize the differences between men and women, however, they value these categories differently, so that almost all societies and cultures assign lower value to women, not men. From such beliefs and social constructions arise lower values of women within social stratification and gender relations in the broadest sense. However, this subordinate position of women has no biological origin, but stems from sociocultural factors. Such factors are related to something that is underestimated in everyday culture, i.e. “nature”, with which women are usually identified, while men appropriate the sphere of culture. Because of their special female role in social reproduction and engagement in raising children, women identify with nature. Such connections of women with nature are not natural in themselves, but are symbolic components of patriarchy [Millet, 2000; Moore, 1994 according to Galić, 2002: 227]. In the following section, we will deal with inclusion in paid work, generational and regional differences in inclusion in paid work of Roma women and their occupations.

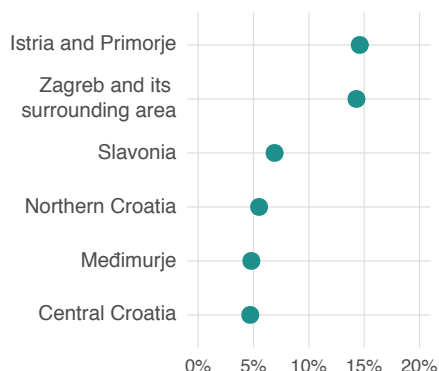
According to the CBS [2019], employed women with completed primary school are the least frequent in general population [10%], there is 57% of employed women with completed secondary school and 34% of those with higher education. According to the same source, it is interesting that the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate is among unemployed women and it amounts to 50%, while for employed women this rate is 5.8%. According to the Statistical Yearbook [CBS, 2017b], there were 516,287 [48%] employed women in 2016, and according to the type of employment, 429,064 [83%] women from the general population had permanent employment, while 83,859 [16%] had fixed-term work. There were 3,364 women [0.7%] among trainees and interns.

The share of Roma women who do paid work is extremely low, regardless of their age group. In total, in the week before the survey, only 7.6% of Roma women performed some form of paid work. Considering that as many as 79.5% of Roma women between the ages of 20 and 29 have not completed secondary school, their prospects in a flexible labor market are very limited. There are statistically significant generational differences in the performance of paid work in the previous week among Roma women,<sup>51</sup> and most Roma women who performed some paid work [10.2%]<sup>52</sup> are middle-aged. Older women work the least [4.2%], while young women are represented in paid work with 6.4%. In all three generation groups,

51 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 12.419$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = 0.005$ .

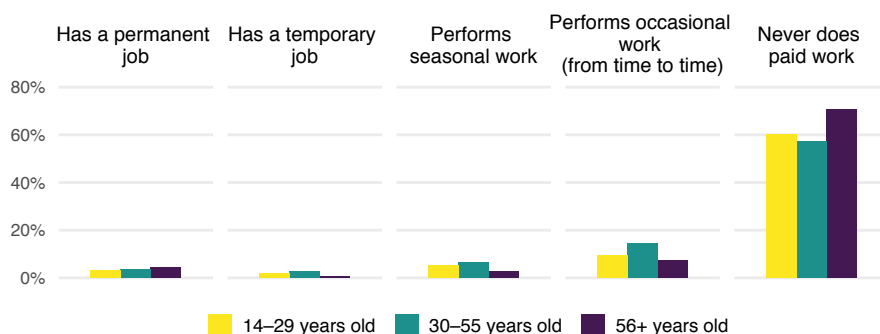
52 According to Radenković, Reljić and Kasumović [2018], in the SFRY, 17% of Roma were involved in productive work, with a relatively secure job and guaranteed social rights.

there are also statistically significant gender differences in the performance of paid work, with more men than women performing paid work in all generations. Among young people, paid work was performed by 27% of men compared to only 6% of women.<sup>53</sup> In the middle-age generation of Roma men and women, 33% of men and only 10% of women performed paid work in the previous week<sup>54</sup>. In the older generation of Roma men and women, 12% of men and 4% of women performed paid work in the previous week.<sup>55</sup>



**FIGURE 4.2.1. Regional differences in the performance of paid work of women**

There were also statistically significant regional differences in the share of women who performed paid work in the previous week:<sup>56</sup> most women work in Istria and Primorje and in Zagreb and its surrounding area [14%–15% in total], and the least in Central Croatia and Međimurje [only about 5% of women].



**FIGURE 4.2.2. Generational differences in the form of paid work of women**

53 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

54 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

55 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

56 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 32.197$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

The picture of employed Roma women looks significantly different from the general population of women. The share of women who have a permanent job is extremely low in all generations. Only 3% of young and middle-aged women are permanently employed, and 4% of older women. For temporary employment, the percentages are even lower, so only 0.6% of older women, 2% of younger Roma women and 3% of middle-aged women do such jobs. Generational differences among women in the form of paid work were found only in occasional jobs,<sup>57</sup> in which middle-aged women participate the most [15% of them], while occasional jobs are half as often done by older women. The majority of seasonal workers are middle-aged women [6%] and the least of them are older Roma women who are seasonally employed in 3% of cases.

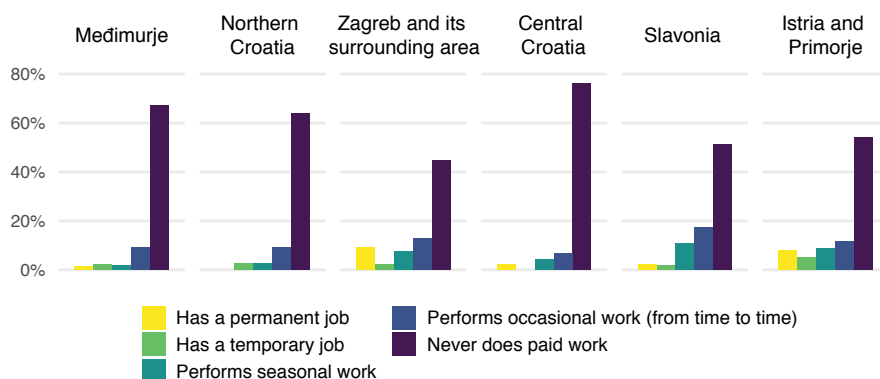


FIGURE 4.2.3. Regional differences in the form of paid work of women

Statistically significant regional differences among women in the form of paid work were found in permanent employment,<sup>58</sup> seasonal work,<sup>59</sup> occasional work<sup>60</sup> and in the share of women who never do paid work.<sup>61</sup> Only in temporary jobs are there no statistically significant regional differences among women. Most women are formally employed in Zagreb and its surrounding area [9%], while in Northern Croatia no woman has a permanent job. In Slavonia, most women do occasional [17%] and seasonal jobs [11%], while in Zagreb and its surrounding area 7% of women do seasonal jobs, and 13% of them do occasional jobs. Women occasionally work in Međimurje and Northern Croatia (in 9% of cases), while seasonal jobs are less represented in both regions [from 2 to 3%].

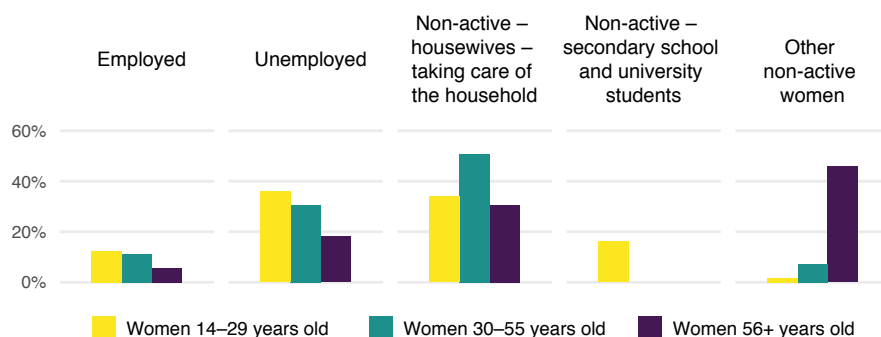
57 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 11.591$ ; df = 2; p = 0.003.

58 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 49.643$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001.

59 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 36.908$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001.

60 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 18.091$ ; df = 5; p = 0.003.

61 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 71.018$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001.



**FIGURE 4.2.4. Generational differences in women's work activity**

There are statistically significant generational differences in women's work activity. Most employed women are young [12%], slightly fewer work in middle age [11%], while less than 6% of women are employed in older age. In older age, women are most often non-active and are housewives in 31% of cases, while in the category of "other non-active women" there are as many as 46%. Most housewives are in the working age group of 30 to 55, as many as 51% of them. According to a 2011 FRA survey, in 11 EU Member States [FRA, 2013], 21% of Roma women aged 20 to 64 were paid for some work they performed, compared to 35% of Roma men of the same age. When we look at the total population of Roma women in Croatia aged 14 and older, it is clear that only 11.1% of employed Roma women are far below the European average. According to the FRA [2014], in France, Greece, Spain and Italy more than 40% of Roma women aged 16 and older are non-active and only engaged in household chores, and the data from this survey show that as many as 40% of all women are housewives, which puts Croatia in the infamous European context of countries with the largest share of the non-active Roma female population.

When asked about the occupation they are or have been engaged in in their lives, as many as 58% of women did not state any occupation but answered that they have never worked in their lives. The structure of occupations of those Roma women who worked speaks of hard and low-paid work in cleaning and production lines, in which all generations of Roma women were employed the most [24% of all surveyed women]. Most women from the older generation [30%] work or have worked in such jobs, while one fifth of young women aged 18 to 29 have such jobs. Some women aged 56 and over worked in rural low-skilled and typically male occupations such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting [11% of them], while in these occupations the younger and middle-age population of women is twice less [5–6%]. Service and trade occupations among young Roma women are represented by 8%, and the women of the middle-age and older generation work even less often [6% and 3% respectively].



### 4.3. Reproductive and sexual health and rights of Roma women

According to the United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], good sexual and reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system. It implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life, the ability to reproduce, and the freedom to decide whether, when, and how often to do so. To maintain one's sexual and reproductive health, people need access to accurate information and a safe, effective, affordable and acceptable contraception method of their choice. They must be informed and empowered to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases. When they decide to have children, women must have access to services that can help them have a fit pregnancy, a safe delivery, and a healthy baby. Each individual has the right to make their own choices about their sexual and reproductive health.

Over 25 years ago, in 1994 in Cairo, 179 countries adopted an orientation Program of Action during the International Conference on Population and Development. The Program of Action has transformed the way in which the links between population, poverty reduction and sustainable development have been addressed. Then, for the first time, the rights, needs and aspirations of individual human beings were placed at the center of sustainable development. By advancing the implementation of the Cairo program on universal access to sexual and reproductive health, the empowerment of girls and women and gender equality, and building on its achievements and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2019 UN Summit in Nairobi has committed itself to, among other things, seek to ensure the achievement of zero maternal mortality rates and postpartum complications that could have been prevented. This is intended to be achieved by integrating a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health interventions, including access to safe abortion in full compliance with the law, measures to prevent and avoid unsafe abortions, and post-abortion care, into national public health strategies, policies and programs, as well as measures to protect and ensure the rights of all individuals to bodily integrity, autonomy and reproductive rights and to provide access to basic services in support of those rights [UN, 2019].

In its 2017 report “Women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights in Europe”, the Council of Europe warned that women’s sexual and reproductive rights were “under attack” and sent a strong message to European countries: “Notwithstanding important progress, women in Europe continue to face widespread denials and infringements of their sexual and reproductive health and rights. However, threats to women’s reproductive and sexual health in the form of the ability to make independent and informed decisions about the body, health, sexuality and decisions about whether or not to reproduce are re-emerging in parts of the

continent where they have not been so pronounced. Such threats call into question society's long-term commitment to gender equality and the universality of women's human rights. Thanks to these trends, laws, policies and practices have become retrograde and restrictive. Especially when it comes to abortion and contraception. Harmful gender stereotypes are developing, and marginalized groups such as Roma and migrant women are being neglected. Additionally a range of barriers continues to undermine women's access to justice and effective remedies for violations of their sexual and reproductive rights" [Council of Europe, 2017: 5].

How far Croatia is from the application of the UNPFE definitions of good sexual health and women's rights is best shown by the results of the Roda association's research on maternal care practices.<sup>62</sup> From the results of this survey [RODA, 2015] we single out some of the experiences of childbirth in Croatia: more than half of women who give birth vaginally underwent an episiotomy [by comparison, in Denmark this percentage is 4%]; in more than half of women, the Kristeller maneuver [fundal pressure] is performed, which is a very dangerous intervention that should never be used in so many births, especially since it is rarely useful; 64% of women felt as if health workers did not have patience for them and they spent most of the time alone during childbirth, without the presence of health workers in the delivery room. The result of such treatment is that one in three women says that she is seriously considering whether she wants to have more children at all or has decided not to have more children precisely because of such an experience in childbirth. In response to women's complaints about the experience of childbirth in our maternity hospitals, experts generally emphasize the fact that perinatal mortality in Croatia is extremely low, which can be associated with still quality primary health care for women, especially for pregnant women. According to the Croatian Health Statistical Yearbook for 2018 [CNIPH, 2019], the number of examinations per pregnant woman was 7.5, while that number was slightly higher a year earlier – 7.8 examinations per pregnant woman in 2017.

In addition to the challenges of maternal care, women in Croatia, under pressure from neoconservative associations and initiatives, are finding it increasingly difficult to decide on medically prescribed contraception. In fact, according to the Croatian Institute of Public Health [2019], visits to women's primary health care clinics in 2018 for the purpose of family planning in Croatia are declining compared to the previous year. In 2017, 90,140 visits were recorded for the purpose of family planning and/or prescribing a contraceptive, which is 14.8% less than in the previous year [105,838]. Oral contraceptives [in 75% of cases] and intrauterine devices [in 18.2% of cases] were most often prescribed [CNIPH, 2019: 125]. According to

62 The survey was conducted in Croatia in March 2015 and involved more than 4,000 women, most of whom gave birth in the last two years. Available at: <http://www.roda.hr/udruga/programi/trudnoca-i-porod/rezultati-ankete-o-maternalnim-praksama-u-hrvatskoj.html>, retrieved on 16 November 2019.

the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015], the prevalence of contraceptive use among women who are married or in a relationship between the ages of 15 and 49 in Croatia is 64%, which includes any form of contraception for either the woman or her partner. All these data describe the social context in which women in Croatia, including Roma women, should exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and take care of their reproductive health.

According to Martinović-Klarić, Peternel and Ančić [2015], the results of a study conducted by the UNDP, the World Bank and the European Commission in 2011, concerning the reproductive health of Roma women, show that there are no statistically significant differences between Roma women and women in the majority population when it comes to visiting a gynecologist. However, the data are alarming in relation to preventive examinations through a test to determine the risk of cervical cancer. In fact, according to their analysis, more than 50% of women from the general population and two thirds of Roma women have never undergone this preventive examination [Martinović-Klarić, Peternel and Ančić, 2015: 21].

We begin this chapter with quotes from interviews and focus groups to describe the even more complex reality of Roma women and thus contextualize the data from the quantitative analysis.

While talking about Roma women's health care and their experiences with doctors, participants in the qualitative research touched on various topics related to women's reproductive health such as gynecologist appointments, pregnancy, number of children and consequences of childbirth, contraception and the need to educate women.

*[...] Many times going to the gynecologist is delayed in the female population, which then causes problems later with their health condition. Precisely because there is no money at the moment, so there is no money for the contraception that the gynecologist prescribes. Unfortunately, it's better to tell these details here to each other, these are the facts. [FG\_VŽ\_KNF\_15]*

*Then we also heard about this one medical campaign, mammography was organized within our institute, a mammography device was brought on site. [...] They forbid their wives, they ideologically forbid them to undergo that examination, not even for the sake of some, some kind of sexuality but because of what will happen if something is discovered. It's better for them not to know that there is some tumorous change than to face the solution... [FG\_ZG\_KNF\_13]*

*As far as health care is concerned, I think that there is still a certain difference in relation to the rest of the population, primarily when*

*it comes to underage marriages [...]. We still have a lot of that. [...]*  
*The exhaustion of Roma women after childbirth and all that is also*  
*not something that promotes better health, especially for women.*  
 [FG\_OB\_KNF\_22]

*As for women, I would say that they should be a little more educated*  
*on reproductive health care as well, because they do not go to regular*  
*gynecologist appointments, nor do they go to gynecologist appoint-*  
*ments during pregnancy. Sometimes they are 4, 5, 6 months pregnant*  
*and they have not yet gone to the first gynecologist appointment. As*  
*a reason, they state either "I know that everything is fine" or "I'm not*  
*going because I don't have money", "I don't have transportation" and*  
*such things – we have to provide them better access. They often say*  
*that they feel ashamed because they've been pregnant many times or*  
*something, so they know people will talk and they don't want to go.*  
 [MĐ\_KNF\_16]

*So I begged the institutions to help them settle that debt in some way,*  
*because I insisted that it mostly refers to women who are dealing with*  
*an unwanted pregnancy, so they would need an abortion and possibly*  
*a contraceptive implant. It all cost money. It all cost. Some have done*  
*it.* [MĐ\_RNM\_01]

*As for women, contraception is still, let's say, a taboo subject. It's terri-*  
*ble, in the beginning I would ask a woman about seeing a gynecologist*  
*and about contraception, she would stay silent. Or if there is a male in*  
*the house, even a male child, they would leave the room. [...]*  
*So it's kind of their tradition, family planning and having children is a woman's*  
*problem, not a man's [...]*  
*So, zero contraception. [...]* [OB\_KNF\_05]

*Younger girls and women go to gynecologist appointments. The prob-*  
*lem is with these slightly older ones, it's just shame or something that*  
*prevents them or they don't want to go there at all.* [OB\_RNM\_01]

*The problem with us is that women do not go to a female doctor, gy-*  
*necologist. It's horrible. It's not allowed. If she goes to the gynecologist*  
*at the age of 15–16, then she is pregnant. Even when they are pregnant,*  
*they don't go to the gynecologist regularly. It's a big problem.*

*They are quite irresponsible in that regard. Perhaps this irresponsibility*  
*stems in part from shyness because a lot of women are reluctant to*  
*go to the gynecologist, some from not understanding, because she will*  
*just look at the doctor and won't understand anything, and then prob-*  
*lems arise. Someone has problems with childbirth, someone has prob-*  
*lems with a child, someone has problems with a tumor.* [PG\_RNM\_04]

From the above quotations, one can read through the challenges in achieving sexual and reproductive health and the rights of Roma women. In the first place, it is traditionalism that is present in the Roma population, where going to the gynecologist is not understood as an action in accordance with the protection of their health, but some women feel ashamed of such examinations. In addition to shame, this situation is further exacerbated by a lack of understanding of doctors' instructions, which may be related to specialist medical discourse (which many women do not fully understand), and in part for some Roma women who do not speak Croatian well, the obstacle may be purely linguistic. Shame is not only tied to examinations, but also to the feeling that their multiple pregnancies are not viewed with approval by other patients and sometimes medical staff. Many women in the general population arrange preventive check-ups in private practices and pay for it themselves, but due to their unfavorable socioeconomic status, the additional cost of preventive check-ups in private practice is not a likely option for Roma women. As we have indicated, in recent years the issue of abortion and contraception in Croatian society has become more difficult for all women due to the conscientious objection of doctors in many hospitals, lack of gynecologists and other contextual reasons (such as prayer communities in front of hospitals with banners reading "Abortion is murder"). In addition, expenses for a monthly dose of contraceptives or IUDs, as well as several thousand kuna for abortion are no small feat for Roma women. However, apart from the economic reasons for poor contraceptive use, the importance of the reproductive female role, which is certainly highly valued in patriarchal Roma communities, is not an incentive to adopt a different type of self-care and contraceptive use. According to statements in interviews and focus groups, teenage pregnancies and more children in short periods of time are additional challenges to women's reproductive health in the Roma population.

According to Martinović-Klarić, Peternel and Ančić [2015], the quality of health services and thus the health of both Roma women and other members of the RNM would be significantly improved by introducing Roma health care providers who would function as a link between the Roma population and the Croatian health care system. Also, according to Martinović-Klarić, Peternel and Ančić [2015: 7–8], the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia plans to gradually start the program of introducing Roma health care providers during 2020, first with the implementation of a pilot project in one of the Roma settlements, after which an evaluation would be conducted to determine the effectiveness of this approach. It is planned that Roma health care providers live in Roma settlements, that they know the local culture and people well while the educational conditions are not yet defined, but it is expected that secondary education will be a prerequisite. However, certain representatives of Roma associations are critical of the program and call for the introduction of a sustainable, meaningful and useful program that would include capacity building of young Roma men and women through education and training in various medical professions.

### 4.3.1. Reproductive health and prevention

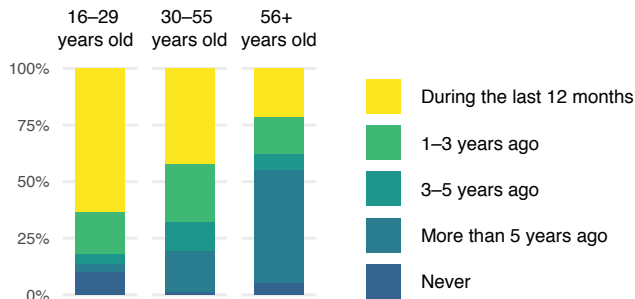
#### *Reproductive system diseases*

According to the CNIPH [2019], the most common diseases and conditions of women's reproductive health in 2018 are menopausal and perimenopausal disorders and other inflammatory diseases of the female pelvic organs [9%], followed by menstrual disorders [8%], procedures related to prevention of unwanted pregnancy [8%] and monitoring normal pregnancy [7%].

Roma women were asked in the survey if they had ever had any disease affecting reproductive organs, i.e. the uterus, ovaries or fallopian tubes. 17% of them [out of a total of 382] answered in the affirmative. There was a statistically significant difference in the prevalence of reproductive system diseases between women of different age groups.<sup>63</sup> Reproductive system diseases are most common in women in the oldest age cohort [56 years and older], with 30%. One-fifth of middle-aged women and 10% of young women experienced some of the reproductive diseases. No statistically significant difference in the incidence of reproductive diseases was found between women from different regions.

#### *Frequency of gynecologist appointments*

According to the Health Statistics Yearbook for 2018 [CNIPH, 2019], in 2018 there were 1,724,780 women in the care of a gynecologists within primary health care. Of the total number of women who chose their gynecologist in primary health care, 563,031 or 32.6% [31.7% in 2017] used health care.



**FIGURE 4.3.1. The last gynecologist appointment, by generation**

The data show that a total of 48% of Roma women have visited a gynecologist in the last 12 months. A statistically significant difference was found in the last gynecologist appointment between the age groups of women.<sup>64</sup> During the last 12 months, most young women visited a gynecologist [63%] which can be interpreted precise-

63 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 12.234$ ; df = 2; p = 0.002.

64 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 96.479$ ; df = 8; p < 0.001.

ly with the fertile age of women when most pregnancies and births occur. This also corresponds to the statements from the qualitative analysis that younger women visit a gynecologist more often than older ones. Women aged 30 to 55 in 42% of cases went to the gynecologist in the last 12 months, while this share is the lowest in older women [21%].<sup>65</sup>

The women were divided into two groups for analytical purposes according to whether they had had a gynecologist appointment in the last year.<sup>66</sup> To establish the predictors for regular gynecologist appointments, a binary logistic regression was performed in which the following variables were included in the model: health insurance, general health status, level of education (in three categories), employment status, monthly household income, literacy as social status indicator, use of social assistance as an indicator of household material status, risk of household poverty and settlement type. The general health status and settlement type were determined as statistically significant predictors. If all the other variables included in the model are constant, the improvement in general health gives a 40% higher chance of having regular gynecologist appointments.<sup>67</sup> Women living in concentrated Roma settlements on the outskirts of cities or villages are 2.5 times more likely, and women living in concentrated Roma settlements within cities are 2.6 times more likely to have a gynecologist appointment in the last 12 months than women living dispersed among the majority population.<sup>68</sup>

### *Last Pap smear (cervical cancer risk test)*

According to the Health Statistics Yearbook for 2018 [CNIPH, 2019], in 2018, 386,478 samples were taken for Pap smears from a total of 1,724,780 women in the care of gynecologists in primary health care [22%]. Of the total number of Pap smears, 9% were pathological [10% in 2017]. It should be noted here, as with the data on the share of women who visited a gynecologist in primary health care, that data on women visiting private gynecologist practices are not included, so this share is probably much higher in the general population of women.

65 There was no statistically significant correlation between the last gynecologist appointment and the attitudes towards medical staff and health professionals, as well as with negative experiences with doctors.

66 No statistically significant difference was found in having a gynecologist appointment in the last 12 months between the regions: the chi-square test.

67  $p = 0.001$ .

68  $p = 0.010$  and  $p = 0.029$ .

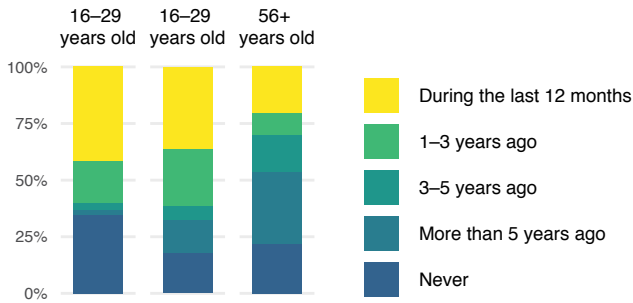


FIGURE 4.3.2. Last Pap smear [cervical cancer risk test], by generation

Among Roma women, 36% of them have had a Pap smear in the last year, and statistically significant generational differences have been found.<sup>69</sup> In the last year, 42% of young women aged 16 to 29, 36% of middle-aged women and only one-fifth of older Roma women took the cervical cancer risk test. For analytical purposes, women were divided into two groups for regional differences according to whether they had had a Pap smear in the last year. Statistically significant regional differences were found in the share of women who underwent a Pap smear in the last 12 months.<sup>70</sup> According to prevention and reproductive health care, Roma women in Slavonia show the highest level of awareness, and more than half of them have performed such testing in the last year. In Northern and Central Croatia, more than 40% of women were tested for cervical cancer, while just under a quarter of women did so in Zagreb and its surrounding area [23%].

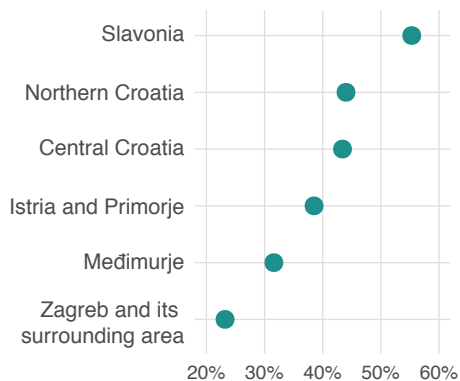


FIGURE 4.3.3. Pap smear in the last year, by region

69 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 61.669$ ; df = 8;  $p < 0.001$ .

70 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 18.131$ ; df = 5;  $p = 0.003$ .



### 4.3.2. Pregnancy and childbirth

According to the CNIPH [2019], in 2018, 36,752 births with 37,436 total children born were registered in maternity hospitals on the basis of individual birth registrations. Maternity data also include newborns whose permanent residence is not in Croatia, and in 2018, 161 births of mothers from other countries were registered. The trend of increasing the number of births in older age groups [35 years and older] continues. Births are most common between the ages of 30 and 34 [12,670 births, or 34%]. In second place, with a slight increase in the number and frequency of births, are mothers aged 25–29 [10,305 births, or 29%]. In 2018, 6,658 births were recorded in the age group 35–39 [18%], while 4,837 births [13%] were recorded in the age group 20–24. After the age of 40, births are still relatively rare. There were 1,334 births [4%] in the ages 40–44, 58 births in the ages 45–49 [0.2%] and two births in the age of 50 and older. According to the same source [CNIPH, 2019], in 2018, there were 222 births by minors [ $\leq 17$  years] in Croatian maternity hospitals, i.e. 0.6% and 666 births by younger adults [18–19 years], or 1.8%. This makes a total of 888 births by girls under 20 years of age [2.4%]. This continues the trend of decreasing the number of births in adolescence in the general population of women in Croatia.

#### Age at birth of first child

Age at birth of first child in the sample of 360 Roma women who answered this question ranges from 12 to 34 years. The median or mean age at birth of first child is 17.5 years [ $Q_1 - Q_3$ : 16–20 years, which means that 50% of Roma women give birth to their first child aged 16 to 20 years], and the average age at birth of first child among Roma women is 18 years [sd = 2.88 years].

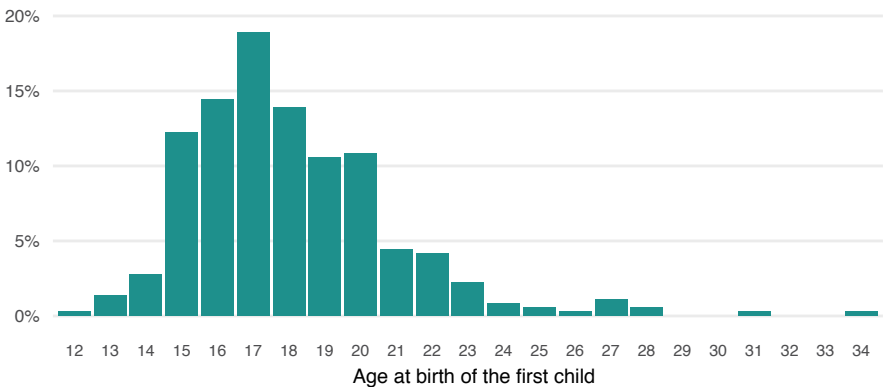


FIGURE 4.3.4. Age at birth of the first child

Of Roma women who have children, 50% of them gave birth to their first child as minors, and 17% at the age of 16. Only 9% of Roma women surveyed had never given birth, while less than 1% did not know the age at which they gave birth to their first child. The average age at birth of first child among the women in the sample decreased slightly from 17.8 years in the oldest age group to 18.1 years in the younger generations, but no statistically significant difference was found in the average age at birth of first child between women of different age groups.

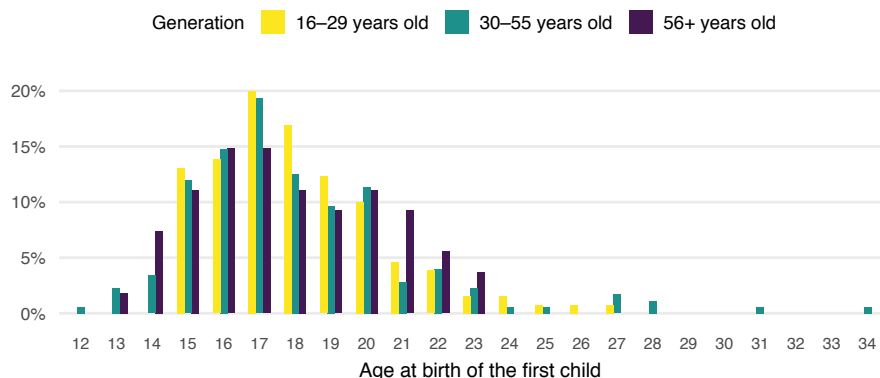


FIGURE 4.3.5. Birth of the first child of Roma women in certain generations

In the youngest age group of women, most of them gave birth to their first child at the age of 17 [20% of them], which is the same as in the middle-age generation of women where the first child was born at the age of 17 by 19% of them. Almost 15% of women in the middle-age and the older age group gave birth to their first child at the age of 16, while young women in 17% of cases give birth to their first child as younger adults at the age of 18.

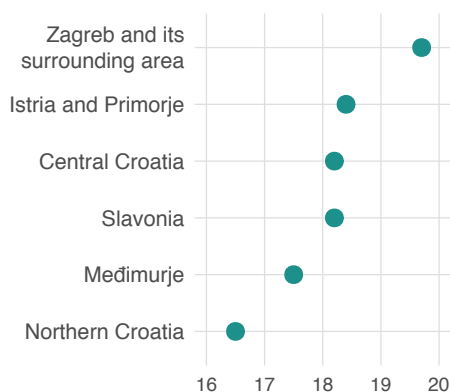
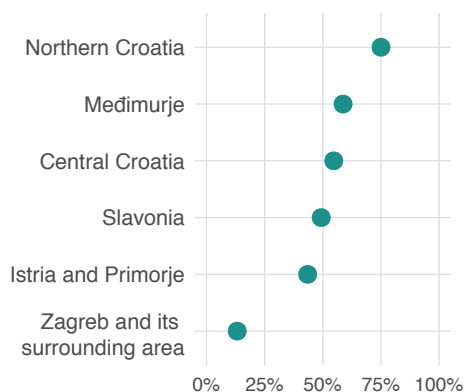


FIGURE 4.3.6. Average age at birth of the first child, by region

There was a statistically significant difference in the average age at birth of first child between regions:<sup>71</sup> the lowest average age at which Roma women give birth to their first child is in Northern Croatia [16.5 years] and then in Međimurje [17.5 years], while the highest is in Zagreb and its surrounding area [19.7 years]. There was also a statistically significant difference in the average age at birth of first child with regard to the type of settlement in which women live:<sup>72</sup> the average age at birth of first child among Roma women living dispersed, among the majority population in a town or village is statistically significantly higher [19.2 years] from the average age at which Roma women living in any type of concentrated Roma settlement give birth [which is between 17.5 and 17.7 years].

To establish predictors for the age at birth of first child, a multiple linear regression was performed where the following variables were included in the model: women's education level [in three categories], women's literacy as an indicator of social status, monthly household income, use of social assistance as an indicator of material household status and the risk of household poverty. The only statistically significant predictor was the level of education,<sup>73</sup> i.e. it can be concluded that the higher the completed level of education women have, the later they give birth to their first child. This predictor explains 10% of the variance of the dependent variable.



**FIGURE 4.3.7.** Share of women who gave birth to their first child as minors, by region

For analytical purposes, all women who gave birth to at least one child were classified into two groups according to whether they were minors or adults at the time of the birth of their first child. There was a statistically significant difference in the share of teenage pregnancies with the first child between regions<sup>74</sup> – the

71 ANOVA,  $F = 6.739$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

72 ANOVA,  $F = 8.209$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

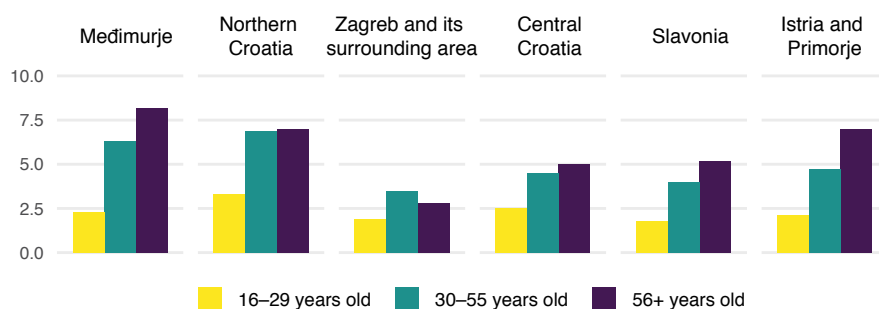
73  $\beta = 0.299$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

74 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 41.416$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

lowest share of women who gave birth to their first child while they were minors is among those in Zagreb and its surrounding area [13%] and the highest in Northern Croatia [75%]. To establish predictors for teenage pregnancies with the first child, a binary logistic regression was performed where the following variables were included in the model: monthly household income, level of education (in three categories), employment status – form of paid work, literacy as an indicator of social status, the use of social assistance as an indicator of the material status of the household, the risk of household poverty and settlement type.

The level of education of women and the type of settlement in which women live were determined as statistically significant predictors. If all other variables included in the model are constant, women who have completed primary school are 68% less likely to have a teenage pregnancy with their first child than women who are out of school or have not completed primary school,<sup>75</sup> while women with completed secondary school or higher education are as much as 91% less likely to have a teenage pregnancy with their first child than women who are out of school or have not completed primary school.<sup>76</sup> It was also found that women living in any type of concentrated Roma settlement are between 3.0 and 3.5 times more likely to have a teenage pregnancy with their first child than women living dispersed among the majority population.<sup>77</sup>

There were also statistically significant regional differences in the share of women who gave birth to their first child at a minor age.<sup>78</sup> Roma women living in any type of concentrated Roma settlement are significantly more likely to give birth to their first child at a young age [between 54% and 59%] than Roma women living dispersed among the majority population [less than 30%].



**FIGURE 4.3.8. Average number of births in age groups of women, by region**

75  $p < 0.001$ .

76  $p < 0.001$ .

77 Settlement on the outskirts of town or village:  $p < 0.001$ ; settlement within a town or village:  $p = 0.004$ ; settlement within a town or village:  $p = 0.011$ .

78 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 25.258$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

Given that women can give birth at any time during their entire fertile age, it does not make sense to make comparisons in the number of births between women of different generations, but it is interesting to look into the regional differences in the average number of births they had during their lifetime. It was found that the differences between regions are not statistically significant when it comes to young women. However, in middle-aged women as well as in older women,<sup>79</sup> regional differences in the average number of births during lifetime<sup>80</sup> are significant. Thus, in the group of middle-aged women, most children are born to women in Northern Croatia [on average almost 7 births during their lifetime], while the lowest average number of births in this age group is in Zagreb and its surrounding area [3.5 births] and in Slavonia [4 births]. For older women, the highest average number of births is in Međimurje [8.2], followed by Northern Croatia and Istria and Primorje, where it averages 7 births, while the lowest is in Zagreb and its surrounding area [2.8 births]. By comparison, the average number of births during lifetime among women in Croatia in 2017 was 1.4 births [World Bank Group, 2019], which is significantly less than among Roma women in all age groups and regions.

To establish the predictors for the number of births, a multiple linear regression was performed where the following variables were included in the model: education level of women (in three categories), female literacy as an indicator of social status, monthly household income, use of social assistance as an indicator of household material status and the risk of household poverty. Two statistically significant predictors for the number of births were identified: a woman's level of education<sup>81</sup> and a woman's literacy,<sup>82</sup> which together explain 23% of the variance of the dependent variable. Data show that the number of births decreases with a higher level of education and literacy of women.

In interviews and focus groups, one of the questions related to where women most often give birth. Below are the frequencies, and it should be noted that the term "midwife" means the support of a woman who gave birth herself. Historically, women often gave birth in the presence of another woman (mother and grandmother, or a closer member of the community), an experienced mother who helped them at the time of birth. From this practice, midwifery developed over time. However, with the increase of giving birth in maternity hospitals, the role of the midwife has also changed: she became more of a medical professional caring for a woman mainly from a medical point of view and very rarely has the opportunity to dedicate herself to a single mother. But women's needs have remained the same during childbirth and they need the expert support of women who them-

79 ANOVA,  $F = 4.575$ ;  $p = 0.002$ .

80 ANOVA,  $F = 7.187$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

81  $\beta = -0.339$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

82  $\beta = -0.259$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

selves have had the experience, which led to the emergence of the doula. “Doula is a woman who provides support to pregnant women and mothers during pregnancy and childbirth. She herself went through the experience of childbirth and the experience of being with other mothers in childbirth. The qualities that adorn a doula are calmness, warmth, sensitivity and endurance, which is sometimes needed if the birth is long-lasting” [Psychological Center “Razvoj”, 2011]. The interviews and focus groups are more about the traditional female support of an experienced woman from the community who in certain way specializes in helping women during childbirth.

**TABLE 4.3.1.** Place of birth of children – presentation of frequency in interviews and focus groups

Code name	Number of documents with code*
Hospital	40
Some give birth at home and some in the hospital	2
At home	1
Midwives	5

\* The total number of documents with the displayed codes is 45

According to claims from interviews and focus groups, the largest number of Roma women give birth in hospitals, less and less frequently in their homes, which was the case before.

### Abortions

The vast majority of countries in Europe [27] allow abortion on request in the early stages of pregnancy. The Center for Education, Counseling and Research [CESI, 2017] believes that the consequences of restrictive laws speak in favor of a legislative solution that allows abortion on request because restrictive laws do not reduce abortion rates, but are one of the leading causes of maternal mortality.<sup>83</sup> Refusal to provide medical services due to conscientious objection limits the availability of abortion and poses a public health problem and ultimately results in legal and medical uncertainty for women. According to the Act on Health Measures for

83 CESI [ibid.] states that the World Health Organization [WHO] estimates that about 22 million unsafe abortions are performed annually, and 98% of these abortions occur in developing countries that have restrictive abortion laws. It also states that, according to the WHO, about 47,000 pregnancy-related deaths are the result of unsafe abortion complications, while 8.5 million women experience unsafe abortion complications each year and need medical care. CESI [ibid.] agrees with the WHO that these outcomes could have been prevented through sex education, family planning, ensuring safe and legal induced abortion, and medical care for post-abortion complications.

Exercising the Right to Freely Decide on the Birth of Children, in Croatia abortion is a medical procedure that is allowed until the end of the 10th week from the day of conception, and after that period it can be performed only with the approval of the commission. Abortion is performed at the request of a pregnant woman, and the procedure upon request is urgent. The procedure can be performed in hospitals that have an organized unit for gynecology and obstetrics and in other health care institutions that are specifically authorized by the state authority responsible for health affairs. The costs of a legally induced abortion are not covered by health insurance but need to be covered from personal funds.

According to the CNIPH [2019], during 2018 the total number of abortions was 7,064. “Other abnormal products of conception” account for the largest share – 37%, followed by legally induced abortions – 36.2%, and “miscarriages” which make up 18.2% of total abortions. Ectopic pregnancy was recorded in 7.2% of reported abortions. The number of girls under the age of 20 among women who underwent a legally induced abortion in 2018 was 6%.<sup>84</sup> Among women with legally induced abortions, most are those with live births – 66% and between the ages of 30 and 39 [47%]. According to the results of this study, miscarriage was experienced by 30% of Roma women during their lifetime, while one-fifth of Roma women [20%] had an abortion on request. However, as it is possible that the same women had different types of abortion, a variable was constructed that shows this – about 6% of women had both miscarriages and induced abortions during their lifetime.

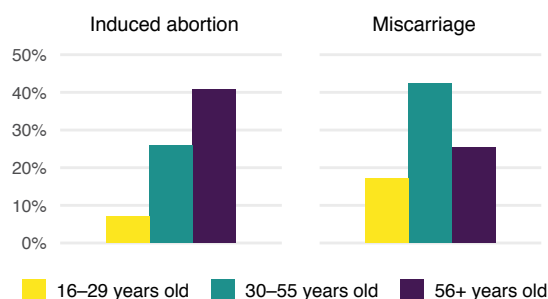


FIGURE 4.3.9. Share of women who had abortions, by generation

84 In previous years it was as follows: 2007 9.2%, 2008 7.9%, 2009 8.5%, 2010 8.6%, 2011 8.0%, 2012 8.3%, 2013 7.0%, 2014 7.2%, 2015 7.5%, 2016 7.1% and 2017 6.5% [CNIPH, 2019: 284].

17% of young women, 42% of middle-aged women, and 25% of older women had a miscarriage.<sup>85</sup> 7% of young women, 26% of middle-aged women and 41% of older women had an induced abortion.<sup>86</sup> To establish the predictors for induced abortion, a binary logistic regression was performed where the following variables were included in the model: health insurance, number of births, level of education [in three categories], paid work, monthly household income, literacy as an indicator of social status, use of social assistance as an indicator of the material status of the household, the risk of household poverty and settlement type. The number of births, the working status of women and settlement type in which women live were determined as statistically significant predictors. If all other variables included in the model are constant, the following can be concluded: women who have had more births during their lifetime are more likely to have had an induced abortion [for each birth the chances that a woman has had an induced abortion increases by 15%];<sup>87</sup> women who are housewives by working status, i.e. they take care of the household, have a 2.3 times higher chance of induced abortion than women who are unemployed;<sup>88</sup> women who are unable to work due to age [although not retired] or a serious health condition are 8.7 times more likely to have had an induced abortion than women who are unemployed;<sup>89</sup> women living in isolated concentrated Roma settlements are 78% less likely to have induced abortion than women living dispersed among the majority population;<sup>90</sup> and women living in concentrated Roma settlements on the outskirts of town or village have a 59% lower chance of having an induced abortion than women living dispersed among the majority population.<sup>91</sup>

Unlike a large number of social and economic factors related to whether Roma women have a greater or lesser chance of induced abortion, the model with the same included variables for miscarriage shows only one statistically significant predictor, and that is the number of births. The data show that women who had a higher number of births during their lifetime are also more likely to have a miscarriage [for each birth, the chance that a woman had a miscarriage increases by 22%].<sup>92</sup> Thus, the only significant predictor of miscarriage among Roma women is the number of births they have had during their lifetime, while for induced abortion there is a whole set of intertwined socioeconomic circumstances that may increase or decrease the chances of Roma women experiencing induced abortion during their lifetime.

85 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 27.832$ ; df = 2;  $p < 0.001$ .

86 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 36.825$ ; df = 2;  $p < 0.001$ .

87  $p = 0.008$ .

88  $p = 0.026$ .

89  $p < 0.001$ .

90  $p < 0.001$ .

91  $p = 0.034$ .

92  $p < 0.001$ .



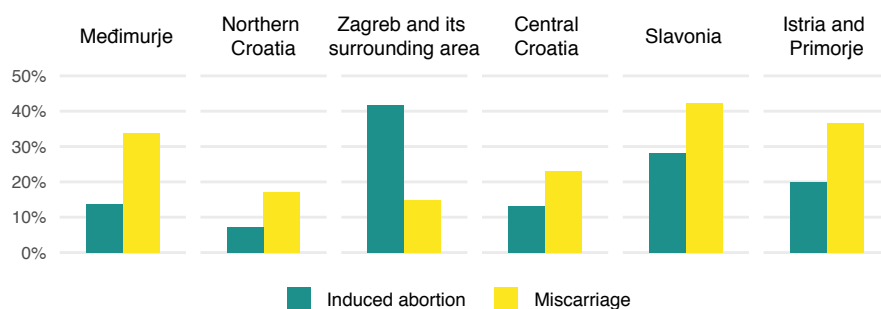


FIGURE 4.3.10. Share of women who had abortions, by region

According to the statements of Roma women surveyed, the largest share of those who had a miscarriage was in Slavonia [42% of women], while the least number of women in Zagreb and its surrounding area had a miscarriage [15% of women].<sup>93</sup> Also, according to the women, induced abortion is most common in Zagreb and its surrounding area, where 42% of women had it, and the rarest in Northern Croatia, where only 7% of women had it.

### Complications in pregnancy

According to the CNIPH [2019], complications in pregnancy were recorded in 10,049 mothers [27.3% of the total number] in the general population of women in Croatia during 2018. The most common complication in pregnancy is gestational diabetes recorded in 4.9% of mothers in 2018.<sup>94</sup> Data from that study show that a total of 31% of Roma women [out of 379 respondents] stated that they had some form of complications related to pregnancy or childbirth.<sup>95</sup> The data are not directly comparable to those of the general population because Roma women's responses related to all pregnancies during their lifetime [prevalence], and data from the general population are the incidence of cases during 2018. Among Roma women, there was a statistically significant difference in the prevalence of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth between different generations of women:<sup>96</sup> the largest share of women who had complications related to pregnancy or childbirth were middle-aged [38% of them]. Among young women, it is about a quarter of women, and among older women about a fifth of those who have experienced complications related to pregnancy and childbirth.

93 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 18,987$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0,002$ .

94 This is followed by hypertensive disorders: 3.2% of the total number of mothers; maternal care due to other known or suspected fetal problems: 3.2% of the total number of mothers; premature birth: 2.0% of the total number of mothers; premature rupture of membranes: 1.4% of the total number of mothers; amniotic fluid and amniotic fluid volume disorders: 1.4% of the total number of mothers; and urinary tract infections during pregnancy: 1.4% of the total number of mothers [CNIPH, 2019: 275–276].

95 There was no statistically significant difference found between regions.

96 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 7.138$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.028$ .

### Perinatal mortality – mortality of fetuses, newborns and infants

According to the Croatian Health Statistics Yearbook for 2018 [CNIPH, 2019], in 2018, out of 37,436 total births in Croatian maternity hospitals, 37,277 children were live births and 159 children were stillborn. Of the 37,277 live births, 93 newborns died in the first seven days of life. Data from this study show that among Roma women who had at least one birth in their lifetime, 10% experienced fetal death, 5% neonatal death, and 6% infant death. These shares are not directly comparable with the data for the general population of women because these statistics are kept separately from the total number of births, and the collected data on Roma women refer to the share of women, not their births. It should be noted that Roma women on average give birth to a higher number of children than women in the general population, so these percentages would probably have been lower had they been measured in relation to the number of births. Given the small share of women surveyed who have experienced perinatal child mortality, statistical analyses by generations and regions were not conducted.

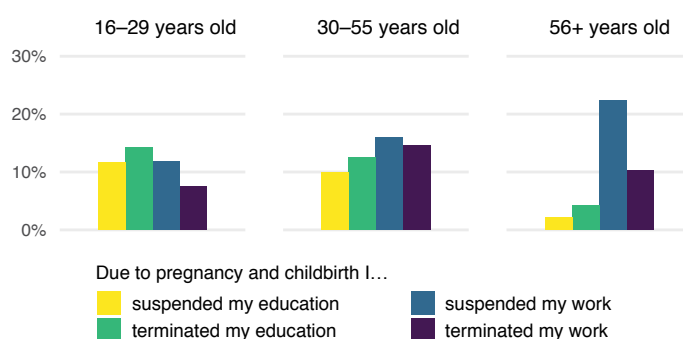


FIGURE 4.3.11. Social consequences of childbirth, by generation

The women<sup>97</sup> were offered four statements in the questionnaire that referred to the possible social consequences of pregnancy and childbirth: suspension or termination of education and suspension or termination of work. It is an alarming fact, which confirms the already mentioned challenge in the subchapter on education, that as many as 26% of Roma women surveyed have suspended or terminated their education due to pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, pregnancies and births are the reason for the suspension and termination of active inclusion in the labor market for 19% of Roma women. No statistically significant generational differences were found in any of the claims offered. However, it should be noted that the statement “I permanently dropped out of school due to pregnancy and

97 The question was posed only in version B of the survey questionnaire, so this analysis was conducted on a smaller subsample of 328 surveyed Roma women aged 16 and older.

childbirth”<sup>98</sup> found statistically significant differences between the age subgroups of young women. Early pregnancies and childbirth have the greatest consequences on the education process in the youngest age group of women, those aged 16 to 19: as many as 47% of them have permanently dropped out of school.

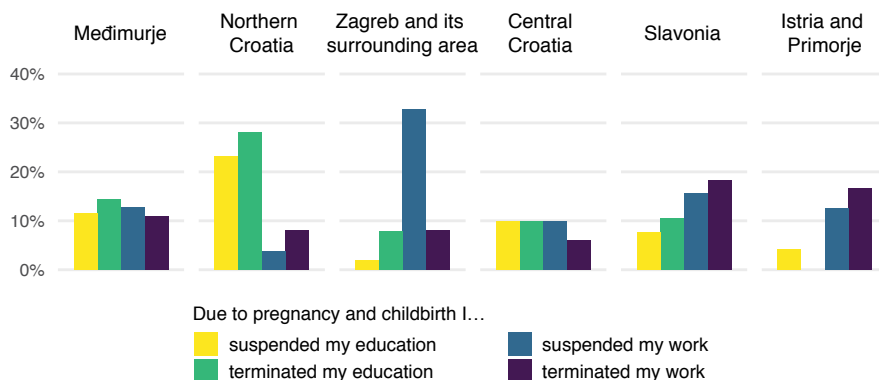


FIGURE 4.3.12. Social consequences of childbirth, by region

The results of regional analyses<sup>99</sup> showed that there are statistically significant regional differences in termination of education<sup>100</sup> due to pregnancy and childbirth, and that this pattern is most common among women in Northern Croatia, where as many as 28% of women terminated their education for these reasons. Also, there are statistically significant regional differences<sup>101</sup> in temporary cessation of work. Temporary cessation of work due to pregnancy and childbirth is most common among women in Zagreb and its surrounding area. As many as 32% of them claim that they have temporarily stopped working due to childbirth and pregnancy, which can be related to the largest share of formally employed Roma women in Zagreb and its surrounding area [16%]. The fact that the share of women in Zagreb and its surrounding area who claim that they have temporarily stopped working due to pregnancy is twice as high as the share of formally employed Roma women is surprising. However, some Roma women who work do not participate in the formal, but informal economy. Also, it depends on what all Roma women mean by work, because it is possible that due to pregnancy and childbirth, some women temporarily do not participate in social and reproductive work and potentially consider it a temporary interruption of work obligations.

98 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 20.211$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

99 No statistically significant regional differences were found in the statement regarding the suspension and termination of education and in the statement regarding the suspension and termination of work.

100 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 11.183$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.048$ .

101 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 16.435$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.006$ .

## 4.4. Domestic violence

Any violence against women is not only a private but also a social problem. Economic and personal insecurity, unemployment, crime and intolerance, as well as the lack of education are some of the factors that contribute to the more frequent occurrence of domestic violence [Dokmanović, 2007]. Since some of the risk factors for violence are particularly present in the Roma population, violence against women in Roma families is one of the unavoidable topics to which special attention should be paid when analyzing the social position of women in Roma communities.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence defines key terms as follows: „violence against women’ is considered a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and refers to all acts of gender-based violence that result in or are likely to result in the physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion or deliberate deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” [CoE, 2018: 7], while „domestic violence’ means all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence occurring in the family or household or between former or current spouses or partners, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim” [CoE, 2018: 7]. Experiences of violence against women by their intimate partners are not easy to measure, and it is particularly not easy to assess its prevalence.

Data from the Ministry of the Interior [MUP] point to the fact that women are mostly victims of domestic violence; both misdemeanors and criminal offenses of domestic violence, as well as criminal offenses of murder, bodily injury and grievous bodily harm, and criminal offenses against sexual freedom committed among close persons. For example, according to the data on criminal offenses of domestic violence from Article 179a of the Criminal Code [OG 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15], in 2016, 330 of criminal offenses were recorded in which 279 [85%] females and 51 [15%] males were injured, while in the same year 13,647 offenses of domestic violence were recorded, of which mostly physical [7,351, or 54%] and psychological violence [5,841, or 43%], with the perpetrators of domestic violence in 77% of cases being men [MDOMSP, 2017].

According to the results of the Klasnić [2013] research, it was determined that psychological violence is the most common in the general population of women in Croatia, and when it comes to specific partner behavior, women most often experience shouting [which was experienced by at least half of the surveyed women at least once, and by almost 40% of them more than once]. This is followed by insulting or name calling, accusations of infidelity, belittling, mocking and ridicul-

ing, intimidation with glances, movements or activities, and threats with weapons – behavior experienced by between 10 and 20% of women. The most common physical violence is intentionally rough pushing or shaking and slapping, which was experienced by about 17% of women in the general population. About 11% of women have experienced their partner throwing things at them or hitting them with their fist or foot once or more than once. For indicators of economic violence in the same survey 12% of women stated that their partner acted as if all the money was only his, and not shared, 8% of women experienced that their partner put them in a situation where they do not have money for basic living needs, 12% of women repeatedly had to hide that they had bought something, and 6% of women repeatedly had to beg their partner for money. Just over 10% of women have been victims of sexual violence by their partner at least once. The analysis of the respondents' answers to the question whether they knew if physical violence occurred against their best friend or mother [guardian] showed that at least one quarter of women in Croatia were victims of physical violence by their intimate partner [Klasnić, 2013].

Social scientists argue that gender inequalities in intimate relationships and family relationships make such relationships more susceptible to violence [Gelles, 2007]. Feminist theorists dealing with violence against women emphasize that researchers of domestic violence must consider the context of gender inequalities and their impact on women's experiences of violence [Anderson, 2005]. Therefore, today we most often talk about *gender-based violence* which refers to violence shaped by gender roles and status in society, or women's experiences of violence that are the result of unequal gender power relations [True, 2012]. According to Russo and Pirlott [2006], a complex mix of gender cultural values, beliefs, norms, and social institutions implicitly and even explicitly supports partner violence and provides few resources for victims. This applies in particular to gender roles and expectations, men's rights, sexual objectification of women, and discrepancies in power and status that together legitimize, make invisible, sexualize, and help perpetuate violence against women [Russo and Pirlott, 2006: 181].

We will begin the analysis of women's experiences of violence in the family and from intimate partners, in order to contextualize statistical indicators with insights from qualitative research. In fact, despite the fact that the issue of violence against women was not directly mentioned in interviews and focus groups, this topic still appeared in the conversations. Statements by key Roma persons, as well as representatives of local and county institutions, indicate that violence against women in Roma families exists and it is relatively frequent, but also shows that there is a certain awareness among the Roma population about the unacceptability of violence against women which increases with the level of education of Roma men and women.

*Nowadays, educated Roma women set the rules for their husbands. They didn't before, they were beaten, they listened, and they were pregnant when he said it, when he was drunk. Unfortunately. As education became more common, one can see exactly how some things have changed.* [FG\_VŽ\_KNF\_14]

The reduced incidence of violence against women in Roma families today, compared to previous generations, is also attributed to a more effective legislative framework.

*It seems to me that there is less of it now that the Family Act has been introduced and you go to jail if you beat up a woman or children.* [KK\_KNF\_02]

*It works and it happens less frequently. Now even my people are careful not to step on a woman like she is a carpet.* [ZG\_RNM\_02]

The topic that most often appears in the context of violence against women is alcohol consumption. Participants in the qualitative research emphasized that violence against women usually occurs when family members, especially male members, or a woman's partner, consume alcohol.

*There are also a lot of family quarrels and disputes. There are family disagreements here. A lot of them. And quarrels and fights and alcohol and all [...].* [MĐ\_RNM\_04]

*This isn't something that is reserved for the older ones, but whole families are involved and then with alcohol often some aggressive or violent behavior occurs, very, very often.* [KK\_KNF\_10]

The links between alcohol consumption and violence against women can be explained by applying several theories. Thus, a theory known as the "psychiatric/psychopathological model" or "medical model" treats domestic violence as a result of the psychopathology of individual family members, and stress theory explains domestic violence in terms of increased levels of stress in the family, where scientists study family characteristics and problems that make the family prone to violent interactions, such as social isolation, alcoholism, etc. [according to Kurst-Swanger and Petcosky, 2003]. According to Heise [1998], who develops a socio-ecological model to explain violence against women, many studies show that frequent alcohol consumption is a predictor of both physical and sexual violence, and researchers believe that alcohol is a situational factor that releases brakes, obscures assessments, and affects an individual's ability to interpret signs (if there are no problems with other addictions).

The mechanism of the influence of alcohol on violence is not clear, but some laboratory evidence suggests that alcohol consumption under certain circumstances leads to increased aggression. Heise [1998] also states that some researchers argue that alcohol works by giving an abuser an excuse and relieving the abuser of responsibility while feminists reject alcohol as a factor in the etiology of abuse precisely because it serves as an excuse for violence. Attributing the cause of violence against women to alcohol [rather than the perpetrator himself] is a well-known myth about violence against women that diminishes the perpetrator's responsibility. One study on the general population of women in intimate relationships showed that more than 60% of women agree with the statement that alcohol and drugs are the most common culprits for domestic violence [Klasnić, 2014], and another that this is one of the three myths about violence over women with whom most experts agree [Ajduković and Pavleković, 2000].

In the analysis of how the participants of the qualitative research explain the connection between violence and alcohol consumption in Roma families, the topic of spending social assistance money on alcohol was emphasized.

*Domestic violence is mostly caused by drinking alcohol and you can get most information about that from the police, which is the only one responsible for recording this domestic violence. Basically, the problem is that the social assistance money goes to drinking alcohol and to expensive mobile phones, and I think that should be regulated by law.*  
[KK\_KNF\_01]

In this context, in addition to the physical, the participants in the research also testify to economic violence against women. In fact, they state that spending money received as social assistance on what it is intended for [food and supplies for the house and children] leads to a negative reaction of the woman's partner, which results in physical violence.

*Social assistance or child allowance when they get it, I always tell them they have to use it for what they got it. So, to buy cleaning products, they need to get soap, shampoo, food and such things, not cigarettes, alcohol or spend it in a casino, which also... And then the women get beaten up at home.* [SM\_KNF\_15]

This connection of economic and physical violence with alcohol consumption was also found in the general population of women in Croatia [Klasnić, 2014], where the partner's alcohol consumption was the strongest predictor of experiences of economic violence against women at the individual level. The environment in which the couple lives is also the strongest predictor of experiences of economic violence against women at the community level.

Participants in the qualitative section of the research testified not only to violence against women, but also to domestic violence between different members, for example, child violence against parents, and their statements are consistent with the social learning theory. This theory is also known as the intergenerational theory of violence, grounded in the work of Albert Bandura, and it explains domestic violence in terms of cognitive processes and demonstrates how violence is learned by modeling, imitation, and encouragement [according to Kurst-Swanger and Petcosky, 2003].

*There is also an awful lot of domestic violence. Between spouses, practically none of them are in a civil marriage, it is all extramarital unions as far as I know, and since there are several generations of families living together [husband, wife, husband's brother, his family, etc.], terrible conflicts happen. All those children, they participate in it and then when they grow up, when they are 12, 13 years old, then they are violent towards their parents. [KK\_KNF\_12]*

*But it's very interesting, they are all your cousins, nephews, they are all related, but that doesn't stop them from fighting each other during parties. [PG\_KNF\_04]*

We have already mentioned the so-called myths about violence against women that are actually wrong generalizations, i.e. opinions based on lack of facts or wrong facts that diminish the importance of the problem of violence against women and deny social responsibility [Klasnić, 2014]. Peters [2008] argues that myths about domestic violence are conceptually linked to a number of restrictive views on women, and that by strengthening patriarchal attitudes toward the use of force and coercion against women, they perform the social function of keeping women "in their place". The interviews also highlighted the problem of the existence of myths about violence against women among police officers visiting Roma settlements. The following quote outlines well the problem of ignoring violence against women and blaming victims of violence, among employees of institutions that should intervene in the case of domestic violence.

*In fact, a lot of times the police just go through the neighborhood in their van and often times the women from the neighborhood complain that when they have a case of domestic violence, for example, that the police don't react or totally ignore them or even blame the woman for what she is, that they don't care she was beaten. [MĐ\_KNF\_17]*

It is certain that the existence of such attitudes among employees of institutions to which victims of domestic violence should turn to makes it difficult for women to report violence. Perceptions of the frequency of reporting domestic violence among interviewees and focus groups varied, with some citing increasing violence,



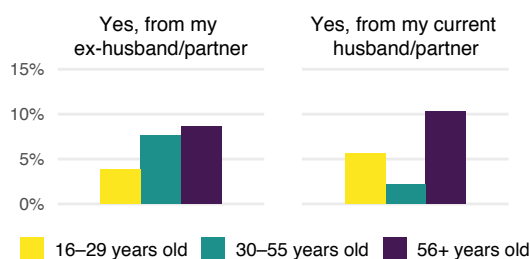
while others pointed out that Roma do not report violence as often as women in the general population.

*Well, it is reported more and more often lately. [ZG\_RNM\_02]*

*But there is violence in the family, they just don't report it the way we report it, it stays between them. [PG\_KNF\_04]*

The problem of non-reporting violence is also present in the general population of women in Croatia. Experts dealing with the prevention of violence against women and providing assistance to women who have been victims of violence estimate that there are as many as 15 to 20 unreported rapes per one reported rape, while for domestic violence they estimate that there are 10 unreported cases per one reported case [Safe Zone, Statistics – Prevalence of violence against women]. We believe that it is not unreasonable to assume that such relations between reported and unreported violent events are even more unfavorable for Roma women than for women in the general population, which, however, cannot be verified from the available data.

To determine the experiences of violence against women by their intimate partners, the survey questionnaire asked one question related to the experience of violence at any time in the life from any man with whom the woman was in a relationship, and then there were more questions about experiences of violence by the current partner. This part of the survey questionnaire was completed by 420 women aged 16 years and older.

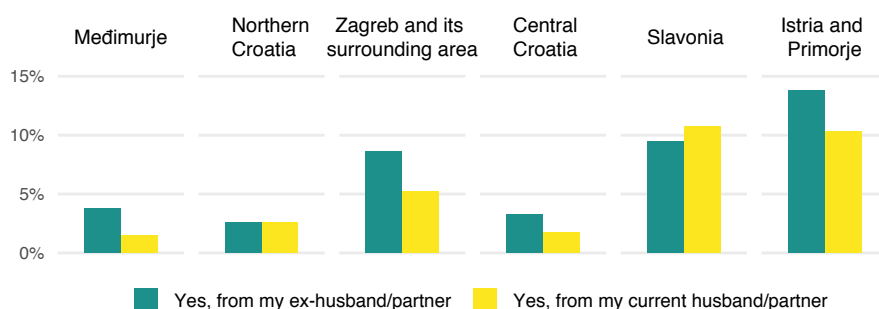


**FIGURE 4.4.1.** Experience of violence in an intimate relationship at least once in a lifetime, by generation

When asked about experiences of violence from any man with whom a woman has been in an intimate relationship during her lifetime, 6% of women answered that they were victims of violence by their ex-husband or partner, and 5% by their current one. These percentages are significantly lower than data on the share of women in the general population who have been victims of violence in intimate relationships, with the most valid being the systematic review of 155 population-based studies worldwide [WHO, 2013] according to which 30% of all women

[older than 15] who have been in an intimate relationship during their lifetime have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. This large discrepancy is in part certainly the result of methodological problems related to such a direct method of measurement.<sup>102</sup>

Generational differences were found in the experiences of violence against women in violence by the current partner,<sup>103</sup> with women from the older generation most often stating that they were victims of violence by their current partner (more than 10% of them), then – which is particularly alarming – young women [6% of them], and finally middle-aged women [2%]. No statistically significant age differences were found for experiences of violence by an ex-partner, although in our sample women of the middle-aged and the older generation are somewhat more likely to report that they experienced violence by an ex-partner than young women.



**FIGURE 4.4.2. Experience of violence in an intimate relationship at least once in a lifetime, by region**

Regional differences in experiences of violence against women exist when it comes to violence by the current partner,<sup>104</sup> and the data show that violence against women by the current partner is most common in Slavonia and Istria and Primorje, where more than 10% of women reported it, while in Međimurje and in Zagreb and its surrounding area, less than 2% of women answered in the affirmative. No

<sup>102</sup> It should be emphasized that scientists and experts believe that the results of surveys of violence such as this, in which the topic of violence is only one of many other research topics and therefore cannot be examined with a sufficient number of questions and accurately measured, significantly underestimate the true scope of violence against women [Walby and Myhill, 2001; Jansen, 2004; True, 2012; Levy, 2008; Walker, 2007]. There are a number of methodological problems related to measuring violence against women [such as determining appropriate terminology depending on the research population, definitions of what is and what is not violence, definitions of the period for which violent experiences are examined, social desirability in answering questions, possible lack of awareness of forms of violence, etc.], some of which could only be partially respected and addressed in the research whose data we use in this study.

<sup>103</sup> Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 7.067$ ; df = 2; p = 0.029.

<sup>104</sup> Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 13.575$ ; df = 5; p = 0.019.

statistically significant regional differences were found in the responses of women for the experiences of violence by the former partner, although according to the data in the sample, it can be seen that most women stated that they experienced violence by the former partner in Istria and Primorje – almost 14%. The question of whether the respondents ever experienced fear of their current husband or partner served as an introduction to more sensitive and direct questions about certain forms of violence, and it is also a good indicator of the existence of violence in a relationship. In total, about 16% of the surveyed women answered in the affirmative, i.e. that they felt fear of their partner at least once in their lives. However, there are large generational differences<sup>105</sup> here, so this share is the highest among older women [almost 32%]. It is more than twice as low among young and middle-aged women, and it is the lowest among middle-aged woman.

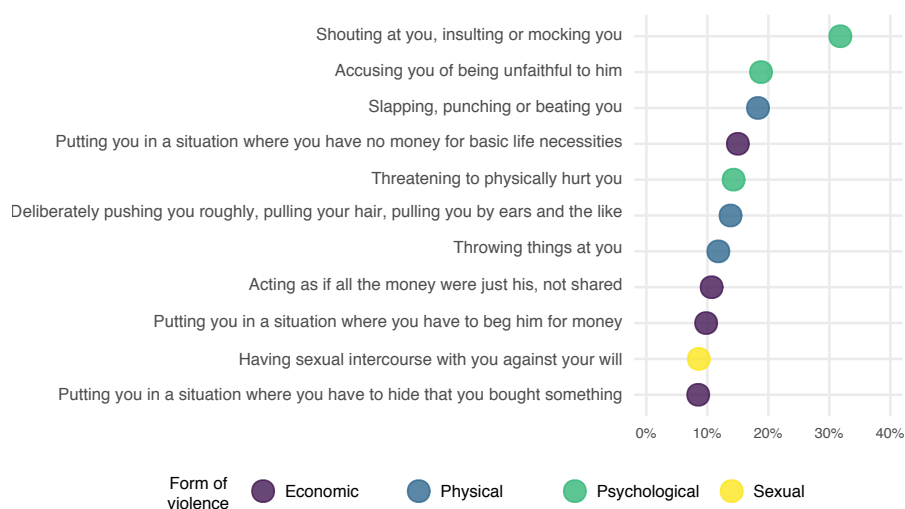
When interpreting the data stating that most women have felt fear of their husband or partner at least once in their lives in the older age group, it should be taken into account that these women have been in a relationship with their partners for the longest time. However, the fact that in the youngest age group of women the share of women who have at least once felt fear of their partners is slightly higher [16%] than in the middle age group [12%], is of particular concern and may indicate a slight increase in violence against women in younger generations but, on the other hand, it may also suggest their greater awareness and greater propensity to speak out about violence.

Regional differences in the perception of fear of partners did not prove statistically significant, probably due to relatively small subsamples of women in some regions who answered this question, but in the sample most women from Istria and Primorje [25%] answered in the affirmative, followed by Slavonia [20%] and Međimurje [18%].

Given that experts warn that experiences of violence against women should be measured separately, according to different forms of violence and violent behavior [Walby and Myhill, 2001], in this study, despite the limited space in the questionnaire due to the extensiveness of the research, we measured the experience of women regarding three psychologically and physically violent behaviors, four economic and one sexual.

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105 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 10.777$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.005$ .



**FIGURE 4.4.3. Representation of certain violent behaviors of partners against women<sup>106</sup>**

Data from this study show that psychological violence is the most common and it was experienced by 35% of women by their current husbands or partners.<sup>107</sup> 21% of women<sup>108</sup> experienced physical violence, 18% of them experienced economic violence,<sup>109</sup> and almost 9% experienced sexual violence. Of some psychologically violent behaviors, most women experience that their partners often shout at them, insult them or mock them [32% of women], then often accuse them of infidelity [19% of women], and 14% of women have experienced at least once that their partner threatened to physically injure them. Of the physically violent behaviors, most women experienced being slapped, punched, or beaten by a partner – 18.3%. 14% of women have been at least once or several times deliberately roughly pushed, pulled by hair, ears or similar by their partner, and 12% of women experienced their partner throwing things at them. Of the economically violent

<sup>106</sup> In the following behaviors, the share of “once” responses is omitted and only the share of women who have experienced these behaviors repeatedly is shown: “Shouting at you, insulting or mocking you”, “Accusing you of being unfaithful to him”, “Putting you in a situation where you have no money for basic life necessities [food, utilities, clothes, etc.]”, “Putting you in a situation where you have to hide that you bought something”, “Putting you in a situation where you have to beg him for money” and “Acting as if all the money were just his, not shared”. The reason lies in the definition of violent behavior as a pattern of behavior.

<sup>107</sup> We consider experiences of psychological violence to be answers “several times” or more often for behaviors “Shouting at you, insulting or mocking you” and “Accusing you of being unfaithful to him”, as well as answers “once” or more often for “Threatening to physically hurt you”.

<sup>108</sup> At least once, any of the three measured forms of physically violent behavior.

<sup>109</sup> Multiple times, any of the four measured forms of economic violence.

behaviors, most women, [15% of them] experienced their partner putting them in a situation where they did not have money for basic life necessities such as food, utilities and clothing. Furthermore, 11% of women stated that their partner acted as if all the money were only his and not shared, which is the element that best summarizes and describes the experiences of most women who have been victims of economic violence [Klasnić, 2014]. Ten percent of women have been repeatedly put in a situation where they had to beg their partner for money, and 9% had to hide that they bought something. Finally, the only indicator of sexual violence measured in this study was rape, formulated as “sexual intercourse against your will”, which almost 9% of Roma women experienced from their partners at least once, and some of them many times.

If we compare the data from this study with those about women in the general population of Croatia [Klasnić, 2013], we can notice that they are approximate. Roma women are somewhat less likely to respond in the affirmative to some of the violent forms of behavior of their partners, especially psychological violence, than women in the general population, while the percentages for physical and economic violence among Roma women are slightly higher. The indicator of sexual violence is almost identical to that in the general population.

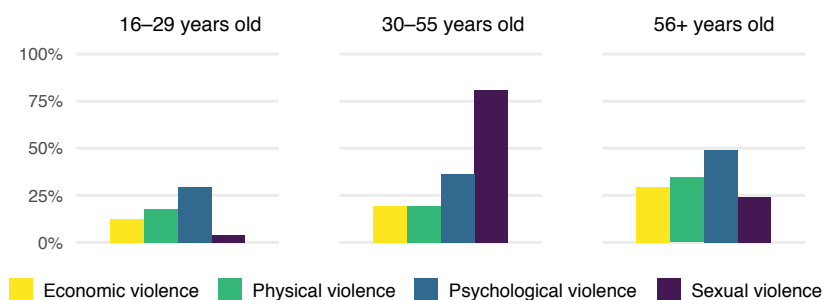
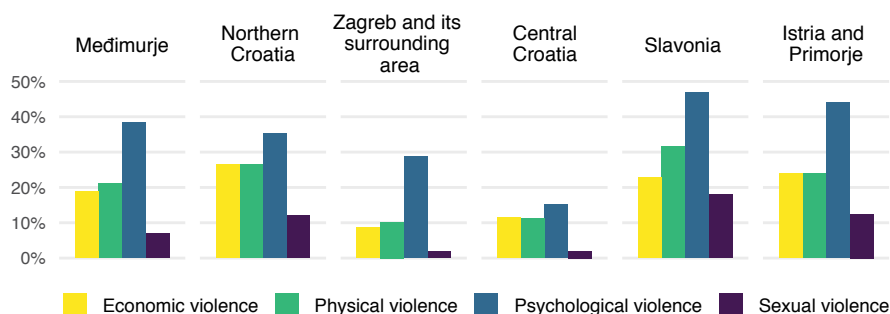


FIGURE 4.4.4. Prevalence of forms of violence against women, by generations

Significant age differences were found in all four forms of violence against women [psychological, physical, economic and sexual],<sup>110</sup> and all forms were the most common among older Roma women. Thus, almost every second older Roma woman experienced psychological violence from her partner, every third experienced physical violence, almost 30% of them experienced economic violence, and a quarter experienced sexual violence. In general, there is a large generational shift in the experience of violence against women: middle-aged women experienced all forms of violence to a lesser extent than older women and more than young women.

<sup>110</sup> Chi-square tests: psychological violence:  $\chi^2 = 6.800$ ; df = 2; p = 0.033; physical violence:  $\chi^2 = 7.369$ ; df = 2; p = 0.025; economic violence:  $\chi^2 = 8.263$ ; df = 2; p = 0.016; sexual violence:  $\chi^2 = 19.102$ ; df = 2; p < 0.001.



**FIGURE 4.4.5.** Prevalence of forms of violence against women, by region

Statistically significant regional differences in the prevalence of certain forms of violence against women were found in all forms of violence except economic violence.<sup>111</sup> Psychological violence of men against women is least represented in Central Croatia [15% of women], while in all other regions it is represented between 29% in Zagreb and its surrounding area and up to 44% in Istria and Primorje. Physical violence against women is most prevalent in Slavonia, where as many as 32% of women have experienced at least one of the measured violent behaviors, and the least in Zagreb and its surrounding area [10%] and in Central Croatia [11%]. Although economic violence against women in our sample is most prevalent in Northern Croatia [27%] and Istria and Primorje [24%], and least in Zagreb and its surrounding area [9%] and in Central Croatia [12%], in contrast to physical and psychological violence, there was no statistically significant difference between the regions in the case of economic violence. Sexual violence is most prevalent in Slavonia, where as many as 18% of surveyed women stated that they had sexual intercourse with their partner against their will, and the least in Zagreb and its surrounding area and Central Croatia with 2% in each region.

By conducting multivariate binary logistic regression analyses for the experiences of psychological, physical, economic and sexual violence against women by their partners, models were tested in which the following variables were included as potential predictors: highest completed level of education of women (in three categories), age group (in three categories), working status of women, women's literacy as an indicator of social status, use of social assistance as an indicator of material household status, risk of household poverty in which the couple lives and settlement type. Statistically significant predictors for experiences of psychological violence were the age of women, women's [temporary or occasional]

111 Chi-square tests: psychological violence: 14,481; df = 5; p = 0.006; physical violence:  $\chi^2 = 13.360$ ; df = 5; p = 0.020; economic violence:  $\chi^2 = 8.430$ ; df = 5; p = 0.134; sexual violence:  $\chi^2 = 15.233$ ; df = 5; p = 0.006.

employment, i.e. paid work and life in isolated concentrated Roma settlements. Statistically significant predictors for experiences of physical violence were the age of women and life in a concentrated Roma settlement. Statistically significant predictors for experiences of economic violence were the age of women and life in a concentrated Roma settlement, while statistically significant predictors for experiences of sexual violence were the age of women, employment of women, i.e. paid work and life in a concentrated Roma settlement.

It was therefore found that violence against women is associated with a complex set of socioeconomic factors, of which the most prominent are older age, life in concentrated Roma settlements, but also a woman's paid work outside the home. Increased partner violence against employed women, relative to the unemployed, can be explained by the feminist thesis that violence can be a compensatory method for enforcing control and constructing masculinity among men who feel that their authority and masculinity are called into question [Anderson, 2005: 858] given that patriarchal men whose partners are economically independent may feel that the traditional male role as the provider is threatened.

### **Social [un]acceptability of violence**

The social acceptability of violence in intimate relationships is measured indirectly through the acceptability of divorce in the case of physical violence from one partner against another. In order to assess the social acceptability of violence, it is necessary to compare the shares of the acceptability of divorce without a stated reason with divorce of a violent marriage. The acceptability of divorce in case of infidelity of each partner will also be taken as a control.

TABLE 4.4.1. Social [un]acceptability of divorce

		Not acceptable at all	Partly acceptable	Acceptable	Total respondents	Gender difference [p]*
Divorce	Men	47.1%	19.3%	33.6%	363	0.455
	Women	44.3%	20.3%	35.5%	400	
Divorce due to husband's physical violence against the wife	Men	18.7%	8.8%	72.5%	364	0.163
	Women	15.2%	8.0%	76.8%	401	
Divorce due to wife's physical violence against the husband	Men	24.2%	8.8%	67.0%	364	0.021
	Women	17.5%	8.3%	74.3%	400	
Divorce because of husband's infidelity	Men	25.1%	12.8%	62.0%	366	0.287
	Women	21.2%	13.7%	65.1%	401	
Divorce due to wife's infidelity	Men	22.7%	10.9%	66.4%	366	0.405
	Women	22.5%	15.0%	62.5%	400	

\* Mann-Whitney test

Divorce [without the stated reason] is not acceptable at all for slightly less than half of the Roma population, it is partially acceptable for about 20% of Roma men and women, and it is acceptable for approximately one third. No statistically significant difference was found in the acceptability of divorce for men and women. However, when the reason for divorce is that the husband is physically violent against the wife, 63% of men and 66% of women who stated that divorce is not acceptable to them at all state that such divorce is acceptable. The acceptability of divorce due to male violence against women increases from one third when the reason for divorce is not stated to 73–77% of Roma men and women. However, there are still about 19% of men and 15% of women for whom violence against a woman in a marriage is not an acceptable reason for divorce, as well as about 9% of men and 8% of women for whom divorce is only partially acceptable in such a situation. No statistically significant difference was found in the acceptability of divorce of such a marriage for men and women.



If, on the other hand, the reason for divorce is that the wife is physically violent against her husband, 57% of men and 61% of women who stated that divorce is not acceptable to them at all state that such divorce is acceptable. The acceptability of divorce due to violence of the woman against the man in this case increases from one third when the reason for divorce was not stated to two thirds of Roma men and 75% of Roma women. This difference is statistically significant,<sup>112</sup> i.e. divorce due to wife's physical violence against her husband is less acceptable to men than to women. For a quarter of men, divorce in such a situation is not justified, while about 18% of women think the same. For about 9% of men and 8% of women, divorce is only partially acceptable in such a situation.

Additional analyses show that women equally assess the acceptability of divorce regardless of the sex of the perpetrator or victim, but for men divorce is more acceptable when a man is a bully and a woman a victim than when it is the other way around.<sup>113</sup> These analyses show that there is some awareness that violence between intimate partners is an unacceptable form of behavior that makes some Roma men and women to change their minds about the inadmissibility of divorce in cases of violence, but there still remains a significant part of the Roma population that demonstrates social acceptability of such violence, especially in cases where a woman commits violence against her partner.

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112 Mann-Whitney test,  $p = 0.021$ .

113 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks tests, women:  $p = 0.150$ ; men:  $p = 0.042$ .

# 5. Young Roma men and women



## 5. Young Roma men and women

When we talk about the Roma in Croatia, we should be aware that we are to a large extent talking about young people. According to data from the chapter on sociodemography, the average age of the Roma population is about 22 years, and about half of them are minors. Gvozdanović et al. (2019) consider young people to be all persons aged 14 to 29,<sup>114</sup> and this age group, according to the data we analyze in this study, makes up as much as a third of the Roma population. The same authors also use the division of young people into three age cohorts, which we took over and applied in the analysis of the social position of young Roma men and women: the youngest age cohort [14 to 19 years], the middle age cohort [between 20 and 24 years] and the oldest age cohort [from 25 to 29 years]. According to the data presented in the chapter on the sociodemographic characteristics of the Roma population, it is clear that young Roma men and women live in conditions of severe poverty and material deprivation, mostly in concentrated Roma settlements with numerous infrastructural and hygiene problems, that they enter into (legal or customary) marriages very early and become parents and live in overcrowded and inadequately equipped dwellings. High unemployment rates, low monthly incomes of the households in which they live, as well as the reliance of families on social assistance is a social reality of young Roma men and women and their families.

Given the above data, the concept of social exclusion is imposed as the most appropriate sociological theoretical approach in the analysis of the social position of young Roma men and women. Social exclusion is a term that, inter alia, implies the concept of poverty, but at the same time it is not limited to the distribution of resources, i.e. lack of disposable income, but focuses on “process, action and multi-dimensional disadvantage and provides a framework for analyzing the relationship between daily survival, well-being and rights” [MacPherson, 1997: 535 according to Šućur, 2001: 15]. The concept of social exclusion, explains Šućur [2001, 2004a], refers to the poor functioning or failure of one or more main social systems [the democratic legal system, the labor and market system, the social welfare system and the family and local community system] that guarantee full civil status.

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114 In interpreting the results of the research, when it comes to the entire population of young people aged 14 to 29, we will use the phrase “young people” without indicating the age category.

Roma can indeed be said to be socially excluded because being excluded means being in a situation of accumulating unfavorable life circumstances that support each other and overlapping low incomes and poor market position with various non-monetary indicators of well-being [skills and knowledge, access to health care, education, public transport, state transfers, etc.] [Šućur, 2004a]. Social exclusion becomes a serious problem if someone is socially excluded in several systems or and if the exclusion has a relatively more permanent character, i.e. it lasts for a longer period [Šućur, 2004a]. In this chapter, therefore, the analysis of the social position of young Roma men and women will be based on three dimensions that determine their unfavorable living conditions: education [as a key precondition for successful social integration], inclusion in economic life [as a prerequisite for economic integration and breaking out of the poverty cycle], and deviant and delinquent behavior [as negative consequences of social exclusion and a kind of appeal to change their marginalization [Morrell, 2001]].

## 5.1. Education

The level of education is one of the main indicators of socioeconomic status because it embodies a specific form of knowledge-based capital [Shaw et al., 2007]. The level of education is often a key determinant of labor market and income opportunities and, as a result, a person's economic situation [UNECE, 2009]. Higher education also contributes to civic engagement, greater personal freedoms and choices, and better health and well-being [Brennan, Durazzi and Séné, 2013]. According to the 2011 Census, in the total population of Croatia aged 15 to 29, only 0.065% of men [or 1205] and 0.054% of women [or 1095] are illiterate [DSZ, 2016: 118]. A 2011 survey of Roma in the EU [FRA, 2014a] found that Roma across the EU generally reported low literacy rates, but concluded that positive generational shifts were observed, i.e. a decrease in the share of illiterates among young Roma men and women, compared to other age groups.

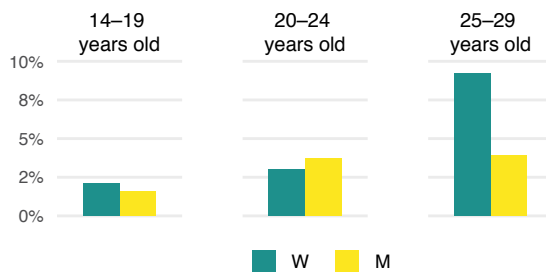


FIGURE 5.1.1. Gender differences in youth illiteracy

According to the data from this study, a total of 3.6% of young members of the RNM [2.9% of men and 4.2% of women] are illiterate, which indicates a serious gap in relation to the general youth population in Croatia. The share of illiterate persons is lower in the younger cohorts, whereas in the youngest and middle cohort there are no significant gender differences in the share of illiterate persons, but they do exist in the oldest age cohort of young people<sup>115</sup>, where there are significantly more illiterate women than men [more than 9%]. There are also statistically significant regional differences in the share of illiterate young people<sup>116</sup>, with the largest share of illiterate young people in Northern Croatia [8%] and Međimurje [5%], while in other regions it ranges between 1.5% and 1.7%. By comparison, data on young Roma men and women in the EU [FRA, 2014a] also show that in several Member States there is still a significant number of illiterate young Roma [mostly in Greece – as many as 35%].<sup>117</sup> These results indicate that a significant share of young Roma men and women still “drop out of school without acquiring the most basic skills for social integration, labor market and equal participation in society” [FRA, 2014a: 28].

**TABLE 5.1.1. Gender differences in youth illiteracy within individual regions**

	Share of illiterate youth [14–29]	
	Men	Women
<b>Međimurje</b>	4.9%	4.3%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	4.0%	12.5%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	1.0%	2.0%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	1.2%	2.1%
<b>Slavonia</b>	0.9%	2.3%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	0.0%	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	2.9%	4.2%

We also analyzed gender differences in the share of illiterate young people within the regions, and a statistically significant gender difference was found only in Northern Croatia,<sup>118</sup> where the share of illiterate young women [13%] is three times higher than the share of illiterate young men [4%]. In Međimurje, there are 5% of illiterate young Roma, while in Northern Croatia there are 4%. The largest number of illiterate young women is in Northern Croatia – as many as 13%, while in Međimurje there are three times less [4%]. Gvozdanović et al. [2019] state that the educational structure of young people from all over Croatia is such that 23%

115 Fisher's exact test, 25–29 years old,  $p = 0.030$ .

116 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 20.923$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.001$ .

117 The data refer to the age group of young people aged 16 to 24 [FRA, 2014a] and are not directly comparable with the data from this study.

118 Fisher's exact test:  $p = 0.034$ .

of them have not completed school or have completed only primary school, 60% of them completed secondary school, and 17% of them have higher education. A large difference in the educational structure of young people in Croatia and young Roma men and women is evident in all levels of education. Thus, in the Roma population of young people, only 81% have not completed school or have completed only primary school, of which 6% have no education, 35% have not completed primary school while 40% have completed primary school. 19% of young Roma have completed secondary school, while only 0.3% have some level of higher education.

**TABLE 5.1.2. Gender differences in the education of young people within certain age subgroups<sup>119</sup>**

	14–19 years old		20–24 years old		25–29 years old	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Does not attend school</b>	53.7%	63.0%	98.7%	98.7%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Attends primary school</b>	20.1%	17.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Attends secondary school</b>	25.9%	19.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Attends university</b>	0.3%	0.6%	0.8%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%

In the youngest age cohort of young Roma, when the majority of young people from the general population are still in the system of primary or secondary education, as many as 63% of girls and 53.7% of boys do not attend school. In this age cohort, 7% more boys than girls attend secondary school [26% of young Roma men compared to 19% of Roma women]. When it comes to university, the data are extremely low – only 0.3% of young Roma men and 0.8% of young Roma women continue their education after secondary school. In the oldest age cohort, slightly more Roma women than Roma men attend university [1.3% of women compared to 0.8% of men].

According to Gvozdanović et al. [2019], the share of persons aged 30 to 34 with tertiary education in the Republic of Croatia in 2016 was 29.5%, significantly below the EU average of 39.1% and the Croatian national target of 35% by 2020 [European Commission, 2017, according to Gvozdanović et al., 2019: 20], whereas in our sample of a total of 307 persons at that age only two persons have completed higher education [0.6%]. The biggest gap between young people in Croatia and young Roma men and women is in higher education, where there is “a high share of the young population in tertiary education [69%]” [Gvozdanović et al., 2019: 20], whereas our data show that among young people only 0.7% of Roma men and women are included in the higher education system.

<sup>119</sup> No statistically significant gender differences were found in the share of young people attending a particular level of education in any age group of young people [chi-square tests, 14–19 years old:  $\chi^2 = 6.622$ ;  $df = 3$ ; 20–24 years old:  $\chi^2 = 1.200$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.549$ ; 25–29 years old: the test cannot be performed because there are no people in this age subgroup who are in school].

**TABLE 5.1.3. Regional differences in the education of young people [aged 14 to 19]**

	Does not attend school	Attends primary school	Attends secondary school	Attends university
<b>Međimurje</b>	58.3%	19.0%	22.3%	0.4%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	69.8%	15.1%	15.1%	0.0%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	40.6%	21.9%	35.9%	1.6%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	62.4%	13.0%	23.2%	1.4%
<b>Slavonia</b>	56.6%	19.8%	23.6%	0.0%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	64.3%	23.2%	12.5%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	58.5%	18.7%	22.3%	0.5%

The education of those in the youngest age cohort of young people was further analyzed at the regional level [Table 5.1.3.]. Although no statistically significant regional differences were found in the share of young people in the youngest age cohort attending a particular level of schooling, the data show that in Northern Croatia two thirds of young people do not attend school, while in Zagreb and its surrounding area 41% are excluded from further education. In Istria and Primorje, 23% attend primary school, while secondary school is mostly attended in Zagreb and its surrounding area – 36%. It is interesting that, although in Northern Croatia most young people drop out of school early, 1.4% of them attend university, while the percentage of young people attending university is only slightly higher for young people from Zagreb and its surrounding area [1.6%], which is also the largest number of Roma attending university in the youngest age cohort of young people. A comparison with data on young people from the general population [Gvozdanović et al., 2019], shows that high educational aspirations of young people in the general population are in great discrepancy with the level of education and educational opportunities of young people in the Roma population. A similar situation as in Croatia applies to the majority of Roma in the EU. A key finding of the 2011 Roma survey [FRA, 2014a] was that the vast majority of Roma aged 18 to 24 drop out of education without obtaining a vocational or general secondary education, so they do not have an essential requirement for stable participation in the labor market.

The following are the results of a qualitative section of the research related to the inclusion of young Roma men and women in secondary education.

**TABLE 5.1.4. Reasons for [non]enrollment of young Roma men and women in secondary schools – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Document number with code*	Illustrative quotations
No parental support	25	<p>Enrollment in secondary schools is still very rare, although we try to enroll in something, but the parental influence prevails. They deal with vegetables and they think that they do not need it. [BB_KNF_02]</p> <p>First there's this mindset where their parents feel it is completely irrelevant. Then there's general success and children don't attend primary school regularly, so they never become interested in further education. Finally, there is a perception in the Roma population, which is now increasingly present in the rest of the population as well, that with education one achieves nothing because there is no work anyway. [OB_KNF_09]</p>
Marriage and teenage pregnancies	19	<p>Some girls got married after the 8th grade. [IS_KNF_08]</p> <p>The biggest problem with them is falling in love. There was this one little girl, she was very, very successful, and she did well in school. She was in foster care here in <i>[place name omitted]</i>, and even the teacher had great success with her. She received some state award for writing, I don't remember what it was, but she wrote very beautifully. The teacher supported her so much, she encouraged her to finish primary school because she was capable and she could enroll in secondary school, and so on. Then the girl went on summer holidays, that's what they usually do in the summer, they go back to their parents in <i>[place name omitted]</i>. She was around 15 or even 16 years old, she was in 7th grade, and then we heard that M. got married. Gone is our M. [KK_KNF_07]</p>
Poor preparation for secondary school in primary school	12	<p>This kid, he went to get tested and he wanted to be a car mechanic. However, since he had bad grades, Ds and Cs, he couldn't enroll. So they wanted him to become an assembler or some other male occupation, they suggested three male occupations, such as a cook, an assembler. He didn't want that, he even refused, and his dad had said that he would pay for it, just let him go to school. He wanted to provide education for him, but he didn't have enough credits to enroll in regular program. I'm sorry that kid stayed home. [BP_KNF_06]</p>

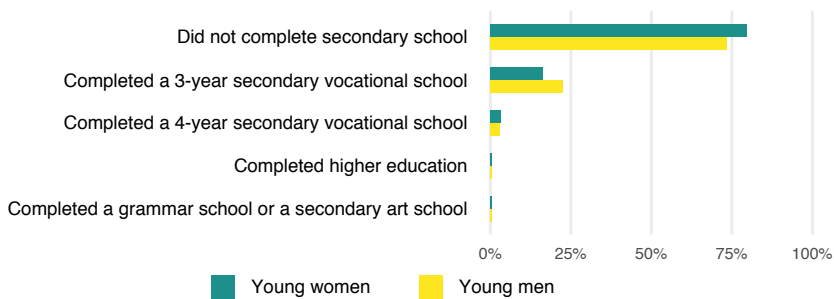


		<p>Unfortunately, a larger number of children attend vocational schools. That's a problem for further education. Well, men, male children often become car mechanics, car body repairmen, carpenters, which is not very good. Women become assistant chefs, pastry chefs, hairdressers, etc. But I can say that there are children who would like to enroll in a four-year school, but the problem is the special program, they complete a shortened [primary school] program and then they refer them to vocational guidance where they offer them to become gardeners, for example – what will they do with that school, where will they find a job? A woman became a toolmaker and what will she do now, she never got a job in that profession or anything. [ZG_RNM_05]</p>
Financial	10	<p>600–700 kuna for a monthly bus pass, books are around 1000 kuna, textbooks, you need some pocket money, and most of them are on welfare, 90–95% of them. [OB_KNF_12]</p> <p>They don't have the opportunity to go to a better school. Then again, it takes two, three years until you learn that, that craft. And that takes at least two or three years to learn that craft. Transportation, clothes, everything you need. [PG_RNM_01]</p>
Secondary school education does not matter	3	<p>The biggest problem is actually their persistence and hard work. They give up when at age of 16 or 17, they think about their existence again. In a conversation with them they tell me “It is more important to me that I earn money, for example, by metal sales or repurchase or to start a family because what will I do with school anyway. I won't get a job, I'm wasting my time.” [KK_KNF_09]</p> <p>So the fact that they think it doesn't matter at all, that they don't need it to live. Most of them live well as far as we can see. [ZG_KNF_09]</p> <p>Our biggest problem is in 7th grade. That's when they drop out of school. That's the problem. They don't want to go to school, they don't want to, and they don't have a developed awareness that it means prosperity, for a better future. [SM_KNF_05]</p>
The complexity of the enrollment procedure	3	<p>We have e-enrollment, the primary school helps with enrolling in secondary schools because Roma children do not have IT equipment at home, and they are generally less computer literate, so we help them. What we hear is that more and more children also complete secondary school.</p>

		The problems are similar, adjusting to the new system, but it's not compulsory. They give you two or three chances and then you are expelled. These are the same children who have had problems here for years. The prevailing conclusion is that they will graduate if they become stable in the first six months. Alcohol is one of the problems [...] I guess there are these problems. [MD_KNF_01]
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\*The total number of documents with the displayed codes is 64

According to the analysis of documents from the qualitative material in accordance with the assessments of relevant representatives of institutions and RNM representatives, the lack of parental support is proving to be the most common challenge for greater coverage of young Roma men and women in secondary schools. Out of a total of 63 analyzed documents with the topic of stating the reasons for not enrolling young Roma in secondary schools, slightly less than half of the documents mention parental lack of interest in further education of children after primary school. As already established by the quantitative survey method, a very common reason for not enrolling in secondary school, especially for girls, is early marriage and becoming a parent, which is stated in a qualitative analysis in one third of the documents. According to key participants, poor preparation for secondary education in primary schools and financial reasons are additional obstacles for Roma children to continue their education.



**FIGURE 5.1.2.** Share of youth aged 20 to 29 who completed secondary school, by gender

To calculate the share of young people who completed secondary school, we used data on the middle and older age cohort of young people, excluding those from the youngest age group because most young people who are still in school are from that age cohort. It was found that among young people aged 20 to 29, more than two thirds [74% of men and 80% of women] have not completed secondary school. Slightly less than a quarter [23%] of young Roma men and 16% of young Roma women aged 20 to 29 have completed a three-year secondary vocational

school, which is also the largest share of young Roma men and women with secondary level education. Only 3% of them have completed a four-year secondary vocational school,<sup>120</sup> while the number of those who complete grammar schools or secondary art schools is extremely low: 0.4% of men and 0.5% of women. By comparison, data on young Roma men and women in the EU from 2011 [FRA, 2014a]<sup>121</sup> show that the vast majority of them also did not complete secondary education – 89% on average, so one might say that the situation in Croatia regarding secondary education of young Roma men and women is still better than the European average.

**TABLE 5.1.5. Regional differences in the share of young people aged 20 to 29 who completed secondary school**

	Completed a 3-year secondary vocational school	Completed a 4-year secondary vocational school	Completed a grammar school or a secondary art school	The total percentage of young people aged 20–29 who have completed secondary school
<b>Međimurje</b>	16.7%	1.5%	0.6%	19.1%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	10.9%	1.7%	0.0%	12.6%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	23.3%	9.8%	0.0%	33.9%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	20.2%	2.6%	1.8%	25.5%
<b>Slavonia</b>	17.7%	3.1%	0.0%	20.8%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	40.0%	2.9%	0.0%	44.3%
<b>Total</b>	19.3%	3.2%	0.4%	23.3%

Analyses show that there are statistically significant regional differences in the share of young people aged 20 to 29 who have completed secondary school.<sup>122</sup> From Table 5.1.5. it is evident that the largest share of young Roma men and women who have completed secondary school is in Istria and Primorje, where

120 There is no statistically significant difference by gender in the share of young people who completed secondary school [ $\chi^2 = 5.642$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = 0.227$ ].

121 The data refer to young people aged 18 to 24 [FRA, 2014] and are not directly comparable with the data from this study.

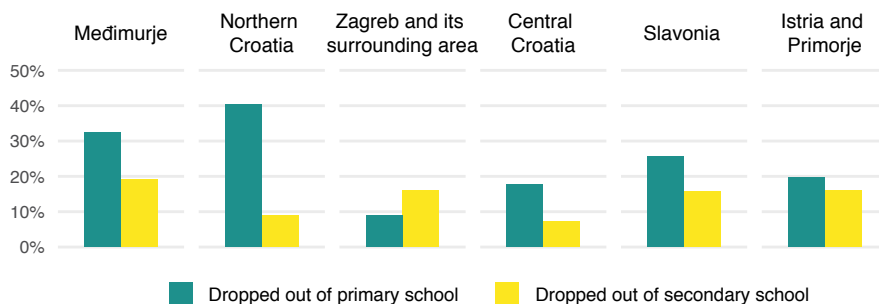
122 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 62.634$ ;  $df = 20$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

a total of 44% of persons have secondary education, of which the vast majority are those with completed three-year secondary vocational schools. Slightly fewer young Roma men and women have completed secondary school in Zagreb and its surrounding area [34%], with 23% of them completing a three-year secondary vocational school and 10% a four-year vocational school. In Northern Croatia, there are almost three times fewer young Roma men and women who have completed secondary school than in Istria and Primorje. Only 13% of them have successfully completed some level of secondary education, 11% of them in a three-year vocational school and only 2% in a four-year vocational school. In Northern Croatia, no young Roma men and/or women who completed a grammar school or a secondary art school were identified in the sample. As shown below, there are various reasons for dropping out of school among the population of young Roma men and women. Certainly, future measures and activities of the NRIS should take into account the identified causes of dropping out in order for the educational objectives of this strategy to have a positive trend and greater coverage of young Roma in the secondary school system.

According to the data in this study, in the youngest age cohort of young people, a total of 38% of Roma men and 42% of Roma women dropped out of school. One fifth of young people in this cohort dropped out of primary school [boys and girls alike] while slightly more girls [19%] drop out of secondary school than boys [14%]. Older age groups of young people record slightly higher dropout rates. Thus, in the middle age cohort of young people, 41% of Roma men and 49% of Roma women dropped out of school. Almost one third of them dropped out of primary school, and 13% of Roma men and 20% of Roma women dropped out of secondary education. In the oldest age cohort of young people, 34% of women and 30% of men dropped out of primary school, and 15% of men and 8% of women dropped out of secondary school. Therefore, school dropouts are slowly decreasing from generation to generation, primary school dropouts are more frequent than secondary school dropouts because everyone enrolls in primary school, and much fewer young Roma men and women enroll in secondary school. Moreover, secondary school dropouts are more common among girls. It should be emphasized that this refers to the total percentages of all surveyed Roma men and women in certain age subgroups, and not to the dropout rates exclusively among those who enrolled in certain educational levels.<sup>123</sup>

Additionally, we looked into the gender distribution among those who dropped out of the primary or secondary school they enrolled in. Of the 241 young people in the sample who dropped out of primary school, 47% were men and 53% were women. Of the 193 young people in the sample who dropped out of secondary school, 46% were men and 54% were women.

<sup>123</sup> This information could not be determined.

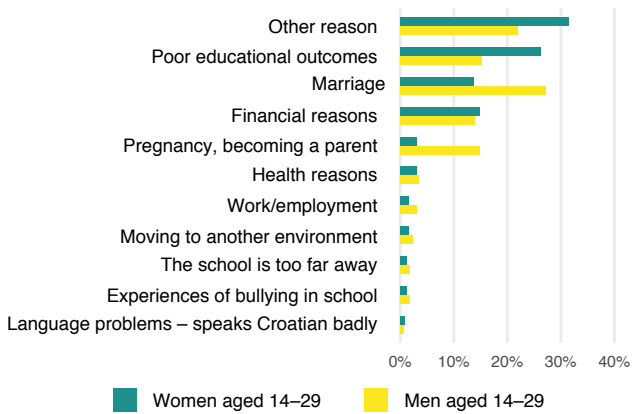


**FIGURE 5.1.3. Regional differences in young people dropping out of school**

Regional differences in young in young people dropping out of school have been identified.<sup>124</sup> Most young people in Northern Croatia dropped out of primary school [as much as 40%], while this percentage is by far the lowest for Zagreb and its surrounding area [9%]. Young people drop out of secondary school the most in Međimurje [19%], and the least in Central [7%] and Northern Croatia [9%], probably because they enroll less in secondary schools.

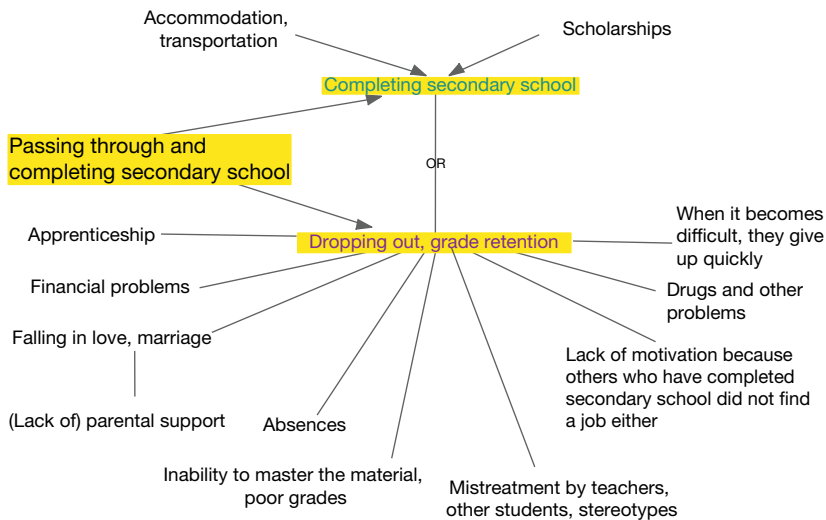
In Figure 5.1.4. the shares of stating a particular reason for young people dropping out of school by gender are shown, and only for those respondents who stated that they dropped out of some form of education. Of the reasons offered in the survey questionnaire, the key reason for dropping out of school for young Roma is poor educational outcomes [26%], while for 27% of Roma women the key reason for dropping out of school is marriage. In addition to pregnancy and becoming a parent, which is stated by another 15% of girls, marriage and parenthood are structural reasons for 42% of Roma women to drop out of the educational process. 14% of young girls state financial reasons as a reason for dropping out of school. Also, poor educational outcomes are a reason for young Roma women to drop out of school in 15% of cases. For young Roma men, financial reasons are the second most relevant reason for dropping out of education, followed by marriage in third place, which is cited by 14% of them. For only 3% of young Roma men, becoming a parent is a reason to drop out of school. However, it should be noted that the most commonly chosen answer is “other reason”, i.e. something that was not offered as an answer in this research, so there is a need for additional research on this issue.

124 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 86.515$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .



**FIGURE 5.1.4. Reasons for dropping out of school for young Roma men and women aged 14 to 29<sup>125</sup>**

We considered the issue of dropping out of secondary education in the analysis of qualitative data from the angle of supporting and hindering factors. It is a complex thematic unit with a large number of codes, and we made a graphical representation of the relations of codes, i.e. a visual representation of the entire problem set according to the model of the so-called network representations of results [Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2013: 111]. Below we first give a visual representation of the relationship of individual codes, which are then presented in tabular format with illustrative quotations.



**FIGURE 5.1.5. Dropping out of secondary school**

<sup>125</sup> Statistically significant gender differences exist in the following reasons for dropping out of school: poor educational outcomes [ $p < 0.001$ ]; marriage [ $p < 0.001$ ]; pregnancy, becoming a parent [ $p < 0.001$ ]; other reason [ $p = 0.015$ ].

According to Figure 5.1.5., significant support for young Roma men and women in completing the secondary education process comes primarily from parents and their communities, where the expectation of successful completion of secondary school is an accepted social norm [especially in Istria and Primorje, where 40% of young people successfully complete secondary vocational schools]. In addition to parental support, which is most important for young people, incentives from local self-governments and relevant ministries in the form of various forms of financial support [scholarships, student dormitories, paid transportation costs] also play an important role. For example, according to the Report of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of the NRIS from 2013 to 2020, for 2016 and 2017, the Ministry of Science and Education provided scholarships for 675 [373 Roma men, 302 Roma women] students in 2016 and a total of HRK 2,950,900.00 was spent from the State Budget. In 2017, the number of scholarships was increased to 689 [373 Roma men, 316 Roma women], for which HRK 3,488,411.44 was spent, i.e. 18% more than in the previous year.

However, there are many other factors that lead to dropping out of school. As the statistics show, for many girls the key reason for dropping out of school is early marriage and becoming a parent, while most secondary school students who belong to the RNM face various other challenges. This primarily refers to finding appropriate mentoring and apprenticeship during schooling, among other things due to insufficient capacity of craftsmen in certain areas [for example, too few hair salons where all girls could complete their apprenticeship], but also due to discrimination of young Roma men and women by employers. The Ombudsman [2013] also reports on the problem of discrimination in the secondary education of Roma children and states the following: "In 2011, they intervened in the civil proceedings regarding a separate action to determine discrimination against two Roma women, students of a vocational school in Čakovec. As part of their regular secondary education, they were required to work a number of hours in the form of practical training in the profession as shop assistants, but after applying for an apprenticeship, they were rejected because they were Roma women. In 2012, the court of first instance took the position that there was discrimination and awarded them damages, and the appellate court upheld the verdict in April 2013, but reduced the damages." [Ombudsman, 2013: 44–45]. In addition, the data in this study show that sometimes parents are an obstacle to further educating their children because of the financial challenges that schooling brings: such as buying adequate clothing and obtaining other necessary documentation [sanitary health cards, examinations] so that their children can start their apprenticeship.

For young Roma, financial problems are a challenge, so many of them work during secondary school, which leads to absences, poorer educational outcomes and even dropping out. As with the majority of the population, a small number of young

Roma in their teens begin to experiment with illicit and unhealthy behavior such as consuming psychoactive substances and gambling, theft and other illegal activities that make education fall into the background. According to the statements in the interviews, a part of young Roma men and women drop out of secondary education due to discriminatory and stereotypical treatment of them by other students, as well as by certain teachers. Some young Roma men and women do not think that secondary level education is important, so they do not make much effort because many of them still cannot find a job after graduating from secondary school, often due to prejudices against RNM [not having work habits, being irresponsible, stealing, that belonging to the Roma minority will jeopardize the entrepreneurial venture itself: for example, no one will want to order delivery if it is delivered by a Roma man or woman, etc.].

The frequencies of documents with individual subtopics from this thematic unit are shown below, as well as illustrative quotations.

**TABLE 5.1.6.** Thematic unit “Passing through secondary school” – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations

Code name	Document number with code*	Illustrative quotations
Completing secondary school	29	<p>They enroll in secondary school, graduate regularly. [FG_KNF_BB_KK_VP]</p> <p>Here everyone goes – both girls and boys, there’s no... and they finish it [secondary school, A/N]. I think 90% of them finish, maybe more. [BB_KNF_10]</p> <p>There’s also, a smaller share completes secondary school. [IS_RNM_01]</p>
Falling in love, marriage	24	<p>Teenage pregnancies happen many times and then they simply withdraw, this is normal in the female population – they withdraw whenever it happens, they don’t continue [...] How widespread is this phenomenon? Well, it’s widespread. I had a research related to that, teenage pregnancy according to social services – it was two years ago, I think there were about 17 reported [cases] per year. I think it is more widespread and so on, it’s a big problem for children, they need to be educated... [MĐ_KNF_16]</p> <p>We also had two girls, they enrolled in secondary administrative school, but they got married in their second year. [KK_KNF_05]</p>



Scholarships	24	<p>Every year, the City of Zagreb also partially provides scholarships for shortage occupations and in this way tries to motivate students who are Roma nationals to join schools for shortage occupations. It is a special program. The City of Zagreb also provides scholarships for regular secondary school students belonging to the Roma minority. 32 scholarships were awarded in 2014/2015 and 42 scholarships in 2015/2016. We also see that this number is growing from year to year. The budget proposal stated that 50 scholarships could be awarded. 58 candidates applied, but only 42 candidates met the general requirements of the competition. [FG_ZG_KNF_12]</p>
Accommodation, transportation	15	<p>It's great improvement that we have, we have a bus, city bus that drives kids to secondary school. [...] It drives in shifts. If they are in first shift, then they leave an hour earlier, and they wait there around town for school to start. Or let's say, when they come to the County, they have a bus station and then they walk about 3.4 km again. [...] But it's different. 5 km plus having a bus, so they don't have to take three more and a total of eight or ten is a big deal. [BP_RNM_O2]</p>
Lack of parental support	14	<p>Girls have bigger problems here because in their culture it is believed that they have to get married young because who would want to have her as wife after secondary school? It's rare for parents to support girls' secondary school education, but they also have to want to complete some education. But it's all in vain if the parents intended she has to get married.</p> <p>Two hundred and six, Roma eleven. [...] Let me start with a few of these scholarships, which is fine, positive, I support everything. However, when a parent, despite the scholarship, says that they will not issue a sanitary health card, they can't, there is no time, it's not time for that yet, they tell me. And these children mostly enroll in vocational school to become assistant chef and pastry chef and assistant baker. There is a great deal of trouble then. So, every time those six months for the sanitary health card expire, that child simply loses continuity in apprenticeship, doesn't attend the apprenticeship for a month or two because of the sanitary health card... [FG_ZG_KNF_14]</p>

Dropping out, grade retention	13	<p>And when do they drop out? Right at the start, first or second grade of secondary school...</p> <p>And what are the reasons for dropping out? Ah, parents. [IS_RNM_02]</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge, some of them drop out of secondary school at the very beginning or after the first, second year. Boys try to look for a job and girls get married. [BB_KNF_08]</p>
Financial problems	12	<p>Everyone attends normally, you can check it in schools. There were some problems at the beginning, a year ago because they didn't have a free meal, and you know how it is in the settlement, they have 5, 6 children. They get that social assistance but it's not enough for them. They didn't have money for lunch, they had to pay for lunch, and then some kids, there were two of them, waited for the other kids to finish eating and then they took food out of the garbage cans. So that was a problem until we solved it and now, they have a free meal, they attend school regularly and it's not a problem anymore, absolutely. [KK_RNM_02]</p>
Inability to master the material, poor grades	11	<p>We have a total breakdown of children in secondary school because they came unprepared, they can't cope without support, they need some kind of mentoring program. [PG_RNM_03]</p> <p>A lot of them enroll in secondary school even though they don't complete secondary school because of bad grades or they don't feel like going anymore. [SM_KNF_14]</p> <p>[...] He comes unprepared. I can guarantee it one hundred percent, I guarantee that he didn't come prepared to secondary school. [MĐ_RNM_04]</p>
Mistreatment by teachers, other students, stereotypes	11	<p>They don't complete secondary school to a large extent [...] In secondary school, children are pulled out of school because they cannot tolerate discrimination from other children. They are provoked or harassed to such an extent that there are fights, I know that about a boy who went to [...] school and had to drop out – he wanted to be a car mechanic – because he could no longer endure the terror, so he fought and then dropped out. [OB_RNM_01]</p> <p>What do you think are the challenges for children and young people when graduating from secondary school?</p>

		I will tell you one fact that pains me a lot. We have been building a community for 8 years, then a diligent child that someone looks at differently just because he is Roma because not everyone has the sensibility we have here, that child has to start from scratch, not even from scratch, he must prove that he is valuable, that he is the same as others... [MĐ_KNF_07]
[Lack of] motivation because others who have completed secondary school did not find a job	11	Well, there is a small number of students who drop out. The reason is... Looking ahead, they ended up not getting a job and that's it, that's the problem because they see that someone finished a better school, but they couldn't get a job, let alone that person. [MĐ_RNM_05]
Apprenticeship	11	Well, um, the Roma used to complain, um, that it's a problem for them to do their apprenticeship, because, um, business owners won't have them... In fact, everything is going well until they come, you know. [...] It is normal that they usually go into craft professions and it's necessary to do an apprenticeship here. So, it was difficult for them to do the apprenticeship because of their Roma background. Whether it is generally present or not, I cannot say with certainty. [FG_BP_KNF_08]
When it gets tough, they give up quickly	5	Quite a big problem in secondary school education is essentially just that dropping out, secondary school is not compulsory, right? A lot of them attend secondary school and when it gets hard for them, they drop out very quickly. [MĐ_KNF_14]
Absences	4	So, we have some kids who didn't show up all year at school. There are telegrams, no one reacts, after that the child repeats the grade. If they enroll again, it's the same thing. So, something simply needs to be done regarding these parenting competencies. Very difficult, parents do not understand the instructions. [FG_ZG_KNF_14]
Drugs and other problems	4	Well, I mentioned a little while ago, there's falling in love, but then there are those who... There's this drug issue, somehow, galaxy, stuff like that [MĐ_RNM_02]

\* The total number of documents with the displayed codes is 92

After primary and secondary school, let us take a look at higher education of young Roma men and women. The share of Roma men and women with completed higher education in all regions of the Republic of Croatia is very low and according to the data from this study it ranges from 0% in Northern Croatia to 1.4% in Istria and Primorje. The shares of young people currently attending university are also very small and are for both men and women in all age cohorts below 1%, slightly higher among young women in the middle age cohort, where currently 1.3% is enrolled in higher education. As the share of young Roma men and women in higher education is extremely small (in our sample of young people aged 20 to 29, only 0.7% of them), we were interested in the relevant factors that facilitate their enrollment and completion of tertiary education.

As with secondary education, scholarships for university students have proven to be extremely important, as have other forms of financial support (student dormitories, meals). Thus, according to the Report of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy, for the period from 2013 to 2020, for 2016 and 2017, scholarships were provided for 16 Roma students in 2016 (9 Roma, 7 Roma women) through the National Foundation for Support to the Pupil and Student Standard of Living, for which a total of HRK 160,000 was spent, while the number of scholarships increased in 2017, and a total of HRK 190,000 was spent on scholarships for 19 students (11 Roma men, 8 Roma women). Although this Report does not contain detailed data on scholarships for students of the RNM from other sources (local self-government units, foundations, etc.), the analyzed documents of qualitative material show that only three Roma students exercised the right to a scholarship in the City of Zagreb in 2015/2016. The most common reasons why so few young Roma men and women exercise the right to scholarships and other types of support for their studies are poor educational achievements in secondary schools, but also lack of motivation to study at available faculties with slightly lower evaluation criteria.

**TABLE 5.1.7. Roma attending universities – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Roma attending universities	43	<p>Then, scholarships for university students of the Roma national minority for college and higher education. Up to ten scholarships were to be awarded, but unfortunately, we never had such a number. In 2014/2015, there was one student who was entitled to a scholarship. In 2015/2016, the right to use the scholarship was exercised by three female students belonging to the Roma national minority. [FG_KNF_ZG-ZGŽ / ZG_KNF_GR_4]</p> <p>Great, there is one who succeeded, but with great effort and great... This year there was one girl, she completed secondary school, she wanted to enroll in university, but she didn't want to go to the one offered to her according to her grades, so I guess she's went nowhere, she didn't ask for help later. In general, we always find ways, although in our scholarship system the criteria are good grades so it's tough for them to get in. They meet the social requirements, but not the one relating to grades. However, we always try to help them through other methods. The ones who really want it always find a way. [FG_VŽ_KNF_15]</p> <p>We have, there you go, we can pride ourselves with three diplomas already. Three higher education diplomas already, so... They come to us, they do. So it largely depends on the environment in which the child grows, meaning the family. If there is parental support, if the parents are at all aware, this can be solved. Well, I say again, we have... well, we are definitely talking about a more affluent family, right? To be clear. [SM_KNF_PU_2]</p> <p>They pass exams, they finish college. [...] It is difficult for them financially, but the fact that they have a Roma scholarship helps a lot. Parents are very grateful because this Roma scholarship really helps children a lot when buying books and everything they need. But it's not enough when a child who is a good student leaves goes to college and has to pay for an apartment and a lot of other things, then it's a little harder, but somehow most of them manage. As much as they can. [BB_RNM_O4]</p>

There are no students/ persons from the RNM with a university degree	30	<p>In our field, I don't know anyone that went to college. [BB_KNF_O8]</p> <p>In our community, in the last 11 years since I have been here, no one has ever enrolled in higher education. [BB_KNF_O1]</p> <p>We get an outside invitation to include them in academies, faculties, everything paid, but we can't get them. Because they get disappointed. They want one thing and they get another, and that spite is a problem. [BP_RNM_O2]</p>
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\* The total number of documents with the displayed codes is 72

## 5.2. Inclusion in economic life

The general socioeconomic context of young people in Croatia, especially when it comes to employment and the labor market, is devastating not only for young Roma men and women, but also for young people in the general population. Numerous authors [Potočnik and Adamović, 2018; Potočnik and Spajić Vrkaš, 2017; Standing, 2011] warn that the growing flexibility of the labor market affects the growth of precarious forms of employment,<sup>126</sup> which is especially seen in the exploitation of young workforce by precarious forms of work, exploitation of student contracts by employers and low labor costs. Also, Tomić [2018], using Eurostat as a source, claims that precarious work is most evident in the number of three-month employment contracts, which 8% of the workforce in Croatia held in 2016. Of the total share of those holding three-month employment contracts, 47% are persons under the age of 29, meaning that every other precarious worker is a young person. There are more men in this group, 55% of them, and 73% of them have completed secondary school. Most precarious workers [29%] are found in service and trade occupations, and 22% in elementary occupations. As many as 25% of precarious workers are employed in the manufacturing industry, 17% in trade and 15% in preparation and accommodation activities [according to Tomić, 2018].

Potočnik and Adamović [2018] state that in 2016, according to official records, 36,436 people emigrated from Croatia, while two thirds of young people are con-

<sup>126</sup> According to Standing [2011], "precariat" is a phenomenon in a society on a global scale, and it describes today's reality of employees around the world where a large part of the population is subject to flexible exploitation or "flex exploitation". The word originated by combining the word "proletariat" which refers to members of the working class in capitalist society and the English word *precarious* which denotes uncertainty and insecurity. The main characteristics of "precariat" are: low and precarious wages, precarious jobs, irregular income, fixed-term work, occasional and temporary work, and low or no labor rights and protection.

sidering moving abroad for a longer period or forever if they fail to achieve their private and professional goals in Croatia. Potočnik and Spajić Vrkaš [2017] emphasize that “the inability of young people to ensure their livelihood through their work and thus financially relieve their already impoverished families, which includes their difficult housing independence and lack of resources needed to organize free time, seriously jeopardizes their well-being and their active role in the social, economic and political development of Croatia” [Potočnik and Spajić Vrkaš, 2017: 144].

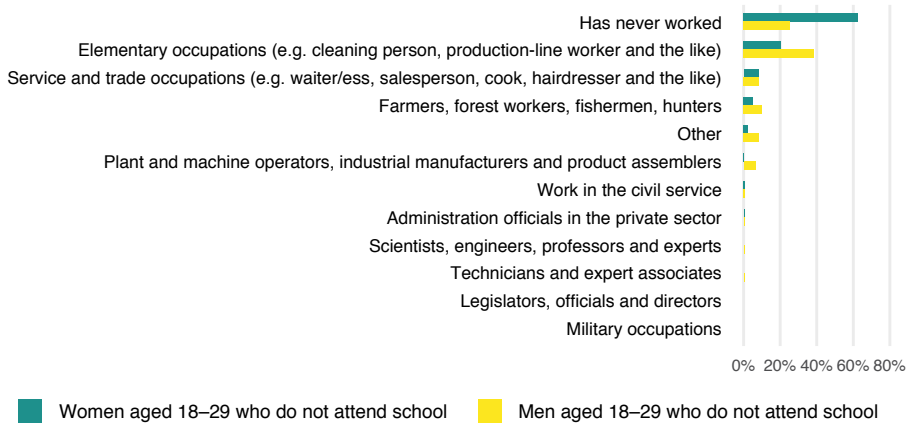
According to the Croatian Chamber of Commerce [Vidović, 2015], low activity and employment rates, rising unemployment, especially of the younger population, relatively high costs and low labor productivity, legislative and institutional rigidity, relatively high share of public and informal sector employees and mismatch of supply and demand in the labor market are characteristic of the work sphere in Croatia. These characteristics of the labor market are not only the result of the financial and economic crisis; only one part of the current situation can be attributed to the cyclical movement of the economy and purely economic causes, while the rest is attributed to certain non-economic, primarily demographic and institutional factors. The youth unemployment rate in the population under the age of 25 in Croatia was 32% in 2016 [European Commission, 2017]. Also, the European Commission, using Eurostat as a source, states that in the total young population in the EU aged 15 to 24, there were 6.3 million persons from the NEET group [not in education, employment or training] in 2016. The NEET rate among people aged 15 to 24 in 2016 was the highest, at more than 15% in Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Cyprus and Greece. The share of employed Roma in 11 European countries was 28% in 2011 [FRA, 2014b], and 25% in 2016 in nine European countries, with the lowest among Roma in Croatia – only 8% [FRA, 2018b]. In this context of the general population of young people in the labor market in Croatia, as well as Roma in the EU, we analyze data on the economic activity of young Roma men and women in our country.

### 5.2.1. Occupations of young Roma men and women<sup>127</sup>

According to the National Occupational Classification [NOC], the structure of employed men and women in the general population is significantly different from the occupations of young Roma men and women, which is highly related to their educational structure. According to the CBS [2018c], women were in 2017 mostly represented in the activities of health care and social welfare [78%] and education

127 Please note that in the analysis of occupations the lower age limit is 18 because most of those who attend secondary school attend three-year schools that end at 17, and those who did not attend secondary school do not have a qualified occupation with only primary school anyway. Everyone who is currently in school is excluded from the analysis of occupations.

[78%], as well as in financial and insurance activities [69%]. In the general population in 2017, men were most represented in construction [88%], mining and quarrying [87%] and in water supply, wastewater disposal, waste management and environmental remediation [80%].



**FIGURE 5.2.1 Occupations of young Roma men and women<sup>128</sup>**

Young Roma men and women between the ages of 18 and 29 most often work in elementary occupations such as cleaner, production line worker [39% of men and 20% of women]. Women and men who are members of the RNM also find jobs in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting – men twice as much [10%] than women [5%]. Also, one part of young Roma men and women are employed in service and trade occupations where gender equality is almost achieved: 9% of men and 8% of women work in these activities. Unlike young Roma women who participate in the activities of handling plants and machines and other jobs in the manufacturing industry with a 0.2% representation, young Roma men in this branch make up 7%. All other listed occupations [such as scientists and experts, military occupations, work in the civil service or administration in the private sector, etc.] are either extremely low or not represented among Roma men and women at all. Thus, for example, it is known from other sources that a total of nine Roma are employed in state administration bodies, professional services and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, i.e. only 0.02% of the total number of employees [(G)OHRNM, 2019: 16], whereas for example only five members of the RNM are employed in the Ministry of the Interior [(G)OHRNM, 2019: 17].

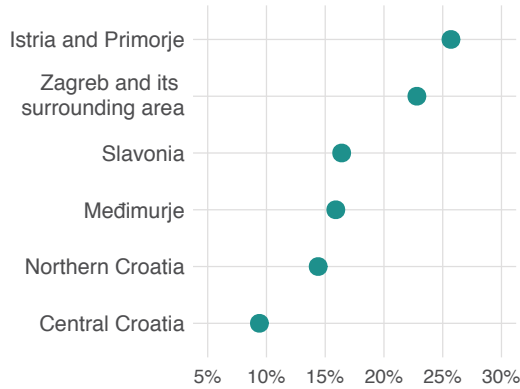
<sup>128</sup> There are statistically significant gender differences in the representation of certain occupations among young Roma men and women [chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 141.809$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ].



### 5.2.2. Paid work

Speaking of young people in general, Gvozdanović et al. [2019: 25] state that most of them are outside the labor market, and among those who work, 22% of them have a full-time permanent employment contract while 18% of them have a fixed-term contract. In this study, people aged 14 and older were asked the following question: “Did [name] do any paid work [in cash or in kind] during the past week?” The distribution of responses shows that almost a quarter of young Roma men work [23%], which may be one of the key reasons for dropping out of school, while young Roma women involved in paid work are four times fewer [only 6%]. In the youngest age cohort of young people, 15% of boys and 4% of girls work. Also, it is evident that in the youngest age cohort there are more boys [6% of them] than girls [only 1%] in the education system. In the middle age cohort, almost a third of young Roma men perform some type of paid work [32%], while only 10% of Roma women are employed at that age. The majority of Roma are employed and do some form of paid work in the oldest age cohort of young people: 38% of them claim to do some paid work, while only 7% of women of that age are employed.

In addition to the gender differences in paid youth work analyzed separately for each age cohort of young people, the analysis of paid work also took into account information on whether young people are currently in education, as this is an important intervening variable for youth work analysis. In the youngest age group of young people, 1% of girls and 6% of boys did paid work in the past week, while 6% of girls and 23% of boys did paid work among those who do not attend school. In the middle age group of young people, 13% of girls and 23% of boys did paid work in the past week, while 10% of girls and 33% of boys did paid work among those who do not attend school. In the oldest age group of young people among Roma women who attend school, there are no people in our sample who did paid work in the past week, while among Roma men who attend school, 60% of them did paid work. Among those who do not attend school, paid work was done by 8% of Roma women and 37% of Roma men. Thus, in all age subgroups of young Roma men and women, boys perform paid work to a greater extent than girls, but also boys and girls who are still in school work less often than those who are no longer in school.



**FIGURE 5.2.2. Regional differences in paid youth work**

There are statistically significant regional differences in the performance of paid work in the previous week among young people.<sup>129</sup> In Istria and Primorje, young Roma men and women participate the most in paid work [26% of them], in Zagreb and its surrounding area slightly less than a quarter of young people work [23%], while they are least employed in Central Croatia where only 9% do some paid work.

To analyze the forms of paid work of young Roma men and women with regard to the frequency of their work, we analyzed gender and age differences in the answers to the question “What form of paid work does [name] do?”, providing the following answers: Has a permanent job, Has a temporary job, Performs seasonal work, Performs occasional work [from time to time] and Never does paid work, with multiple choice options.

**TABLE 5.2.1. Gender differences in the form of paid youth work within certain age subgroups**

	14–19 years old		20–24 years old		25–29 years old		Young people total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Has a permanent job</b>	3.1%	1.8%	7.0%	4.2%	9.9%	4.3%	6.1%	3.2%
<b>Has a temporary job</b>	3.7%	0.9%	10.7%	3.8%	13.1%	1.4%	8.5%	1.9%
<b>Performs seasonal work</b>	2.8%	2.9%	9.9%	7.9%	10.3%	6.2%	7.0%	5.3%
<b>Performs occasional work [from time to time]</b>	17.5%	6.5%	38.7%	11.7%	41.8%	12.4%	30.7%	9.6%
<b>Never does paid work</b>	52.0%	62.2%	25.5%	57.5%	20.7%	59.5%	35.2%	60.1%

129 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 19.317$ ; df = 5; p = 0.002.

Gender differences in permanent employment exist only in the oldest age group of young people, where more men [10%] than women [4%]<sup>130</sup> have a permanent job, whereas gender differences in the remaining two groups of young people are not statistically significant. When it comes to permanent employment, there are more young Roma men in all age groups than young Roma women. 3% of boys and 2% of girls in the youngest age cohort have a permanent job. 7% of Roma men and 4% of Roma women are employed in the middle age group of young people. Gender differences in temporary employment exist in the middle and oldest age cohort of young people, with more men than women doing temporary work in both age groups. In the middle age group of young people, 11% of men and 4% of women<sup>131</sup> have temporary jobs, and in the oldest age group, it is 13% of men and only 1% of women.<sup>132</sup> Gender differences in the performance of seasonal jobs were not found in any age subgroup of young people. Seasonal jobs are mostly done by men in the oldest age cohort – 10% of them, while in seasonal jobs most women [8%] participate in the middle age cohort.<sup>133</sup>

Gender differences in the performance of occasional jobs exist in all three age subgroups of young people, with men doing such jobs to a much greater extent than women in all three subgroups of young people.<sup>134</sup> Thus, most Roma in the oldest age cohort of young people do occasional jobs, as many as 42% of them, 39% of them in the middle age cohort, and 18% of them are occasionally employed in the youngest age cohort. Almost three times less Roma women are occasionally employed in the oldest age cohort [12%], 12% of young women are occasionally employed in the middle cohort, while only 7% of girls work from time to time in the youngest age group.

When looking at the population of young Roma men and women as a whole, 35% of Roma men and as many as 60% of Roma women are completely excluded from the world of work. Due to low educational achievement and discrimination that is strongly present in employment and work [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić, 2018: 251–252], young Roma men and women are generally excluded from permanent forms of employment that ensure a minimum of subsistence security, but also other

130 Fisher's exact test,  $p = 0.036$ .

131 Fisher's exact test:  $p = 0.004$ .

132 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

133 In the general population of the Republic of Croatia, seasonal employment makes up a significant part of total employment. In fact, in 2018, 31,823 workers were employed in seasonal jobs, which is 20% of the total number of employees from the records of the Employment Service based on employment. Seasonal employment was most numerous in the provision of accommodation, food preparation and serving [59% of the total]. Most seasonal workers are employed from coastal [66% in total] and Slavonian [21%] counties, while the area of northwestern and central Croatia covers a relatively smaller part of seasonal employment [13%] [HZZ, 2019: 7].

134 Fisher's exact tests, 14–19 years old,  $p < 0.001$ ; 20–24 years old,  $p < 0.001$ ; 25–29 years old,  $p < 0.001$ .

social benefits of such employment, such as paid annual leave, various recourses, paid overtime, the right to sick leave, etc. Thus, the absence of permanent employment for an indefinite period of time means not only the lack of social status, but also exclusion from the social security system.

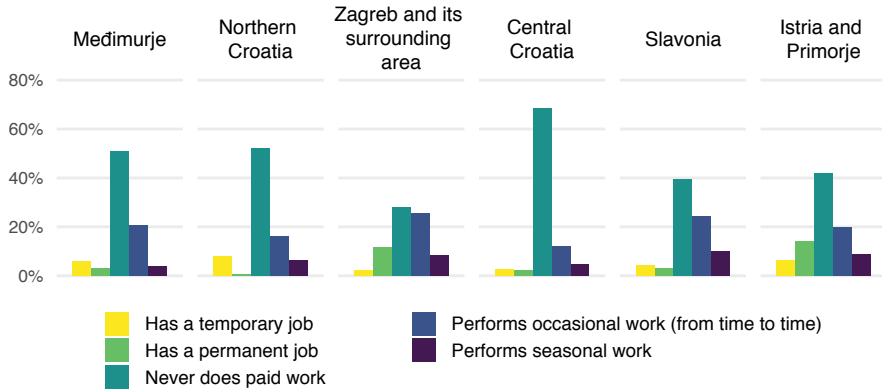


FIGURE 5.2.3. Regional differences in the form of paid youth work

Statistically significant regional differences were found in the form of paid work performed by young people in permanent employment,<sup>135</sup> seasonal work,<sup>136</sup> occasional work<sup>137</sup> and in the share of young people who never do paid work.<sup>138</sup> Only in temporary jobs there are no statistically significant regional differences among young people. Most young people are permanently employed in Istria and Primorje [14%], followed by Zagreb and its surrounding area [12%], while in other regions this percentage ranges from 0.5% in Northern Croatia to 3% in Međimurje. Temporary employment of young Roma men and women is most prevalent in Northern Croatia with 8%, 6% in Istria and Primorje and in Međimurje, while in other regions from 2% of young Roma men and women in Zagreb and its surrounding area to 4% in Slavonia have temporary employment. Most young people do seasonal work in Slavonia, 10% of them, 9% in Istria and Primorje, and 8% in Zagreb and its surrounding area. In other regions, 4% to 6% of young people work in seasonal jobs.

135 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 64.208$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

136 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 15.472$ ; df = 5;  $p = 0.009$ .

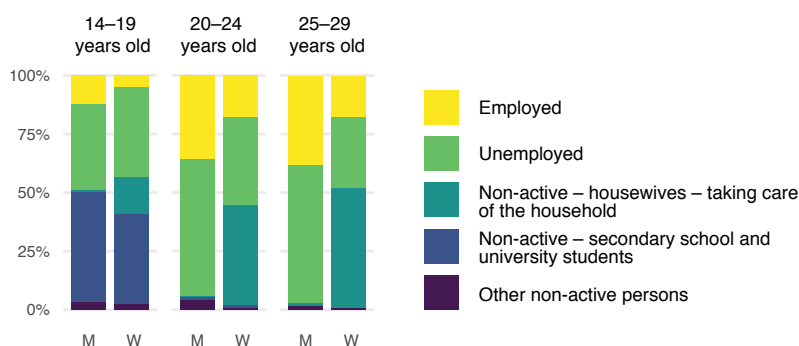
137 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 15.912$ ; df = 5;  $p = 0.007$ .

138 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 75.931$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

### 5.2.3. Unemployment and work activity

Štimac Radin [2002] states that one of the most important reasons for incomplete social integration of young people stems from their forced status as long-term unemployed. Also, the author believes that the inability to realize work and professional aspirations in the circumstances of exposure to long-term unemployment makes young people a particularly vulnerable group, and delaying the socializing effect of taking a job, among many other consequences, contributes to their social exclusion.

Data on youth activity show that about a third of young Roma women are non-active because they take care of the household [so-called housewives], while approximately as many are unemployed, i.e. those who are active and willing to work but unable to find work. Only 12% of them are employed. Among young Roma men, the situation is somewhat more favorable because slightly more than a quarter of them are employed, but as many as half are unemployed. Those young Roma men who are non-active have this status mostly because they are still in school, not because they take care of the household as Roma women do.



**FIGURE 5.2.4. Gender differences in the work activity of young people within certain age subgroups**

Statistically significant gender differences in economic activity exist in all three age subgroups of young people.<sup>139</sup> More young Roma men than Roma women are employed in all age categories. Most of them work in the oldest age cohort: 38% of Roma men and 18% of Roma women. Slightly fewer young men [36%] work in the middle age cohort and almost the same share of Roma women as in the older age cohort of young people [18%]. This data could be interpreted as a small part of young Roma men and women entering the labor market around the age of twenty,

<sup>139</sup> Chi-square test, 14–19 years old:  $\chi^2=56.848$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; 20–24 years old:  $\chi^2=128.895$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; 25–29 years old:  $\chi^2=138.303$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

and this coverage does not change significantly in older age. The biggest difference between young women and men is in the category of non-active persons who take care of the household. In fact, in the youngest age cohort, 16% of girls take care of the household, and as expected, this share increases with their growing up. Thus, in the middle age cohort there are 43%, and in the oldest age cohort as many as 51% of Roma women who are housewives. These data show that young Roma women are a particularly vulnerable group because, as we have already mentioned, there are higher at-risk-of-poverty rates among unemployed women. Furthermore, as shown in the previous chapter, their educational structure is lower than the educational structure of men, which is often due to early marriages and becoming a parent [among young people 51% of girls and 41% of boys are parents, while the average age of marrying and giving birth to the first child is 15 to 18], thus skipping the process of growing up and development and the time when they can be educated and included in the working population.

**TABLE 5.2.2. Regional differences in the work activity of young people [aged 14–29]**

Region	Employed	Unemployed	Non-active – housewives – taking care of the household	Non-active – secondary school and university students	Other non-active persons
Međimurje	20.7%	32.9%	24.7%	19.0%	2.7%
Northern Croatia	16.8%	48.4%	18.9%	12.1%	3.7%
Zagreb and its surrounding area	27.1%	40.7%	9.0%	20.1%	3.0%
Central Croatia	16.0%	50.3%	16.0%	16.0%	1.7%
Slavonia	10.7%	55.8%	12.0%	19.7%	1.7%
Istria and Primorje	27.8%	49.2%	7.1%	15.9%	0.0%

There are also significant regional differences in the work activity of young people.<sup>140</sup> Most young people, slightly more than a third of them, are employed in Istria and Primorje, as well as in Zagreb and its surrounding area. A fifth of them are employed in Međimurje, 17% of young people work in Central and Northern Croatia, and the least employed young people are in Slavonia [11%]. Housewives who take care of the household among young people are mostly in Međimurje and Northern Croatia, and least in Istria and Primorje and Zagreb and its surrounding

140 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 98.767$ ; df = 20; p < 0.001.

area. Slavonia ranks first in terms of the share of unemployed young people, as many as 56% of young people in Slavonia do not work, while the lowest number of unemployed young people is in Međimurje [33%].

## 5.3. Deviant and delinquent behavior

Deviations are a form of opposition to an order, and social deviations are violations of norms that establish a social relationship and have social causes [Janković and Pešić, 1988]. In this chapter, we address different thematic areas related to certain forms of deviant behavior that have in common that the theoretical explanation for their development relies on the theory of social learning of deviant behavior [Burgess and Akers, 1966; Akers et al., 1979]. The chapter thus begins with an overview of the experiences of young people with violent behavior in their families as a fundamental institution in which various forms of social behavior are formed and learned. This is followed by an overview of specific deviant behavior characteristic of the young population, namely delinquent behavior, behavioral disorders, and consumption of harmful substances. The last part refers to raising awareness of the harmfulness of consuming drugs and other intoxicants for children and young people.

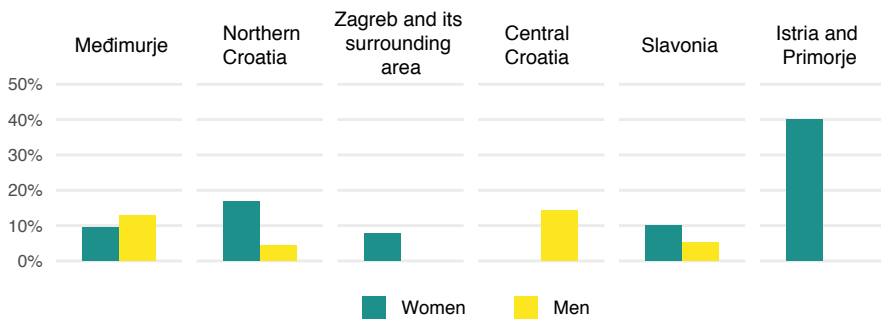
### 5.3.1. Violent behavior among family members

According to Ajduković and Ajduković [2010: 293], “domestic violence is a set of behaviors aimed at controlling family members through the use of force, intimidation and manipulation.” As with violence against women, various forms of violence can be identified in domestic violence: mental, physical, economic and sexual. Abusers, as well as victims, can be different family members regardless of gender, and the most common victims of violence are children, women, the elderly and people with special needs. There is no firm boundary between different forms of violent behavior, so, for example, “physical or sexual violence in close relationships is always accompanied by psychological and emotional violent behavior” [Ajduković and Ajduković, 2010: 293]. The same authors point out that exposure to violence between parents is today recognized as a specific form of violence against children in the family. Such violence always presupposes an abuse of power in relationships that are not based on equality.

In a study by the Child Protection Clinic in Zagreb, young people (N = 4,191) retrospectively estimated that during childhood they were exposed to physical abuse in 16% of cases, 17% to emotional abuse, 15% of respondents witnessed domestic

violence, and 14% stated that they were sexually abused. In a sample of the same age group, Ždero [2009] found a slightly different exposure to childhood violence: 12% of young people reported experiencing physical violence in the family, 20% psychological, while 10% witnessed physical violence of the father against the mother. 2% of respondents felt that they were victims of sexual violence. A study on adult women conducted by Otročak [2003] showed that children in 36% of Croatian families witnessed physical violence by fathers against mothers.

To detect domestic violence, the survey asked the following question “Have you ever experienced any form of violence from a member of your family?” Here, we analyze gender and regional differences in experiences of domestic violence among young people. According to data collected for 311 young Roma men and women aged 16 to 29, every tenth young person was a victim of domestic violence, both among boys [9%] and girls [11%]. No statistically significant differences in the total amount of experiences of domestic violence were found between individual regions of the Republic of Croatia. Although the data from the sample show some gender differences in experiences of domestic violence, especially in the region of Istria and Primorje [Figure 5.4.1.], they are not statistically significant, probably due to small subsamples within the regions. Also, there is no statistically significant difference in experiences of domestic violence among young people from the three age subgroups.



**FIGURE 5.3.1.** Experience of domestic violence among young people – gender differences, by region



### 5.3.2. Delinquent behavior of young people

Delinquency includes serious forms of asocial, antisocial and criminal behavior such as: theft, robbery, intentionally causing damage and fire, etc. The term is usually used when referring to juvenile offenders [Jašović, 1983]. According to Jašović [1983], juvenile delinquency points to the fact that society has failed to institutionally respond to signals sent by a young person to family, school, peers and other key people in the immediate environment, seeking help and support. According to a broader interpretation, juvenile delinquency is considered to be all forms of behavioral disorders of minors, i.e. any behavior of young people that violates the legal and moral norms of the social environment. According to Bošković [2006], delinquent behavior of young people includes those forms of behavior that are specific to children and are not legally incriminated among adult perpetrators [running away from school, running away from home, vagrancy, alcohol consumption, etc.]. Juvenile delinquency can be defined as any socially unacceptable behavior of individuals or groups of young people, i.e. violation of legal or moral norms of a society, as well as behavior that provokes spontaneous or organized social response in order to protect social goods and values, but also the perpetrators of such behaviors [Folnegović Šmalac, 1999].

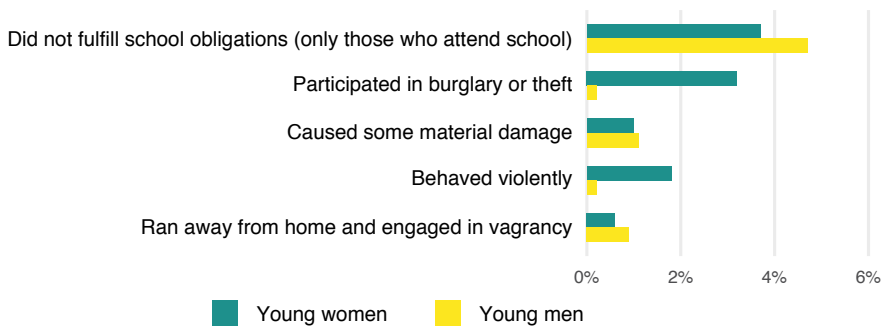
Gorman-Smith et al. [2002, according to Žuvela, Vučković Matić and Sindik, 2016] found that neglectful parenting style [manifested in low levels of discipline, supervision, emotionality and connection] is a significant predictor of all forms of delinquent behavior of young people, which is also confirmed by Farrington [2005, according to Žuvela, Vučković Matić and Sindik, 2016] who states that a low level of parental control is the most significant predictor of later deviant behavior. In other words, the parenting style has an impact on the emergence of deviant behavior, which emphasizes the importance of primary socialization for the “healthy” integration of young people into the wider community. The results of the study conducted by Patterson and Yoerger in 2004 [according to Šincek and Ajduković, 2012] show that young people who expressed certain forms of socially unacceptable behaviors early, during adolescence, adopt new and increasingly complex forms of such behaviors such as theft or burglary. Part of the explanation for this phenomenon is offered by labeling theory, according to which such findings can be explained by the fact that young people early accept the labels of “maladaptation” attributed to them by society, continue to behave in a similar way and turn socially unacceptable behaviors into delinquent behaviors [Becker, 1991].

Numerous studies [Bašić and Ferić, 2000; Ricijaš, Krajcer and Bouillet, 2010] have shown that friends choose each other based on similar characteristics and that in adolescence a young person does not adapt to new group norms, but reinforces already adopted behaviors that attracted them to join a certain group in the first place. This can be a risk factor if a young person has previously shown a certain

deviation in behavior from their peers that can enhance over time and lead to more severe forms of delinquency and crime.

According to the Report on the Implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities for 2017, the total number of Roma perpetrators of criminal and misdemeanor offenses across Croatia was 3,193. At the Croatian level, 2014 was a record year in terms of the number of criminal offenses committed by Roma against Roma [189 criminal offenses with 248 perpetrators] and the number of criminal offenses committed by Roma against other persons [1,124 such criminal offenses with 1,568 perpetrators]. Official police statistics state that in 2018, a total of 389 aggravated thefts were committed in the area of Međimurje County, of which 96 were resolved, and of those 96 detected perpetrators, 76 were Roma. It is similar with some other criminal offenses of ordinary crime in Međimurje [e.g. theft, coercion and assault on an official], where most reported cases were not resolved, but the perpetrators of those offenses are mostly members of the RNM.

In the text that follows, we will present the results of a survey where one randomly selected respondent for all household members answered the following question “Has [name] done any of the following in the last year?” with five offered answers and multiple choice option, where we present data for children and young people aged 10 to 18 [a total of 939].



**FIGURE 5.3.2. Delinquent behavior of children and youth aged 10 to 18**

According to the respondents, among children and young people aged 10 to 18 all of these delinquent behaviors are represented in very small shares, with the most common behaviors among young men being non-fulfillment of school obligations [4%] and participation in burglary or theft [3 %], and among girls even slightly more than among boys non-fulfillment of school obligations [5%]. Statistically significant gender differences were found only in participation in burglary or theft<sup>141</sup> and in violent behavior.<sup>142</sup> Roma women participate in burglaries or thefts to a

141 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

142 Fisher's exact test:  $p = 0.022$ .

lesser extent than Roma men [only 0.2% of respondents], while the same number participate in violent behavior, unlike young Roma men, 2% of whom behave violently, according to their household members.

**TABLE 5.3.1. Delinquent behavior of children and youth aged 10 to 18, by region**

	Participated in burglary or theft	Caused some material damage	Ran away from home and engaged in vagrancy	Behaved violently	Did not fulfill school obligations [only those who attend school]
<b>Međimurje</b>	2.4%	2.2%	1.0%	2.0%	4.2%
<b>Northern Croatia</b>	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%
<b>Zagreb and its surrounding area</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
<b>Central Croatia</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Slavonia</b>	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	6.2%
<b>Istria and Primorje</b>	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	11.6%
<b>Total</b>	1.8%	1.1%	0.7%	1.1%	4.1%

Statistically significant regional differences were found in participation in burglary or theft<sup>143</sup> and in non-fulfillment of school obligations.<sup>144</sup> Most children and youth aged 10 to 18 participate in burglaries or thefts, 5% in Northern Croatia, 2% in Međimurje, while in this study in Zagreb and its surrounding area, Istria and Primorje and Central Croatia no such case was recorded. Non-fulfillment of school obligations is most common among children and young people in Istria and Primorje [about 12%]. Material damage was done by 2% of young Roma in Međimurje, while this type of delinquent behavior is not present in other regions, except sporadically in Slavonia with 0.6% of young perpetrators of this illegal act.

### 5.3.3. Behavioral disorders

Behavioral disorder is defined as a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior that violates the fundamental rights of others or violates social norms or rules age-appropriately [American Psychiatric Association, 2014, according to Corbo, 2018: 1]. These are most often disorders that start in the family and spread thro-

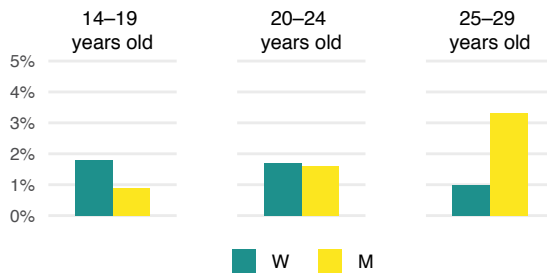
143 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 13.448$ ; df = 5; p = 0.020.

144 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 12.845$ ; df = 5; p = 0.025.

ugh preschool and school institutions to peers, which is a problem for the local and wider community [Letić, 2012, according to Čorbo, 2018]. Čorbo [2018], using data from the American Psychiatric Association from 2014, states that the one-year prevalence within the population varies from 2 to over 10%, with a mean value of 4%, and occurs equally in all ethnic and racial categories. The prevalence rate increases from childhood to adolescence and is higher for males.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – DSM-5 [according to Čorbo, 2018] identifies 15 diagnostic features of behavioral disorders grouped into four groups of behaviors [aggressive behavior towards humans and animals, destruction of property, fraud and theft and serious violation of rules, which refers to running away from home, truancy, etc.]. The diagnosis is made if at least three of the 15 criteria appear in a 12-month period provided that at least one criterion is present in the last six months. Although for the purposes of the baseline survey, youth behavioral disorders were not operationalized by all indicators from the DSM-5, the following question was asked: “Does [name] demonstrate or did he/she demonstrate any of the above in the last 12 months?”, and the answer related to behavioral disorders read: “Behavioral disorder [e.g. attention deficit disorder, aggression towards oneself or others, social isolation...]”.

A total of 1.6% of young people were found to have had a behavioral disorder in the last year. Although due to the incomplete measuring instrument we cannot directly compare the data provided by the American Psychiatric Association, these data indicate that the prevalence of behavioral disorders in Roma children and young people is even slightly lower than the one-year population trends.



**FIGURE 5.3.3.** Gender differences in the prevalence of behavioral disorders in youth within certain age subgroups

No gender differences were found in the prevalence of behavioral disorders in young people in any age subgroup of young people. Interestingly, behavioral disorders in our sample were detected slightly more [1.8%] among girls in the youngest age cohort of young people than among boys [0.9%]. In the middle age cohort, both Roma men and women experienced some form of behavioral disorder in 1.6

to 1.7% of cases, while the prevalence of behavioral disorders increased only in the oldest age cohort of young people, so more men demonstrated behavioral disorders [3.3%] compared to 1% of women. No statistically significant regional differences in the prevalence of behavioral disorders in young people were found.

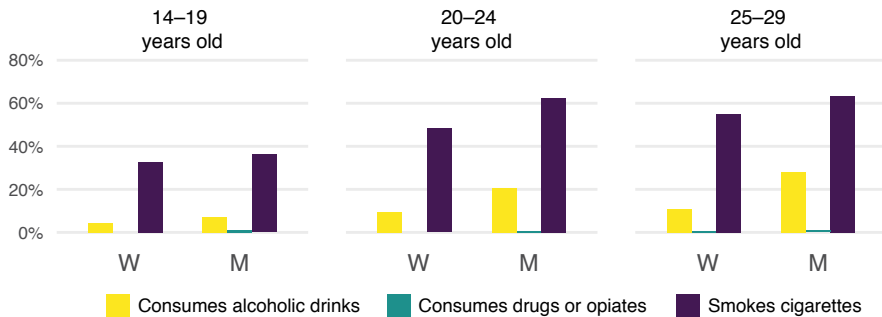
#### 5.3.4. Consumption of harmful substances

According to Lalić [1995], we treat addiction sociologically based on three concepts: the first is the concept of a total social phenomenon in which addiction has its own closed and structured social world that is reflected on several levels – cultural, physiological, economic, etc. The second is the concept of a social problem which observes the phenomenon of addiction through three features: 1. It is undesirable from the point of view of the public and/or the dominant group; 2. It is characteristic of a large number of people; 3. It can be mitigated or prevented by organized social action [Lalić, 1995]. Subsequently, a fourth feature is added, and that is the damage that this phenomenon brings on a general social and individual level. The third sociological concept views the phenomenon of addiction as a social deviation, a behavior that deviates from what is considered normal and desirable in society. Controversy over such a concept is based on the ambiguity of assessing a certain behavior as abnormal and undesirable, and this type of controversy is clearly manifested within the theoretical concept of labeling [Lalić, 1995].

Sociological research on addiction is often based on the study of the lives of youth and remediation of pathology among young people, especially aspects of addiction, with the aim of enriching social interactions with young people and establishing social order in these groups [Leburić and Relja, 2001, according to Kordić, Hromadžić and Karlić, 2017]. Psychoactive substance abuse and addiction carry significant social and health risks. Modern psychology points out that anyone can become an addict. In addition to “classic” psychoactive substances, heroin, morphine, amphetamines, tranquilizers and cocaine, nicotine, caffeine, sugar, steroids are mentioned, and the problem of new addictions is introduced – Internet, work, exercise and even sex addiction [Grant et al., 2010, according to Kordić, Hromadžić and Karlić, 2017]. Addiction is primarily seen as a complex phenomenon whose understanding requires an interdisciplinary approach. From the point of view of pedagogy, addiction is studied through the prism of drug addiction prevention [Bognar, 2005, according to Kordić, Hromadžić and Karlić, 2017], and pedagogical studies of addiction among youth emphasize drug abuse and physical violence and the representation of minors and young adults in the structure of reported perpetrators of drug abuse [Nenadić Bilan, 2012, according to Kordić, Hromadžić and Karlić, 2017].

Ilišin and Radin [2002] state that the use of various psychophysical stimulants among young people is examined in the conceptual framework of leisure time simply because the use of narcotics and other substances mostly occurs in leisure time. According to the findings of research for the general population of young people in Croatia, Ilišin [2002] states that the most widespread use of tobacco and alcohol, followed by the so-called soft drugs and various psychopharmaceuticals, while hard drugs are used the least. According to the National Strategy on Combating Drug Abuse in the Republic of Croatia for the period from 2012 to 2017 [2012a], the most prevalent drug in Europe is cannabis, which was taken by at least 5% of the population aged 15–64 in 2010. Cocaine is the second most used drug in Europe [0.8–0.9%] with about 4.5 million users, which represents 30% of users of this drug in the world.<sup>145</sup>

According to the National Strategy on Combating Drug Abuse [2012a], in 2007, in Croatia, as in most other European countries, the use of the drug ecstasy and the number of students who smoked marijuana at least once in their lives decreased, but the number of young people who problematically consumed marijuana [40 times or more] increased.<sup>146</sup> According to recent data from the ESPAD<sup>147</sup> survey for 2015 [CNIPH, 2016], in the last 12 months in Croatia, as many as 82% of young people drank alcohol at least once, while 47% got drunk at least once in their lives. 62% of students have tried cigarettes at least once in their life, and 21% have smoked in the last month [CNIPH, 2016]. Croatia is above the European average in terms of cigarette and alcohol consumption, as well as in terms of cannabis consumption among young people [ESPAD, 2016].



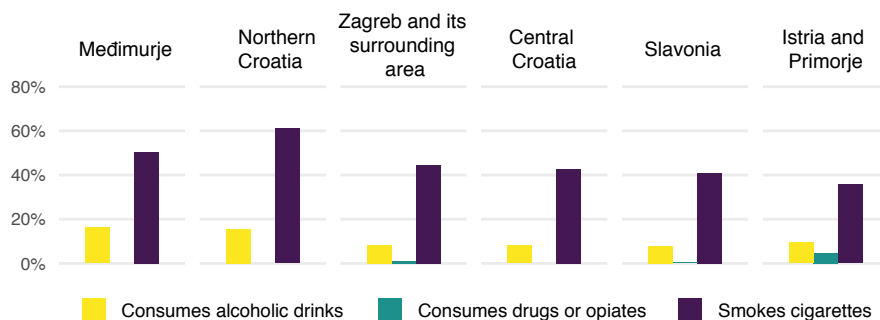
**FIGURE 5.3.4. Gender differences in alcohol, cigarette and drug consumption within certain age subgroups of youth**

<sup>145</sup> Between 25,000 and 27,000 drug-related deaths are registered in Europe each year, with a rate of 46–48 deaths per million inhabitants aged 15–64.

<sup>146</sup> There is 5% of boys and 2% of girls at serious risk of addiction [ESPAD survey data from 2005].

<sup>147</sup> This is an international survey on smoking, drinking alcohol and drug use conducted on students aged 15 and 16 in about thirty European countries, including Croatia.

Among young Roma men and women, smoking is the most widespread addiction and it increases with growing up. Thus, in the middle age group, 63% of men and 48% of women smoke, while in the oldest age cohort, 63% of Roma men and 55% of Roma women are addicted to cigarettes. A statistically significant gender difference in cigarette smoking exists only in the middle age cohort of young people<sup>148</sup> [more young men than girls smoke cigarettes], but not in the youngest and oldest age group of young people. Alcohol is mostly consumed by young Roma men and women in the oldest age cohort, 28% of men and 11% of women. Statistically significant gender differences in alcohol consumption exist in the middle<sup>149</sup> and older age group of young people,<sup>150</sup> where alcohol is consumed more by men than women, but not in the youngest age group where it is consumed equally – in about a third of them. Drug or opiate use is present in about 1% of young Roma men and 0.1% of young Roma women, and statistically significant gender differences in drug use were not found in any age group of young people [possibly due to very small subsamples of consumers].



**FIGURE 5.3.5. Regional differences in alcohol, cigarette and drug consumption among youth**

Significant regional differences in consumption among young people were found for all three harmful substances.<sup>151</sup> The highest alcohol consumption is among young people in Međimurje and Northern Croatia [16%]. In other regions, alcohol consumption among young Roma ranges between 8% and 10%. The highest number of smokers among young Roma is in Northern Croatia – as many as 61%, while the lowest number is in Istria and Primorje – 36%. The highest opiate consumption is in Istria and Primorje [5%], 1% of young Roma consume drugs in Zagreb and its surrounding area and 0.4% in Slavonia, while in the remaining regions [Međi-

148 Fisher's exact test,  $p = 0.002$ .

149 Fisher's exact test,  $p = 0.001$ .

150 Fisher's exact test:  $p < 0.001$ .

151 Chi-square tests, alcohol:  $\chi^2 = 21.801$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ; cigarettes:  $\chi^2 = 30.415$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; drugs:  $\chi^2 = 45.373$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

murje, Northern and Central Croatia] the survey did not record drug and opiate use among young people. Data on drug non-consumption, especially for Medimurje, may be a consequence of giving socially acceptable answers in the survey or ignorance of the person responsible for other household members because the qualitative analysis for Medimurje shows that there are some young people who consume some opiates (in interviews and focus groups *galaxy* and marijuana are mentioned, see Table 5.3.4.). Below is a summary of the qualitative data analysis related to the topic of consumption of harmful substances.

**TABLE 5.3.2. Cigarettes – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotes**

Code name	Document number with code*	Illustrative quotations
Cigarettes	31	Tobacco products, of course, are common, we can already say that they are unfortunately an integral part of culture, which is like a sign of growing up [...]. Almost everyone starts consuming tobacco products in primary school. [FG_OB_KNF_23]
Children and young people who smoke	29	Tobacco, I witnessed a baby in diapers smoking, that's exactly what I saw. [KK_KNF_02]  I have a two-year-old child who smokes. [MD_RNM_07]
Who smokes, at what age	24	90% smoke from 15 years of age onwards, by gender as well. [PG_RNM_05]  As for nicotine consumption, it means that everyone consumes equally, men and women. [BP_RNM_01]

\*The total number of documents with the displayed codes is 66

According to a qualitative analysis, the largest number of interviewees, slightly less than two thirds, state that Roma consume cigarettes to a large extent. The general perception of the interviewees is that almost all men and women are equally addicted to nicotine, although according to the survey, more young men [52%] smoke than women [43%] and the prevalence is around 50% of the youth population.

Interestingly, about one-fifth of the interviewees state that children smoke at a completely inappropriate age ["in diapers", "two years old"], which may be indicative that in relation to the general population among Roma, at the level of individual cases, smoking is so acceptable that even very young children can reach for cigarettes and smoke.



**TABLE 5.3.3. Alcohol – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Document number with code*	Illustrative quotations
Alcohol is not a problem	33	<p>Women maybe not, men yes. Depending on where. There are a lot of them in Pula who have turned to religion, and now in Rijeka, so there is no more alcohol. [...] Faith plays its part, which again is good. [PG_RNM_02]</p> <p>We don't have alcoholics in the neighborhood, we don't have drugs in the neighborhood. [PG_RNM_04]</p>
Alcohol is a problem	32	<p>As for alcohol, we have a slightly bigger problem here [...]. Our Roma have too much free time. So they try, they fight, they are great fighters, they try and when they fail, they fall into problems and depression and everyone turns to alcohol which then becomes a big problem. And of course, sometimes they are frustrated and then they drink and then they become ten times more frustrated. They are mostly men, but there are also women. [KK_RNM_03]</p> <p>[...] To us, the system of reports on disturbing public order and peace, fights, alcohol consumption grows proportionally in the moments when social assistance is distributed. [FG_MĐ_KNF_20]</p> <p>If you go to a settlement, you have 20 young people who do nothing there except drink. Alcoholism, that's probably [problem, A/N] number 1. [FG_MĐ_KNF_22]</p> <p>Families who consume, they all consume, the problem is that children come to school half drunk and completely drunk. [MĐ_KNF_04]</p>
Who drinks, at what age	24	<p>Here women almost never consume alcohol in our community. Men consume, but women, if they drink a glass or a pint of beer, that's it – one glass in moderation [...]. [BB_RNM_04]</p> <p>As for alcohol, it's mostly men. [KK_RNM_06]</p>

\*The total number of documents with the displayed codes is 77

In the qualitative analysis, an equal number of interviewees believe that alcohol is or is not a problem. It is important to emphasize that in cases where participants do not consider alcohol a problem, this means that they assess that alcoholism is not widespread in the locality or that most drink occasionally, and it does not mean that there is no alcohol consumption at all. Participants typically point out that men drink more than women. Alcohol consumption among children and youth is associated with growing up in families where alcohol consumption is normalized,

and some even state that children from families where parents drink go to school drunk. Alcohol is also associated with the misuse of social security benefits and neglect of children, which, together with violent and criminal behavior under the influence of alcohol, creates tensions between the majority population and part of the Roma population, especially in Međimurje County.

**TABLE 5.3.4. Drugs – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Drug addiction is not a problem	20	As far as I know, we don't have that. [IS_RNM_01]
Marijuana	18	Going back two years there was again a strong trend and an increase in marijuana use. So this is what was noticed, after the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes and after the decriminalization of marijuana use, for which the public was obviously not prepared. There was a public impression that marijuana is almost a sacred plant that heals everything. [FG_MĐ_KNF_19]
Drugs present	16	Well, those pills, ecstasy, I don't know what kind of drugs they are, but the big ones give those pills to our children, then you see that children come to school under some effect, you can see that they are under some opiates, there wasn't so much of that before. Then there are these criminal acts and alcoholism is present, but these drugs, it is a negative trend. [MĐ_KNF_06]
Galaxy	14	However, the difference between young people drinking and adults drinking is that young people do not only consume alcohol, but they mix alcohol and other addictive substances. Going back a few years [...], especially among the Roma population, there is an increase in the use of new drugs. It was a terrible rebellion for a time. In 2015 in general, it was very noticeable in all our schools and that was actually a very big problem for us because these are addictive drugs that cannot be detected, cannot be proven by these testers for traditional drugs. So we had campaigns that were also aimed at schools, children, parents, teachers, but we also went to Roma settlements, especially because we really noticed that a large part of this kind of culture of using new drugs really comes from Roma settlements. [FG_MĐ_KNF_19]
Who drinks, at what age	7	I think there is, especially among young people. [OB_KNF_05]

\*The total number of documents with the displayed codes is 62

According to the interviewees in the qualitative analysis, a third of them do not consider drug addiction to be a problem present in Roma communities. However, the presence of marijuana and the *galaxy* drug was detected in the statements of both representatives of the RNM and representatives of relevant institutions in Međimurje County. The problem of alcohol consumption with new drugs (which cannot be detected by routine testing because it is an air freshener – *galaxy*) was detected to such an extent that the relevant institutions acted independently, including schools and parents. According to statements, this growing trend of new drug consumption came to a halt in 2017.

During the interviews and focus groups, another topic emerged that can be categorized as modern addiction, and that is gambling. The topic of gambling appeared in a total of six documents. Below are illustrative quotes on the subject.

*[...] When we have those workshops, they honestly say that they gamble. Now, in what form, is it a betting shop as far as football is concerned or something like that. [FG\_SM\_KNF\_20]*

*[...] This younger generation is not as prone to alcohol consumption as their parents were. They are more subject to betting and stuff like that. Now I don't know the amounts we're talking about and how they can pay it. [FG\_SM\_KNF\_20]*

*And more recently, there is also gambling. They wait for the payment and immediately go to the casinos. [KK\_KNF\_02]*

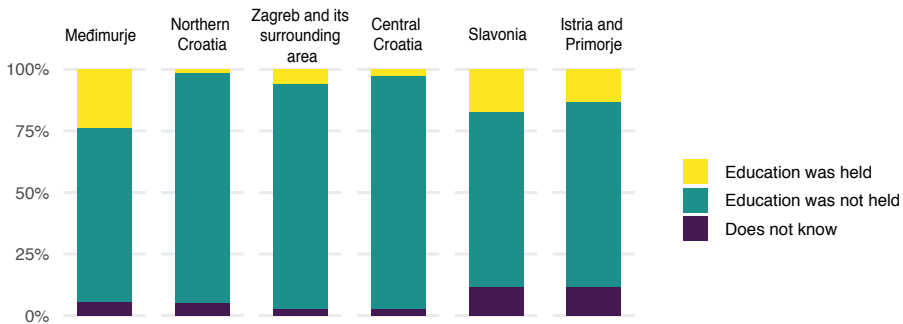
*And gambling in recent times, some addictive behaviors that are then passed on, so children learn. [KK\_KNF\_10]*

*Alcohol and gambling. This is currently relevant, as we hear, from individuals, not everyone. [OB\_RNM\_01]*

*They gamble and they have nothing to eat. [ZG\_RNM\_04]*

### 5.3.5. Education on the harmfulness of consuming drugs and other intoxicants for children and youth

In one of the two applied versions of the questionnaire, the following question was asked: “Do you have information that in the last four years, somewhere in your vicinity, some type of education was held on the harmfulness of consuming drugs and other intoxicants for children and youth?”



**FIGURE 5.3.6.** Regional distribution of information on the provision of education on the harmfulness of drug and substance abuse for children and youth

In total, only 14% of respondents answered in the affirmative, 80% of them stated that such workshops were not held while the rest said they did not know. It was found that there are statistically significant regional differences in awareness on the provision of education on the harmfulness of drug and substance abuse for children and youth.<sup>152</sup> Roma in Međimurje [24%], followed by 17% in Slavonia and 13% in Istria and Primorje were the most informed about the provision of preventive education on the harmfulness of drug use. In other regions, according to the respondents, education took place on a smaller scale, i.e. a smaller share of respondents were informed [from 1% in Northern Croatia to 6% in Zagreb and its surrounding area].

152 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 65.941$ ; df = 10;  $p < 0.001$ .



# 6

## Well-Being of Roma children



## 6. Well-Being of Roma children

In the conceptualization of the section on children, we were guided by the approach to child well-being and the operationalization of domains and indicators of child well-being according to Ajduković and Šalinović [2017]. The issue of child well-being relies on the concept of children's rights, and for the purposes of assessing and monitoring the realization of children's rights, various subjective and objective indicators are used.<sup>153</sup> The project of developing a unique methodology and indicators for monitoring the well-being of children in Croatia was envisaged by the National Strategy on the Rights of Children [Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2014a], and was launched by MDOMSP in cooperation with the UNICEF Office for Croatia. In 2017, the expert group drafted and presented a proposal of indicators that operationalize the concept of child well-being in nine domains: 1. health, 2. education, 3. family relationships, 4. subjective and psychological well-being, 5. material well-being and poverty, 6. relationships with peers and risky behavior, 7. participation, 8. child safety and 9. vulnerable groups of children/children in vulnerable situations.

Children belonging to the RNM in this approach have been identified as one of the vulnerable groups of children, within domain 9. By comparison, in this chapter we will look at the well-being of Roma children integrally, in almost all of these domains. It is necessary to make some introductory remarks. Primarily, the baseline survey was conceptualized to follow the NRIS objectives rather than child well-being indicators (but the latter were partly included in the baseline survey). Although analyses of previously collected data from a new angle are not uncommon, such analyses always carry with them certain limitations. The main limitation in this case relates to the fact that the database did not cover indicators from the 4th domain of child well-being – those related to subjective and psychological well-being. For all other domains, indicators existed, but the scope of the book does not allow us to go into each of the domains in equal detail. Some subchapters cover two domains each, while other domains – especially those on education – are presented more extensively.

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153 For an overview of the literature and operationalization of the concept of child well-being, see: Šućur et al. 2015: 10–14.

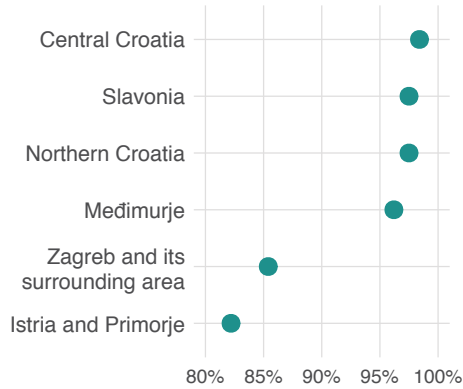
Finally, it should be noted that the order of the results presentation does not follow the above order of domains in the Croatian child well-being index. It seemed to us that the unfavorable socioeconomic situation of the Roma population dictates that we start from the issue of poverty, after which we consider the health of children. This is followed by a detailed analysis of education, which is based on the issue of integration in schools, addressed within the domain of peer relations. The sphere of relationships with peers outside of school and other contents related to spending free time follow in the next chapter on participation. The last chapter covered the domain of family relations and that of vulnerable groups of children/children in vulnerable situations. The logic behind the merging of these two domains stems primarily from the fact that in the research itself, family relationships were a relatively poorly represented topic, and the questions asked were mainly related to problematic situations.

## 6.1. Material well-being, poverty and child safety

The material well-being of children is a necessary precondition for the realization of other aspects of children's well-being. Previous research [see in Šućur et al., 2015: 10-14; Stubbs et al., 2017: 4-7] undoubtedly points to the extremely negative effects of living in poverty on children. In addition to the immediate ones, growing up in poverty leaves long-term consequences for well-being and life chances in later life, especially through the impact on educational outcomes and future position in the labor market, perpetuating the so-called "circle of poverty." As already shown in the chapter on sociodemography, Roma households in Croatia are among the leaders in poverty compared to Roma households in other EU countries followed by the FRA and UNDP. Although children share material conditions with their parents, as a consequence of the fact that poor households on average have more children, at the level of the Roma population the share of children is slightly higher than that of adults living in poverty. According to data for 2014, the poverty rate of the population in the Republic of Croatia was 21.1%, and the child poverty rate was 19.4% [Stubbs, Ledić, Rubil and Zrinščak, 2017: 15]. In parallel, the Roma poverty rate in Croatia is much higher: 94.6% of Roma children and 93.6% of Roma adults live below the poverty line. At the same time, regional differences can be noticed. Central Croatia, Northern Croatia and Slavonia have the highest share of children living in poverty.<sup>154</sup>

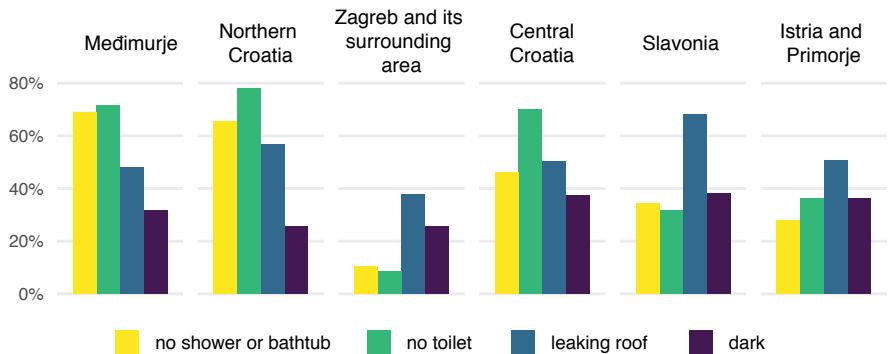
154 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 102.308$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .





**FIGURE 6.1.1.** Share of children aged 0 to 13 living in households below the poverty line, by region

An important aspect of poverty is housing deprivation. Below are data on the share of children living in dwellings with leaking roofs or insufficient lighting or without a shower/bathtub or without a bathroom, according to Eurostat’s definition of housing deprivation [Eurostat, 2019c: 17]. Slightly more than half of children live in buildings with leaking roofs or no shower/bath or toilet. About a third of children live in dwellings which are considered too dark. It should be added that 4 out of 5 children live in dwellings that have a damp problem, although this indicator does not enter the Eurostat housing deprivation index. Inadequate housing conditions affect children’s educational opportunities, safety and health. A regional comparison shows that most children who live in dwellings that are dark and have a leaking roof problem are in Slavonia. In Northern Croatia and Međimurje, on the other hand, children in households without toilets, showers or bathtubs are the most common.



**FIGURE 6.1.2.** Percentage of children living in households with inadequate living conditions for children, by region

Another indicator of inadequate housing conditions used by Eurostat [2019c] is *overcrowding*, which refers to the number of rooms available in relation to the size and composition of the household. Bearing in mind that members of Roma households have on average a very small number of m<sup>2</sup> of available living space [average 10.6 m<sup>2</sup> per member, median 7.7 m<sup>2</sup> per member], we took the limit of up to two rooms as an indicator of [extremely] overcrowded living conditions for children because it means, at best, only a living room and one bedroom, i.e. there is no separate bedroom or study room for children. According to this criterion, 77% of households with children are overcrowded, with an average of six children living in them.

**TABLE 6.1.1. Regional differences in the share of households with a small number of rooms and the number of children in these households**

Region	Share of households with children with a small number of rooms (up to 2 rooms)	Number of children in households with up to two rooms			
		Average	Median	Q1	Q3
Međimurje	92.3%	6.1	6	4	8
Northern Croatia	84.2%	6.3	6	4	8
Zagreb and its surrounding area	46.0%	5.6	5	4	7
Central Croatia	79.3%	5.8	6	4	7
Slavonia	62.5%	5.2	5	4	6
Istria and Primorje	60.9%	6.2	5	5	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>

There are statistically significant regional differences in the share of Roma households with children with a small number of rooms and in the median number of children living in households with a small number of rooms. Children living in Međimurje are in the most unfavorable position, where 92% of households with children live in up to two rooms, and the average number of children living in such small dwellings is more than six. Children in Northern Croatia are in a very similar housing situation. On the other hand, children in households in Zagreb and its surrounding area are in a relatively most favorable position, where slightly less than half of them live in households with up to two rooms, with the average number of children in these households being five [average 5.6]. Seen from the perspective of overcrowding, such data are devastating. According to the index used by Eurostat [Eurostat, 2019c: 17], a family consisting of two parents and 5–6 children under the age of 12 should have a minimum of four rooms.

Qualitative content analysis covered the issue of the impact of poor housing conditions on children. The analysis showed that an important separate subtopic, in more than two thirds of the documents on this topic, is the issue of the impact of

poor housing conditions on education. Other contents describing the living conditions of children were aggregated under the code “Housing conditions of children” [Table 6.1.2.]. Living cramped in a small space, children have neither the space nor the adequate peace in which to concentrate on studying and doing homework. Interviews and focus groups also mention additional problems such as the lack of a desk or the lack of electricity, which makes it even more difficult for them to do their homework and study. As we saw earlier, a third of children live in poorly lit dwellings. As an additional problem, research participants cite the negative consequences of poor hygiene conditions, lack of bathroom and toilet. As some of the participants point out, the fact that children cannot maintain an adequate level of hygiene has a negative impact on their relationships with peers at school.

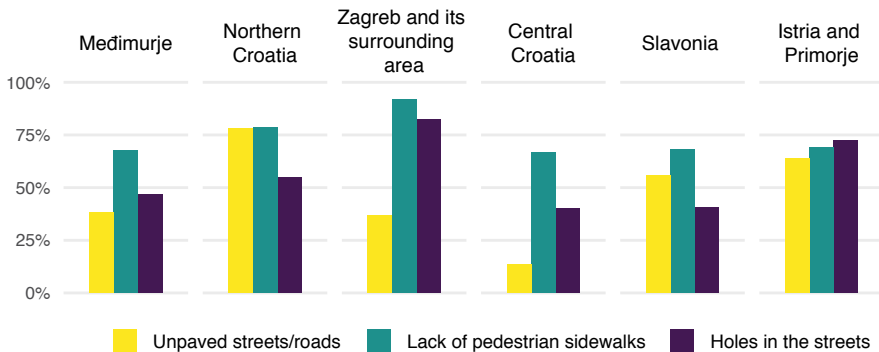
**TABLE 6.1.2. Impact of poor housing conditions on children – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Impact on education	44	<p>There is this one family where there are 10 of them in 40 square meters. These children don't have any space of their own to do their homework because it's always kind of crowded and usually they don't do their homework and don't complete their tasks. [BB_KNF_01]</p> <p>How to expect from children to learn with candles on the table and rats passing them by? [ZG_KNF_02]</p> <p>They have no electricity, so in the winter they come from school and for a while there's daylight and after that they don't have electricity. [VŽ_KNF_13]</p> <p>They don't have bathrooms, they don't have their own study rooms and these kids go dirty to school, so there are problems because other kids can't stand them in some way. [SM_RNM_03]</p>
Housing conditions of children	42	<p>If you're already in a room where people smoke, where they drink and if the child is there all day with them, it's not very healthy, right? [MĐ_RNM_04]</p> <p>A lot of them sleep in one room, they have bunk beds or they sleep on the floor or on couches, and they live in 2 rooms. There is damp. [OB_RNM_01]</p> <p>They are poor, but there's this family of nine, they have two rooms, one of which is a living room with beds, not like in a hospital because you can't even get between the beds, there is no passage, but it's all in place.</p>

		And these are children who make their bed every morning, precisely because it is also their living room. They wash the dishes, wash those work clothes outside to save on electricity and then wash them outside in a trough, at the pump, at the well and so on. [SM_KNF_O5]
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*\*The total number of documents with codes on the impact of poor housing conditions on children is 68*

An additional problem relates to inadequate conditions in Roma settlements, which are reflected in the safety and health of children, but also in education. Taking unpaved streets/roads, holes in the streets and the lack of pedestrian sidewalks as an indicator of inadequate conditions in the settlement, we came to the result that most Roma children live in settlements with inadequate conditions. Statistically significant regional differences were found in all three indicators of inadequate spatial conditions for children.<sup>155</sup> The problem of unpaved streets/roads is most pronounced in Northern Croatia, and the problem of holes and lack of pedestrian sidewalks is most pronounced in Zagreb and its surrounding area. Interestingly, the regions with the highest poverty rates of the Roma population do not have the most pronounced infrastructure problems. The level of development of public infrastructure is probably primarily a reflection of local self-government policies and the opportunity that Roma have at that level to fight for investments in public spaces in the localities where they live.



**FIGURE 6.1.3. Regional differences in the share of children living in settlements with inadequate conditions**

<sup>155</sup> Chi-square tests: unpaved streets/roads:  $\chi^2 = 210.926$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ , holes in the streets:  $\chi^2 = 150.541$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ ; lack of pedestrian sidewalks:  $\chi^2 = 52.674$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

The lack of paved roads makes it difficult for children to move and makes it impossible to maintain hygiene during rainy periods, which makes it harder for children to get to school or they come there wet and muddy. In the qualitative analysis, we coded the problem of unpaved roads as a question of safety in the movement of children. Nevertheless, in the qualitative section of the research, the participants most often pointed out the consequences of poor conditions in the settlement for the health of children and their safe movement, as shown in Table 6.1.3.

**TABLE 6.1.3.** Consequences of bad conditions in the settlement for children – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations\*

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Specific health problems of children in the locality	31	<p>Bronchitis, then you have common colds, chicken pox... There were cases when they had that, a skin disease... Scabies. We tried to resolve that, we called the doctors. [MĐ_RNM_09]</p> <p>In [place name omitted] every other house has an inhaler because they live in areas where it is damp [...] due to housing conditions, a large part of children, small babies, are prone to disease. [OB_RNM_09]</p>
Problems for the safe movement of children	11	<p>If a sidewalk were made. That would be really good because the street is narrow and when two cars come across from opposite directions, it is hard for them to pass and then the kids have to jump either in the ditch or they have to move to the side somewhere wherever they can. [BB_RNM_04]</p> <p>It would take another 500 meters of asphalt and a playground for children should be built because since they are on the road every day, we fear that they will get hurt in traffic accidents that have happened before in the settlement itself. [...] Street lighting needs to be finished. Children, in the autumn, when it's dark at six o'clock, they should no longer be outside, they have to be at home. [SM_RNM_03]</p>

*\*The total number of documents with codes on the consequences of bad conditions in the settlement for children is 39*

The fact that the participants of the qualitative section of the research referred more often to health problems specific to their locality than to problems for the safe movement of children does not mean that the latter are a negligible problem. Indeed, it is children who are exposed to greater risks due to unpaved roads, lack of pedestrian sidewalks or safe playgrounds, as they necessarily move as pede-

strians and often spend their free time outside the home, which will be discussed in section 6.5. In terms of health risks, it is important to note that participants repeatedly cited the problem of respiratory diseases as a result of air pollution. Quantitative data do not show a high prevalence of respiratory diseases in children, from which we conclude that the health risks to which children are exposed are concentrated in specific Roma settlements. Let us recall that the problem of polluted air is the most commonly identified problem at the settlement level in mapping. It is precisely the health aspect of child well-being that is the topic we address below.

## 6.2. Health

Health self-assessment is a good predictor of health outcomes [Inchley et al., 2016: 71]. According to recent research [Šućur et al., 2015: 99], Roma are more likely to assess their health as poor compared to other groups of social assistance beneficiaries. It is relevant to point out that in the same study, parental assessments of children's health are somewhat better compared to assessments of their own health and the health of their spouses [Šućur et al., 2015: 100–105]. In this study, parents of Roma children in 4.2% of cases assess the health of their children as poor or very poor, 6.2% as mediocre, and 89.5% as good or very good. Data from the *Health Behavior in School-Aged Children* study [HBSC; Inchley et al., 2016] conducted in 2013/2014 on a sample of children aged 11, 13 and 15 from the general population in Croatia show that the share of those who assess their health as mediocre or poor at the age of 11 is equal to the result obtained in our sample of Roma children [9% for girls and 10% for boys; Inchley et al., 2016: 72–73; cf. Figure 5.2.1.]. However, while the assessment of the health of Roma children from this study also becomes only slightly weaker for the older age group of children [the difference is not statistically significant],<sup>156</sup> in children from the general population included in the HBSC, the share of children who perceive their health as mediocre or poor increases significantly with age and reaches 28% of girls and 14% of boys aged 15. Although the data from these studies are not directly comparable, they indicate that the [self]assessment of the health status of Roma children is equal to or slightly better than that of children in the general population. However, in contrast to the HBSC study, where children assessed their own health, in this study children's health was assessed by their parents, who, as in Šućur et al. [2015], appear to have tended to have somewhat more optimistic assessments of their children's health. It is necessary, therefore, to supplement the picture with additional, objective indicators [whether children have a pediatrician, whether they

156 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 6.036$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = 0.197$ .

have been vaccinated, whether they undergo physical examinations and which diseases they contract)], which we present below.

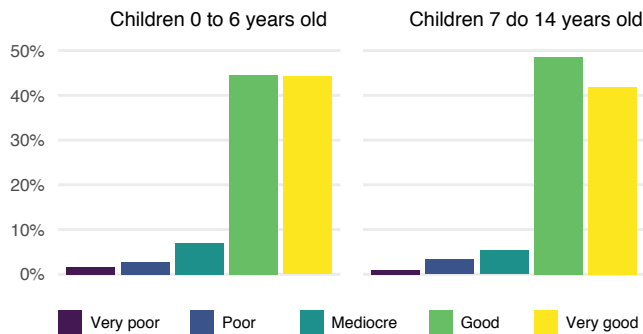


FIGURE 6.2.1. Assessment of children’s health status, by age group

The share of children reported to be in poor or very poor health was pooled and analyzed regionally. Statistically significant regional differences in the share of children with poor or very poor health were found.<sup>157</sup> The highest share of children with poor or very poor health is in Istria and Primorje [14%], while in all other regions this share is below 5%.

For all children under the age of seven, parents were asked if they had a pediatrician to take the child to if he or she was ill. Data were collected for a total of 853 children, of whom 3.8% did not have a pediatrician. This share is highest in Slavonia [7%] and Northern Croatia [6%], but regional differences did not prove statistically significant.<sup>158</sup> All children under the age of seven were asked whether they have been regularly vaccinated against infectious diseases. Data were collected for a total of 853 children, of whom 96% have been regularly vaccinated. Regional differences in the share of regularly vaccinated children are small and not statistically significant.<sup>159</sup>

When it comes to physical examinations of children, most interviewees and focus groups state that children undergo physical examinations.<sup>160</sup> Below is an overview of the frequencies of individual subcodes with illustrative quotations.

157 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 36.788$ ; df = 5; p < 0.001.

158 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 9.875$ ; df = 5; p = 0.079.

159 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 2.607$ ; df = 5; p = 0.760.

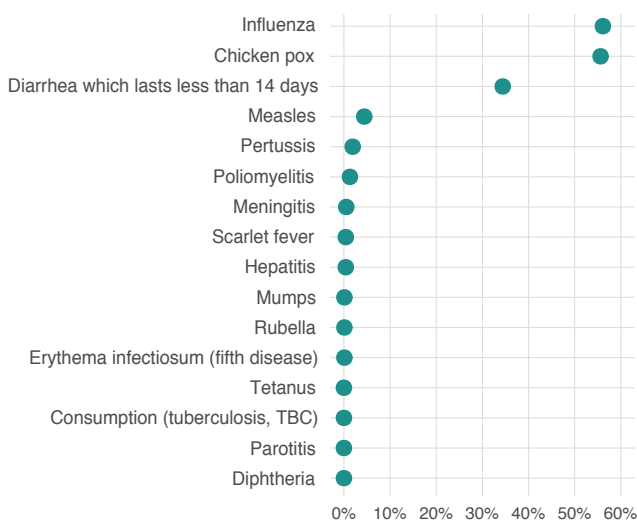
160 Unfortunately, this question was not included in the survey questionnaire.

**TABLE 5.2.1. Physical examinations – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Most children do	34	[Through] the system of medical care of school-age children, every school child [...] also has regular physical examinations, that is, in the 1st grade of primary school, in the 5th, 8th grade, in 1st grade of secondary school, meaning that all children are included, including Roma children. [FG_MĐ_KNF_19]
Most children do not	3	Bad, very bad because they may have prevention, physical examinations and immunizations in five percent of cases. [VŽ_KNF_03]
Half of them do, half of them do not	1	Sometimes some of them go, some of them don't. [MĐ_RNM_07]

\*The total number of documents with physical examinations codes is 38

For children from birth to the age of 14, the question was asked if they had any of the childhood diseases during their lifetime. The four most common diseases are influenza, chicken pox, diarrhea shorter than 14 days and measles. Given that in Croatia, and beyond, the risk of measles has increased in recent years, it is interesting to pay attention to regional differences in the incidence of this disease. According to the results of the research, this disease is most common in Slavonia, Istria and Primorje, where approximately every tenth child had measles. On the other hand, in Northern Croatia and Međimurje, the children included in our research were the least likely to have this disease.

**FIGURE 6.2.2. Number of sick children – children up to 14 years**



One of the important aspects of a preventive approach to children's health is certainly quality nutrition. In the interviews, members of the RNM were asked the following question: "What is the quality of children's nutrition in the community?" Also, the question about the frequency of use of certain foods in the diet was asked in the questionnaire, and the results have already been published in Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić [2018: 158]. The results show that the diet contains a high share of meat and meat products and carbohydrate foods [bread, pasta], frequent consumption of carbonated juices, chocolate and sweets and infrequent consumption of fish and seafood. It is interesting to point out that part of the research participants explicitly link the diversity of nutrition with financial possibilities.

*There is meat, vegetables, fruits, everything. It's normal. Those who can afford it, buy everything. Those who can't, well...*  
[MĐ\_RNM\_O9]

*It depends on the family. Certain children probably don't have adequate nutrition... They don't have three meals or four... They don't have the opportunity to eat a variety of foods... It is commendable that they have introduced a free meal in schools, that meal may be someone's main meal, maybe even the only meal of the day.*  
[OB\_RNM\_O9]

Free meals at school, mentioned in the last quote, are just one form of support that RNM children receive in schools. In the next section, we will deal in more detail with education, with special emphasis on the issue of support that children receive from their environment during preschool and primary education.

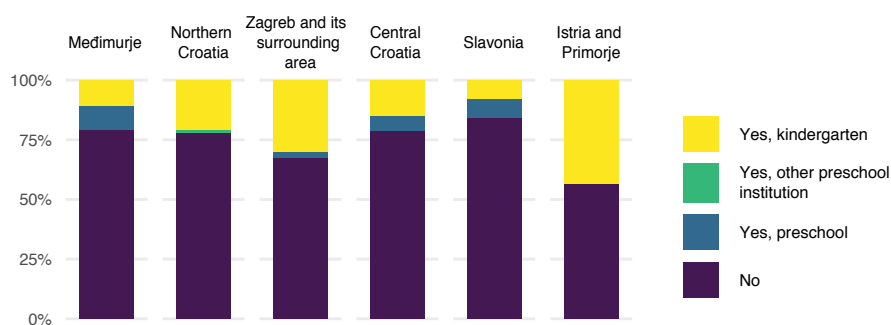
## 6.3. Education

Although the most encouraging finding in the overall survey of baseline data refers to a positive shift in the field of education of Roma children [Kunac, Klasnić and Lalić, 2018], the gap between Roma children and children of the general population in the field of education is still very large. Below are the key results on preschool and primary education of Roma children. Since the key problem in preschool education is the involvement of children, the reasons why children do not attend kindergarten or preschool, according to the participants in the research, are analyzed in more detail. On the other hand, the involvement of children in primary education is good. Therefore, our focus in the analysis was on the issue of the overall support of the environment they receive during primary school attendance, which

is then reflected in their educational success, timely completion of primary school and continuing education.

### 6.3.1. Preschool education

The results show that in the school year 2016/2017, only 23% of children aged three to six attended preschool (kindergarten or preschool). These results are in line with recent comparative data showing that only Greece has a lower coverage of Roma children in preschool educational institutions [FRA, 2018a: 23]. It is not encouraging that the number of Roma children for whom co-financing was approved in 2017 was lower compared to the previous year [GoC, 2018: 66], nor the fact that Croatia is generally at the European bottom in terms of involvement in preschool education of children from four years old to school age: while in 2017 the EU average was 95%, in Croatia it was 83% [Eurostat, 2019d, Figure 4]. The share of children who do not attend any educational institutions gradually decreases with the preschool age of children: a total of 93% of three-year-olds, 87.6% of four-year-olds and 69% of five-year-olds do not attend any educational institutions. At the age of six, with the onset of the obligation to attend preschool or school, this share drops to 24.5%.



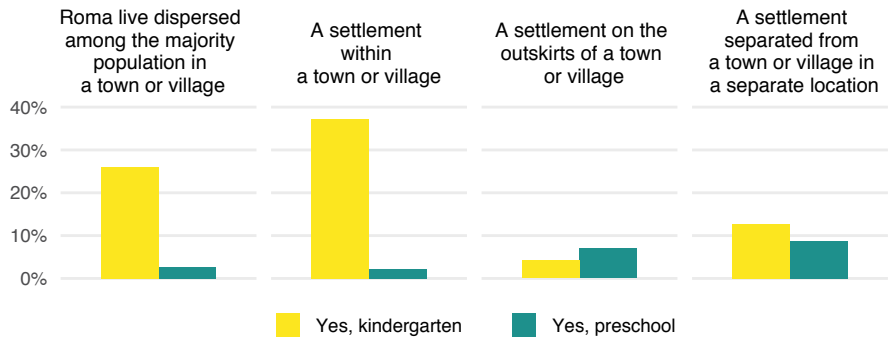
**FIGURE 6.3.1. Attendance at educational institutions in the school year 2016/2017 among children aged 3 to 6, by region**

There were statistically significant differences in the attendance of educational institutions for children at this age, both with regard to the region<sup>161</sup> and with regard to the type of settlement.<sup>162</sup> Most children attend kindergarten or preschool in Istria and Primorje [26%], and the least in Slavonia [5%]. The negative impact of the isolation of the settlement on the involvement of children in preschool educational institutions is noticeable. The highest share of children attending kindergarten is among those living in settlements within the city or village [37%], and the

161 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 60.789$ ;  $df = 20$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

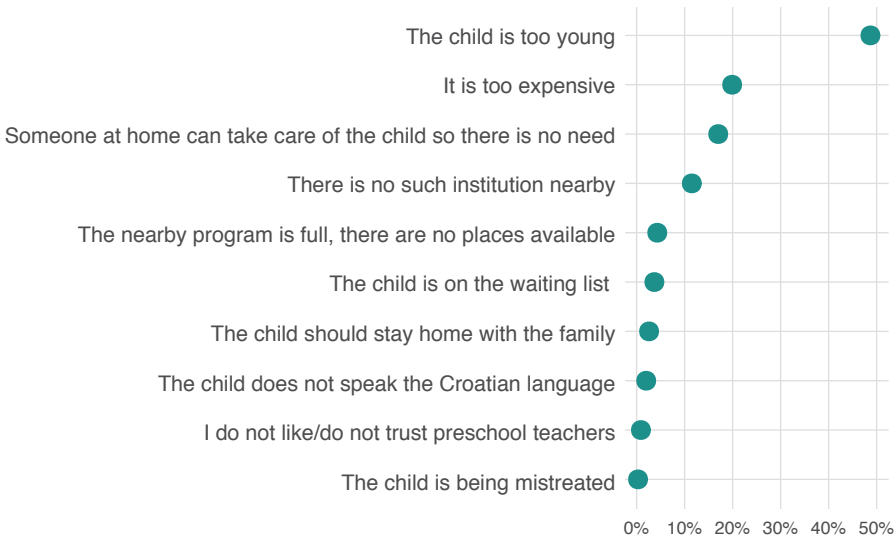
162 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 40.344$ ;  $df = 12$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

lowest in settlements on the outskirts of the city or village [4%]. Since attending preschool is a legal obligation in case children do not attend kindergarten, it is logical that the higher involvement of preschool children is higher exactly where the lower involvement in kindergartens is: in settlements separated from the city or village and those on the outskirts of cities or villages.



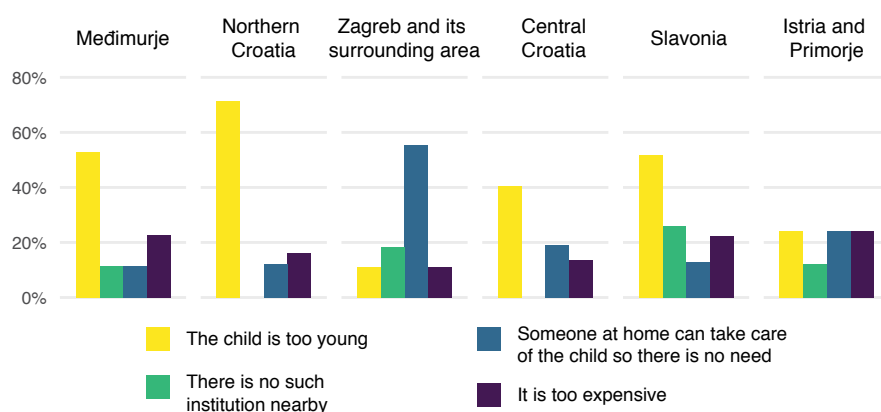
**FIGURE 6.3.2.** Attendance at educational institutions in the school year 2016/2017 among children aged 3 to 6, by type of settlement

347 children aged three to six were reported as not having attended any educational institution in the school year 2016/2017, and their parents' reasons are presented.



**FIGURE 6.3.3.** Reasons for not attending preschool education

We further analyzed the four main reasons according to the region and according to the type of settlement in which the respondents live. Of these reasons, two can be characterized as subjective assessments based on attitudes about adequate care for preschool children, while financial unavailability and distance can be interpreted as objective obstacles. Regarding the opinion that the child is too young to attend preschool education, there were statistically significant regional differences,<sup>163</sup> with this opinion being most prevalent in Northern Croatia, and least common in Zagreb and its surrounding area. At the same time, this opinion is most prevalent among Roma living in isolated concentrated Roma settlements.<sup>164</sup> The opinion that there is no need for a child to attend an educational preschool institution because someone at home can take care of the child is most prevalent in Zagreb and its surrounding area,<sup>165</sup> as well as among Roma living dispersed among the majority population, but also among those living in Roma settlements within cities/villages.<sup>166</sup>



**FIGURE 6.3.4. The most common reasons for not attending preschool education, by region**

When it comes to the opinion that the reasons for not attending preschool education are financial, regional differences are not statistically significant, nor are those with regard to the type of settlement. We did not find a statistically significant difference between the shares of respondents in certain types of settlements who cite excessive distance from such institutions as the reason for not attending preschool education. On the other hand, there is a statistically significant regional di-

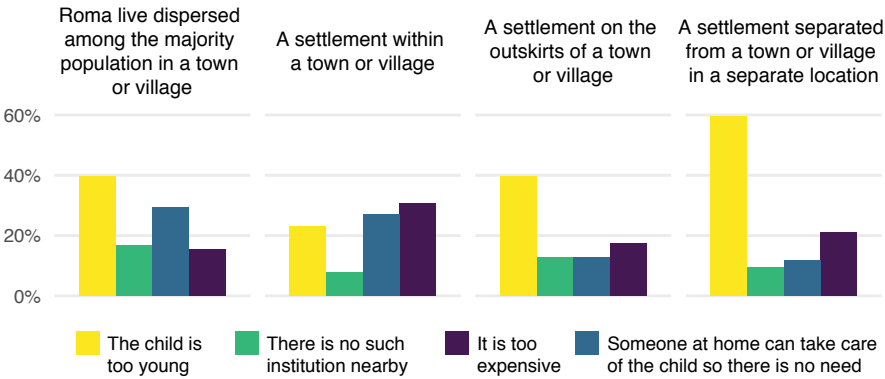
163 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 33.804$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

164 Differences by type of settlement are statistically significant: chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 19.705$ ; df = 3;  $p < 0.001$ .

165 Regional differences are statistically significant: chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 34.002$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

166 Differences by type of settlement are statistically significant: chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 14.887$ ; df = 3;  $p = 0.002$ .

ference:<sup>167</sup> it is most common in Slavonia [26%], while respondents from Northern and Central Croatia do not state excessive distance as a reason for not attending preschool education. Overall, the statistically significant differences found do not show some clear and easy-to-interpret patterns, but it is noticeable that decisions to include children in preschools mostly differ in terms of subjective reasons while estimates are relatively more consistent when it comes to objective barriers.



**FIGURE 6.3.5.** The most common reasons for not attending preschool education, by type of settlement

We also structured the analysis of qualitative data around the arguments given by the participants when explaining why children attend or do not attend kindergarten and the results give an equal picture of the dominant subjective and objective barriers, so we will not present them in detail. First of all, in all cases when the participants referred to the reasons why children belonging to the RNM attend kindergarten, they stated that it was because the kindergarten was free/co-financed or because transportation was organized. This is important because it shows that financial support measures [GoC, 2018: 66–68] have an effect. However, the multidimensionality of objective obstacles should also be taken into account here, which we will elaborate through the two “pain points” that we identified in the qualitative analysis.

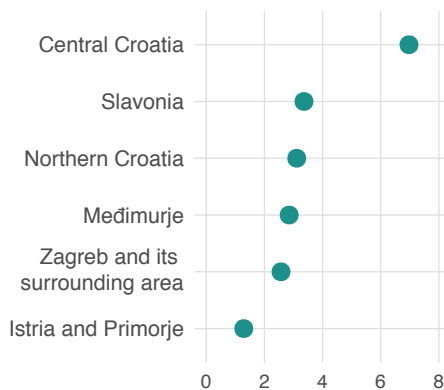
First of all, as a specific problem set, the participants stated that their big problem is that they cannot transport children to preschool without a car, and that having a car disqualifies them for certain social benefits [see the quote on this topic in the table on preschool; Table 6.3.1.]. Secondly, the problem of available posts in kindergartens has also proved to be related to the issue of parents’ employment status: employed parents usually have the right of priority, which disqualifies predominantly unemployed Roma parents in a situation of limited posts.

167 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 23.483$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

*It is a small kindergarten and there are a lot of children. Both Roma and non-Roma. The criterion that exists for kindergartens is that children whose parents work have the right to enroll, and in the Roma population none of them do. [KK\_RNM\_03]*

Data on the distance of each surveyed Roma settlement from the nearest kindergarten were collected from the mapping. The total average distance is 3.44 km. Logically, kindergarten is the furthest away [average 4.22 km] for Roma living in a settlement separate from the city or village in a separate location, while in the case of dispersed housing among the majority population it is closest [average 1.44 km]. Interestingly, on average, kindergartens are further away to residents of Roma settlements within the city or village [3.79 km] than to residents of Roma settlements on the outskirts of the city or village [2.87 km]. It can be assumed that in the case of settlements on the outskirts of the city or village, the need for a kindergarten becomes more visible and subject to planning by the competent institutions in the field of education and urban planning.

Regional differences in the average distance to the nearest kindergarten were also determined – kindergartens are the farthest from Roma settlements in Central Croatia [on average 7 km], and the closest in Istria and Primorje [1.3 km]. Except at the regional or county level, the issue of kindergarten accessibility should be approached by detecting specific locations where kindergarten distance is an issue.



**FIGURE 6.3.6. Average distance [in km] of Roma settlement from the nearest kindergarten, by region**

Preschool is most often held in kindergartens. Preschool-related responses were analyzed from two perspectives. Firstly, as with kindergartens, the question arose of the scope or reason why children attend or do not attend preschool. Despite being compulsory, just over a quarter of participants stated that children do not attend preschool or do not attend it regularly without parents bearing any sancti-

ons. Secondly, specific problems related to preschool have become clear, which we show in Table 6.3.1. Participants stated that preschool is useful, but it is too short to make up for the lag in the preparation of Roma children for enrollment in the first grade. As with kindergarten, some participants cited the problem of transporting children to preschool. Only two participants mentioned problems related to the integration of Roma and majority children within the preschool, but we have singled out these places in a separate code for relevance [on the importance of (early) integration of RNM children in the context of child development rights, see Brajša-Žganec et al. 2015: 194–195].

**TABLE 6.3.1. Preschool attendance – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
It is too short	18	The preschool program lasts for a year in the settlement, but it's too short, they don't reach the level of Croatian children who enter the education system with them at the same time, and they are in a worse position at the beginning. They find it difficult to attend classes and are absolutely not interested, it's not clear to them. The whole system failed here because it didn't adapt to the Roma, but they adapt the Roma to our system. [MD_KNF_08]
Transportation	11	According to the current regulations, children who are not included in kindergarten are required to go to preschool for 250 hours, which is actually 3 months for three hours a day... What Roma mother can take a child from the hills [...] to the city for 3 hours? [PG_RNM_03]  As far as transportation is concerned, that is the biggest problem, according to the Social Welfare Act, families who ask for any form of social assistance, or support, have to meet some censuses, right? One of those censuses is the car. And now you live 5 km away from [place name omitted] and don't have a car, and you don't have public transportation either. [KK_KNF_03]
Integration problems	2	When the preschool program for Roma was introduced, then the Ministry of Science said, no, no, no, when we asked for a few Croats to include them, no, no, no it's for Roma. [FG_MD_KNF_21]

\*The total number of documents with codes on attending preschool is 27

In conclusion, the participants consider the preschool to be extremely useful for the preparation of Roma children for primary school. Despite the positive shift, the very low coverage of kindergartens creates pressure on preschools to prepare children for primary school in an unrealistically short period of time. Therefore, as the analyses below will show, the level of preparedness of Roma children for primary school is still inadequate, especially when it comes to command of the Croatian language.

### 6.3.2. Primary education

According to the data in our sample, the age of children attending primary school (N = 760) ranges from a minimum of six to a maximum of 16 years, with no statistically significant difference in the age of children in primary schools between regions. Further analyses related to primary school attendance will include children aged seven to 14 given that they make up the majority (91%) of the total number of children in primary schools in our sample. A total of 95.3% of children of that age attend primary school. As a comparative figure, it is relevant to note that at the national level 89% of children are involved in primary education and that, among EU Member States, only Romania has a smaller coverage of children [87%, according to Eurostat 2019d, Table 1.]. In other words, the involvement of Roma children in primary education is above the national average. Also, the involvement of Roma children in primary education is above the average for the nine countries included in the EU MIDIS II survey [FRA, 2019: 15]. Regionally, the share of children of that age attending primary school ranges from a minimum of 91.1% [Northern Croatia] to a maximum of 98% [Istria and Primorje]. However, no statistically significant regional differences in primary school attendance were found for all children in total or in regional comparisons separately for girls and boys. Also, no statistically significant gender differences in primary school attendance were found in any region.

Despite the various barriers that RNM children face during primary education, the data on dropping out of primary school are encouraging, as are the coverage data presented at the beginning of this subchapter. Of the 484 children aged seven to 14 for whom responses were collected, 13 [2.7%] dropped out of primary school – eight girls and five boys [all from Northern Croatia, Međimurje, Slavonia and Central Croatia]. Parents of these students were asked about the reasons for their children dropping out of school. For two girls, financial reasons were given for dropping out of school, and health reasons for two boys. For others, no reasons were given for dropping out of primary school. It is important to note here that we analyzed the dropping out of children under the age of 14 while they are legally required to attend primary school. The previously presented quantitative data [p. 82] indicate



that a good part of young people do not complete primary school, which means that they drop out later. Qualitative data indicate that dropping out most often occurs at the age of 15, when the legal obligation to attend primary school ends.

However, high involvement and completion do not mean that primary education of Roma children is not the scene of a number of problems. Below is a presentation of the results of the qualitative analysis in the part in which it referred to the issue of enrolling in primary school. The problem most often detected by the participants is the unpreparedness of the children for the first grade of primary school due to the lack of knowledge of the language. This problem was mentioned by almost two thirds of the total number of participants who in the interview/focus group referred to the topic of enrolling in primary school, while other aspects of children's unpreparedness for school were mentioned less often by participants, including lack of socialization, lack of work habits, graphomotor problems etc. A small number of participants pointed out the positive aspects: the improvement regarding the preparation of children for attending preschool education or the improvement regarding education and the attitude of parents.

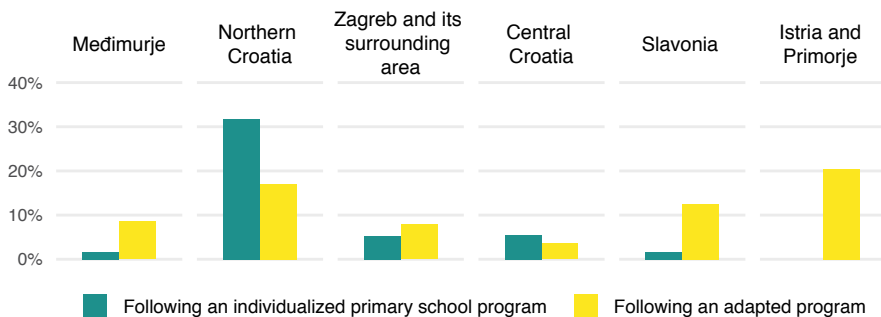
**TABLE 6.3.2. Primary school enrollment – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Insufficient command of the Croatian language	24	Language. Language is a big problem because there used to be a Roma kindergarten where all Roma were in one group and they didn't learn Croatian properly. This is a big problem and that is why I asked, I told the principal that Roma children have to adapt if the state is paying for the kindergarten. We got one big result there. [IS_RNM_02]
Unwillingness/unpreparedness	18	And when I test them for first grade readiness, it shows that Roma children are weaker than non-Roma, just because they are not socialized enough. Their parents do not do what other parents do, they lack work habits, continuous work, basic communication skills... [OB_KNF_20]
Prepared children	5	What has improved is, what I said, is actually the goal of my work, when the first generation of Roma children I worked with complete school and become a parents, when their children attend my class, and that is currently the generation that attends the third grade, I see the physical, intellectual and work ethic difference between their parents and them in every way.

		That difference can indeed be seen. These children are much better prepared for school. [...] And they have school backpacks and the tidiness is at a much higher level and holding a pencil, these children have already encountered a pencil, crayon and so on and the very fact that they know their way around, that they understand Croatian better. [KK_KNF_03]
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\*The total number of documents with physical examinations codes is 38

The problem of insufficient command of the Croatian language, of course, is perpetuated throughout primary education. One of the negative consequences of this problem is that children belonging the RNM are often educated according to adapted programs only because of their insufficient command of the Croatian language. In total, about 6% of Roma children aged seven to 14 in primary schools are educated according to an individualized program, and about 11% according to an adapted program. Statistically significant differences were found in the share of children enrolled in the individualized program in different regions.<sup>168</sup> The largest share of children enrolled in the individualized program is in Northern Croatia – as much as 32% of children, which is significantly more than in other regions where the share ranges from 0% in Istria and Primorje to 5.5% in Central Croatia. The largest share of children aged seven to 14 enrolled in the adapted program is in Istria and Primorje – 20% of children. Regional differences in the share of children enrolled in the adapted program in primary school are not as large as in individualized programs but are statistically significant.<sup>169</sup>



**FIGURE 6.3.7. Education according to special programs of children aged 7 to 14 who attend primary school, by region**

168 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 118.528$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

169 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 13.819$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.017$ .

One of the questions that seemed important to ask was how close the schools were to Roma children in general. The total average distance to the nearest primary school is slightly less than the distance to the kindergarten: 2.8 km [3.4 km to the kindergarten]. Observed by type of settlement, the average distance to the nearest primary school is greatest, as in kindergartens, in concentrated Roma settlements separated from the nearest town or village and is on average 3.3 km, while the closest is in those locations where Roma live dispersed among the majority population where the average distance to the primary school is 1.6 km. Regional differences in the average distance to the nearest primary school were also determined – primary schools, as well as kindergartens, are the farthest from Roma settlements in Central Croatia (on average 4.4 km – however, on average about 2.5 km closer than kindergartens), and the nearest in Istria and Primorje (1.3 km, the same as kindergartens). Nonetheless, in general, it is possible to conclude that school accessibility is not a problem, which is confirmed by the fact that it was not mentioned as a problem by the participants of the qualitative section of the research. Consequently, it is logical that only eight children aged seven to 14 (or 1.2%) have dormitory accommodation in our sample, with two from Međimurje (0.7%) and six from Northern Croatia (7.3%), while in other regions in our sample there is not a single Roma student who is placed in a dormitory.

We structured the further analysis around the question of what facilitates and what creates obstacles during the primary education of Roma children. We devoted ourselves to this topic in more detail and made a graphic presentation of code relations, i.e. visual representation of the entire problem set, according to the same principle as in the presentation of the thematic unit on dropping out of secondary school (p. 113).<sup>170</sup> The focus of the presentation is on the subjects that make up the environment of Roma children, of which we have singled out parents, school and peers as the main ones. Of course, all these relationships are placed in the broader context of previously addressed material living conditions of children. In other words, apart from relationships with parents, school and peers, children's educational opportunities and achievements are greatly affected by exposure to poverty, inadequate housing conditions, health risks and risks for safe movement, but also by the fact that RNM children lack their own learning space, books and picture books, desks and chairs in their homes. With this in mind, it is important to point out that parental support and school support are key factors that create obstacles to or support the education of Roma children: class integration/segregation, availability of Roma assistants, extended stay and extracurricular activities within the school. In addition to providing direct support to children, their formal frameworks for the integration of children encourage their informal socializing in and out of school. Furthermore, communication between schools and parents is

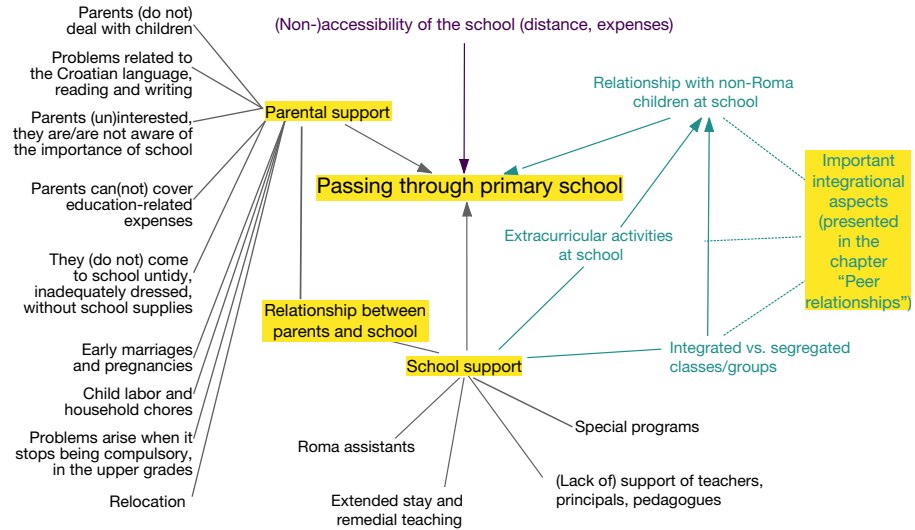
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170 The frequencies of the individual codes are shown below with the accompanying illustrative quotations.

quite important, and the analysis showed that many schools make great efforts to motivate parents to participate in their children's education.

Parental support typically includes helping children to do their homework and study at home. Above all, however, the low level of education of Roma parents makes the necessary parental support difficult. Therefore, the following argument was often reiterated: "How can parents who are uneducated themselves help their children?" The opposite direction of the participants' argument was that parents do not provide enough support to children because they are not interested in educating their children and are not aware of the importance of schooling, so they neither motivate children nor try to help them with school. Nonetheless, a smaller share of participants cited the positive effects of the recent shift in Roma education, noting that parents nowadays are more educated and provide more support to children than before. Secondly, in addition to direct support for learning at home, parental support is also manifested in the ability and desire to finance school-related expenses: the purchase of supplies, footwear and clothing, and paying for activities such as field trips and other optional activities. Here, too, participants cited objective obstacles [poverty], but also expressed the view that parents do not control their children enough about whether they bring supplies to school. The textbooks are usually co-financed and free, but some of the participants mentioned organizational problems when procuring textbooks, due to which children sometimes run out of them or receive them late.

The third aspect of parental support relates to prioritizing children's schooling over other aspects of family life and customs. In this regard, we identified the following important segments: overburdening children with work, early marriages, and relocation. It was often mentioned in interviews that Roma families jointly participate in seasonal work [e.g. acorn picking] or waste collection, and then the children do not come to school. Likewise, older siblings often help mothers care for younger ones, and girls also help with household chores. Then, as already mentioned in the chapter on women and young people, the problem of early marriages persists, and some girls continue to drop out of primary school due to marriage and parenthood. These problems often manifest themselves in the upper grades of primary school. In addition, family relocation often displaces children from the environment and the education system. In particular, the problem of children of immigrants who arrived from other European countries has repeatedly appeared in interviews. These children often do not have documents, are not registered in the system and do not have any evidence of previous education, so the older ones are enrolled in lower grades, which leads to additional problems.



**FIGURE 6.3.8. Support from the environment during primary education**

Looking at the frequency of occurrence of certain codes related to parental support in content analysis, the first point is that parents, for various reasons, do not deal enough with children. However, the following code that relates to problems in the upper grades of primary school is very interesting. It includes the responses of participants who explicitly referred to how problems arise in upper grades, as opposed to the lower ones. The point here is that in the first four grades, children often have a more personal relationship with class teachers that gives them a greater sense of support and security. However, when they enroll in upper grades, in subject teaching, this relationship is lost, and at the same time children enter puberty and are exposed to increasing demands from the family. Here, children become more seriously involved in babysitting, work, and girls are at risk of their family imposing an early marriage. All of these aspects were singled out as separate codes and appeared equally frequently, in approximately a quarter of documents dealing with parental support. Equally often, participants cited a somewhat more general argument that parents are not interested or aware of the importance of their children's education and that they do not enable the children to acquire adequate command of the Croatian language.

Interestingly, financial obstacles related to material means and family poverty were mentioned least frequently by participants. On the one hand, there is the topic of insufficient school supplies and, in addition to poverty, the problem of inadequate clothing, footwear and hygiene levels. Thus, the main obstacle here is covering indirect costs related to education. It is known that children at school react to various material status symbols [clothing, footwear, mobile phones, bags, etc.], where in the Croatian context we can recall the recent "Lidl-children affair".

In the same way, the poverty of Roma children becomes visible in interaction with other children. As participants have repeatedly noted, other children sometimes discriminate against Roma children precisely because of poverty rather than on racial/ethnic grounds.

**TABLE 6.3.3. Aspects of parental support – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Parents [do not] deal with children	45	<p>The problem is that their parents can't help them much because they don't know the Croatian language well enough, let alone a foreign language or a difficult subject, so that they can help them to pass it. [FG_KK_KNF_13]</p> <p>Help with studying and doing homework... Parents don't have enough time. There are also a few parents, especially moms who can't help because they are illiterate. [IS_KNF_O6]</p>
Problems arise when it stops being compulsory, in the upper grades	37	<p>Until the fifth grade [...] they are small there, they are cute, they learn the language a little bit, it all sort of fits into place and everything is OK. By the time they start the second part of education, which is in [<i>the name of the place is omitted</i>], here in the neighboring municipality, from the fifth to the eighth grade, and now they are slowly maturing, especially if they flunked first or second grade a few times. They already reach puberty, while the other ones are still small. They are automatically stronger in hierarchy, above the others. And as such, they then pretend to be the bosses in the class, and then these children have problems, especially from those young Roma men who know how to really cause problems. That's where learning stops, you can't control it, they are almost half grown up, so their will to learn also disappears because they already see their parents. They collect iron, they earn money, they get social assistance, children allowance and they think yeah, so that's my life path too. [KK_KNF_O6]</p>

Child labor and household chores	36	Their upbringing system is not like ours. What they have to do, parents require them to collect waste, to collect hay, to feed cows, pigs, horses, and so on. Usually, they spend their free time like that. It's not like the rest of the population. They have a different upbringing. [OB_KNF_09]
Parents [un] interested, they are/ are not aware of the importance of school	35	Parents are uninterested. They should take more care of the children and the school. [OB_RNM_06]
Early marriages and pregnancies	35	When it comes to girls, they give birth quickly, they get married and forget about stuff like that. Already in primary school, at the age of 14, 13, they become moms. This is a big problem because they are still children, and they have children. Their settlement representatives have a big role here, there are still some arranged marriages, I am not very competent on this subject. [KK_KNF_04]
Croatian language, reading and writing	32	That is, first of all, the biggest problem for them is the [Croatian] language that they do not want, they do not use at home and then children who come to school and who might achieve the same success as others, have a problem with that language. And then comes weaker learning success, etc. [SM_KNF_13]
They [do not] come to school untidy, inadequately dressed, without school supplies	25	<p>Very few of them work, when children come to school, books are free, but they don't have school supplies. It's hard for parents to spend on supplies, workbooks, erasers, art supplies and that's a big problem because they don't care enough about those children. [MĐ_KNF_09]</p> <p>Children have a hygiene problem. Some children come to school dirty, if it's winter they don't have the necessary clothes. Same goes for when it's hot. [VŽ_RNM_01]</p>
Parents [cannot] cover the costs related to education	12	The problem is that because of their poverty, the school, which should broaden their horizons, is sort of inaccessible to them because they have no money. You should find money for that somewhere. We say that education is free for us, but it's not free because every step outside of school parents have to pay for; be it fieldwork, be it cinema, theater, field trips. [KK_KNF_05]

Relocation	5	So the school always prepares a certain number of textbooks for the beginning of the school year, and when you don't know how many children will attend, then there's a problem. The school principal also mentioned that the problem is their permanent address and their constant moving. Because you never know when the family will move out, when they will move in, where they live, what their address is. [FG_KK_KNF_14]
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*\*The total number of documents with parental support codes is 139*

School support, along with parental support, is another key factor in children's primary education. This includes the overall support of teachers, professional associates (psychologists, pedagogues, speech therapists...) as well as the support of school principals in acknowledging the specific situation of Roma children. However, key aspects of school support for Roma children relate to the availability of Roma teaching assistants and extended stays. Roma assistants are important here especially because of the help in learning and support in the situation of insufficient command of the Croatian language, but also because of the individual approach and motivation of children. In addition, children at home more often do not have adequate conditions for studying, even in terms of basic infrastructure such as electricity, heating, light. There is an almost unanimous agreement of the participants in the qualitative section of the research on the benefits of extended stay, which creates an opportunity for Roma children to study and stay in better conditions. Only one participant stated that the extended stay is available, but children use it less and less during the school year. Everyone else stated that the effects of the extended stay were excellent, where available. However, many pointed out the problem of insufficient funding or organizational barriers [e.g. too many children for quality work during the extended stay].



**TABLE 6.3.4. Aspects of school support – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
[Lack of] support of teachers, principals, pedagogues	61	<p>There's been a change, for example, from the experience of our teachers who have been working with Roma children since the first grade. What has changed is that they put a lot of their effort and work into dealing with Roma children, primarily because they had to learn to communicate with them. In some schools, the teachers made picture dictionaries themselves, they came up with some, on their own, they came up with some solutions on their own initiative to make it easier for them to work with those children. [FG_KK_KNF_14]</p> <p>A lot depends on the teacher and how they react. They must be educated in a social sense. In order for them to be aware that this is a child who feels rejected, that he/she lacks attention, that he/she needs more attention. To have a different pedagogical approach to the child in order to win him over to school. If it's in their best interest, but if it's not, then it's not, then things become a little harder [BB_RNM_O3]</p>
Roma assistants	57	<p>And Roma assistants, there are simply not enough of them, especially not the ones that have to be paid. Volunteers are hard to find. The school again doesn't have enough funds to pay someone to translate... It's more up to the parents. [KK_KNF_O6]</p> <p>We have a "teaching assistants" project in our county. It's been several years in a row. [...] And several young Roma people are employed who are, some of them are even Roma assistants. We had that program that they completed, and they proved to be very necessary and very good and they work a lot. [FG_KK_KNF_14]</p>
Extended stay and remedial teaching	38	<p>We design programs to keep them in school as long as possible, we finance extended stays for Roma children. [IS_KNF_O7]</p> <p>In this way, in cooperation with professional associates and principals, we saw the possibility for students to attend remedial teaching classes in the Croatian language, given that they do not know Croatian enough. [...]</p>

		This is now the first generation of students attending these remedial teaching classes and there has been progress. [KK_KNF_11]
Adapted program	25	Many of their children follow an adapted program. But a lot of it is due to neglect. If they worked better at home, maybe they could handle it a little better. This way they simply can't master it at all, because there is no one to show them at home, to work with them. And there must exist [some diagnosis for an adapted program]. I mean, there must... There was just this case in [school name omitted], they had to split classes because they are now in second or third grade, and 6 or 7 of them follow and adapted program. According to the rules, you can't have so many of them in the same class. [BB_KNF_07]

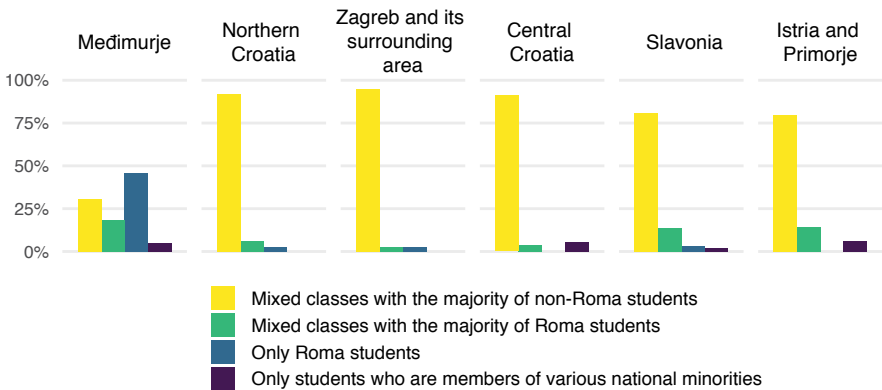
\*The total number of documents with school support codes is 117

In contrast to the extended stay, participants' attitudes about the adapted program are ambivalent. While on the one hand the participants point out that such a program still allows Roma children to go through primary school, others point out that there's a negative aspect because Roma children follow simplified programs, most often only because of insufficient command of the Croatian language [which, it should be added, could be compensated by increasing the number of Roma assistants and with preschool education]. Since the adapted program is primarily intended for children with special needs, it does not provide Roma children with knowledge equivalent to that of the regular program, which is then reflected in their enrollment in secondary school and further educational success in life. It seems that special programs are sometimes used as a shortcut to increase primary school completion of Roma children, but with negative subsequent effects on their knowledge and qualifications.

Finally, as indicated in Figure 6.3.8, school support for Roma children is closely related to the issue of integration or segregation in exclusively Roma classes. In other words, the analysis points to the importance of formal integration in school for informal aspects of integration, by which we mean the socialization of Roma children and children from the majority population outside school. These are the topics we will cover in more detail in the next two chapters.

## 6.4. Peer relationships and risky behavior

Child well-being indicators that address peer relationships include the topics of availability and quality of peer support, the scope of the peer network and satisfaction with relationships therein, but also issues of participation in peer violence and behavioral problems.<sup>171</sup> The specificity of the situation of Roma children puts at the center of this domain the issue of integration, which is intertwined with all these topics. The segregation of Roma children in primary education is a gross violation of human and civil rights and has a number of negative consequences. Attending integrated classes encourages the establishment of relationships with peers in informal contexts. However, the data show that formal integration itself – the fact that children belonging to the RNM attend mixed classes – is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for achieving quality peer relationships between Roma children and children from the majority population.

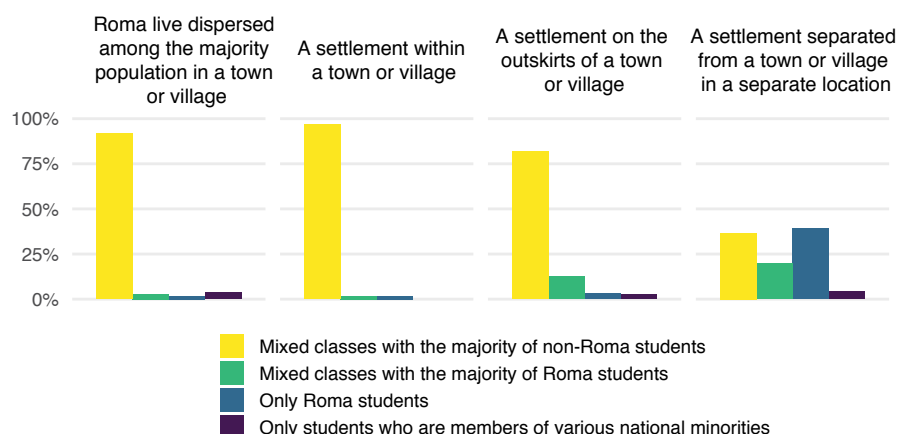


**FIGURE 6.4.1. Ethnic structure of students in the class, by region**

The data in our research show that a total of 63% of children attend mixed classes with the majority of students from the majority population, 21% attend exclusively Roma classes, 13% attend mixed classes with the majority of Roma students and 3% attend classes where there are only students belonging to national minorities. Our data differ slightly from those obtained in the comparative survey from 2016 [FRA 2018: 28], which in Croatia identified a smaller share of exclusively Roma classes, and a larger share of classes in which Roma are the majority. From a comparative perspective, according to this research, Croatia is among the countries with lower shares of exclusively Roma classes and with an above-average share of

<sup>171</sup> Certain other aspects of risky behavior: deviant and delinquent behavior, consumption of harmful substances, and behavioral disorders have already been addressed in the chapter on young people.

Roma children attending classes in which the majority are children from the majority population. However, the fact that the situation in many EU Member States is even worse does not lead to the conclusion that it is at a satisfactory level in Croatia. Equally, it is important to keep in mind the significant regional differences in the share of Roma children attending the so-called “Roma classes”.<sup>172</sup> In Međimurje, as many as 46% of children aged six to 14 who attend primary school attend exclusively Roma classes, and an additional 5% of children attend classes attended only by members of national minorities. Therefore, we can say that every other child in Međimurje does not have the opportunity for social integration with children from the majority population in their class. In all other counties, the share of children attending classes with Roma students only is significantly lower – from 0% in Central Croatia to 3% in Slavonia. Most children in all other regions, except Međimurje, attend mixed classes with the majority of students from the majority population.



**FIGURE 6.4.2. Ethnic structure of students in the class, by the type of Roma settlement**

There are also significant differences in the ethnic structure of the classes that children attend with regard to the type of Roma settlement in which the children live.<sup>173</sup> In fact, children living in Roma settlements that are separate from a nearby town or village attend classes only with Roma students to a much greater extent than children in all other types of Roma settlements. Children who also live in Roma settlements, not isolated ones, but those on the outskirts or within towns or villages, still attend Roma classes to a much lesser extent. They mostly attend classes that are mixed, but with the majority of students from the majority population. Thus, we can say the concentration of the Roma settlement is not a strong

172 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 275.811$ ; df = 15;  $p < 0.001$ .

173 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 227.381$ ; df = 9;  $p < 0.001$ .

factor for the integration of Roma children with peers from the majority population by attending the same classes, but there is a much stronger factor of distance of the Roma settlement from the nearby place where the majority population lives. This is in line with the conclusion of a comparative study on the education of Roma children in the EU (FRA, 2014a: 46) that residential desegregation is an incentive but not a sufficient precondition for educational integration.

In interviews and focus groups on the integration of children in schools, participants most often spoke through the prism of the relationship between Roma children and children from the majority population or simply gave somewhat more detailed descriptions of the situation in their locality regarding the issue. Somewhat less frequently, two specific topics appeared that we find particularly interesting from the angle of possible interventions and recommendations, to which we will return later. On the one hand, participants often pointed out that the problem for better relationships between children is the transfer of discriminatory attitudes of parents of children from the majority population to their children who attend school with Roma children. On the other hand, in this relationship there was an objective problem faced by parents of children from the majority population in integrated classes. Due to the poorer preparation of Roma children for primary school, it happens that teachers have to devote more time to Roma children in integrated classes and then, according to some of the participants, other parents consider their children to be deprived. This is the intersection of various issues: from the inclusion of Roma children in preschools, providing adequate support in the form of Roma assistants, working with parents of both Roma children and children from the majority population.

**TABLE 6.4.1. Integration/segregation in schools – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

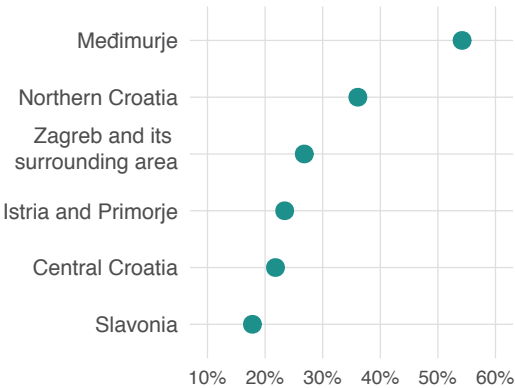
Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Relationship with children from the majority population in the school	109	No, we no longer have that difference. Whether they are black, white, green, we don't have that anymore. There is no discrimination, there is nothing like that in [the name of the city is omitted] and I can generally speak for other counties as well. It all depends on the parents, how they direct their child, that's how it will be. It means a lot. [PG_RNM_07]  They hang out, but not too much. They hang out while at school, but outside just a few of them. [KK_RNM_01]  Nationality is not always a problem. Appearance is more of a problem, material status, social status.

		Apart from being bad on that basis, then if there is nothing else, then they will find this as well. [BB_RNM_01]
Integrated/ segregated classes	61	<p>We have one district school which is now ethnically completely pure because it is a settlement where the number of the rest of the population is decreasing, the Roma population is growing. In previous years, sometimes it happened that only two non-Roma students attended first to the fourth grade and then their parents asked for them to be allowed to attend classes in the central school, so the district school was then attended only by Roma children. Of course, this is unacceptable to them, but classes cannot be organized differently. [FG_KK_KNF_14]</p> <p>When it comes to the goal of creating preconditions for reducing the number of classes attended only by students of the Roma national minority, we must say that there were no such classes in the City of Zagreb. [FG_ZG_KNF_1]</p> <p>The very fact that this is an exclusively Roma school, I think, is already a proof, i.e. reflection of that situation here in [place name omitted]. We have now been an exclusively Roma school for 6 years. [MD_KNF_17]</p>
Attitude of parents of children from the majority population	45	<p>Of course, they also encounter stereotypes from other students, from teachers, from parents of other students, and this, in a way, makes education and better success in school difficult. [BB_RNM_02]</p> <p>It bothers parents where the children attend the same class because of the already mentioned hygiene problems and that the whole class is behind, they are always behind with the curriculum because they don't pay attention. Especially if there are a lot of them as we heard in [place name omitted] where they are the majority. They can't master the program in any way. And I think it's clear why this bothers everyone. [FG_KK_KNF_13]</p>
[Non] involvement in extracurricular activities at school	33	Well, they do participate in extracurricular activities. Come now to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the school and you will see how many of them are involved in the choir, they sing, they perform, and they even sang to the minister. So, absolutely, especially in football, we were the champions of Croatia. Then everyone said it's easy for us because we have Brazilians. So, they are involved in all spheres of school life. They're mostly good at singing and sport. [...] [PG_KNF_01]

		Roma children are not covered by a good program like the children of the majority population, for example, it would be good to include Roma children in music schools, recitals on some occasions, school day or whatever. [MĐ_RNM_O9]
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*\*The total number of documents with integration/segregation codes in schools is 140*

The last major thematic unit that stood out relates to the inclusion of Roma children in extracurricular activities at school. Participants cited these activities mostly in a positive light, although some mentioned that children members of the RNM are not as involved in these activities as children of the majority population. Data from the survey questionnaire show that just over a third of children participate in extracurricular activities at school. This share is the largest in Međimurje, where 54% participate in extracurricular activities at school, and the smallest in Slavonia, where only 18% participate.<sup>174</sup> Participants in the qualitative section of the research, in addition to making reference to the level of participation of Roma children, mostly emphasized positive effects of their participation. First of all, these activities are more affordable for Roma children, both financially and organizationally. Unlike paid extracurricular activities, these activities are also more affordable and take place in the school space where children spend part of the day anyway. As a rule, these are team activities, they provide an opportunity for interaction among children in the context of achieving a common goal, which is certainly an incentive for their integration. A number of very positive examples emerged in the research, highlighted by the teachers and school principals interviewed. These are the successes of school teams, especially in sports competitions [football, handball...], in which children belonging to the RNM participated equally or even stood out in a positive way [one of the examples is in Table 6.4.1.].



**FIGURE 6.4.3. Attending extracurricular activities, by region**

174 Regional differences are statistically significant: chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 67.565$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

In order to obtain data on the potential for social integration, those who answered in the affirmative to the question about participation in leisure activities were asked who participates in these activities. Overall, in more than half of the cases, children belonging to the RNM participate in leisure activities in the same way as children from the majority population, in 30% of cases it is mostly children from the majority population [this situation is most common in Slavonia and Northern Croatia], and in 17% of cases it is mostly children belonging to the RNM. According to the ethnic structure of the class, the latter is characteristic of Međimurje. Nonetheless, in 57% of cases, both groups of children participate in leisure activities there as well.

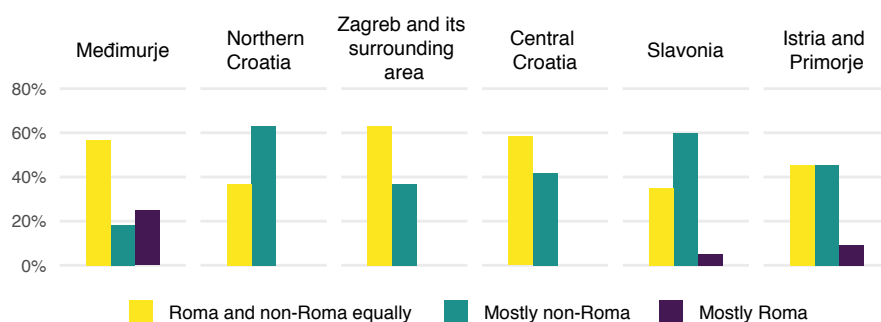


FIGURE 6.4.4. Attending extracurricular activities – ethnic composition, by region

One of the problems in peer relationships, which is certainly not specific to Roma children, but they are – it can be assumed – more exposed to it, is peer violence. The following question was asked: “Has [name] ever been a victim of bullying or violence at school just because he or she is a Roma?” We present data for children up to 14 years of age who attend primary school.

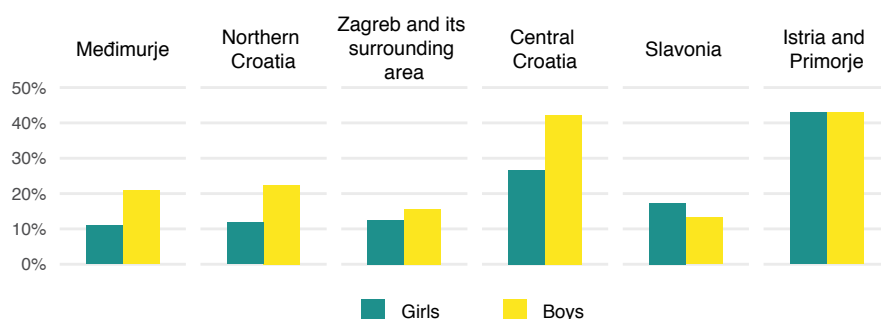


FIGURE 6.4.5. Experiences of violence or bullying at school, by region



In total, about 20% of children attending primary school are either victims of violence or bullying at school just because they are Roma. By comparison, a recent survey of peer violence in Croatia [involving 3,470 children aged 11, 13 and 16] showed that 30% of children are victims of peer violence, and half of the victims are also perpetrators [Sušac, Ajduković and Rimac, 2016]. There are statistically significant regional differences,<sup>175</sup> with children in Istria and Primorje being the most frequent victims of violence at school [43% of them], while this share is the lowest in Zagreb and its surrounding area [14%]. Regarding gender differences in experiences of violence and bullying, they were found only in Međimurje, where the share of boys who were victims of violence and bullying at school is almost twice as high as the share of girls.<sup>176</sup> Although a similar trend is observed in two other regions [Northern and Central Croatia], gender differences are not statistically significant, probably due to significantly smaller samples of children in these regions compared to Međimurje.

Given the type of settlement, the data in our sample show that the victims of violence are most often those children who live in concentrated Roma settlements within cities or villages – 33% of them have such experience. According to the data in our sample, children living in isolated Roma settlements are just as often victims of violence as children belonging to the RNM who live dispersed among the majority population – about 17% of them in both cases. Differences in the prevalence of violence and abuse of Roma children with regard to the type of settlement in which children live are not statistically significant, although they are close to statistical significance.<sup>177</sup> Finally, we considered it relevant to determine whether there is a difference with respect to whether children attend integrated or segregated classes. Although the data in our sample show that children attending mixed classes with a majority of students from the majority population are slightly more likely to be victims of violence or bullying at school just because they are Roma than children attending classes with a majority or exclusively Roma students, this difference is not statistically significant.

This chapter deals with peer relationships within the school and the leisure activities that take place in the school. In the next chapter, we deal with peer relationships outside of school that take place in the context of children's free time. In addition to peer relationships, we also deal with other aspects of spending free time.

175 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 29.226$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

176 Fisher's exact test,  $p = 0.031$ .

177 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 7.516$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = 0.057$ .

## 6.5. Participation of Roma children in social life

In the conceptualization of the indicators of child well-being, the domain of “participation” includes the units of participation in the local community, spending free time and respect for children’s opinions by society [school, family, community]. Our data primarily arise from the question related to spending free time, which was: “Which of his/her peers, given their ethnicity, does [name] most often hang out/spend free time with?”

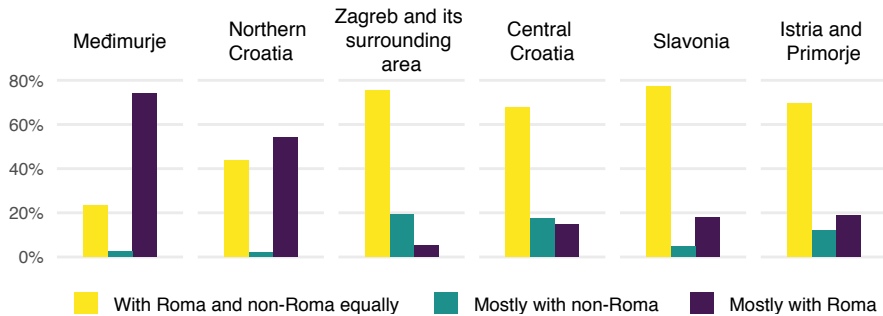
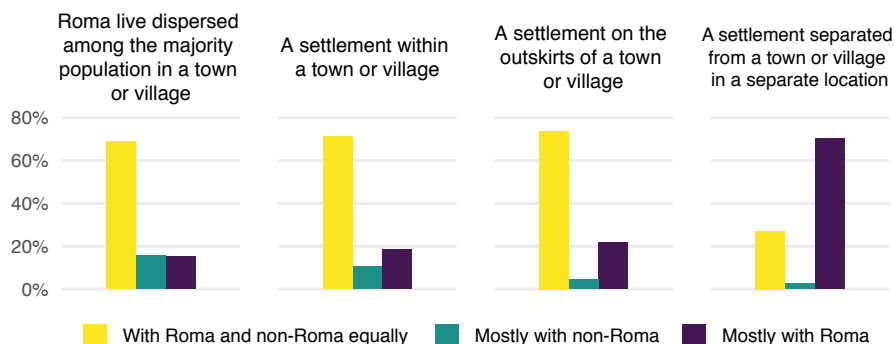


FIGURE 6.5.1. With whom children spend their free time, by region

Overall, half of Roma children aged six to 14 socialize equally with Roma peers and peers from the majority population, while the other half [or slightly less than half] of children still mostly socialize with Roma peers. The share of Roma children who predominantly socialize with peers from the majority population is relatively small and amounts to about 7% in the overall sample. However, when regions are included in the analysis, significant regional differences are visible.<sup>178</sup> The lowest level of social integration, according to the criteria of spending free time with peers, is shown by children in Međimurje, where as many as three quarters of children aged six to 14 spend their free time mostly with Roma peers only. Međimurje, which is “at the bottom of the scale of social integration of children”, is followed by Northern Croatia with 54% of children who spend most of their free time with other Roma children. In contrast, the most integrated children are members of the RNM in Zagreb and its surrounding area, among whom three quarters of them socialize equally with Roma and peers from the majority population, and about 20% of them mostly socialize with peers from the majority population. Zagreb is followed by Slavonia, Central Croatia and Istria and Primorje.

178 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 302.778$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .



**FIGURE 6.5.2.** With whom children spend their free time, by the type of Roma settlement

There are also significant differences in whom children spend their free time with, depending on the type of settlement in which they live.<sup>179</sup> In fact, children living in Roma settlements that are separated from a nearby town or village in a separate location spend their free time with Roma peers to a much greater extent than children in all other types of Roma settlements, i.e. they show a much lower degree of integration with peers than all other Roma children. In contrast, children living in concentrated Roma settlements, but those on the outskirts or within towns or villages, socialize significantly more with peers from the majority population. They mostly socialize with children belonging to the RNM who live dispersed among the majority population. Therefore, similarly to attending “Roma classes”, the concentration of the Roma settlement is not a strong factor for the integration of Roma children with peers from the majority population, but the distance of the Roma settlement from the nearby place where the majority population lives is a much stronger one.

In the qualitative section of the research, we also dealt with the topic of spending free time. Socializing with peers appeared as the most common topic here. Participants looked at the extent to which children socialized with each other and presented positive or negative aspects and examples. Almost half of the participants who mentioned the free time of Roma children stated that it was generally disorganized and that the children simply entertained themselves. Slightly more than a third of the participants who referred to the topic stated that children were involved in various organized leisure activities outside of school. Some participants also talked about the way in which children members of the RNM spend their free time with their parents, stating that parents often do not have enough time for structured educational activities with children or for playing, but at the same time are often quite protective in such a way that they “keep children with them” and “children do what adults do”, which is in line with the findings on Roma parenting styles in Šučur [2004b].

179 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 252.565$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

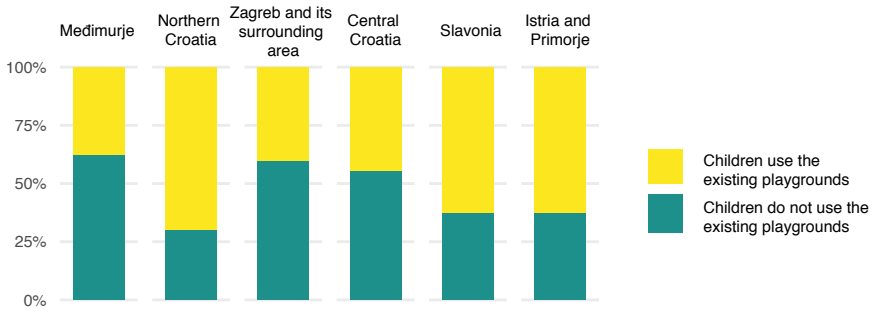
**TABLE 6.5.1. Children's free time [time spent outside school] – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Socializing with children from the majority population outside of school	116	<p>Do children hang out after school?</p> <p>There have been occasions, there are of course, our children don't hang out after school either, they are mostly at computers. There are few occasions, maybe that isolation of the settlement is a problem. [MĐ_KNF_03]</p> <p>I see socialization and good involvement through all possible associations, such as the most ordinary football club, where friendship and some mutual socializing and helping is seen. Both Roma and non-Roma populations are included. [OB_KNF_17]</p>
Unorganized free time	78	<p>Well, they mostly play here, like this ... They run freely... They run freely, you have to be careful that no car hits them. [MĐ_RNM_10]</p> <p>They have nothing there. It's mostly what parents say or they play together. There are no non-Roma children there. They have nothing there, zero. They have TVs, cell phones, the older ones. The only thing they can do is play ball, play with animals or put up with the adults in their misdeeds. [KK_KNF_03]</p>
Leisure activities outside of school	59	<p>They hang out, we don't have a Roma cultural and artistic society here, we don't have a Roma football club, we don't have some things that are specific to Roma, but they are in these associations and local societies. You have Roma and members of some other nations, so there's everything in parallel, and everything is more or less left to the personal choice of individuals, how they will be involved and to what extent. [BB_RNM_01]</p> <p>And there aren't many opportunities outside of school. You have that football and handball club that once again need investments. So you have to buy equipment because the Roma don't have the money for it. You have to take them to practice, to matches. For this reason, they are less involved than non-Roma children because they do not have the resources. [SM_KNF_09]</p>

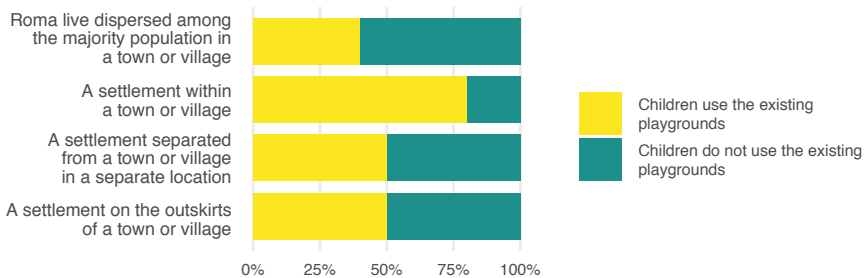
Spending time with parents	38	<p>The quality of free time of parents and children is, I would say, devastating. The work that women do is not adequate because they are away from home throughout the day and end up spending only a short time with the children. [BP_RNM_03]</p> <p>They are mostly tied to parents – what parents do, they do too ... They pick acorns after class or don't come that day at all. What parents do is what they do. [ZGŽ_KNF_05]</p> <p>There are no activities. Parents are not with children in activities, no. They neither play with them, nor take them for a walk, nor this, nor that. [OB_RNM_04]</p>
TV, cell phones, tablets, computers	9	<p>That television, they have cell phones, Facebook. [OB_RNM_08]</p> <p>If they have electricity, they watch TV, they do not have sports equipment [bicycles, balls], they do not have toys, i.e. they disappear even if they are donated. They play with each other, watch TV or wander around. [ZG_KNF_06]</p>

*\*The total number of documents with codes on socializing with children from the majority population in schools is 159*

The quality of free time is certainly affected by the availability of infrastructure for quality free time: safe, spacious enough and adequately equipped children's playgrounds. Mapping data show that out of a total of 109 localities in 12 counties of the Republic of Croatia where Roma live, 50 or 46% do not have a children's playground. Children's playgrounds are the rarest in concentrated Roma settlements on the outskirts of towns or villages and in settlements that are in a separate location, separated from the nearby town or village [about 70% of them do not have children's playgrounds]. In contrast, 80% of locations where Roma live dispersed among the majority population have a children's playground. It was found that children's playgrounds are most accessible in Roma settlements in Zagreb and its surrounding area [about 70% of localities where Roma live have a children's playground], and least in Međimurje and Northern Croatia where children's playgrounds exist only in about 40% of Roma settlements. In those Roma settlements where there is a children's playground, the question was asked whether children use that playground. It was found that children use only about half of the existing children's playgrounds [54%]. The distribution by region and type of settlements is shown below.



**FIGURE 6.5.3.** Use of children's playgrounds in Roma settlements, by region [percentage of settlements/localities]



**FIGURE 6.5.4.** Use of children's playgrounds in Roma settlements, by type of settlement [percentage of settlements/localities]

We coded the issue of the availability of infrastructure for quality free time as a separate issue in the qualitative analysis. All participants agree on the need for such spaces, not only children's playgrounds, but also cultural centers and educational facilities. While some point out that children use the available infrastructure, others talk about the need to make it accessible to children.

*I regularly see them in the afternoon on school playgrounds [...] they make the most of the playground, football, that's classic.* [IS\_KNF\_01]

*There are no social spaces. There is no asphalt, children have nowhere to play.* [PG\_RNM\_01]

*Because they have nowhere to play. [If] they had swings there, then some things would be different. This way they run towards the road every now and then, some have fences, some don't, it's very dangerous. Both for them, and for us. We live in fear.* [MĐ\_RNM\_10]

We asked parents of children under 16 the following question: “Have any of your children ever used any of the services that different associations provide to children [e.g. learning assistance, work on creative skills, leisure activities, psychosocial support for children and young people with behavioral disorders]?” Of the 392 parents of Roma children who answered the question, 21% said they had used such services. There are statistically significant regional differences in the use of these services.<sup>180</sup> The services of such associations are mostly used by parents in Međimurje [32%] and in Slavonia [31%], and least in Central Croatia [7%] and in Zagreb and its surrounding area [8%]. No statistically significant differences were found in either material deprivation or average monthly income between those households in which such services were used and those in which they were not. Also, no statistically significant difference in the number of children was found between households in which such services were used and those in which they were not.

Overall, we can conclude that there is still a lot of room for improving the infrastructure and incentives for quality free time of Roma children. The support of parents, who often involve children in adult activities early on, certainly plays a role here. This certainly develops a sense of responsibility [towards the family] in children, which according to child well-being indicators is recognized as a positive educational impact in the context of children’s psychological well-being [Ajduković and Šalinović, 2017: 42]. But it is questionable whether children, in parallel, have the opportunity to develop some other talents and creativity.

## 6.6. Family relationships and children in vulnerable situations

Although there was relatively little information related to family life in the research of the baseline data, in the end we concentrated on some of the problems that children face within the family, so that we could formulate some recommendations in this area as well. Parents of children under the age 16 were asked about ways to discipline and punish children. The question was, “If your children do something bad or forbidden, what methods of punishment do you use?” The instrument was completed by 419 parents [with some missing values in some sub-questions].

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180 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 25.916$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

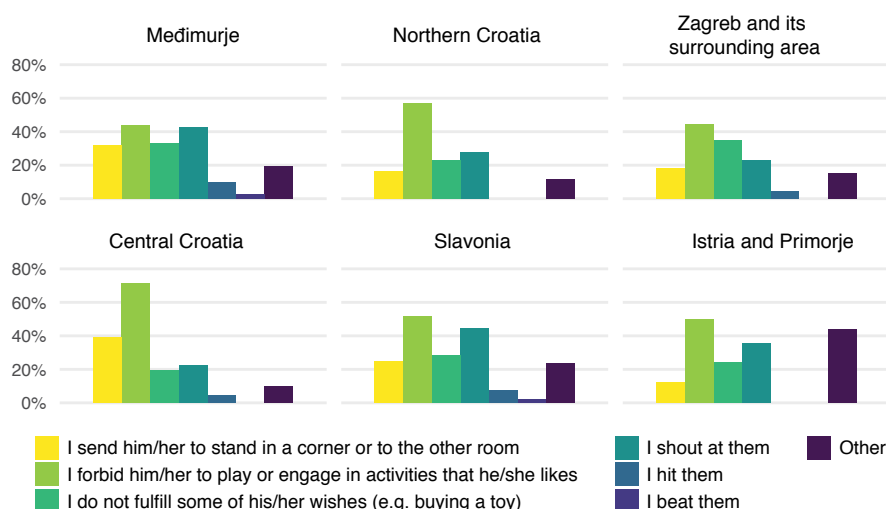


FIGURE 6.6.1. Regional differences in methods of punishing children

Violent methods [the answers “I shout at them”, “I hit them” and “I beat them”] are of special interest to us from the perspective of protecting the well-being of children. Shouting at a child as a method of punishment is generally the second most frequent method, after banning playtime or some activity that the child likes. A total of 34% of parents surveyed said they shout at their child if he or she does something bad or forbidden. Shouting is most common among parents in Slavonia [45%] and in Medimurje [43%], and least in Central Croatia [22%] and Zagreb and its surrounding area [23%].<sup>181</sup> In terms of physical punishment, regional differences in responses are not statistically significant, most likely due to the small sample of those who answered in the affirmative. These data, however, should be read in the context of the very permissive climate in Croatia when it comes to physical punishment of children. Although it has been prohibited by the Family Act since 1999 [OG 162/1998], a recent survey of the Brave Phone on a nationally representative sample showed that, according to their own testimony, 57% of respondents verbally punish children [most of them by shouting], and 35% use physical punishment [where four out of five spank children] [Brave Phone, 2018: 6–7].

Unfortunately, a number of children within the family are systematically exposed to domestic violence and neglect. The question is how much support the social welfare system provides to Roma children in such situations. Judging by the results of the content analysis, there are two key issues: the removal and fostering of children and the supervision of social welfare centers regarding sending children to school.

181 Regional differences in responses are statistically significant: chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 16.099$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.007$ .



**TABLE 6.6.1.** The CZSS system supervision of parents – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
Removal of children, fostering	33	<p>So, this was at the end of primary school, there was a girl they wanted to marry off and she herself was so strong that she turned to the social welfare center and went to a home, she was taken care of in the home so she could continue her education. [FG_IS_KNF_09]</p> <p>We have a lot of Roma children placed in foster families, fewer in institutions, but we have a lot of Roma children placed. These are mostly measures of the Center. Sometimes the parents themselves give their consent, then we don't need to go to court or take other measures, and when they don't give it, and we do evaluations, then it goes. [...] Taking away children is never a matter of poverty. [...] The problem is that some of them are poor because the money is not spent the way it should be. There is a lot of gambling, borrowing, repayment of interest, alcohol, usually it's all connected in such a family. And it's never our first measure, unless the child is really neglected and we have to react immediately. It's never our first measure. We always try – first there's warning When nothing happens even after the warning, then there is supervision over parental care, or professional help as it is now called. Attempts are then made to be in frequent contact and constant contact with an outsider, with some helper, in some way to help them get out of the situation, and when that doesn't work anymore, then unfortunately we are forced to initiate proceedings. [MĐ_KNF_15]</p>
Sending children to school	26	<p>I think that they are represented in everything, there is even a lot of family legal protection for them, there are a lot of supervisions in Roma families, when something goes wrong at school, because they are very often known as truant children, and when that becomes frequent, then we go with our measures – parental warnings and supervision measures. So there are a lot of Roma families under the direct supervision of our employees. [BB_KNF_07]</p>

		When a Roma child does not go to school for 10 days, no one asks where that child is. No one ever. They never went out on the field, came to the school and the settlement and asked where that child was. The school never asked. It hurts me, that child has to come to school regularly like others, someone has to ask where that child is. [IS_RNM_O2]
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\*The total number of documents with codes on CZSS system supervision of parents is 51

We have analyzed the issue of the manner of spending social welfare funds and the supervision of social welfare centers in this regard of [mis]intended use of these funds separately. Some of the participants in the research had a negative image according to which the Roma live “from social welfare”, so they collect money on the basis of child allowances for a large number of children, and then do not spend that money for that purpose. This is a stereotype that is not specifically related to the Roma population, but is a popular version of the thesis on the “culture of poverty” and “dependence on the social welfare system” [Dahlstedt, 2013], which was difficult to separate from factual statements, except where they were more specifically substantiated by examples. However, contrary to this view, interviews and focus groups also found a number of conflicting examples in which representatives of social welfare centers pointed out that misuse of funds was the exception, not the rule.

*I believe they spend it on food and all that. But we have families where you know he gambles, where the dad spends money and the children are then in need, and then you have to in some other way... I would even say that there are a lot of women in Roma families... In the case of Roma families, most of the beneficiaries are guaranteed women, so this money is paid to them. I think they are the ones that economize. Social assistance itself is not very substantial, so that they get more from child allowance than from social assistance because they have a lot of children. [BB\_KNF\_O7]*

On the other hand, members of the RNM themselves were often critical of those who misused funds.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>182</sup> It is interesting to mention that two participants, both representatives of institutions [KNF], stated that due to accumulated debts and blocked accounts, sometimes social benefits are automatically enforced. Although according to the Enforcement Act [Articles 172 and 173; OG 112/2012] incomes on the basis of social welfare, child allowances, etc. are exempt from enforcement, in practice it happens that these funds are enforced, as warned by the Ombudsman for Children [2018].

*People go to various offices and gambling societies. They go to casinos, hit slot machines and poker, and spend what should be used to buy baby milk. He spends his income, then borrows more money and leaves again. [BP\_RNM\_O2]*

In the event that social welfare centers assess that no other type of intervention is possible, they impose the measure of separation of children from the family. Respondents aged 16 and older, who completed version B of the questionnaire, were asked the following question: “Have you personally heard that in some families near you children have been removed from their parents’ care?” Four answers were offered, with multiple choice options. While in 42% of cases respondents have not heard of such a case, in 41% they have heard of a case in the neighborhood, in 8% they know of a case in their family, and 8% of them know of such a case elsewhere. To analyze the frequency of separation of children from Roma families at the regional level and with regard to the type of Roma settlement, the answers “yes, someone in my family” and “yes, someone in the neighborhood/settlement” are combined in the answer “Children separated from my family or neighbor’s family/in the settlement”. As many as two thirds of respondents in Međimurje [66%] and Northern Croatia [64%], about half of respondents from Slavonia and about 30% of respondents from Istria and Primorje are familiar with the separation of children from Roma families in their settlement.<sup>183</sup> Respondents living in concentrated Roma settlements separated from the city or village [63%] are most familiar with the separation of children from Roma families in their settlements, and respondents living dispersed among the majority population [20%] are the least familiar.<sup>184</sup>

Respondents were also asked about the number of cases of removal of children they were familiar with, which occurred in their own family or neighborhood. Roma living in Međimurje and those living in isolated Roma settlements are most aware of the cases of separation of children from Roma families [their own families or the families of their neighbors]. The average number of cases of child removal with which the respondents were familiar was 3.4, with the highest average number again recorded in Međimurje [4.3] and Northern Croatia [3.5], and the lowest in Zagreb and its surrounding area [1.3] and Central Croatia [1.7].<sup>185</sup> Also, the highest average number of cases of removed children known to the respondents was recorded again in the settlements separated from the town or village [4.0], while in other types of settlements the same averages were recorded [ranging from 2.5 to 2.8].<sup>186</sup>

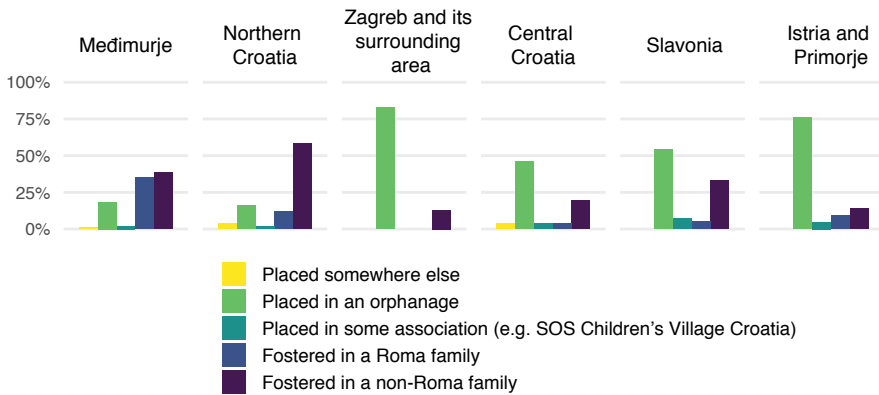
183 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 137.732$ ; df = 5;  $p < 0.001$ .

184 Chi-square test,  $\chi^2 = 103.752$ ; df = 3;  $p < 0.001$ .

185 ANOVA,  $F = 6.401$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

186 ANOVA,  $F = 4.751$ ;  $p < 0.005$ .

Below are the responses of those respondents who said they had heard of cases of separation of children from Roma families on where those children were placed after separation from the family. Overall, according to the respondents, children are most often placed in families from the majority population [36%] or in an orphanage [34%]. One fifth of the respondents state that they know of cases where children have been placed in a Roma family. Overall, according to the respondents, they very rarely end up in accommodation organized by some of the associations. Regionally, in Northern Croatia and Međimurje, children are most often fostered in families from the majority population, but they come to Roma families with the same frequency in Međimurje. In all other regions, children are most often placed in an orphanage.



**FIGURE 6.6.2.** Where the children were placed after separation from the family, by region

The responses of respondents who said that such a case occurred in their family [61 in total] were analyzed separately to determine whether there are any common characteristics of the households from which the children were separated. To establish the predictors for separating children from Roma families, a binary logistic regression was performed in which the following variables were included in the model: severe material deprivation of the household [refers to inability to pay for all three measured poverty indicators], use of social assistance in the household, number of children in the household, inadequate living conditions in the household [any of the four measured: dark, humid, no toilet, no bathroom] and the type of settlement. The use of social assistance in the household and inadequate living conditions were determined as statistically significant predictors. If all other variables included in the model are constant, the chance of separating children from families is 8.6 times higher in households using at least one form of social assistance than in households not using social assistance, and it is 3.9 times higher

in households with inadequate living conditions. Other variables included in the model [number of children and type of settlement] did not prove to be statistically significant predictors for the separation of children from Roma families.

A particularly vulnerable group of children are RNM children with developmental disabilities. Out of a total of 1,667 children in the sample under the age of 14, eight of them were stated to have developmental disabilities, of which six were from Medimurje [which makes 0.8% of children], one from Northern Croatia [which makes 0.5 % of children] and one from Slavonia [which makes 0.4% of children]. No statistically significant regional difference was found. Qualitative analysis of the content showed that children with developmental disabilities, as well as those left without parents usually continue to be cared for by the family.

**TABLE 6.6.2. Particularly vulnerable groups of children – overview of code frequencies and illustrative quotations**

Code name	Number of documents with code*	Illustrative quotations
System and community care for children with developmental disabilities	37	<p>We have, I just don't know how many kids with Down syndrome. There are about three or four of them. They don't have [any special care], they're more like, they're not so critical that they need a doctor or nurse to be with them. The guardians are their parents. They go to school here regularly, just for such people, then they are specially educated. [KK_RNM_06]</p> <p>We have an example where enrollment in primary school has been postponed for 3 years. [...] This is a child who's visually impaired and has communication troubles. [BP_RNM_03].</p>
System and community care for orphans	32	<p>Have any children in your neighborhood been left without parents? Yes. Yes.</p> <p>What happened to them after that? Who took care of them?</p> <p>We were told they were given to foster parents. That didn't happen. Then their relatives, older brothers and sisters, took the children so that they... They took care of those children. [MD_RNM_04]</p>

*\*The total number of documents with codes on particularly vulnerable groups of children is 46*

Assessments of the adequacy of the received support of the health care and social welfare system for such cases are mostly positive, noting that, as a rule, these were assessments of persons who do not take care of these groups of children themselves. So, we conclude that this is a specific issue that requires a separate case study. However, based on the data we have, we can see a discrepancy between the share of children with developmental disabilities and the share of children in school following an adapted program [11%]. We have already mentioned that these programs are used as a certain “path of least resistance“ to overcome the language barrier. We can also see this as a problem of inadequate use of resources intended for children with special needs. We return to this issue and other problems once again in the concluding chapter, where, in addition to a summary of the basic findings, we will also make certain recommendations.



# 7

## Conclusions and recommendations





# 7. Conclusions and recommendations

## 7.1. Main findings of the study and conclusions

**The Roma population** in the Republic of Croatia is significantly younger than the general population – the average age is 22, approximately 50% of Roma men and women are minors, and 50% are adults. Roma men and women in Croatia mostly have a low educational status, with those who did not complete primary school predominating in almost all regions. Roma women are significantly less educated than Roma men, in all regions there is a large difference in the educational status of men and women, and in most regions the share of women is almost twice as high as the share of men in the category “without education”.

The analysis of employment status shows that men mostly declare themselves as unemployed, while women are mostly non-active, i.e. they declare themselves as so-called housewives. Unemployment rates among Roma men and women are many times higher than those in the general population, especially among Roma women. Of the regions with the highest unemployment rates, Slavonia stands out (as much as 93% for women) as well as Northern and Central Croatia, with a female unemployment rate of 91%. On the other hand, employment rates are extremely low, especially among Roma women, ranging from 4% in Slavonia to 24% in Zagreb and its surrounding area. In other words, a large share of Roma men and women who perform some form of paid work face precarious working conditions. Even when they find a job, it is mostly not permanent employment, but temporary, occasional or seasonal jobs. In Central Croatia, Međimurje and Northern Croatia, between 82% and 86% of women never do paid jobs.

Roma households are significantly more numerous than those in the general population, they have an average of 5.2 members, the majority of Roma households being families with children, most often two-parent families.

All indicators of poverty and material deprivation show a very poor economic situation of most Roma households, especially in Central Croatia. The average monthly income of Roma households is around HRK 2,670, and 65% have a total monthly income of less than HRK 3,000. As many as 92.4% of Roma households are at

risk of poverty. Households in Slavonia and Northern Croatia have the highest degree of material deprivation. In almost every other Roma household, someone had gone to bed hungry in the previous month. As many as 85% of Roma households use some form of social assistance or services. About 28% of Roma families live in houses that are in poor condition or are dilapidated, and another 4% in huts, sheds or shacks. Roma households are significantly larger in number of members, especially children, than those in the general population, but the dwellings are small, overcrowded and inadequately equipped. The housing equipment of Roma households in Croatia is among the worst in the EU – there is a lack of rooms and basic infrastructure such as sewerage, running water and toilets. More than 70% of Roma live in concentrated Roma settlements where there are various hygiene and health risks and a lack of amenities that would enable the inclusion of children and young people in social life.

According to all the dimensions explored in this study, **Roma women** are a socio-economically marginalized and socially excluded group [education, inclusion in economic life, sexual and reproductive health and rights, violence against women]. Roma women live in a “traditional patriarchy” in which the right to dominance is defined by establishing customs according to which roles and power are distributed, the patriarch has unlimited power in the household, and women and children represent his property [Weber, 1978].

When we talk about Roma women, the first conclusion of the study, which refers to the large discrepancy between women members of the RNM and the majority population, is the data on the illiteracy of Roma women. Namely, there are 17.3% illiterate Roma women and 1.3% illiterate women in the general population. Also, Roma women are almost three times more illiterate than Roma men. Most illiterate female members of the RNM are elderly [56 and older], as many as 45%, while the share of illiterate young women aged 14 to 29 is significantly lower [4%]. The decrease in the share of illiterate Roma women among young women speaks of changes within Roma communities. As Pateman [1998] argues, patriarchy is a specific oppression of women, a social construct that reproduces with sexual politics but can be undermined and ultimately altered.

Dropping out of primary school is certainly one of the key causes of Roma women's illiteracy. Thus, of all Roma women, as many as 33% claim that they dropped out of primary school. Most women who dropped out of primary school are in the middle-age generation, i.e. among women aged 30 to 55 [42%]. As an important reason for dropping out of school, older Roma women [56+] mostly cite poor financial conditions, while young women mention getting married [27%], poor educational outcomes [15%] and pregnancy and becoming a parent [15%]. According to the regional analysis, most women dropped out of primary school in Northern Croatia [49%], and the least in Zagreb and its surrounding area [15%].

For a quarter of all Roma women, marriage was the reason that prevented them from completing their education. The highest share is of young women who have not completed the educational process due to marriage – as much as 27%, while the same reason is given by 14% of young men. Young women aged 14 to 29 also state pregnancy and becoming a parent as another reason for dropping out of education [15%], whereas 3% of middle-aged and older women state this reason. Thus, 42% of young women drop out of education due to childbirth and marriage, which seems to be a retrograde trend of repatriarchalization of young Roma women. Due to the lack of education, they have extremely little chance of trying to enter the labor market, but also in other spheres of social life. Slightly fewer middle-aged women [aged 30 to 55] dropped out of school due to marriage [24%], but a fifth of them cited financial reasons as significantly contributing to dropping out of education. Interestingly, only 8% of older Roma women [56+] cite marriage as the reason for dropping out of school, while 53% state that financial reasons were the reason for dropping out of school. Marriages and childbirths of young Roma women are conditioned by the vicious circle of poverty and traditional patriarchy, which is certainly the general context of dropping out of education of Roma women because it is poverty that pushes them to start a family.

Considering that almost 80% of Roma women between the ages of 20 and 29 have not completed secondary school, it is clear that their opportunities in the modern labor market are limited. Most Roma women who have done some paid work are middle-aged [30 to 55 years old] [10%], and the lowest number of paid jobs is done by women older than 55 [only 4% of them]. In all three age groups, there are significant gender differences in the performance of paid work, with more men than women performing paid work in all generations. There were also statistically significant regional differences in the share of women who performed paid work in the previous week: most women work in Istria and Primorje and in Zagreb and its surrounding area [14%–15% in total], and the least in Central Croatia and Međimurje [only about 5% of women].

However, the data that only 8% of the total Roma female population performs some form of paid work, and that 40% are housewives, places Roma women in Croatia in the infamous European context of the countries with the largest share of the non-active Roma female population. Such a low share of Roma women in the labor market can also be interpreted by the traditionally patriarchal understanding that a woman's role is primarily in the sphere of reproduction: giving birth and doing unpaid household chores.

Although a number of challenges in achieving sexual and reproductive health and the rights of Roma women can be read from the qualitative analysis, the quantitative data still give a somewhat more optimistic picture. Thus, a total of 48% of Roma women have visited a gynecologist in the last 12 months. During the last 12

months, most young women aged 16 to 29 visited a gynecologist, 63% of them, which can be interpreted with the fertile age of women when most pregnancies and births occur. This also corresponds to the statements from the qualitative analysis that younger women visit a gynecologist more often than older ones.

Interestingly, more Roma women [36%] than women in the general population [22%] underwent a Pap smear to determine the risk of cervical cancer in the last year. Young Roma women aged 16 to 29 [42%] were preventively tested the most, while only one-fifth of Roma women over the age of 56 underwent this health examination.

One of the biggest differences determined by empirical data between Roma women and women in the majority population is the age of giving birth. In contrast to the general population, where in 2018 the most frequent births were between the ages of 30 and 34 [34%], half of Roma women gave birth to their first child as minors. One-fifth of young and middle-aged Roma women give birth to their first child at the age of 17, and almost 15% of middle-aged and older RNM women gave birth to their first child at the age of 16. According to claims from interviews and focus groups, the largest number of Roma women give birth in hospitals, less and less frequently in their homes, which was the case before.

Miscarriage was experienced the most [42%] by middle-aged Roma women, and the least by young women – 17%. 7% of young women, 26% of middle-aged women and 41% of older women have had abortion on request. According to the results of the analysis, induced abortion is most common in Zagreb and its surrounding area, where 42% of women had it, and the rarest in Northern Croatia, where only 7% of women had it.

Here we will point out once again that the only significant predictor of miscarriage among Roma women is the number of births they have had during their lifetime, while for induced abortion there is a set of intertwined socioeconomic circumstances that may increase or decrease the chances of Roma women experiencing induced abortion during their lifetime.

The social consequences of pregnancy and childbirth that have proven to be significantly plausible for Roma women are suspension or termination of education and suspension or termination of work. In the subsample of surveyed Roma women aged 16 and older, as many as 26% of them suspended or terminated their education due to pregnancy and childbirth, while for the same reasons 19% suspended or terminated their active inclusion in the labor market. It is important to point out that early pregnancies and births had the greatest consequences on the education process in the youngest age group of women, i.e. Roma women between 16 and 19 years of age, because as many as 47% of them dropped out of education for these reasons.

According to their own statement in the survey, 11% of Roma women experienced violence from their current or former partner. However, generational differences were found in the experiences of violence against women by the current partner, with 10% of older women (56 years and older) stating that they had been victims of violence by their current partner. Among young Roma women aged 16 to 29, victims of partner violence were recorded at 6%, while the lowest number was recorded among middle-aged women aged 30 to 55 [2%]. Also, the data show that violence against women from the current partner is most common in Slavonia and Istria and Primorje, where more than 10% of women reported it in the survey, while in Međimurje and Zagreb and its surrounding area less than 2% answered in the affirmative.

In contrast to self-reported experiences of violence, when Roma women were asked about the experiences of certain violent behaviors by their partner, the data show higher rates of violence. As this study measured women's experience for three psychologically and physically violent behaviors, four economic and one sexual, the key results show that the most common is psychological violence, which 35% of women experienced by their current husbands or partners. Psychological violence in Roma families most often occurs in the form of frequent shouting, insults or mockery by partners, which was experienced by 32% of Roma women, then they are often accused of infidelity [19%], and 14% of women have experienced at least once that their partner threatened to physically injure them. Physical violence was experienced by one-fifth of women, most of whom experienced slapping, punching or kicking or beating by their partner – 18%. 14 % of women have been at least once or several times deliberately roughly pushed, pulled by hair, ears or similar by their partner, and 12% of women experienced their partner throwing things at them. Economic violence was experienced by 18% of Roma women, most of whom [15%] experienced that their partner put them in a situation where they do not have money for basic subsistence needs such as food, utilities and clothing. Furthermore, 11% of women stated that their partner acted as if all the money was only his and not shared, which is often the experience of most female victims of economic violence. 10% of women have been repeatedly put in a situation where they have to beg their partner for money, and 9% of women have to hide that they have bought something. Almost 9% of Roma women have experienced “sexual intercourse against their will” from their partners at least once, and many of them more than once.

The social acceptability of partner violence in relationships is measured indirectly through the acceptability of divorce in the case of physical violence from one partner against another. It has been shown that when the reason for divorce is that the husband is physically violent against the wife, 63% of men and 66% of women who stated that divorce is not acceptable to them at all state that such divorce is

acceptable. Also, when the reason for divorce is that the wife is physically violent against her husband, 57% of men and 61% of women who stated that divorce is not acceptable to them at all state that such divorce is acceptable. From these data it can be deduced that for the majority of the Roma population, physical violence, especially of men against women, in a partnership is not a generally accepted social norm.

**Young Roma men and women** aged 14 to 29 make up about a third of the total Roma population in the Republic of Croatia, so the analysis of the social position of young people as a specific social group is crucial for future measures and activities related to social integration of RNM members. Young Roma men and women share unfavorable living conditions with the rest of the Roma population and live with them mostly in concentrated Roma settlements with numerous infrastructure and hygiene problems, in conditions of severe poverty and material deprivation, in overcrowded and inadequately equipped dwellings. High unemployment rates, low monthly incomes of the households in which they live, as well as the reliance of families on social assistance is a social reality of young Roma men and women and their families. The social exclusion of young Roma men and women is manifested, therefore, in the accumulation of unfavorable life circumstances that are relatively permanent, difficult to change and mutually supportive. The analysis of the specifics of the social position of youth focused on three important areas: education, economic life and deviant and delinquent behavior of young people.

In the field of education, young members of the RNM are characterized by early departure from the education system and thus failure to acquire the basic skills and knowledge needed for social integration and competitiveness in the labor market. Illiteracy is declining among Roma over the generations, but it is still a problem that has not been fully resolved. Almost 4% of young members of the RNM are illiterate, but positive changes are evident: the share of illiterates is lower as the cohorts are younger and the gender gap characteristic of the older generations is decreasing. The highest number of illiterate youth is in Northern Croatia [8%] and in Međimurje [5%].

Only 19% of young Roma have completed secondary school, unlike as many as 60% of young people in the general population of the Republic of Croatia. Nevertheless, Roma who complete secondary school in Croatia are better than the European average of the Roma youth population. The largest shares of secondary education completion are among young people in Istria and Primorje, and the lowest in Northern Croatia, usually three-year secondary vocational schools. The main reason for not attending secondary school is the lack of parental support. Girls are also characterized by early marriage and motherhood as factors that prevent them from continuing their education. Poor preparation in primary school for secondary education and financial reasons are additional obstacles to continuing education.

The biggest gap between the general and Roma population is in higher education – among young Roma only 0.3% of them have completed some level of higher education, as opposed to 17% of young people in the general population.

Young Roma men and women are also characterized by high rates of dropping out of school, especially among girls. The largest share of young people dropping out of primary school is in Northern Croatia (as much as 40%), i.e. the region with the highest average number of children in Roma households, a very high share of households below the poverty line and the highest material deprivation. Young people in Međimurje drop out of secondary school the most. Among the main reasons for dropping out of school are financial reasons and early marriage, present in both genders, while gender-specific reasons are pregnancy and motherhood for girls, and poor educational outcomes for boys. One part of young Roma men and women drop out of secondary education due to discriminatory and stereotypical treatment of them by other students, as well as by certain teachers. Some young Roma men and women believe that secondary school will not help them find a job, so they do not particularly try to complete it. Experiences of unemployment, prejudice and discrimination against other members of the community in which they grow up are certainly not an incentive for young Roma men and women on their way to social and economic integration.

Among young men, about a quarter of them work, which may be one of the key reasons for leaving the education system early, while four times fewer young Roma women are involved in paid work, only 6%. Thus, a small share of young Roma men and women enter the labor market around the age of twenty, but this scope does not change significantly in older age.

About a third of young Roma women are non-active because they take care of the household [so-called housewives], while approximately as many are unemployed, i.e. those who are willing to work but unable to find work. Young Roma women are a particularly vulnerable group because they become non-active very early and take care of the household, and those who are willing to work do not find a job.

Young Roma men and women participate the most in paid work in Istria and Primorje [26% of them], and the least in Central Croatia (only 9% of them). About 35% of young Roma men and as many as 60% of young Roma women are completely excluded from the world of work. Those who work mostly do occasional, temporary or seasonal jobs while permanent employment is extremely rare. Thus, young Roma men and women are deprived of the social benefits that permanent employment brings. They most often work in elementary occupations such as cleaners, production line workers, a part of them in service and trade occupations as well as in agriculture and forestry.

Deviant and delinquent behaviors are considered negative consequences of social exclusion, but can also be understood as a kind of appeal of young people to change their marginalized social status. Given the assumption of the social learning theory that aggressive and deviant behaviors are learned primarily in early family socialization, the fact that every tenth young person has been a victim of violence committed by a family member supports the thesis of socialization of young people in an environment that supports aggressive and deviant behavior.

Nevertheless, the data collected show very small shares of children and young people aged 10 to 18 who behave delinquently. Among boys, the most common behaviors are non-fulfillment of school obligations [4%] and participation in burglary or theft [3%], and among girls, non-fulfillment of school obligations [5%]. Most children and youth participate in burglaries or thefts in Northern Croatia [5%]. Non-fulfillment of school obligations is most common among children and young people in Istria and Primorje [about 12%], and material damage in Međimurje [2%]. When interpreting these data, it should be noted that these questions were answered by randomly selected household members, not necessarily the young people to whom the data relate, so there are several reasons why this data could underestimate the true picture (ignorance of respondents, shame or giving socially desirable responses). However, not even these indicators should be taken lightly because young people who express certain forms of socially unacceptable behaviors early, adopt new and increasingly complex forms of such behaviors during adolescence.

Cigarette smoking is the most widespread addiction among young Roma and increases with age; by the age of 14, about a third of young people smoke, and after the age of 25, almost two thirds of Roma men and more than half of Roma women smoke. The highest number of smokers among young Roma men and women is in Northern Croatia [as many as 61%]. Alcohol is mostly consumed by young Roma men and women in the oldest age cohort, 28% of men and 11% of women. The highest alcohol consumption is among young people in Međimurje and Northern Croatia [16%]. Alcohol is associated with the misuse of social security benefits and neglect of children, which, together with violent and criminal behavior under the influence of alcohol, creates tensions between the majority population and part of the Roma population. Alcohol consumption among children and youth is associated with growing up in families where alcohol consumption is normalized. Drug or opiate use is present in about 1% of young Roma men and 0.1% of young Roma women, with particular emphasis on the frequency of marijuana and *galaxy* drug use. The highest rate of opiate consumption is found among youth [5%] in Istria and Primorje. Poor awareness of the surveyed Roma about the provision of education on the harmfulness of consuming drugs and other intoxicants for children and youth indicates a greater need for this type of intervention.



Our research confirms the findings of recent research and reports [Brajša-Žganec et al., 2015; Ombudsman for Children, 2019; Šikić-Mićanović et al., 2015; Šućur et al., 2015] which show that **children belonging to the RNM** are still extremely vulnerable, often exposed to multiple sources of social exclusion, human and children's rights violations and discrimination. It is a worrying fact that a total of 95% of children under the age of 13 live below the poverty line. At the same time, Central Croatia, Northern Croatia and Slavonia have the highest shares of RNM children living in relative poverty and housing deprivation. This finding is in line with the recent study of families with small children who are beneficiaries Eurostat [of social assistance, which showed that among all observed groups, children belonging to RNM live in the poorest conditions exposed to the highest level of housing deprivation [Šućur et al., 2015: 46–47; 88]. The results of our research confirm that poor material and housing conditions and poor conditions in settlements negatively affect education [see also Šikić-Mićanović et al., 2015: 88–89], reproducing the vicious circle of poverty, low education and unemployment.

Furthermore, poor housing and infrastructure conditions are reflected in the safety and health of children. In general, the data obtained on the health status of Roma children are relatively positive, both in terms of assessing the health status of children by their parents and in terms of vaccinations and physical examinations [with the caveat that these are assessments made by parents]. Problems with access to health care, according to the results of this research, are not pronounced, which is a slightly more positive finding than the recent report on children's rights that detects this problem for Roma children [Brajša-Žganec et al., 2015: 198–199]. However, it is important to add that this research also shows that health, hygiene and safety risks for children are still concentrated in some settlements, with health pollution, including air pollution and related respiratory problems.

With regard to the education of Roma children, it can be concluded that, despite the positive developments in preschool education, the problem of low involvement remains the most pronounced. The results show that in the last school year only 16% of children aged three to six attended preschool [kindergarten or preschool], and the least in Slavonia [5%] and in settlements on the outskirts of the city or village [4.2%]. The analysis showed that the four main reasons for not attending include subjective [“the child is too young” and “someone at home can take care of the child so there is no need”] and objective barriers [financial unavailability and distance]. Overall, the statistically significant differences found do not show some clear and easy-to-interpret patterns, but it is noticeable that decisions to include children in preschools mostly differ in terms of subjective reasons while estimates are relatively more consistent when it comes to objective barriers. It is important to point out the finding that the distance of kindergartens is by far the biggest problem in Central Croatia, compared to all other regions.

The analysis showed the positive effects of the co-financing and free transportation programs – part of the participants in the qualitative section of the research stated that this is exactly why children attend kindergartens. However, it is worth noting that we detected that one of the problems related to preschool stems from the fact that preschool programs usually last only three hours a day, which in the case of dislocated housing presents an organizational problem for parents. We believe that this finding should be given certain attention in the adoption of future measures to increase participation in preschool programs. Likewise, this research confirmed the importance of the recommendation that the Ombudsman for Children (2019) has been reiterating for years: preschool programs are too short to compensate for the poorer preparedness of RNM children compared to other children when enrolling in first grade. In addition, research shows that there is a deficit of supervision of parental compliance with the obligation to send children to preschool, but also that part of the problem stems from the way parents are informed about enrollment in preschool and primary school [via web notifications that Roma parents do not follow].

With regard to primary school, it has been found that great progress has been made in terms of coverage and successful completion, but a number of problems have also been identified. This is not surprising since in the last report the Ombudsman for Children warns of frequent violations of the rights of children belonging to the RNM in the educational system [Ombudsman for Children, 2019: 130]. The results of the research show that the increase in involvement alone did not result in equal participation of children belonging to the RNM in primary education. First, despite the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of “Oršuš and Others v. Croatia” in 2010 and despite the recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child [Ombudsman for Children, 2019: 123], the problem of segregated classes still persists. A total of 21% of children belonging to the RNM attend “Roma classes”, and an additional 3% attend classes in which there are students who are members of other national minorities. It is a devastating fact that almost every other child in Međimurje goes to exclusively “Roma classes”.

Furthermore, the research has confirmed that the language barrier is the source of a number of problems throughout primary education. It was confirmed that there is a practice of extensive diagnosis of developmental disorders [Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2012b: 59], which happens to some children primarily due to communication difficulties that arise from insufficient command of the Croatian language. In order to achieve their successful advancement through school, these children are redirected to special programs, which results in a lack of quality of acquired knowledge and difficult continuation of education.

We paid close attention to the issue of parental and school support during primary education. On the one hand, parents are often unaware of the importance of education, due to poverty they cannot afford adequate resources [adequate clothing, footwear, paying for trips, leisure activities ...], and due to their own low level of education they cannot help children to study at home. Likewise, parents often burden their children with work and taking care of younger siblings, and in some places, there is still the problem of early marriages. When it comes to school support, the results of the research indicate that many schools make great efforts to work with children and parents belonging to RNM, but often survey participants still cite examples of discrimination, most often by teachers or parents of children from the majority population. The research confirms the importance of Roma assistants [who help with learning, overcoming the language barrier and motivating children] and organized full-time stay in school [both for help with learning and due to inadequate housing conditions in which many children live].

The research identified children's participation in extracurricular activities as an area that carries significant integration potential. It is important to emphasize this finding because the specific recommendations for children with RNM within the key *policy* documents and research lack recommendations in this direction. All the more worrying is the finding of this research that children in integrated classes, where children from the majority population are in the majority, are slightly more likely to be victims of violence or bullying at school just because they are Roma, than children attending classes with the majority of or exclusively Roma students. Although the difference is not statistically significant, this finding suggests that the objective of class integration must be accompanied by measures and programs ensuring an inclusive environment in schools. The finding that half of the children spend their free time equally with Roma and the majority population is encouraging, although it is important to note that there are significant regional differences: in Međimurje and Northern Croatia, children spend most of their free time with children who are also members of the RNM. The same applies to children living in Roma settlements, either on the outskirts of towns/villages or dislocated settlements.

The research revealed the problem of unstructured leisure time: although some children engage in leisure activities outside of school [mostly sports], almost half of the participants who referred to children's free time stated that it is usually disorganized and that children are left to fend for themselves. In almost half of the localities where Roma live, there are no adequate children's playgrounds, and this is especially a problem when it comes to Roma settlements on the outskirts of towns or villages and in dislocated Roma settlements. The results show that in many locations other infrastructural amenities are missing as well, apart from children's playgrounds [cultural centers, playrooms, libraries...]. We believe that it is important to emphasize this finding as well, because the right of children to

play, which is recognized as one of the rights of the child by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, remains relatively neglected in existing *policy* documents and recommendations. This is especially important in the context of the fact that children members of the RNM are exposed to “early growing up” [Šučur, 2004b], which is confirmed by data on spending free time within the family. Participants stated that children “do what their parents do” while others pointed out that parents spend little time with their children or their time together is unstructured, without playing, educational or recreational activities. Comparing the results of our research and the recent Brave Phone survey on a nationally representative sample [Brave Phone, 2018], it was not found that parents belonging to the RNM use physical punishment more often. What is worrying, however, is the data on the frequency of measures of removal of children and placement in alternative care, which is a problem recognized in other recent reports and documents. Nevertheless, the finding that (according to the research participants) over half of the children are placed in foster families is encouraging. It is to be assumed that new measures to deinstitutionalize children in alternative care [MDOMSP, 2018] will result in further improvements in the future.

## 7.2. Policy recommendations

As we have stated, the NRIS is a social policy, and the key challenge of social policies is the establishment of an effective coordination system, i.e. minimization of contradictions and tensions in public policies, better use of resources used in making these policies, cooperation of all parties affected by these policies and the creation of an integrated, uninterrupted set of services provided to citizens. In addition, social policy depends on the political, economic and social context and it is difficult to generalize about its proper implementation. Here we will list the relevant areas of empirically determined gaps that the future NRIS should seriously consider both by including certain objectives, measures and activities in its scope of implementation, and by purposeful coordination with other competent authorities in adopting those public policies that can support the overall NRIS objective.

Among Roma women, as has been clearly shown, partner violence is not the subject of any of the three relevant public policies, and the problem is [omni]present in the general population as well. The prevalence of some form of partner violence in more than a third of women determined by the survey has been masked due to the methodological limitations of the research, and these numbers are certainly higher. As psychological violence is the most present, and is repeated as a pattern in disciplining children (more than a third of Roma parents shout at children and verbally punish them), the recommendation would relate primarily to coor-

dination with other competent authorities, mostly with MDOMSP; that violence against Roma women and children be systematically and continuously included in the implementation of the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence for the period from 2017 to 2022. However, this Strategy does not have an AP, and no evaluations of implementation have been conducted so far, so it is questionable how to raise awareness of the Roma population about the unacceptability of violence against women and children through specific public campaigns as part of prevention, followed by specific training for target groups (RNM members, teachers, social workers, etc.) and sanctioning violence against Roma women and children, given that the already adopted strategy did not define Roma women as a target group. This challenge could be overcome by adopting an AP for the implementation of this national strategy where Roma women would be included as a target group, or it can be partially overcome by existing measures and activities so that special attention is paid to education with comprehensive approaches to domestic violence, with the focus on those participants from the overall vertical of the educational system in which members of the RNM are involved; to finance the implementation of projects and programs of Roma and other civil society organizations working on preventing the occurrence of and combating various forms of domestic violence, where Roma women and children would be defined as a target group in public tenders, etc.

Furthermore, one of the most relevant findings of this study is that more than half of Roma women give birth to their first child as minors and that this largely prevents them from completing both primary and secondary education, leading to a high illiteracy rate among Roma women but also to minimal inclusion in the labor market. This problem is multi-layered and complex not only because it encroaches on traditions and customs that are often contrary and in conflict with children's rights and women's rights, but also because it is linked to the poverty of Roma communities. However, due to the important role of Roma women in the social reproduction of the family, this problem needs to be addressed decisively and systematically. In fact, Roma women are the ones who take care of children and young people so their socioeconomic status becomes a model for new generations, which leads to many other problems: their lack of education negatively affects support for children in school because they cannot help them master school materials, learn the Croatian language, etc. Also, they cannot convey to girls a different picture of the world and the future in which their role will be different from their mother's, which reduces their motivation for education and inclusion in other spheres of society, as well as the need to change generally accepted traditional patterns of behavior in Roma communities. Thus, the circle closes and that is why the problem of teenage pregnancies of Roma women should be placed at the center of *policy* action.

All criminal laws determine the extent to which a child, according to psychologists, social workers and other experts, is neither able nor mature enough to assess the risks and consequences of sexual intercourse, so adults who enter into such relationships are sanctioned even though they are consensual and without coercion. Croatian Criminal Code [OG 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19] stipulates that this limit is 15 years of age, which is among the lower age limits in the world, and the prescribed penalty for sexual intercourse with a child in Article 158 paragraph 1 is a custodial sentence of three to 12 years. Although the amendment to the Criminal Code has shifted the age limit for sexual offenses against children from the previous 14 to 15 years, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as any person below the age of 18. Here, the recommendation would go in the direction of additional education of judges on the vertical superiority of ratified international conventions in Croatia, where, for example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is superior to other laws and should be taken into account when delivering judgments in such cases and thus contribute to a better application of the CC. In fact, according to the statements from the qualitative section of the research, judges in cases concerning sexual relations of Roma women who are minors [even pregnancies as a consequence] classify such cases as “traditions and customs” and do not impose prescribed penalties. In addition to measures and activities aimed at the judiciary system, preventive and educational components are crucial when it comes to teenage pregnancies and they should be integrated into citizenship education, more precisely, in the modules of sexual education and reproductive health within the education system.

In conclusion, regarding the promotion and protection of Roma women’s human rights, it seems important to better coordinate the future adoption of the NRIS and the National Policy for Gender Equality in order to address Roma issues in a systematic and coherent manner and in accordance with established empirical data, ratified international conventions and other normative acts. Coordination between competent authorities in strategy and policy-making is needed to cover all key areas according to institutional competencies and sectoral topics.

Horizontal networking and coordination in the adoption of strategic documents is important when talking about young Roma men and women, and this target group due to its characteristics of a socially excluded group should be included in part in the new NRIS, but also integrated into separate measures and activities in the NYP for the period from 2019 to 2025. As the educational dimension is crucial for the social integration of young Roma men and women, here we will link the recommendations related to children and youth because the educational vertical, and thus the outcomes of the educational process, begin with preschool education.

First of all, for better educational outcomes, it is necessary to increase and work on parental competence and skills, and to provide meaningful and accessible social

services for families with children in the social welfare system [which is the majority of Roma families]. To this end, the UNICEF program “For Stronger Families” was designed, aimed primarily at empowering families, but through professional education and empowerment of those who work with families, to be able to identify a family at risk, a child living in such a family, to prevent negativities that occur, such as abuse, neglect and the like.<sup>187</sup> However, even this UNICEF program, which precisely responds to the identified problems and gaps, and is implemented in cooperation with the MDOMSP, does not specify Roma families in particular, who should be a priority according to all criteria and indicators. However, as this program is still being implemented, and the results of the evaluation are expected at the end of 2020, it is possible that raising the skills and competencies of social and health workers to work with families in the social welfare system will contribute in part to greater support.

When we talk about Roma parents, the specific detected fields that should be taken into account when formulating *policy measures* and activities refer to their perceptions of the importance of certain segments of the educational process. Namely, it proved to be extremely important to design activities that would raise their awareness of the importance of preschool education and conduct campaigns to encourage enrollment in kindergartens and preschools, especially in regions where the “the child is too young” attitude is predominant [Northern Croatia, Međimurje and Slavonia]. It is also important to inform parents about the unacceptability of violations of the rights of children and youth, especially in cases of teenage pregnancies and economic exploitation of children and youth (unpaid household chores for girls, “family work” in seasonal and other jobs, begging) due to which children and youth often miss school and sometimes drop out of school.

As preschool proved to be extremely important for the later socialization of children in primary schools, the recommendation coming from several participants of this research is to provide preschool for a minimum of two years in the future period of the NRIS implementation, taking care to avoid segregation and the creation of segregated “Roma programs”. One way to achieve this is to increase the flexibility of the preschool system so that the required number of hours can be achieved by participating in a variety of educational and socialization activities [including one-time workshops organized by associations, etc.], which would be certified by the Ministry of Science and Education. It is precisely the greater involvement of Roma children in preschool and kindergartens that would reduce the incidence of diagnosing developmental disorders in children, which so far result in a high share of children in adapted programs. Such a diagnostic approach should certainly be revised, but the number of Roma children attending an adapted program would certainly be lower if preschool lasted longer and their involvement was higher.

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187 This program is planned to include 900 qualified workers from the social welfare system and 400 from the field of health and education. This would cover 2,000 families, or 4,000 children, and UNICEF will allocate five million kuna for that purpose.

This would create a more stimulating environment for more successful completion of the educational process, not only for Roma children, but also for teachers and children of the majority population, which would potentially reduce the segregation of Roma children that is still present. Moreover, for better involvement of Roma children in kindergartens, free transportation to kindergartens should be provided, especially in Central Croatia.

For the completion of primary education, day care of Roma children in schools proved to be an extremely important form of support, which is related to their life in conditions of housing deprivation, which has a very negative impact on their development, education and health. In this context, it is extremely important on the one hand to improve the living conditions of Roma children, but on the other hand to provide a day care center for all Roma children in primary school. Also, in cooperation with schools, it is necessary to increase the number of Roma assistants who will be formally, not temporarily employed and continuously, not project-funded by the MDOMSP, while ensuring a high level of professionalism of their work. As an extremely important instrument of support for the completion of secondary [but also higher] education is the scholarship for Roma students, securing places in dormitories and free transportation to schools. For future measures and activities, it is important to point out that these scholarships should monitor the cost of living and be higher than before, because the poor financial situation of Roma families is often the reason for dropping out of school of young Roma men and women. All these measures and activities should be defined at the national level and have the same implementation potential in all regions.

For all other measures and activities, a vertical connection of different levels is necessary. This means that intensive communication between the local, regional, national and European level is needed in order for the desired steps in the implementation of the NRIS to be focused on the needs of the target groups within those levels. Subsidiarity, as one of the fundamental principles of the European Union, presupposes the existence of competencies of lower administrative and political units, i.e. their recognition of the specific needs of the communities they encompass. In the case of policies regarding women, youth and members of national minorities, this means that some of the objectives will be much more successfully met by local self-government units, such as organizing children's and young people's leisure time or employing young Roma men and women in companies owned by cities and municipalities. Given the fact that the NRIS is an eclectic and cross-sectoral area, it remains to be seen whether there is enough political will and courage to tackle the problems that require structural reforms and hamper RNM members in achieving their goals. On the other hand, the tradition of non-cooperation between different departments and the still insufficient recognition of the importance of Roma inclusion in all spheres of Croatian society are the reasons for its shortcomings in implementation so far.





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## References



## 8. References

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**Ksenija Klasnić** was born in 1983 in Zagreb. She graduated in 2007 with a single major in sociology [scientific and teaching track] and an additional study program of socio-humanistic informatics from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, and received her PhD in sociology in 2014 with a thesis in quantitative sociological methodology. Since 2016, she has been an assistant professor at the Chair of Methodology of the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, where she teaches five methodological courses. Some of the main areas of her scientific research interest are social research methodology, research on marginalized and hard-to-reach populations, and gender and socioeconomic inequalities. She gained work experience on numerous scientific and research projects, but also applied projects, where she was primarily engaged in designing research methodology, construction of survey questionnaires and other research instruments, as well as processing, analyzing and interpreting collected data. She has published about 20 scientific papers in scientific journals and peer-reviewed publications and spoke at about 20 international and domestic scientific conferences. She is the President of the Committee of the Department of Sociology for the Evaluation of Research Ethics and a member of the editorial board of the scientific journal *Social Ecology*. She was the head of field research in the IPA 2012 project "Collecting and monitoring baseline data for the effective implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy", which was carried out by the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

**Suzana Kunac** was born in 1971 in Split. She graduated in sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb in 1998, and she obtained her master's degree in 2002 at the University College of London. Since 2018, she has been self-employed in *Peta disciplina* – a proprietorship for scientific and technical services and consulting. In 2017 and 2018, she was engaged as the lead researcher in the project "Collecting and monitoring baseline data for the effective implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy", which was carried out by the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. In the period from 2013 to 2018, she held a mandate in the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia and worked as a member of the Electronic Media Council, where she made decisions on issues regarding the regulation of electronic media. Within the work of the Mediterranean Network of Regulatory Au-

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**Petra Rodik** was born in 1977 in Zagreb. In 2002, she graduated in sociology, and in 2011 she obtained a doctorate in the domain of social sciences, field of sociology, at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. Since 2002, she has been employed at the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and during 2018 and 2019 she worked at the University of Dublin [Trinity College]. She was a member of the Presidency of the Croatian Sociological Association for two terms, participated in a dozen scientific research projects and spent a three-month research stay at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle. So far, she has written three books, several scientific papers and presented one exhibition. Always putting the diversity of interests before the narrow specialization, Petra Rodik has so far dealt with a wide range of topics in the field of sociology of the army and war, sociology of organization, discourse analysis, political economy and housing policy research. She is also interested in modern trends in the development and application of quantitative and qualitative research methods and the application of computer technologies in social research [agent-based models and the application of computer programs for qualitative research methods]. She has collaborated with the civil sector on several occasions, most often with the Peace Studies Center and GONG. She was one of the founders of the Franak Association, where she was active until 2014.



