Unveiling the Unexplored Faces of Religiosity, Spirituality and Non-religiosity among the Roma

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RELIROMA

Research of Religiosity, Spirituality and Non-religiosity among the Roma

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SRDA

Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology
Slovak Academy of Sciences

Goal

What the project maps

1. Church and non-church religiosity
2. Modern and postmodern spirituality
3. Religious experimenting, de-conversion
4. Non-religiosity and secularism (atheism, agnosticism, apatheism, humanism, etc.)

Goal

Processes under study

1. Processes of mutual negotiation
2. Dynamic continuation of local religious tradition (Romani community, family)
3. Constant appropriation / accommodation of mainstream forms of religiosity / spirituality / non-religiosity
4. Enculturation and ethnicization, cultural transcript and translation
5. Creative processes of innovation, invention

Specific goal

RELI-ROMART web portal

Digital archive of documentary and artistic photographs of religious and spiritual objects and compositions, documenting domestic and community devotion in Roma communities.



Design

Two research modules

Quantitative module

- EVS, ISSP, WVS, Census 2021

Qualitative module

- Initial mapping of church-based religiosity (online questionnaire + in situ interviews)
- Multi-levelled + multi-sited ethnographies (15 localities = 300 interviews + 300 photographs, videos)

Design

Perspectives and approach

Quantitative	Perspective at the national context (SPSS)
Qualitative	(1) Multi-sited ethnography, stationary and return research; (2) multivocal ethnography: multi-levelled perspective and local embeddedness – the whole spectrum of target groups, including a comparative non-Roma sample
Multidisciplinary	Multidisciplinary approach

Methods of analysis

1

Content analysis

Schrier 2014; Herzog, Handke, Hitters 2019

2

Thematic analysis

e.g., Boyatzis 1998

3

Interpretative-phenomenological analysis

Smith et al. 2009

Innovation + added value

1 **Research design**

2 **Digital and visual anthropology**

ethnomusicology

3 **Web portal**

RELIROMA

4 **Exhibition**

5 **Applied anthropology and participatory approaches**

workshops for church leaders and representatives, engaged volunteers both Roma and non-Roma

Milestones

M1 Mapping

M2 Quantitative analysis

M3 Ethical and methodological design

M4 Pilot research, validation of questionnaires

M5 Qualitative research I + II: two-round fieldwork at selected localities (16 localities, min. 320 interviews)

M6 Analysis, interpretation and evaluation

M7 Final monograph and international conference

M8 Dissemination and popularization

M9 Web portal RELI-ROM-ART

Working assumptions

Roma religiousness is similarly diverse and constantly, flexibly negotiated with the modern and postmodern world as well as with majoritarian religiousness.

Religious and spiritual seekers, as well as indifferent, unbelieving, non-practising, atheist or quite secular people, are also significantly represented in Roma communities.

Population by nationality

Census 2021: permanent residents vs. present population

Nationality	Permanent residents	Present	% difference
Slovaks	4 567 547	4 358 389	−4.6
Hungarians	422 065	403 697	−4.4
Roma	**67 179**	**64 992**	**−3.3**
Ruthenians	23 746	22 655	−4.6
Ukrainians	9 451	20 593	+118
Total	**5 449 270**	**5 233 612**	**−4**

Roma

67 179

permanent residents

64 992

present

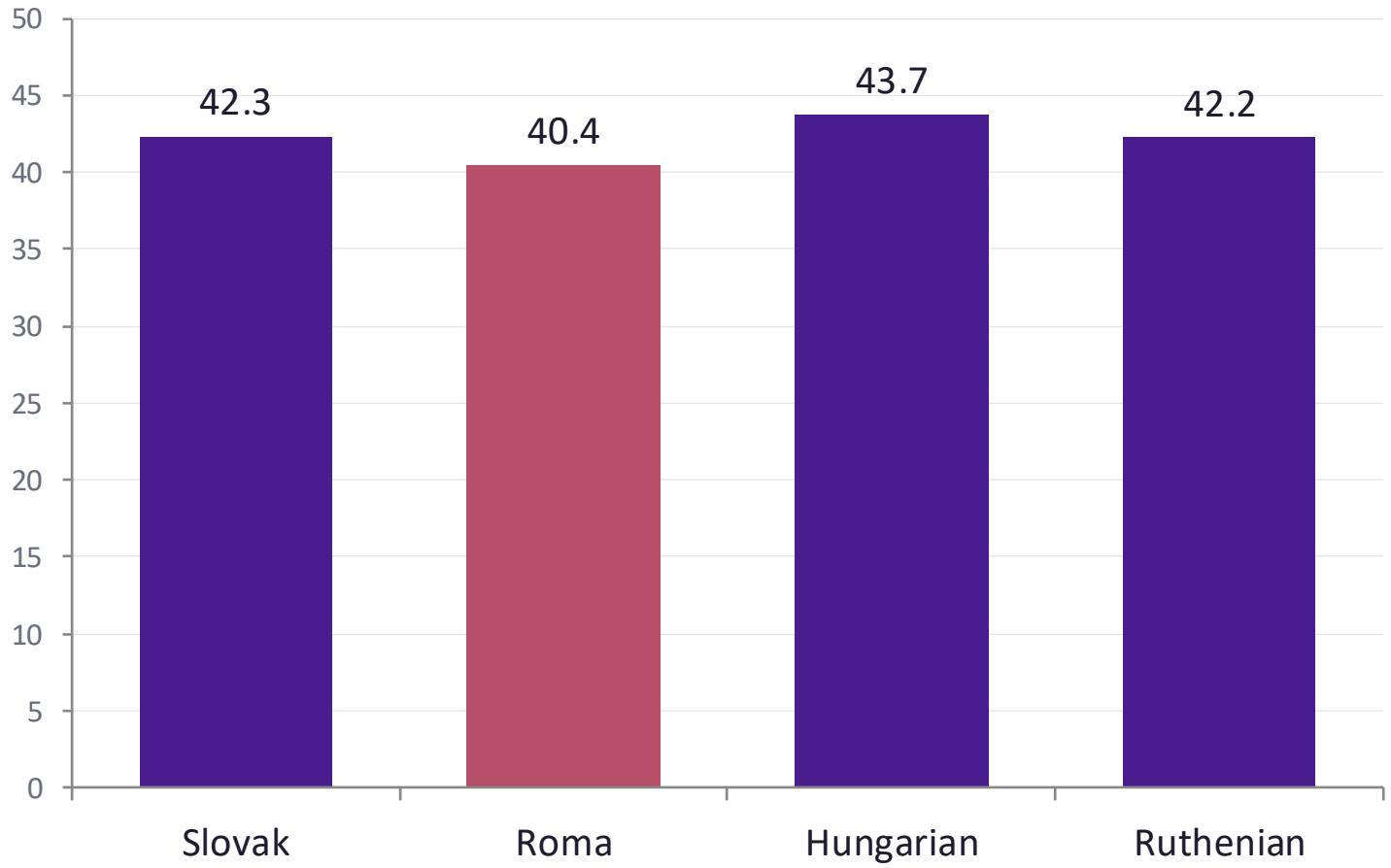
Denominational breakdown by nationality

Census 2021, in %

Nationality / denomination	Roman Catholic	No religion	Lutheran	Greek Catholic	Orthodox	Reformed	Jehovah's Witnesses
Roma	**60.2**	**18.4**	**1.4**	**6.5**	**2.75**	**1.2**	**1.4**
Slovak	59.2	25.6	6.0	4.1	0.72	0.55	0.27
Hungarian	62.3	17.1	1.7	1.9	0	14	0.53
Ruthenian	2.3	7.9	0	55.8	32.3	0	0.3

Religious diversity index (0–100)

Census 2021



Roma

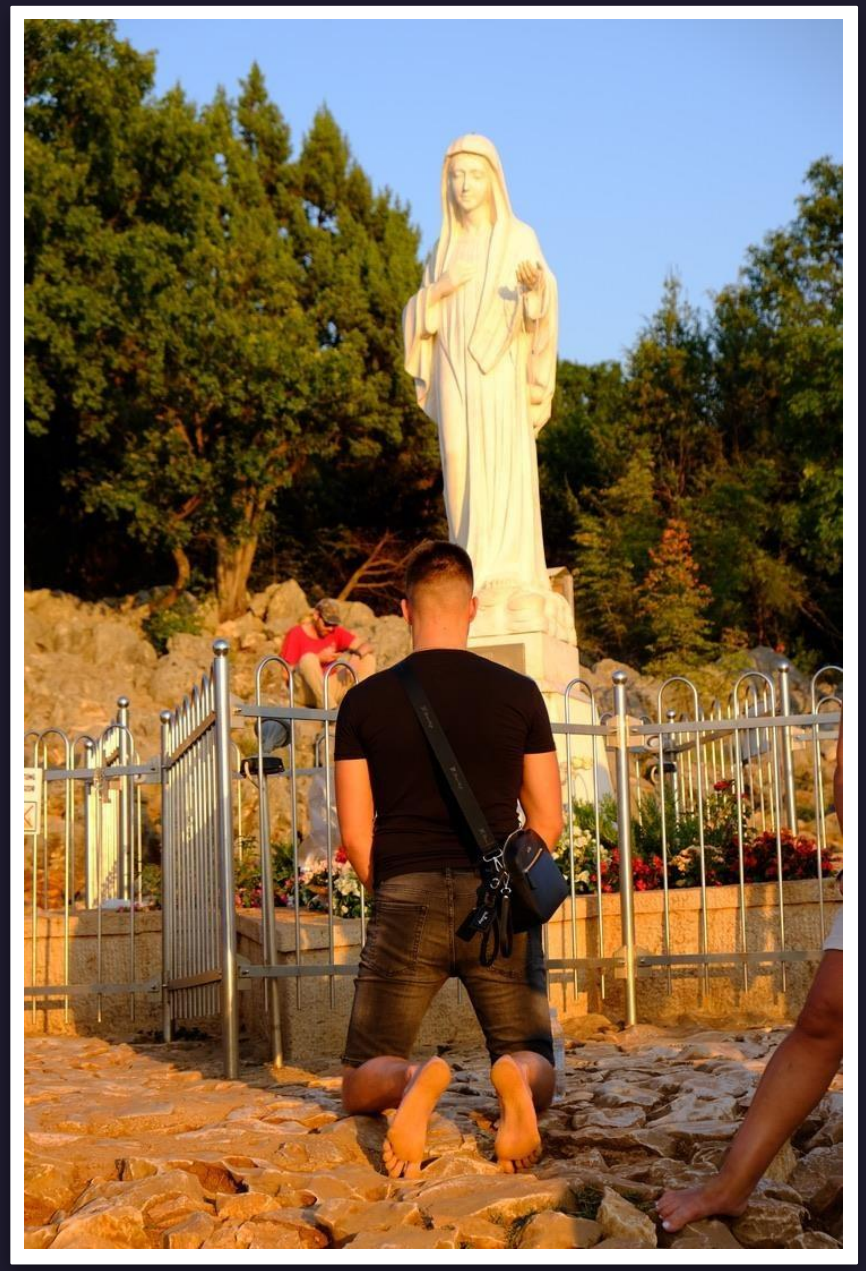
40.4

the lowest religious diversity index of the four groups



Roma pilgrimage

Gaboltov, 2023



Roma pilgrim

Medjugorje, 2023



„Faith, Heart, Love“

Roma woman from the Czech Republic (Markušovce, 2024)





Salesian Church of St Zeferyn

Poštárka, Bardejov, 2024



Car of a Romani pastor

Charismatic assembly of the Greek Catholic Church (Petrovany, 2024)



Roma grave

Sirk, 2021

Preliminary results

Quantitative module

There is no “ethnic” pattern of religiosity, spirituality or non-religiosity.

Mapping

Some faith-based organisations follow the model “sect-to-church”, and some “church-to-sect” or “sect-to-cult”.

To be continued... :)

Thank you for your attention!

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