Social exclusion and inequality in European cities

Abyssal exclusion, advanced marginality, and the goodness of the European indicator AROPE

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In the end, I would like to extend my gratitude to my *nonno Vittorio*, who missed this day for a few months. Today, I will miss your emotional and proud "*Ninin*" on the other end of the phone. Thank you for always having been a safe haven on my every departure and return.

Abstract

The recent happenings (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequent crises, the war in Ukraine, etc.) and the transformations occurring in the last decades (e.g., migrations, welfare restructuring, globalization, etc.) shaped and changed societal composition. These events intensified and exacerbated the existing forms of inequality and social exclusion, which acquired new shades of marginalization, polarization, and segregation in the urban contexts (e.g., Tammaru et al., 2016; Musterd et al., 2017; Dikeç, 2017; Florida, 2017; Mela, Toldo, 2019; Madden, 2021; Van Ham et al., 2021).

Therefore, the present thesis reports a study aimed to investigate social exclusion and inequality in European cities. Specifically, five cities – one per welfare state regime – were the case studies of this research: Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London. The research attempted to answer three questions:

Q1. How does the European Union define, calculate, and frame social exclusion and inequality?

Q2. How are they manifesting in European cities? Are there extremer forms of exclusion and inequality, i.e., "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality"? If so, who is experiencing them in European cities?

Q3. Can European statistical tools capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion? If not, what is missing?

The theoretical framework that guided this research is rooted in postcolonial and urban studies. Specifically, it combines Boaventura de Sousa Santos' notion of "abyssal exclusion" (2007, 2014, 2017; Ricotta et al., 2021) with the analysis of "advanced marginality" developed by Loïc Wacquant (1996, 2008, 2016). The combination of these two perspectives offers a more comprehensive and thorough analysis of the emerging shades of inequality and exclusion. Indeed, Santos' theory allows the deepening of those forms of inequality and exclusion that are often unrecognized and unexplored by the mainstream sociology. On the other hand, Wacquant's studies permit framing these dynamics within the neighbourhoods' dynamics and considering the socio-spatial divisions that exist and persist in the cities.

Methodologically, the research adopted a mixed-method approach to achieve and answer the three questions posed. Thus, to portray how the European Union defines, frames, and monitors inequalities and social exclusion, it reviewed the descriptions, reports, and strategies developed regarding these dynamics. In addition, it provided a panoramic of the statistical tools adopted to grasp and monitor them. Secondly, to portray the current and emerging shades of inequality and exclusion, I conducted one hundred and fifty-four semi-structured interviews in five European cities with associations that work with the most excluded groups and experts that study these dynamics. Lastly, to validate the goodness of the indicators, the research compared the statistical analyses conducted for the first question with the insights and considerations of the interviews for the second one.

The results of this study spotlighted the complexity and fluidity of social exclusion and inequality. On the one hand, the research illustrated the dimensions and shades of these phenomena and the groups impacted by these dynamics in the European cities involved. On the other hand, it highlighted the fluidity of social exclusion and inequality and the difficulties in grasping and tracing their manifestations and impacts. Therefore, the research pinpointed three principal considerations. To begin with, it underlines the necessity to keep questioning the data that the European Union – and the Member States – use to monitor these social phenomena as they continuously evolve and impact new groups that need to be acknowledged and captured. Secondly, it spotlights the potentiality to adopt a mixed-method approach to question the indicators and study these dynamics. Lastly, the research highlights the necessity to develop a stronger and more cohesive network among associations, institutions, universities, and residents to enlarge the voices considered and promote more comprehensive solutions and policies to handle and tackle social exclusion and inequality.

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Table of contents

Chapter 5 - Case studies: inequality and social exclusion in European cities

Chapter 6 – Abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in European cities

Chapter 7 – Can European statistical tools capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion? If not, what is missing?

Conclusion

Glossary
Bibliography
Sitography

Appendix

List of figures

List of tables

Introduction

Recent happenings (e.g., the Covid-19 pandemic, the consequent crises, the war in Ukraine, and more) and the socioeconomic and political changes occurring in the last decades (e.g., the welfare restructuring, globalization, migrations, and more) have increased disparities among and within countries. Hence, several studies spotlighted their rise, expressing concerns and the need to tackle them (e.g., Cingano, 2014; Perez-Arce et al., 2016; Milanovic, 2017; Alacevich, Soci, 2019; Blanchet et al., 2019; Dorling, 2019; Saraceno, 2020; UNDESA, 2020). Specifically, these disparities acquired new shades of marginalization, polarization, and segregation in urban contexts (e.g., Tammaru et al., 2016; Musterd et al., 2017; Dikeç, 2017; Florida, 2017; Eurostat, 2018; Mela, Toldo, 2019; Madden, 2021; Van Ham et al., 2021). Indeed, multiple economic-financial, cultural, and political processes shaped and reconfigured cities, intensifying and exacerbating the existing forms of inequality and social exclusion (Harvey, 1989; Cassiers, Kesteloot, 2012). The intersectionality and overlapping of different layers of these phenomena cumulated in vicious circles of disadvantages, which are increasingly difficult to break and represent one of the most pressing societal challenges.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate social exclusion and inequality in European cities[1]. Specifically, it attempted to answer three questions:

Q1. How does the European Union define, calculate, and frame social exclusion and inequality?

Q2. How are they manifesting in European cities? Are there extremer forms of exclusion and inequality, i.e., "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality"? If so, who is experiencing them in European cities?

Q3. Can European statistical tools capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion? If not, what is missing?

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[1] Specifically, five cities – one per welfare state regime – were the case studies of this research: Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London (look at Chapter 4).

Thus, the purpose of this research is threefold. To begin with, it intends to present how the European Union defines, frames, and monitors inequalities and social exclusion in the Member States. Secondly, the research sought to portray the existing and emerging shades of exclusion and inequality in European cities. On the one hand, it provides a panoramic of how and where they manifest and whom they affect. On the other, it tries to investigate specific shades of inequality and social exclusion that can be interpreted as "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality" (look at Paragraph 2.1). Lastly, the research attempts to understand whether the indicator[2] adopted by the European Union to capture and monitor inequality and social exclusion can grasp these dynamics and their emerging shades. If it does not, this study tries to provide new indicators and variables to achieve this purpose.

The theoretical framework that guided this research is rooted in postcolonial and urban studies. Specifically, it combines Boaventura de Sousa Santos' notion of "abyssal exclusion" (2007, 2014, 2017; Ricotta et al., 2021) with the analysis of "advanced marginality" developed by Loïc Wacquant (1996, 2008, 2016). The combination of these two perspectives offers a more comprehensive and exhaustive image of the emerging shades of inequality and exclusion. Indeed, Santos' theory allows the deepening of those forms of inequality and exclusion that are often unrecognized and unexplored by mainstream sociology. On the other hand, Wacquant's studies permit framing these dynamics within the neighbourhoods' dynamics and considering the socio-spatial divisions that exist and persist in the cities.

Methodologically, the research adopted a mixed-method approach to achieve and answer the three questions posed. Thus, to portray how the European Union defines, frames, and monitors inequalities and social exclusion, it reviewed the descriptions, reports, and strategies developed regarding these dynamics. In addition, it provided a panoramic of the statistical tools adopted to grasp and monitor them. The data analyses allowed portraying the groups more at risk of social exclusion and inequality. Secondly, to photograph the

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[2] The European indicator adopted to study inequality and social exclusion is AROPE, which stands for "At Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion" (look at Chapter 3).

current and emerging shades of inequality and exclusion, I conducted one hundred and fifty-four semi-structured interviews in five European cities[3] with associations that work with the most excluded groups and experts that study these dynamics. Lastly, to validate the goodness of the indicator, the research compared the statistical analyses conducted for the first question with the insights and considerations of the interviews for the second one.

The novelty of this research in studying social exclusion and inequality is rooted in the theoretical framework and methodological approach. On the other hand, the combination of urban and post-colonial studies represents a uniqueness and asset in framing the emerging shades of these phenomena in urban contexts. On the other hand, mixed-method analysis allows the research to deepen and offer a more exhaustive panoramic of these dynamics and the goodness of the indicators.

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. Chapter 1 overviews the concepts of inequality and social exclusion by describing how they are defined, framed, interpreted, and measured over time. Within this perspective, this chapter attempts to illustrate the principal literature reviews and studies on these dynamics, highlighting their drivers and consequences.

Chapter 2 presents the questions, theoretical framework, and methodology that guided the research.

Chapter 3 attempts to answer the first question of the study, i.e., how the European Union defines, calculates, and frames social exclusion and inequality. Hence, it illustrates how the European Union describes these phenomena, according to the reports and strategies. Secondly, it outlines how the official statistics, i.e., Eurostat and EU-SILC[4], calculate and monitor social exclusion and inequality, and who are the groups and people more at risk of these dynamics. Lastly, it shows how the European Union and the Member States frame them.

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[3] Note 1.

[4] I decided to consider this dataset because it is the most updated on the issues of social exclusion, inequality, and living conditions at the European and Member State levels. Indeed, each country has its own data and statistics, and several of them participate in other surveys. Nevertheless, the data from EU-SILC and Eurostat are the only ones gathered in all the Member States each year and adopted to promote social policies and projects.

Chapter 4 describes how the research chose the cities adopted as case studies. Specifically, a country per each welfare state regime was selected based on three features: having high levels of inequality and exclusion, according to the indicators provided by Eurostat; reporting fewer allocations for social protection benefits aimed at reducing social exclusion and inequality; and receiving comments and recommendations related to social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs between 2011 and 2020. Thus, among the countries of the same welfare state regime, the one (or one of those) performing worse than others was the one picked. Specifically, the countries individuated are Italy for the Mediterranean welfare model, Belgium for the Continent one, Sweden for the Scandinavian one, Romania for the Eastern one, and the United Kingdom for the Anglo-Saxon one. Hence, the cities involved are Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London.

Chapters 5 and Chapter 6 attempt to answer the second question of the research, i.e., how social exclusion and inequality manifest in European cities and whether there are shades of abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality. Specifically, Chapter 5 focuses on the first part of this question, reporting how social exclusion and inequality manifest in European cities according to the interviewees. Thus, each paragraph presents the context and the previous studies on social exclusion and inequality in each city, how the interviewees describe them and their drivers, and the groups most affected by these dynamics and the changes that occurred. In addition, the last paragraph of Chapter 5 tries to compare these five case studies by spotlighting the similarities and differences that emerged. On the other hand, Chapter 6 attempts to answer the second part of the second question of the research, i.e., whether and who is experiencing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in European cities. Hence, each paragraph presents whether and how these extremer nuances manifest in the cities analysed. In addition, the last paragraph of Chapter 6 reports the similarities and differences among the case studies.

Lastly, Chapter 7 attempts to answer the third question of the research, i.e., whether the European statistical tools (AROPE and the EU-SILC database) can capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion and, if not, what is missing. Thus, it compares the statistical analyses conducted for the first question (Chapter 3) with the

insights and considerations of the interviews for the second one (Chapters 5 and 6). Further, it reports how the interviewees would improve AROPE and the EU-SILC database by adding some dimensions, and it proposes new indicators, variables, and data collection to achieve this purpose.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the results that emerged and outlines the complexity and fluidity of the issue. On the one hand, the research shows the dimensions and shades of social exclusion and inequality and the groups affected by these dynamics in the European cities involved. Within this perspective, it highlights the evolution of these phenomena and the mechanisms that reinforce them. On the other hand, the study spotlights the complexity and fluidity of social exclusion and inequality and the difficulties in grasping and tracing their manifestations and impacts. Thus, the research pinpointed three principal considerations. To begin with, it highlighted the necessity to keep questioning the data that the European Union – and the Member States – use to monitor these social phenomena. Indeed, inequality and social exclusion are not static and unchangeable issues but rather evolving ones. Hence, we need more comprehensive tools to grasp and analyse them. Secondly, it spotlights the potentiality to adopt a mixed-method approach to question the indicators and study these dynamics. Lastly, the research highlights the necessity to design and implement a holistic approach to handle and study inequality and social exclusion. Indeed, the interviews spotlighted the nodal role of local organisations in dealing with these phenomena. However, these actions need to be inserted into a more cohesive network with institutions, universities, and residents. The aim is to enlarge and consider all the voices and struggles in the public and policy debate to design, implement, and promote more targeted and tailored solutions.

Chapter 1 – Inequality and social exclusion. An overview

"Inequality is a violation of human dignity; it is a denial of the possibility
for everybody's human capabilities to develop".
(Therborn, 2013: 1)

1.1 Inequality

The concept of inequality goes beyond the sole economic disparity within or among countries and groups as it is strictly embedded and intertwined with the structure of society. Hence, experiencing inequality means being in an uneven position in several aspects, such as socioeconomic resources, status, rights, rewards, and opportunities.

The literature regarding its definition is vast and encompasses several perspectives. The starting question of these interpretations focused on what makes people or groups unequal. The first understanding is by distinguishing between inequalities of outcome and opportunity. The former refers to the unequal distributions of income and wealth (Tawney, 1961; Atkinson, 2015). Differently, inequality of opportunity refers to the unequal distribution of life chances across individuals or social groups (Rawls, 1971; Sen, 1992; Roemer, 2000)[5]. Another way to frame inequality is by distinguishing vertical, horizontal, and multiple inequalities. The former refers to the inequalities hierarchically ordered – i.e., by education attainments, by income, or by social stratification position based on economic and occupational status (Saraceno, 2020). Differently, horizontal inequalities[6] are those

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[5] Following Rawls's theory of distributive justice (1971), "an equitable society may not be characterized by the sole equality of final achievements (such as equal richness, level of education and health) and it should rather guarantee an equal ex-ante opportunity to all its members, to attain the outcomes they care about" (Arbia, Pace, 2018: 298). Thus, within this perspective, outcomes are determined by variables that are beyond individuals' responsibility (so-called circumstances) and by factors for which individuals are deemed responsible (so-called effort or responsibility variables) (Roamer, 1993; Van de Gaer, 1993; Fleurbaey, 1995; Breen, Johnsson, 2005; Ramos, Van de Gaer, 2016). These types of inequality are based on ascribed characteristics, on attainments of educational qualifications and social positions.
[6] Recent studies (Steward, Langer, 2008; Stewart et al., 2005; Stewart, 2009) have focused more on horizontal inequalities, observing how they persist over time. They endure through two processes: the intergenerational transmission of income and education and the less mobility in poor groups. They result in poverty and inequality traps which reinforce the persistence of disparities.

among culturally defined (or constructed) groups – i.e., gender, ethnicity, religion, the colour of skin, etc. Lastly, multiple inequalities are typical of horizontal inequality and concern the overlap of two or more.

Therefore, inequality is an intersectional, multilayered, and multidimensional phenomenon. Figure 1.1 synthesizes its complexity by grouping its characteristics into six dimensions. This division allows picturing the several facets that inequality can assume. However, in daily life, these dimensions do not appear separately but overlap and reinforce each other. Here, I display them individually to portray their characteristics.

Figure 1.1 – The dimensions of inequality
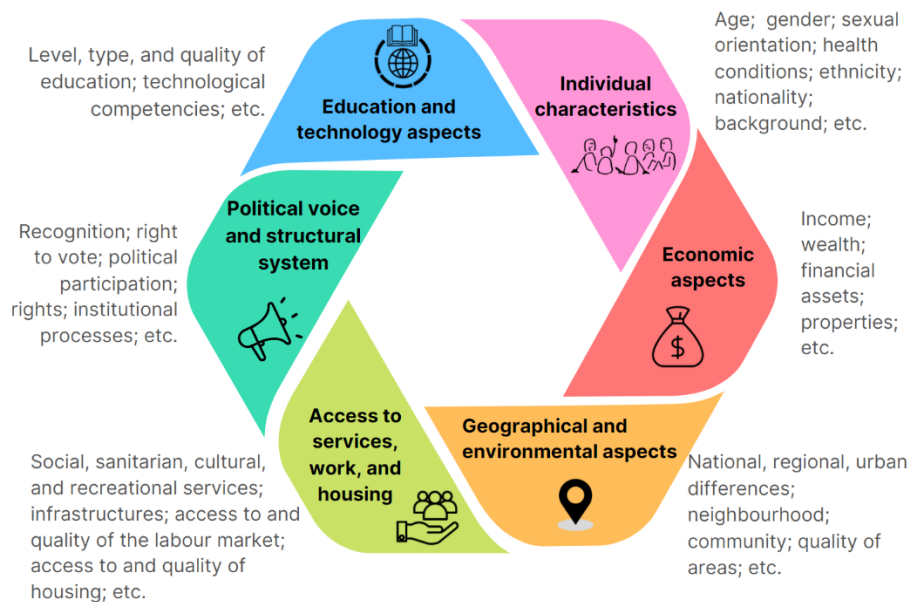
The first dimension reported refers to the individual characteristics that a person or group may have and, due to these, be discriminated against or treated unevenly[7]. These aspects include age, gender, religious faith, sexual orientation, physical and mental health conditions, ethnicity, nationality, family background, etc. The second dimension indicates economic inequalities, referring to the uneven distribution of resources among groups and

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[7] For instance, several studies have shown how gender, race, health, and family background influence people's path in the labour market, education, politics, relationship with the law, health, life expectancy, housing and living conditions (e.g., Power, 1994; Bowles et al., 2005; Svallfors, 2005; Bird, 2007; European Commission, 2007; Erikson, Goldthorpe, 2002; Corak, 2013; Warwick-Booth, 2013; Brown et al., 2000; Krishnan, 2015; Ponthieux, Meurs, 2015; Blom et al., 2016; Perez-Arce et al., 2016).

individuals[8]. The main economic inequalities are the disparities in income and wealth. Income inequality is the unequal distribution of disposal salary. On the other hand, wealth is the current market value of all the assets owned by a household[9]. The third dimension comprehends those aspects related to geographical and environmental characteristics. On the one hand, geographical inequality refers to the unequal distribution of resources and services depending on the area or location where individuals live[10]. On the other hand, this dimension refers to the environmental conditions in which people or groups live (Eloi, 2010; Muller et al., 2018; Chancel, 2020). The fourth dimension of inequality refers to the disparities in access to services, work, and housing. To begin with, services include social, health, culture, infrastructure, and recreation aspects. The presence or absence of these structures shows the quality and livelihood of areas, regions, or countries. Secondly, inequalities could appear in terms of employment conditions such as the access to the labour market, wages, hours worked, and job security (Giupponi, Machin, 2022; Berg, 2015). Lastly, housing inequalities focus on the disparities in living conditions, affordability, and access to social or public solutions. The fifth dimension includes aspects related to the political voice and structural system. Political inequality[11] is the structural difference in influencing over political decisions and outcomes (Johnson, 2005; Dubrow, 2015; López, Dubrow, 2020). Within this perspective, some groups rule and influence policies through existing conditions of privilege and concentration of material and symbolic resources of power,

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[8] These differences matter because they shape and affect opportunities, well-being, and outcomes and, consequentially, produce social injustice (Wilkinson, Pickett, 2009; Ortiz, Cummins, 2011; Warwick-Booth, 2013; UNDESA, 2020).

[9] Wealth inequality results from the unequal distribution of incomes and financial and property resources. Recent analyses (Milanovic, 2012, 2017; Piketty, 2014; Stiglitz, 2016a, 2016b; Dorling, 2019) portrayed the exponential wealth accumulation in the top 1% and 10% richest groups and the worrying socio-economic and political consequences of that.

[10] Within this perspective, disparities can be at the global or national level or within and among countries, regions, cities, neighbourhoods, and so on. For instance, urban inequality describes differences in access to services and living and working conditions between groups and areas within and among cities (Bergamaschi et al., 2009; Cassiers, Kesteloot, 2012; Tammaru et al., 2016; Dikec, 2017; OECD, 2018; Mela, Toldo, 2019; Nijman, Wei, 2020; Van Ham et al., 2021). Differently, regional inequality defines differences in the standard of living and opportunities between regions within and among countries (Steward, 2003; Kanbur, Venables, 2005; Petrakos, 2008; Roses, Wolf, 2018; Zoppi, 2019).

[11] It refers to the "systematic differences in citizens' ability to influence the political process, whether that means through choosing to vote at all, how they vote, whether politicians reflect the population they serve, and whether the policies that they produce favour one group over another" (Ansell, Gingrich, 2022: 2).

while others have fewer assets and, thus, less voice and tools to express their will. In addition, political and structural inequalities also refer to the recognition gap – i.e., "disparities in worth and cultural membership between groups in a society" (Lamount, 2018: 421-422) – and the differences in how the state and its institutions treat and consider people and groups (Billingham, Irwin-Rogers, 2022). The sixth dimension shows inequalities in education and technology. As well as access to services, education inequalities can manifest as disparities in access to schools and their quality[12]. Moreover, digitalization has increased inequality among groups and populations with different educational attainments. Within this perspective, scholars renamed this disparity as "technological inequalities". It refers to the digital differences in equipment, autonomy, skill, and support among individuals and groups. Technological inequality goes beyond the digital divide[13] and encompasses the knowledge gap, affecting access to services and jobs.

As mentioned, the dimensions of inequality do not appear separately in real life but overlap and reinforce each other. Within this perspective, people and groups simultaneously experience multiple disparities. Thus, this proposed division aims to display the shades inequality can assume and underline the importance of considering disparities as a multidimensional challenge.

1.1.1 Economic and sociological frameworks

Economists and sociologists have framed and interpreted inequality through different perspectives over time. On the one hand, economists focused their studies on the disparities in terms of income and wealth, and the relationship between inequality and growth. On the other, sociologists conceptualized inequality from a broader perspective based on structure, class, race, gender, economy, etc.

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[12] For instance, it refers to the unequal distribution of academic resources, the presence of unqualified and inexperienced teachers, and the fewer funds for books and technologies.

[13] It is the differential class-based or country-based access to technology and the internet (OECD, 2001).

Classical economists[14] did not consider inequality a relevant issue. They defined inequality as the result of the class structure of industrial capitalism and, as such, justifiable and necessary to the functioning of society (Alacevic, Soci, 2019). However, in the post-war period, the relationship between distribution and growth became a nodal subject in Keynesian and post-Keynesian approaches. Simon Kuznets (1955) verified these empiric regularities and demonstrated the existence of a relationship between the levels of inequality and the income per capita of countries. According to his studies, the rapport formed an inverted-U curve wherein inequalities rose during industrialization while, following the general development and redistribution, decreased. This analysis was correct and coherent regarding what happened between the 1950s and 1980s but could not explain the rise of inequality in the 1980s. Thus, successive scholars criticized Kuznets' studies and often replaced them with new hypotheses[15]. However, since the 1990s, due to the rise of inequality, economists put new attention on the subject. These analyses moved from a perspective based on a functionalist distribution of income among social classes towards one based on individuals. Several scholars (Piketty, Saez, 2007; Milanovic, 2012, 2017; Stiglitz, 2013, 2016b) produced empirical studies using historical, financial, and economic sources to explain this rise. Their studies dismantled the belief that inequality is a natural condition, justifiable by the market or the functioning of society as it undermines the economy and growth (Milanovic, 2012; Piketty, 2014; Stiglitz, 2015).

Contrary to economics, the issue of inequality has been treated and intertwined with sociology since its begging. Indeed, the fathers of sociology, such as Emile Durkheim (1893), Karl Marx (1848; 1867), and Max Weber (1922), considered and studied it. Successive sociologists reinterpreted and adopted these classical theories, becoming the basis of new approaches and perspectives. Retaking Durkheim, the functionalist scholars (Davis, Moore,

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[14] Scholars such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, and Thomas Robert Malthus.

[15] In 2017, Branko Milanovic proposed to reconsider his theory, suggesting that modern history has several Kuznets curves, which alternate increases and decreases of inequality. Specifically, according to Milanovic (2017), the first Kuznets curve lasted from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution till the 1980s. During this period, inequality rose between the end of the XIX century and the 1920s, and then decreased after the world wars. However, since the 1980s, it has increased, especially within rich countries. Within his theory, this rise represents the beginning of a second Kuznets curve, produced by political and technological changes.

1945; Merton, 1949; Parsons, 1965, 1970) conceived inequalities as functional for society and a source of social order. On the other hand, the studies of Marx and Weber influenced the structuralist and conflictual theories (Guidetti, Rehebein, 2014) and generated two new schools of thought: the neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian. The former attempted to adapt and expand Marx's theory to respond to some of the weaknesses of the traditional Marxist approach (Wright, 1977, 1978, 1994). On the other hand, neo-Weberian sociologists adopted Weber's concept of class to explain contemporary societies and inequalities (Goldthorpe, 1980; Parkin, 1979; Rex, Tomlinson, 1979). Between the Marxist and Weberian perspectives, the studies of Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1986) focused on social inequalities and their perpetuation[16]. Finally, sociologists of the late XX century rethought the issue of inequality by considering the transformations occurring since the 1980s. To begin with, sociologists shifted the level of inequality from a national-state frame to a global perspective (Wallerstein, 1974, 1982). Secondly, sociologists began concentrating their studies on the effects of globalization on individual conditions and whether the concept of class is still suitable to frame and understand inequality from a global perspective (Bauman, 1998, 2011; Beck, 1992, 2007, 2011). Thirdly, a branch of contemporary sociologists acknowledged that research on inequality has been rather Eurocentric and attempted to propose new theories from a post-colonialist perspective (Go, 2013, 2016).

1.1.2 Measuring inequality

Economists measure inequality through income and wealth. Specifically, the most adopted indicator is the Gini coefficient. Elaborated by the Italian statistician Corrado Gini, it measures income (or consumption) distribution among individuals or households in each

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[16] He stressed the role of "capital", defined as any resource enabling an individual to accumulate profit from their participation or contest in each social arena. He distinguished four forms of capital: economic, which includes wealth, financial assets, and material goods; cultural, which involves knowledge, titles, and qualifications; social, which consists of contact with prominent and influential people; and symbolic, which refers to social legitimation, honour, and respect. Bourdieu identified the social position of different individuals or groups by the overall volume and composition of capital they have. Therefore, in his perspective, social origins have a nodal role in passing capital and habitus and maintaining class inequality.

country[17]. The coefficient is expressed as a percentage value between 0 and 1. "Zero" indicates that all individuals have the same income and, thus, inequality is inexistent. Oppositely, "one" signifies that one individual possesses the entire income of a community and, thus, the disparity is extreme. Another method to measure inequality is through income ratios[18]. In these calculations, the disposable household income consists of all income of the household members derived from economic activity, assets, property ownership and social transfers (social security and welfare benefits). A higher result implies more income inequality, whereas a lower number less inequality. A last economic method to measure inequality within and among regions and countries is through the GDP, i.e., the gross domestic product[19].

In addition to these economic measures, other indicators were developed to capture social inequality. Those are harder to gather as they are more complex to be observed and quantified. Consequentially, to analyse them, the researcher adopts proxy indicators, which

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[17] As any measure, the Gini coefficient has relevant advantages as well as several limitations. Indeed, being a ratio, it allows immediate comparability between groups, regions, and countries. As such, it has a clear graphic representation, permitting general conclusions regarding inequality trends. From a statistical perspective, it has the advantages of being independent of the medium value of the distribution and scale and population and obeying the Pigouvian transfer principle. On the other hand, it has several limits. To begin with, it considers just one dimension of inequality. Secondly, the social unit adopted influences it. Thirdly, it shows sensibility to changes happening around the modal value instead of those occurring at the bottom or the top of the distribution. Fourthly, it does not obey the principle of the exact breakdown in the two typical manifestations of inequality, i.e., within and among groups. Fifthly, it does not offer any information on the asymmetry in the distribution. Thus, economies with the same value might have different distributions (Alacevich, Soci, 2019). In addition, the Gini coefficient reduces the level of inequality into a single number. This simplicity omits much of the texture and context of other approaches to measuring inequality (Milanovic, 2012; Perez-Arce et al., 2016). Within this perspective, Milanovic argued that decomposing the Gini coefficient might be a method to look at what lies behind the inequality. In this way, it is possible to figure out inequality due to differences in mean incomes between the constituent parts of an area (called the "between-component") and the inequality caused by variation in personal incomes within each constituent part of that area (the "within component"). Another method to obtain a more detailed analysis of distributional changes is by adopting additional indicators (UNDESA, 2020: 53).

[18] There are different types of proportions: the Palma index, which is the ratio between the income share of the top 10% and the bottom 40%; the S90/S10, calculated as the ratio of the average income of the 10% richest to the 10% poorest; the S80/S20, measured as the proportion of the average income of the 20% richest to the 20% poorest.

[19] Despite the intense use of this calculation, it does not accurately portray inequality within the world. Indeed, according to Milanovic, because countries have unequal population sizes, income rises have different effects, especially if a nation is highly populated. Calculating the variables of gross domestic income and population size might be a way to overcome this issue (Milanovic, 2012).

examine the impact of concrete characteristics on individuals or groups, such as gender, education level, distribution of skills and human capital, housing consumption or living conditions, etc. Due to the multidimensionality of disparity, there are multiple criteria, proxies' indicators, and indexes[20]. Regardless of which indicator or parameter is adopted, studying inequality is fundamental to point out the role of inequality in the social mobility perspective, health, income, and well-being. It allows remarking on the structural mechanisms which produce and reproduce inequalities.

1.1.3 Drivers of inequality

There is no unique and univocal explanation for inequality (Franzini, Pianta, 2016; Saraceno, 2020). In 2016, Maurizio Franzini and Mario Pianta reviewed previous studies and summarized the causes of inequality into four principal drivers. The first driver is the power of capital on work, which directly impact income allocation. The scholars spotlighted the change in the relationship between capital and work, which influenced occupational and salary polarization, and skill and technological bias (Franzini, Panza, 2016; Ichim et al., 2018; Stiglitz et al., 2018). They individuated four causes for this variation: the rise of finance[21], the control of work[22], technological change[23], and international production[24]. They

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[20] For instance, to measure gender inequality, it is possible to develop a composite measure that reflects disparities in achievements, living conditions and work-life balance between women and men. To analyse differences in education, researchers use three measures: the ISCED, the International Standard Classification of Education; the PISA, the Programme for International Student Assessment at the age of 15; and the PIAAC, the Programme for International Adult Competencies in adulthood.

[21] The rise of finance began with the expansion of neoliberalism. Several scholars (e.g., Piketty, 2013; Atkinson, 2015; Milanovic 2012, 2017; Stiglitz, 2012, 2016a, 2016b) have analysed its role in producing inequalities.

[22] The control of work refers to the weakening of trade unions and the worsening of working conditions in the last decades. After a period of growth of trade unions, a countertendency happened since the 1980s. This change increased disparities in income and labour protections and job polarization (Carmo et al., 2018), especially with the gradual decline of the traditional, permanent job in favour of non-standard work— typically part-time, temporary, and self-employment.

[23] Technological change had a massive impact on the labour market. On one hand, an increasing number of jobs and companies related to the ICT sector appeared, while traditional factories declined. It led to a skill bias. On the other, technological development leads to the replacement of unskilled workers with computers and developed machinery. This change tends to affect the most vulnerable individuals and groups, producing new disparities and enhancing the existing ones.

[24] International production rose through the de-localization of companies and factories in developing countries. This mechanism has made the managers and directors increase their capital and their ability to control the working wages and conditions of their employees. As production is dislocated in various countries

influenced occupational and salary polarization, and skill and technological bias (Franzini, Panza, 2016; Ichim et al., 2018; Stiglitz et al., 2018). The second driver, individuated by Pianta and Franzini, is oligarchic capitalism, i.e., the concentration of economic and political power and wealth in a limited number of individuals[25]. The wealthiest individuals benefited from the increase in the share of profits in national income and high financial rents, fomented by speculative gains in increasingly complex financial markets. The third driver is the individualization of economic and social conditions. It is due to two factors. The first one is the unequal working conditions. In the last decades, there has been a growth in the number of non-standard workers and a decrease in working conditions and legal protection. As previously reported, they lead to lower salaries and poorer labour conditions. The second one is the family origin and education. Mainstream studies argued that education has a relevant role in determining the productivity and income of workers. However, the divergence in earnings at the equal educational level is due to three factors, i.e., the structural characteristics of the market and employment; the typologies of the contracts and conditions in the market; and the individual and family features of the workers. In this perspective, the family origin and its composition are relevant in conditioning the life chances, educational and job opportunities. The fourth driver is the retreat of politics. The government has the power to influence the distribution of income and wealth. Therefore, several studies (Chong, Gradstein, 2007; Apergis et al., 2010; Saraceno, 2020) have demonstrated that institutions have the power to diminish inequalities. Nevertheless, in the last decades, several changes[26] impacted them and weakened the efficiency of these policies. Even if these drivers manifest at different levels, Franzini and Pianta stated that they have a strict interaction reinforcing their effects.

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with different legislations, trade unions had less power in requesting better income, working conditions, and protections.

[25] This increasing accumulation of wealth and income is particularly worrying because it has direct connections and consequences on politics. Indeed, affluent individuals and groups can influence politics and policies through wealth.

[26] The liberalization, deregulation, privatization of services, less progressive taxation of income, a weak fiscal imposition of finance and wealth, and a reduction or cancellation of the levy of succession have favoured the rich and exacerbated the economic disparities. Moreover, the austerity policies promoted after the financial crisis of 2008 have made some social services downsize.

In addition to these four main drivers, the UNDESA World Social Report (2020) individuated four megatrends affecting and reinforcing inequalities. They are technological innovation[27], climate change[28], urbanization[29], and international migration[30].

1.2   Social exclusion

The term "social exclusion" is a contested concept, as it does not have an agreed and univocal definition. Its controversies are debated at theoretical, empirical, and policy levels (Peruzzi, 2014). Indeed, it overlaps and intertwined with other social phenomena, such as poverty, vulnerability, and inequality (Tuorto, 2017). Nevertheless, social exclusion is the dynamic and multidimensional process by which certain groups or individuals are systematically disadvantaged and, wholly or partially, excluded from any social, economic, political, or cultural system. Like inequality, it is a socially constructed concept, as it depends on country, time, and culture.

Social exclusion is a relatively new concept as it appeared for the first time in the 1970s in France to describe those not covered by the social security system (Lenoir, 1974). Since then, it has broadened to cover more demeaned groups and embrace different conditions.

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[27] Technological innovation has promoted several improvements as well as new challenges. It changed the structure and nature of work by weakening unions and other labour market institutions (UNDESA, 2020).

[28] Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our time. Recent studies indicated that the effects of climate change could also increase inequality within and among countries. Indeed, its impacts are not uniform in their reach or magnitude. The UNDESA report argues that the threat posed by climate change does not depend solely on a country's location and degree of exposure but also on the level of development, infrastructure, the composition of the economy and coping capacity. This unbalanced situation exacerbates the existing inequalities across counties, increasing the disparities and forcing individuals to relocate. Moreover, climate change also affects inequality within countries. Indeed, population groups differ in their degree of exposure, vulnerability, and ability to cope with climate change. In this perspective, those living in poverty or having a vulnerable socioeconomic condition are more exposed to the effects and consequences of climate change.

[29] For the first time in history, most of the world's population lives in urban areas rather than rural ones. This growth has tremendous implications for sustainable development, inequalities, and the rural-urban divide. Indeed, the place where people live influences their life and opportunities (UNDESA, 2020).

[30] International migration has several implications. On one side, international migration has a positive effect on global economic disparity as it might help reduce poverty and produce social or political change. On the other, international migration could lead to some group-based inequalities in countries of destination – i.e., disparities between migrants and natives of such countries. As a result of their labour market situation, they "are twice as likely as natives to live in households that fall within the poorest income decile and below the national poverty threshold, even at comparable levels of education" (UNDESA, 2020: 141). Moreover, these disadvantages affect their children's opportunities as well.

Respectively, in the 1970s, social exclusion referred to a process of social disqualification (Paugam, 1993) or social disaffiliation (Castel, 1995a) that led to a breakdown of the relationship between society and individuals. Then, in the 1980s, exclusion's definition expanded, including the so-called "pariahs of the nation". It referred to various categories of socially disadvantaged individuals and the new social problems that occurred in these decades, such as unemployment, ghettoization, and fundamental changes in family life (Cannan, 1997). Later, in the 1990s, the definition of social exclusion focused on the processes of disadvantages (Dean, 2016) and encompassed the issue of 'urban exclusion' (Silver, 1994). However, since the 1990s and 2000s, social exclusion gained popularity in European policies and strategies. Thus, nowadays, social exclusion has become an essential and embedded element in the European Union policies, thanks to its capability to encompass different nuances of disparity.

Therefore, over the last decades, several authors tried to define social exclusion[31], individuating its domains and delimitating its borders (e.g., Silver, 1994; Cannan, 1997; Walker, Walker, 1997; Somerville, 1998; de Haan, 1998; Byrne, 2005; Burchardt et al., 1999; Social Exclusion Unit and Cabinet Office, 2001; Hills et al., 2002; Levitas et al., 2007; Popay et al., 2008). Even though the several definitions developed did not converge in an ultimate description and meaning, a systematic review study of the literature (e.g., Room, 1995; Atkinson, 1998; Burchardt et al., 1999, 2002; Tsakloglou, Papadopoulos, 2002; Abrams et al., 2007; Mathieson et al., 2008; Tuorto, 2017; Bak, 2018) spotlighted the six main attributes that mark social exclusion:

1. multidimensionality, because it encompasses different dimensions (de Haan, 1998, 1999; Todman, 2004; Mathieson et al., 2008; Bak, 2018; Farrigton, 2018);

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[31] According to Popay (2010), the principal methods to describe social exclusion are the shopping list approach and the relational one. The former defines it through a never-ending list of dimensions or situations that exclude specific groups. This approach allows us to comprehend exclusion by focusing on the economic, psychological, social, and cultural levels. Contrarily, its limit is to present exclusion only as a dichotomy between individuals considered included or excluded. Differently, the second method, i.e., the relational approach, focuses on the processes that produce social exclusion at different levels. It emphasized the drivers of exclusion rather than the conditions experienced by excluded groups. It allows us to spot the actors who drive these marginalization processes.

2. dynamism, focusing on the processes and drivers that draw individuals into poverty and exclusion and what brings them out (Tsakloglou, Papadapoudor, 2002; Todman, 2004; Abrams et al., 2007; Mathieson et al., 2008; Bak, 2018);

3. relationality, referring to the unequal power relations in social interactions that produce social exclusion (Silver, 1994; Abrams et al., 2007; Madanipour et al., 2015; Farrigton, 2018). It also indicates the rupture of relationships between individuals and the society in which they live. It implies the discontinuities or ruptures in social relations, resulting in detachment, disaffiliation, disintegration, un-belongingness, and marginality in social networks, values, and identifications within a given community (Todman, 2004; Mathieson et al., 2008);

4. relationality with the agency, stressing the role of institutions and governments in reducing or acerbating the level of exclusion and the number of individuals or communities left out (Todman, 2004; Abrams et al., 2007; Farrigton, 2018);

5. non-participation, implying that exclusion affects to what extent individuals or groups can participate in the activities of societies (Abrams et al., 2007; Bak, 2018);

6. multi-level, because social exclusion operates and manifests on many levels, such as individual, household, community, and institutional ones (Taket et al., 2009; Bak, 2018). Thus, social exclusion dynamics appear at micro, meso, and macro levels (Silver, 2007).

Consequentially, the massive usage and clash of descriptions of social exclusion resulted in the need for an extensive semantic definition. Within this perspective, Hilary Silver (1994) and Ruth Levitas (1998) developed two different frameworks to understand the ideological and political roots of the several uses of social exclusion and spotlight the implications for policy and action. Specifically, Hilary Silver (1994) stressed the polysemy of social exclusion. To overcome these political, ideological, and national differences in describing this concept, Silver proposed a threefold typology of the multiple meanings of social exclusion. She provided three frameworks for understanding social exclusion: the solidarity[32],

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[32] The solidarity paradigm is dominant in France, and exclusion is due to the breakdown of social solidarity, i.e., the social bond between the individual and society. Rooted in Rousseau and Durkheim's theories, the

specialization[33], and monopoly[34] paradigms. Each of these assigns to exclusion a different cause, political philosophy, and multiple forms of social disadvantages. Differently, Levitas focused on how ideological underpinnings for concepts of social exclusion change over time and how these are translated into different policies. According to her, the term has been applied to describe three aspects of disadvantage which require diverse solutions (Watt, Jacobs, 2000; Bak, 2018). She argued that three separate discourses deployed social exclusion: the redistributionist[35] one, the moral underclass[36] one, and the social integrationist[37] one (1998). Another different interpretation of social exclusion refers to the studies of David Miliband (2006). He distinguished three aspects of exclusion: breadth, depth, and concentration[38] (Levitas et al., 2007; Bak, 2018).

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emphasis of this paradigm is put "on how cultural or moral boundaries between groups socially construct dualistic categories for ordering the world" (Silver, 1994: 542). In this perspective, this paradigm implies the need for assimilation into the dominant culture. Thus, exclusion is the failure of a society to incorporate all its members as social participants.

[33] The specialisation paradigm is dominant in Anglo-American liberalism, and "exclusion is considered a consequence of specialization: of social differentiation, the economic division of labour, and the separation of spheres" (Silver, 1994: 542). Determined by individual liberalism and drawn on Hobbes, liberal models of citizenship stress the contractual exchange of rights and obligations. According to her, exclusion is a form of discrimination.

[34] The monopoly paradigm is influential in Britain and many Northern European countries, and exclusion refers to "a consequence of the formation of group monopoly" (Silver, 1994: 543). This framework draws heavily on Weber. Powerful groups restrict access through social closure, which is particularly evident in the labour market segmentation. Thus, according to her, "the excluded are therefore simultaneously outsiders and dominated. Exclusion is combated through citizenship, and the extension of equal membership and full participation in the community to outsiders" (Silver, 1994: 543). Hence, the monopoly paradigm sees exclusion as the mechanism by which the ruling classes act to exclude the subordinate classes.

[35] The poverty approach (RED, Redistribution Discourse) focuses on poverty and lack of full citizenship rights as the principal causes of exclusion. Within this perspective, its drivers are low income, lack of material resources and full citizenship rights. Therefore, inclusion will require a reduction of inequalities and a redistribution of economic and social resources.

[36] The lower-class approach (MUD, Moral Underclass Discourse) concerns the morality and behaviour of the excluded. It merges the concept of social exclusion with that of the underclass. Within this orientation, the excluded are conceived as deviants from the moral and cultural norms of a society, who exhibit a "culture of poverty" or "dependency culture". Consequently, they are attributed to blame for their poverty and associated social heritage.

[37] The integrationist approach (SID, Social Integration Discourse) emphasises the significance of paid work and employment for social inclusion. Within this framework, employment is an essential factor in fostering social bonds and social responsibilities and in integration through earned income, identity, a sense of the "self" and networks.

[38] Breadth refers to the portion of individuals affected by the exclusion. The concentration of social exclusion focuses on the tendency of clustering socially vulnerable individuals in specific areas. Lastly, the depth covers how exclusion occurs in multiple and overlapping aspects for everyone.

Therefore, owing to its ambiguous nature, the term "social exclusion" in research has advantages as well as disadvantages (Fisher, 2011). de Haan and Maxwell (1998) affirmed that it is a threefold asset. First, social exclusion focuses on institutional processes that exclude individuals and not only on their plight. Second, it allows a re-discovery of poverty in the North, offering new opportunities to put traditional concerns onto the international agenda. Third, it captures the multi-dimensional nature of social divisions in the post-Fordist world (Horsell, 2006). On the other hand, the principal criticism of social exclusion is its ambiguous description and measurement (Farrigton, 2018). As its definition is broad and vague, it risks being unable to produce precise empirical methods to frame social phenomena properly (Atkinson, Hills, 1998). Moreover, social exclusion risks being confused with other terms, e.g., poverty, deprivation, or marginalization. In this perspective, Peter Abrahamson (1995) wondered if it is "a case of old wine in a new bottle" (Abrahamson, 1995: 134). This definitional limit led to further problems related to the application and measurement of this concept. Another limit is the heterogeneity of the groups that social exclusion encompasses, resulting in further difficulties in reflecting on the trajectories of exclusion and finding proper interventions to handle it (Castel, 2003).

1.2.1 Sociological framework

Regardless of its recent deployment, its dynamics are indisputably embedded in social and sociological theories. Indeed, it has been intrinsic in the functionalist (Durkheim, 1893; Parsons, 1965; Luhmann, 2005), conflictual (Marx, 1867; Weber, 1922; Parkin, 1979), and interactionist (Simmel, 1903, 1908; First School of Chicago; Goffman, 1963) perspective.

Precisely, the functionalists interpreted exclusion as the absence of social bonds, collective conscience, and inclusion, which injures the stability and cohesion of a society[39]. Differently,

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[39] Within this perspective, Durkheim framed social exclusion in relation to – as well as in opposition to – the question of solidarity and social cohesion in society (O'Brien, Penna, 2006; Bak, 2018; Silver, 2019; Durkheim, 1893; Mascareño, Carvajal, 2015). This view has broadened through Parsons' studies. In his perspective, inclusion was considered the good, the expectable, and the normal; while exclusion was the negative side (Mascareño, Carvajal, 2015). Later, since the late 1970s, the emergence of neo-Parsonian systems analysis, neo-functionalism, and systemic sociology have re-interpreted Durkheim's theories (Luhmann, 1990; Habermas, 1975).

conflictual theories framed exclusion as the procedures adopted by members of powerful social groups to maintain or secure their privileged position and dominance over another group. Thus, they interpreted it within the social and class stratification[40]. Diversely, the interactionists saw social exclusion as a relational process through which groups or institutions, explicitly or unintentionally, convey the message to "get out" or "stay in"[41].

1.2.2 Measuring social exclusion

Regarding its measurement, researchers adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Within the formers, for a long time, the main measures to capture exclusion were the income distribution and the GDP, as they should have been able to measure and represent the quality of life of a country. Since the 1990s, several scholars demonstrated that it was insufficient to comprehend and capture the relevant elements of a good life and proposed alternative perspectives. Among them, the capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1992) stood out as it framed well-being in terms of people's capabilities and functioning. Thus, through a literature review (Burchardt et al., 1999; Bhalla, Lapeyre 1997; Chakravarty, D'Ambrosio, 2006), the most relevant domains through which an individual might experience exclusion are physical health, mental well-being, social and family life, political life, resources, services, and production (Peruzzi, 2014). Thus, since then, there has been a consensus that social exclusion results from the cumulative overlapping of various

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[40] Within this perspective, Max Weber discussed social exclusion through the concept of social closure (1922). According to him, this mechanism involves the exclusion of some individuals from membership in a status group. Later, this orientation had a nodal influence on neo-Weberian thinkers, such as Pierre Bourdieu, Frank Parkin, Murphy, and Norbert Elias.
[41] Within this perspective, Georg Simmel introduced the notion of social distance to explain social exclusion (1903; 1908). It is a spatial metaphor for understanding the degree of intimacy that characterize personal and social relations. Indeed, he argued that people might be physically proximate, as in the metropolis, but not socially close. Since then, the effects of the environment on social dynamics and exclusion have inspired and influenced several studies. In particular, the School of Chicago focused on these aspects. Among them, Erving Goffman (1963) enhanced the discourse concerning social exclusion through the concept of "stigma". According to him, stigma refers to those characteristics that are discrediting and which reduce the stigmatized individual from being a whole and normal human being to a burdened and excluded one. Consequentially, Goffman described the people excluded, considered inferior, and marginalized as those defined and perceived in this way. More recently, these studies on stigmatization and spatial exclusion have enhanced in the last decades (Wacquant, 1996, 2007, 2008; Castel, 2004).

dimensions, but the measures developed[42] differ in terms of elements and theoretical frameworks (Abrams et al., 2007; Madanipour, Weck, 2015). Within the study of exclusion, quantitative approaches are an asset because they permit investigating social exclusion over time and comparing its presence in different contexts. On the other hand, they suffer from several limitations related to the lack of a shared definition and consensus on the domains, the failure to include people belonging to specific groups or social identities, the under-representation of forms of inequality, and the differential availability of data across countries and global regions (Mathieson et al., 2008).

On the other hand, the qualitative approaches study social exclusion through interviews, study cases, focus groups and ethnographical studies. Although they cannot provide a universal indicator, they allow researchers to deepen these dynamics and experiences. From this perspective, they are a twofold asset. On the one hand, they can dive into the causes, consequences, and experiences. On the other, they can gather more information on the dynamics of social exclusion that, lately, could be used to develop more precise and suitable indicators.

1.2.3 Drivers of social exclusion

Due to its complexity and multidimensionality (Farrigton, 2018; Bak, 2018; Mathieson et al., 2008; de Haan, 1999; Taket et al., 2009; Silver, 2007), social exclusion has not a univocal and unique cause (Todman, 2004). Burchardt et al. (2002) distinguished three schools of thought. The former argues that social exclusion derives from the combined effects of discrimination and unenforced rights[43]. Within this perspective, the excluded cannot remedy their disadvantage owing to their lack of power in enforcing political, economic, social, and other rights that undergird inclusion. The second school of thought considers social exclusion as

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[42] For this reason, the European Union developed AROPE, while the studies conducted by CASE (Burchardt et al., 2002; Burchardt, Vizard, 2011), the PSE survey (Bradshaw et al., 2004; Pantazis et al., 2006), and the Bristol Social Exclusion Matrix (Levitas et al., 2007) produced three different measures.
[43] For instance, this mechanism occurs when a society's political, social, and economic majority or elite or powerful groups apply social closure to restrict access to valued resources to outsiders. Throughout these discriminatory decisions and actions, they ostracize the other members of society.

a function of the organization and operation of societal institutions and systems. Hence, social, economic, political, and other institutions and systems cause exclusion by limiting access to the opportunities, resources, and powers required for inclusion[44]. The third school of thought "attributes social exclusion to the perverse, pathological, antisocial, and self-destructive behaviours, morals, and values of excluded individuals and groups" (Todman, 2004: 8). According to this vision, the excluded are themselves responsible for their marginality. These self-exclusion mechanisms often result from discriminatory attitudes adopted by institutions[45].

Thus, figure 1.2 sought to synthesize several dimensions and levels that cause social exclusion. On the one hand, it encompasses political, economic, social, spatial, and cultural dynamics (Madanipour, Weck, 2015). Each of these dimensions represents a possible driver of exclusion[46]. Furthermore, as social exclusion is cumulative and often intergenerational, its risks are not evenly shared but concentrated in the poorest individuals and communities. On the other hand, social exclusion operates on different but interrelated levels: macro- and

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[44] Specifically, social structures that drive social exclusion are the socio-demographic changes, the evolutions in family and community structures and patterns, the rise of migration, and the increasing ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. On the other hand, the economic institutions that provoke social exclusion are the changes in the labour market, the rise and expiation of the knowledge society, and the industrial restructuring, which have altered the relative balance between job flexibility and security. These socio-economic structural changes impacted the community, making them more fragmented and polarized. This territorialism, or geographic bias, has resulted in leaving some areas devoid of the financial, physical, and other forms of infrastructure required for economic and social development and, ultimately, inclusion. Lastly, the political institutions that cause social exclusion are the changing and weakening of the welfare state and the failed government policies (Todman, 2008; Atkinson, Davoudi, 2000). Thus, within this perspective, globalization and economic restructuring are among the most cited institutional and structural causes of social exclusion. Indeed, their role in adversely influencing the labour markets and employment, eroding the financial and other forms of support, and undermining the capacity of state welfare-related institutions to provide social assistance is undeniable. Those changes have visibly advantaged the privileged individuals and groups rather than the disadvantaged ones.

[45] Within this perspective, Lakhani et al. (2014) stressed the role of the unwelcoming attitudes that those powerful groups apply to other ones, e.g., immigrants, ethnic minorities, the poor, and homosexuals. According to their research, three distinct types of intolerance drive social exclusion processes: for the poor and different lifecycle stages, toward stigmatized attributes and behaviours, and for specific identity groups.

[46] For instance, the political drivers of exclusion occur in denying rights and participation to individuals or groups. The economic ones happen by obstructing access to labour markets, credit, and other forms of capital assets. The social ones reduce opportunities and access through different forms of discrimination. The spatial ones appear in the division of urban areas by socioeconomic and ethnic aspects. The cultural ones refer to the extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living are accepted and respected (Khan et al., 2015).

micro-ones. They encompass individual, community, and societal aspects (Taket et al., 2009). The macro-level factors are structural, institutional, or systemic (Parodi, Sciulli, 2012). They correspond to the processes of exclusion that operate at the societal level[47]. On the other side, the micro-level factors include the characteristics of disadvantaged areas and their effects on the individuals or groups who live in them. They refer to the dynamics of exclusion at the community and individual levels[48].

Figure 1.2 - Framework for analysis of the production of exclusion (Taket et al., 2009: 11)

Key:
- Arrows – determinants of relations of exclusion – social, political, economic, etc. – whose effects are interactive, mediated discursively and non-discursively and operate variously at different levels, times, space and places
- Communities – of interest – bounded not by geography but by characteristics (hidden or visible) that constitute some shared interest. For any individual or family there will be multiple memberships, not all of which will be acknowledged or recognised at any particular time
- Localities – of life – living, working, leisure – 'communities defined by spaces and places

1.3   Why do inequality and social exclusion matter?

Inequality and social exclusion are different but interlinked phenomena. They feed each other through a vicious circle of precariousness, disadvantage, deprivation, and invisibleness (Paugam, 1996). Specifically, inequality reinforces and provokes exclusion by disempowering and rejecting the most vulnerable members of society. On the other hand,

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[47] For instance, they include economic and industrial restructuring, globalization, lack of the jobs market, population movements, discrimination, and public policy.
[48] For instance, they refer to disinvestment, poverty, social isolation, and lack of jobs, services, amenities, and other integrative supports (Todman, 2004; Pierson, 2016).

social exclusion strengthens horizontal inequalities by influencing or denying some individuals the same rights and opportunities available to others. In this perspective, they are self-reinforcing as they persist over time and generations (Stewart, 2009; Khan et al., 2015).

Due to their multidimensionality and interdependence, their consequences and impacts are interconnected. To summarize and provide a comprehensive panoramic, the implications of inequality and social exclusion have three main domains: economic, social, and political.

From an economic perspective, they cause poverty, unequal growth, and issues related to political economy. Inequality and social exclusion lead to poverty through several mechanisms, e.g., denying or having different access to resources, markets, and public services (DFID, 2005). Secondly, inequality and exclusion are noxious and unnecessary for growth (Ortiz, Cummins, 2011; Piketty, 2014; Stiglitz, 2013; Alacevich, Soci, 2019; UNDESA, 2020). These scholars spotlighted that countries with lower incomes and high levels of inequality tend to grow more slowly in economic terms and experience instability, economic inefficiency, and unsustainability. Two further implications of inequality and social exclusion are related to the political economy. First, societies with a higher level of inequality are less likely to invest in the common good, such as public transportation, infrastructure, technology, and education. Second, as many at the top tend to increase their wealth through financial market shenanigans and rent-seeking, tax and other economic policies encourage these activities rather than more productive ones. Both implications make societies weaker and economies unstable, leading to an unfair, corrupt political and economic system.

From a social viewpoint, inequality and exclusion have several repercussions on vulnerable groups, urban marginalization, and the intergenerational transmission of disparities. To begin with, they tend to affect the already vulnerable groups, reinforcing their disadvantages and difficulties[49] and limiting upward mobility (Warwik-Booth, 2013;

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[49] Individuals or groups socially excluded or in unequal conditions are more likely to become isolated, develop psychological or mental illnesses, be exposed to vulnerability and risks, live in an unhealthy place, or report a lower level of subjective well-being (Curran, 2013; CIOMS, 2016; Delaunay et al., 2019; Abrams et al., 2007).

UNDESA, 2020). Secondly, regarding urban consequences, segregation is probably the most visible and manifested outcome of social exclusion and inequality[50]. Lastly, inequality and social exclusion tend to be intergenerational. This transmission of disparities and disadvantages regards economic, social, relational, and educational aspects. It has tremendous consequences in replicating and exacerbating inequalities and exclusion. In this mechanism, parents' income and wealth play a nodal role in transferring advantages to their children by passing their richness, power, and social connections and investing in their education. On the other hand, those without these resources and networking remain left out. Through this mechanism, economic inequalities affect unevenness in opportunities (Becker, Tomes, 1979, 1986; Raitano, 2015).

From a political standpoint, inequality and social exclusion impact by threatening democracy, changing and shaping the social structure, and rising instability. To begin with, several authors have shown their concerns about the consequences of inequality and social exclusion on democracy[51] (Bauman, 2013; Warwick-Booth, 2013; Stiglitz, 2014; Milanovic,

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Thus, these conditions reinforced their absence of power and vulnerability to exploitation and humiliation (Wilkinson, Pickett, 2009; Eyben et al., 2008). Moreover, social exclusion has a reciprocal relationship with health inequalities. Indeed, those socially excluded are less able to afford healthcare and, consequently, are more likely to be unable to receive proper cures and treatments. Indeed, albeit relevant improvement and progress have been achieved in most countries, access to quality healthcare still varies across the socio-demographic groups, including by sex, age, geographic area, ethnicity, and by financial and non-financial reasons.

[50] It became a central issue in the 1990s when urban marginality rose and the so-called "ghettos" appeared within Western cities (e.g., Berghman, 1995; Atkinson, Davoudi, 2000; Wacquant, 1996, 2007; Madanipour et al., 2015). Those dwelling in these areas are stigmatized as outsiders and are more likely to experience and be exposed to crime, violence, poverty, and deprivation. This relationship between social exclusion, inequality and marginalization may result in a vicious circle of deprivation, poverty, self-segregation, and inequality.

[51] In this perspective, Bauman argued that "the prime victim of deepening inequality will be a democracy, as the increasingly scarce, rare, and inaccessible paraphernalia of survival and acceptable life become the object of cut-throat rivalry (and perhaps wars) between the provided-for and the abandoned needy" (Bauman, 2013: 2-3). Inequalities and social exclusion negatively affect democracies through two principal dynamics: a lack of reactivity of politics and the creation of a vicious circle between politics and economic inequalities. Reactivity is a quality of democracy based on the ability to listen and react to the issues of individuals and groups. When governments cannot respond to these needs and requests properly and promptly, different scenarios are possible, e.g., the removal of many individuals from social and political life, open opposition to the government, social disorder, and riots. The lack of reactivity leaves a political sign because it leads to a deterioration of the trust and cohesiveness of citizens in the institutions and a progressive removal from active participation (Alavecich, Soci, 2019). On the other hand, Stiglitz underlined the vicious relationship between wealth and power. Indeed, he stated that "with the rich having more and more influence, they write the rules of the political game to give them more power and influence, which means economic inequality gets even

2017; Alacevich, Soci, 2019; UNDESA, 2020). Indeed, societies with a higher level of these dynamics are more likely to be divisive, dysfunctional, less cohesive, and unstable. The second political consequence of exclusion and inequality is the change in the social structure of societies. Hence, in the wealthiest economies, the bid divide "is now less between the top, the middle and the bottom, than between a tiny group at the very top and nearly everyone else" (Lansley, 2012: 6). In the last three decades, several scholars spotlighted the decline of the middle class and the rise of the "super-rich". Those mechanisms have political and economic repercussions. The last political consequence of inequality and exclusion is political instability. Unequal societies are more likely to experience destabilisation and conflicts originated from social grievances and perceptions of inequality among groups (Ortiz, Cummins, 2011). It decreases trust, social cohesion, and growth among citizens and institutions. Furthermore, political instability results in a cut of investments and undermines the developments. Indeed, countries that experience political instability often experience a vicious circle of inequality and corruption (e.g., Gupta et al., 2002; Soubbotina, 2004; You, Khagram, 2004; Rothstein, Uslaner, 2005; Apergis et al., 2010; You, 2018; Schwuchow, 2022).

For these reasons, inequality and exclusion are among the most pressing and challenging threats to society. Hence, they must be tackled and analysed together.

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more translated into political inequality, and the political inequality gets translated into ever more economic inequality, in a vicious circle. The same process is occurring in other countries where the wealth and income have become stubbornly concentrated" (Stiglitz, 2014: 13). This vicious circle reinforced the erosion of trust, along with civic engagement and a sense of common purpose. Within this perspective, the most marginalized groups risk remaining unheard and obscured due to these dynamics.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical framework and methodology

This research aims to investigate social exclusion and inequality in European cities[52]. The questions that guided this study are:

Q1. How does the European Union define, calculate, and frame social exclusion and inequality?

Q2. How are they manifesting in European cities? Are there extremer forms of exclusion and inequality, i.e., "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality"? If so, who is experiencing them in European cities?

Q3. Can European statistical tools capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion? If not, what is missing?

Thus, the purpose of this project is threefold. To begin with, it intends to present how the European Union defines, frames, and monitors inequalities and social exclusion in the Member States. Thus, by offering this panoramic, the first question aims to illustrate how the European Union conceives and handles these phenomena from a macro level. Secondly, the research seeks t to portray existing and emerging shades of exclusion and inequality in European cities. Hence, the second question explores these dynamics from a micro and meso level. On the one hand, it provides a panoramic of how and where they manifest, and whom they affect. On the other, it tries to investigate specific shades of inequality and social exclusion, namely "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality" (look at Paragraph 2.1). Lastly, the research attempts to understand whether the indicator[53] adopted by the European Union to capture and monitor inequality and social exclusion can grasp these dynamics and their emerging shades. If it does not, this study tries to provide new indicators and variables to achieve this purpose.

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[52] Specifically, five cities – one per welfare state regime – were the case studies of this research: Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London (look at Chapter 4).

[53] The European indicator adopted to study inequality and social exclusion is AROPE, which stands for "At Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion" (look at Chapter 3).

To answer these questions, the research adopted a mixed-method approach. Firstly, to portray how the European Union defines, frames, and monitors inequalities and social exclusion, it reviewed the descriptions, reports, and policies developed regarding these dynamics. In addition, it provides information and statical analyses of the indicators used to grasp and monitor them. Secondly, to portray the current and emerging shades of inequality and exclusion, the research engaged with the most vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods by interviewing associations that work with, help, and defend the most excluded people and groups. In addition, these semi-structured interviews also included experts that study these dynamics. Lastly, to validate the indicators, the research compared the statistical analyses conducted for the first question with the insights and considerations of the interviews for the second one.

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and methodology that guided the research.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is rooted in postcolonial and urban studies. These two diverse perspectives combined and integrated produce a thorough representation of what the most excluded individuals are experiencing and suffering. Specifically, it combines Boaventura de Sousa Santos' notion of "abyssal exclusion" (2007, 2014, 2017a, 2017b; Ricotta et al., 2021) with the analysis of "advanced marginality" developed by Loïc Wacquant (1996, 1999, 2008, 2016). The combination of these two perspectives offers a more comprehensive and exhaustive image of the emerging shades of inequality and exclusion. Indeed, Santos' theory allows the deepening of those forms of inequality and exclusion that are often unrecognized and unexplored by the mainstream sociology. On the other hand, Wacquant's studies permit framing these dynamics within the neighbourhoods' dynamics and considering the socio-spatial divisions that exist and persist in the cities.

2.1.1 Postcolonial studies

Postcolonialism is an umbrella term for theories and practices investigating how colonialism continues to shape former colonies and metropoles (Steinmetz, 2014). Within

this perspective, "postcolonial thought recognized that empire is everywhere, a silent shaper of our ways of seeing and knowing the world" (Go, 2016: 8). Thus, the dominant standpoint on the relations between Western and non-Western individuals and their worlds is Eurocentric. Hence, the West created and defined the images and perceptions of the non-West. Postcolonialism attempts to provide an alternative viewpoint to observe the dynamics and relations between Western and non-Western people. It stresses that the binary "East-West" is a fabrication and simplification of the reality produced by the Western colonizer to maintain control and power over the colonies. In this perspective, Pellegrino and Ricotta identified five fundamental theoretical elements of postcolonialism: (i) "the critique of the Eurocentric ideology of modernity; (ii) the close interconnection between the development of a global society, or global capitalism, and colonialism; (iii) an attention to the dynamics that created a hierarchical relationship between human groups and the emphasis on «subaltern» groups; (iv) the persistence of relations of domination on a global level due to historical colonialism, well beyond the end of formal colonialism; (v) the epistemological critique of Eurocentric thought and the need to look through new lenses (and with new methods) at domination and social exclusion dynamics, as well as at the forms of resistance and struggles for emancipation" (Pellegrino, Ricotta, 2020b: 803-804).

Hence, postcolonialism is contestatory and committed to transnational social justice (Young, 2003, 2016). Indeed, it criticizes the status quo of hegemonic economic imperialism and the history of colonialism. On the other hand, it implies an activist engagement with political positions, claiming the rights to the same economic, material, and cultural conditions. Therefore, the prefix "post" of postcolonialism does not simply mean "after" colonialism as a temporal periodization but is a stance of "theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath" (Gandhi, 1998: 4). It stresses the role of intellectual position in acknowledging colonialism's legacies, critiquing them, and trying to reach beyond them.

In 2016, Julian Go identified and described three waves of postcolonial authors. The former refers to the scholars who wrote before the 1970s and participated in the anti-colonial revolutions (e.g., Fanon, 1952, 1961; Du Bois, 1903). The second wave of postcolonial authors

started in 1973, and its most relevant exponents were Edward Said (1978), Homi Bhabha (1994) and Gayatri Spivak (1988), who developed colonial discourse analysis and subaltern studies. The last wave should be of sociological writers and thinkers. Even if postcolonialism originated as an anti-imperial discourse while sociology has an imperial origin, Go (2013, 2016) and others (Bhambra, 2007a, 2007b, 2014; Costa, 2007; Santos, 2014) believed the need to reconcile and implement each other. Indeed, "postcolonial thought helps us to raise and then confront these difficult questions about the imperial episteme and social theory. The relevance of postcolonial theory for social science is not that it criticizes social science for its practical or political complicity with imperialism. Rather, postcolonial theory is a loosely coherent body of thought that recognizes the centrality of empire and colonialism in the making of our metropolitan and peripheral modernities. As such, it recognizes the legacies and import of empire upon the culture of those modernities, including its forms and systems of knowledge" (Go, 2016: 187).

2.1.1.1 Baoventura de Sousa Santos

The sociology of Boaventura de Sousa Santos embraces and roots within post-colonial, subaltern, and critical studies. His starting point is that, after centuries of colonialism and solutions for the World, Europe is currently inadequate to resolve its problems (Santos, 2017). The socioeconomic developments occurring since the 1980s resulted in the crisis of the welfare and social protection systems (Bauman, 2000; Castel, 2004; Wacquant, 2009; Ricotta, 2019). Within this perspective, Santos denounced the difficulty and need in dealing with this situation by saying that "Europe, no matter how extraordinary its accomplishments in the past, has nothing to teach the world anymore. Second, Europe has extreme difficulty in learning from non-European experiences, namely from the global South" (Santos, 2017: 173). Hence, he underlined the urge to acknowledge and deal with this discussion with the South, as Western societies are facing new shades of inequalities rooted in the colonial period.

Santos developed his theories from three founding ideas. To begin with, the comprehension of the world goes beyond the Western understanding of it. Secondly, there is no social

justice without global cognitive justice. Lastly, the emancipatory transformations can follow diverse ways than the ones developed by the western critical theory, and this diversity should be valorised (Santos, 2014). Starting from these three standpoints, Santos criticized the Eurocentric modernity – and its concept of rationality – and its dominant epistemologies[54].

Within this framework, Santos spotlighted the permanent missed recognition that defines Western societies and relations. He stated that Eurocentric thought is abyssal because it consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions (Santos, 2014). Being invisible "means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being. Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other" (Santos, 2014: 118). To better understand and describe this form of exclusion, Santos introduced the concept of the "abyssal line". Based on the notion of amity lines[55], it is the border - imaginary, cognitive, as well as material and spatial - generated during the colonial era and currently emerging in Western societies that created two shades of sociability: metropolitan and colonial sociability (Santos, 2014, 2017; Ricotta, 2019; Pellegrino, Ricotta, 2020a, 2020b). The former, typical of Western societies, is based on the principle of equivalence and reciprocity. Thus, the individuals participating in this form of sociability are recognized and considered "fully human". As these relations are balanced by the tension between regulation and emancipation mechanisms, they generate "non-abyssal" social exclusion. Contrary, colonial sociability grounds on processes of dehumanization and invisibility, which legitimise appropriation

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[54] Santos defines the Eurocentric reason as the "lazy" or "indolent" as it renounces thinking in front of necessity and fatalism. Its characteristics are the linear conception of time and the logic of the dominant scale (Santos, 2014; Ricotta, 2019). On the other side, Santos underlined the dominance of Eurocentric rationality and epistemology over others. He argued that Western domination has profoundly marginalised the knowledge and wisdom that has been in existence in the global South through a hegemonic narrative. As all Western knowledge is Eurocentric, also the sociological imagination is embedded with social relations and structures developed and strengthened during colonialism. In this regard, Santos described the Western European epistemologies as abyssal, as they sharp a distinction between their way of thinking, presented as correct, and all others.

[55] "From the sixteenth century onward, cartographic lines, the so-called amity lines dropped the idea of a common global order and established an abyssal duality between the territories on this side of the line and the territories on the other side of the line. On this side of the line, truce, peace, and friendship apply; on the other side, the law of the strongest, violence, and plunder" (Santos, 2014: 121).

and violence. In this case, the subalterns are not considered fully humans. As such, they cannot claim their rights, and this relationship generates abyssal social exclusion. Santos argued that "the difference between the two sides is that on the metropolitan side of social relations, there might be exclusion, but it is not a radical or abyssal exclusion, since the excluded groups can realistically claim rights. They are fully human, often even citizens; accordingly, they can claim rights. On the colonial side, the other side of the line, social exclusion is abyssal or radical, as the excluded groups cannot realistically claim rights because sometimes, they are not even fully human" (Santos, 2017: 251). According to Santos, since the 1970s and 1980s, this abyssal line has been moving and resulted in the expansion of the other side of it and the contraction of this one. This movement is due to the return of the colonial and colonizers. The former refers to "those who perceive their life experiences as taking place on the other side of the line and rebel against this" (Santos, 2014: 125). On the other hand, the return of the colonizer describes the resuscitating of the forms of colonial ordering both in metropolitan societies and in the ones once subjected to European colonialism.

Therefore, colonial mechanisms of exclusion are still present today. Within this frame, Santos introduced the notion of "abyssal exclusion", which produces and reproduces processes of invisibilization, dehumanization, and inferiorization of subordinate social groups. It legitimises appropriation and violence. Within this perspective, those experiencing abyssal exclusion are considered inferior, often unable to declare their rights and make their voices heard. Those dynamics of abyssal exclusion have evolved, strengthened, and anchored to historical colonialism, comporting a violent regulation without the possibility of political discourse (Pellegrino, Ricotta, 2020a, 2020b). According to Santos, this division did not disappear with the end of colonialism, but it is currently emerging in Western society. Hence, nowadays, these two forms of sociability coexist, and the colonial one reproduces its abyssal form of exclusion within the North.

To overcome the Eurocentric limitations and its knowledge-oriented production, Santos proposed the Epistemologies of the South(s)[56]. They became essential to redefine the global sociological imaginary and outlined a new bottom-up cosmopolitanism. Thus, to promote this post-abyssal thought, Santos proposed a cosmopolitan reason aimed to expand the present and contract the future. It involves three procedures: the sociology of absences, the sociology of emergences, and translation (Santos, 2104; Ricotta, 2019; Pellegrino, Ricotta, 2020a, 2020b). The former focuses on making visible what is obscured and conceived inexistent by the Eurocentric paradigm and thought. The sociology of absences aims to make absences into presences and pay attention to the contexts that display confinement and marginalization. Thus, it focuses on how and through which processes the oppressed become invisible. Therefore, the sociology of absences expands the present by enlarging the field of believable experiences. On the other side, the sociology of emergences negotiates with the future by criticizing the linear logic of progress. It replaces the idea of never-ending progress or an empty future with a future of plural and concrete possibilities through the action of care. Thus, the sociology of emergences entails a symbolic enlargement of knowledge and practices. It aims at promoting the emergence of the ways of being and knowing that are present beyond Eurocentric rationality and epistemology. Lastly, the work of translation allows the creation of reciprocal knowledge among the emancipation experiences that occur around the world. This mutual intelligibility and intercultural translation refer to the intellectual, political, and emotional work aimed at comprehending the possible and available experiences. Thus, "the work of translation enables us to cope with diversity and conflict in the absence of a general theory and a commando politics" (Santos, 2014: 213).

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[56] There is not a unique, general South. It could refer to the dichotomy between Global North and South but within Europe or a country. "The South that confronts Europe as the other is both outside and inside Europe" (Santos, 2017: 176). It could define the differences in groups and populations inhabiting this continent, but also the one that characterized geographical and economic regions.

2.1.2 Urban studies

Cities are the undisputed protagonists of socio-economic, cultural, and political transformations. Although they were already central in the analyses of the first European sociologists (Macionis, Parrillo, 2014), urban studies predominantly developed in the United States. One of the most notorious and influential Schools in urban studies during the 1900s was the University of Chicago. Its scholars[57] focused on understanding how social and environmental structures and factors shape human behaviour and capturing the effects of urban changes on individuals and groups through an ethnographic methodology and ecological approach (Lin, Meli, 2013). Since then, these studies spotlighted the differences and inequalities in living and working conditions based on districts, ethnicity, and socio-economic backgrounds. However, the changes occurring in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., the social conflicts and the oil crisis) fuelled growing economic uncertainty and social unrest. These decades experienced new class struggles and social problems, such as racial segregation, immigrant exclusion, poverty, and social inequality in urban life[58]. Furthermore, these macro changes and their effects at the city level made urban sociologists rethink the previous studies. Founded on the strands of Marxism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism, this "new urban sociology" contrasted the market-based and interactionalism assumptions developed by the Chicago School. It argued that the logic of capital accumulation and the "growth machine" of the city shape directly and indirectly the neighbourhood inequality in Western cities (Molotch, 1976; Logan, Molotch, 2007). The relevance of the impacts of political and economic dynamics was even more evident since the 1980s and 1990s with de-industrialization, the rise of migration, and globalization (Lefebvre, 1992, 1996; Harvey, 1992, 2003; Castells, 1982, 2000; Sassen, 2001). Through the

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[57] It includes authors such as Ernest Burgess, Roderick D. McKenzie, George Herbert Mead, Robert E. Park, Edwin Sutherland, W. I. Thomas, Louis Wirth, and Florian Znaniecki.

[58] For instance, William Julius Wilson (1987) addressed the challenges faced by African American inhabitants of the inner city. These changes in residential composition resulted in a heavy concentration of disadvantages and poverty in these peripherical areas, the exacerbation and rise of inequality and exclusion, and a higher rate of joblessness. Wilson defined the condition of living in an impoverished area as "concentration effects". Later, Robert J. Sampson's analyses (2004, 2012, 2014, 2019) will identify and prove the role of neighbourhoods in affecting individual biographies and persisting inequalities.

theory of the World-system developed by Wallerstein (2004), urban changes and inequalities assumed a global relevance, as they play a crucial role as intersections between capital, individuals, production, and goods. Within this perspective, cities increasingly became fragmented, dual, and divisive, and experienced urban and social marginalization (e.g., Castells, Mollenkopf, 1992; Sassen, 2001; Davis, 2006; Wacquant, 2008; Harvey, 2013; Slater et al., 2014).

2.1.2.1 Loïc Wacquant

The sociology of Loïc Wacquant encompasses research areas, including urban inequality, the human body, and hyper-incarceration of poor and stigmatized populations. Within the framework of urban studies, Wacquant focused on the transformations and struggles that marginalized neighbourhoods are suffering and experiencing in advanced societies.

In his book titled "Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality" (2008), he described a new regime of urban marginalization, which is appearing in Western cities. He named it "advanced marginality", i.e., "the novel regime of socio-spatial relegation and exclusionary closure (in Max Weber's sense) that has crystallized in the post-Fordist city as a result of the uneven development of the capitalist economies and the recoiling of welfare states, according to modalities that vary with the ways in which these two forces bear upon the segments of the working class and the ethnoracial categories dwelling in the nether regions of social and physical space" (Wacquant, 2008: 2-3). Wacquant affirmed that it is due to advanced capitalism and neoliberalism and identified four structural logics that lead to it. The first one refers to the macro social dynamics, i.e., the occupational dualization and the resurgence of inequality, which caused an increase in disparities. The second logic is economical and relates to the desocialization of wage labour. The third one is political and concerns the recoiling of the social state. The last one is spatial and describes the processes of concentration and defamation.

To spotlight and delineate this new form of urban exclusion, Wacquant compared the black ghettos of Chicago (United States) with the banlieues of Paris (France).

Hence, starting from the analysis of the return of the repressed[59], the book attempted to respond and describe three key issues: (1) the passage from the ghetto; (2) the "convergence theory" specified and refused; and (3) the "emergence thesis formulated and validated" (Wacquant, 2016).

To begin with, Wacquant outlined the historical transition from the ghetto to the hyper-ghetto in the United States, stressing the role of the state structure and policy in reproducing racialised marginality. Wacquant described the American ghetto as a concatenation of mechanisms of ethnic-racial control founded on the history and materialized in the geography of the city. It was a homogeneous urban area inhabited by Black communities regardless the class. The de-structuration of the Black American ghetto, which happened after the peaking of the civil rights movement, was due to economic and political dynamics, e.g., disinvestment, polarized growth, racial segregation, and political marginality. Then, it spawned a dual socio-spatial formation: the hyper-ghettos and Black middle-class districts. The latter refers to the moving-out of the burgeoning Black middle class into the satellite areas. The former[60] refers to the remnants of the historic ghetto now encased in a barren area of dissolution devoid of economic function and doubly segregated by race and class.

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[59] He analysed of the return of the repressed and the critic to the "underclass" concept. He focused on the riots that occurred in the last decades and the reasons behind them. He spotlighted three structural (or "from above") violence that causes these "bottom" revolts. They are the mass unemployment, the relegation to decaying neighbourhoods, and the heightened stigmatization (Wacquant, 2008). Within this perspective, he denounced how the economic growth of the 1980s and 1990s "failed to 'lift all boats' and resulted instead in a deepening schism between rich and poor, and between those stably employed in the core, skilled sectors of the economy and individuals trapped at the margins of an increasingly insecure, low-skill, service labour market, and first among them the youths of neighbourhoods of relegation" (Wacquant, 2008: 25). Within this perspective, he individuated the collapse of the public institutions, and the consequent rise of the punitive system as causes of the exacerbating of these dynamics (Wacquant, 2008, 2009, 2016).

[60] This hyper-ghetto is "a novel, decentre, territorial, and organizational configuration characterizes by conjugated segregation based on race and class in the context of double retrenchment of the labour market and the welfare state from the urban core, necessitating and eliciting the corresponding deployment of an intrusive and omnipresent police and penal apparatus" (Wacquant, 2008: 3). Furthermore, in "Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity" (2009), he expanded this thematic of the hyper-incarceration of the disadvantaged because of the crisis of sovereignty and the expansion of the penal apparatus.

The second issue discussed the transatlantic convergence[61] of urban poverty regimes. Within this perspective, in the last decades, several scholars and media have argued that the patterns of exclusion experienced by the American ghettos emerged in European contexts. Through the comparison of the (hyper)ghetto of Chicago and the (post-industrial) working-class periphery of Paris, Wacquant affirmed that this transatlantic convergence did not happen as these urban deprivation contexts are separated by enduring differences in structure, function, and scale as well as by the divergent political treatments they receive[62].

Lastly, the third issue was the emergence of advanced marginality. Wacquant developed an ideal-typical description of it by individuating six proprieties. To begin with, the fragmentation of wage labour fuelled advanced marginality. As the ghetto became more unstable and heterogeneously differentiated, wage work has turned from a fount of solidarity and security into a source of social fragmentation and precariousness. As such, wage labour is considered a vector of social instability and life insecurity that outlines advanced marginality. Secondly, it is disconnected from cyclical fluctuations and global economic trends. Thus, these areas benefit little during economic prosperity but worsen noticeably during the slowdown and recession[63]. Thirdly, territorial fixation and stigmatization[64] characterize advanced marginality. By wedding Bourdieu's perspective

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[61] He specified that, if by convergence, one means the "Americanization" of the urban patterns of exclusion or the self-reinforcing cycles of ecological disrepair social deprivation and violence, the answer is clearly negative. Indeed, on the one hand, "discrimination and segregation must not be confounded with ghettoization" (Wacquant, 2008: 273). On the other, "the kind of 'triage' and purposive desertion of urban areas to 'economize' on public services that remade the visage of the American metropolis after 1970 is unimaginable in the European political context (Wacquant, 2008: 274). However, if by convergence, one means "the growing salience of ethno-racial divisions and tension in the European metropolis, the answer might be a qualified and provisional yes" (Wacquant, 2008: 275).

[62] "To sum them up: repulsion into the black ghetto is determined by ethnicity (E), inflected by class (C) with the emergence of the hyper-ghetto in the 1970s and intensified by the state (S) throughout the century, according to the summary algebraic formula $[(E > C) \times S]$. By contrast, relegation in the urban periphery of Western Europe is driven by class position, inflected by ethnonational membership, and mitigated by state structures and policies, as summed up by the formula $[(C > E) \div S]$" (Wacquant, 2013: 1080).

[63] For instance, social conditions and life chances in neighbourhoods of relegation in Europe and the United States changed and benefited very little during the boom years of the 1980s and 1990s. On the other hand, they worsened noticeably during the financial crisis of 2008.

[64] Defined as the confinement of vulnerable groups in specific districts of the cities through processes of stigmatization which exacerbate the situation, it is a versatile concept, become central to studying territorial exclusion and urban inequality (Wacquant et al., 2014; Meade, 2021; Sisson, 2021). Wacquant underlined how territorial stigmatization is an international phenomenon and how the narratives and descriptions of these

(1979) with Goffman's studies on stigma (1963), Wacquant described territorial stigmatization as a strong label attached to confined, detached, and segregated areas that influences the perception of and interaction with the residents of these districts. These isolated and bounded territories are increasingly perceived as social purgatories characterized by violence, where unusual interventions are allowed. "Once a place is publicly labelled as a 'lawless zone' or 'outlaw estate', outside the common norm, it is easy for the authorities to justify special measures" (Wacquant, 2008: 240). Hence, Wacquant underlined that territorial stigmatization impacts several actors (collective and individual), i.e., residents, inhabitants, and surroundings commercial operators, influencing the level and quality of service delivery, the output of specialists in symbolic production, and the viewpoints of the state officials and, through their decisions, the public policies (Wacquant et al., 2014). Fourthly, because of territorial stigmatization, these areas experience spatial alienation and the dissolution of place. According to Wacquant, marginalized neighbourhoods lose their humanization, culture, and identity. They become places where the residents do not feel safe and would like to move out. These areas become alienating as they weaken the relations founded upon a territorial community. Fifthly, advanced marginality faces the erosion of the hinterland, underlying the changes within the social economy of these communities. Indeed, in the past, when people remained unemployed for a while, they relied on the informal support of their community. Currently, this safety net failed. Thus, these people survive through "individual strategies of self-provisioning, shadow work, and unreported, employment, underground commerce, criminal activities and quasi-institutionalized 'hustling'" (Wacquant, 2008: 244). Lastly, it is subjected to social fragmentation and symbolic splintering, as it is under the pressure of a double tendency toward precarization and de-proletarianization (Wacquant, 1996; 2008; 2016). This results in

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realities are similar worldwide. Moreover, Wacquant and his colleagues identified five features that make territorial stigmatization different "from the spatial smear of earlier epochs" (Wacquant et al., 2014: 1273): (i) it is closely tied to, but has become partially autonomized from, the stain of poverty, subaltern ethnicity, degraded housing, imputed immorality, and street crime; (ii) it has become nationalized and democratized as synonyms of social hell; (iii) it is represented as vortexes and vectors of social disintegration; (iv) it is racialized through selective accentuation or fictive projection; and (v) it is subject to overwhelmingly negative emotions and stern corrective reactions (Wacquant et al., 2014: 1273-1274; Sisson, 2021: 659-660).

the rise of the precariat, defined as "a sort of still-born group, whose gestation is necessarily unfinished since one can work to consolidate it only to help its members flee from it, either by finding a haven in stable wage labour or by escaping from the world of work altogether" (Wacquant, 2008: 247).

To overcome and tackle advanced marginality, Wacquant identified three possible strategies. The first option represents a middle ground and "consists in patching up and redeploying the existing programmes of the welfare state aimed at supporting or re-arming marginalized populations" (Wacquant, 2008: 276). The second solution is regressive and repressive and involves the criminalization of poverty "via the punitive containment of the poor in the increasingly isolated and stigmatized neighbourhoods in which they are confined, on the one hand, and in jails and prisons which operate as their spillway, on the other" (Wacquant, 2008: 277). The last strategy is a progressive response to urban polarization. It entails "the offensive reconstruction of the social state that would put its structure and policies in accord with the emerging economic conditions, the transformation of family forms and the remaking of gender relations as well as with new social aspirations to participation in collective life" (Wacquant, 2008: 279).

2.2 Methodology

The methodology of this research entails a mixed-method analysis. Emerged in the 1980s (Brewer, Hunter, 1989; Fielding, Fielding, 1986; Creswell, 1994), it is an approach that combines elements of quantitative and qualitative research. The core characteristics of designing and conducting a mixed-methods study are: collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data; integrating the two types of data and their results; organizing these procedures into a specific research design; and framing these procedures within theory and philosophy (Creswell, Plano Clark, 2017; Creswell, Creswell, 2018).

The advantages to employing mixed-method analysis are several. Foremost, the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches allows them to overcome their weaknesses and enhance their strengths, as the advantage of one approach makes up for the limitation of the other. Second, it offers more evidence and assists in responding to

questions that cannot be answered and studied by either quantitative or qualitative research alone. Third, it provides new insights beyond the results offered by separate quantitative and qualitative analyses. Fourth, it bridges the divide between quantitative and qualitative researchers, encouraging the adoption and development of new skills, worldviews, and paradigms. On the other side, mixed-method analysis has limitations as well. Firstly, it increases the complexity of the interpretation and evaluation, as it considers diverse data. Second, it is challenging to implement as it requires planning all the aspects of research.

Hence, the reasons behind undertaking mixed-method analysis in this research are four. Foremost, it allows this study to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to dive into social exclusion and inequality. Indeed, it permits a more thorough analysis of the severe shades of these phenomena. Hence, using only quantitative or qualitative approaches would be deficient. Second, a mixed-method design is ideal for providing and improving the information on excluded groups and individuals before studying their conditions. As this subject is often unstudied or unrecognized, the variables needed may not be available and known. Third, it offers the tools to deepen and compare distinct types of cases. Lastly, it allows the simultaneous adoption of statistical data and the involvement of the individuals most affected by social exclusion and inequality in the research.

Specifically, this doctoral project integrates the elements from the mixed methods case study design with some from mixed methods participatory-social justice design (Creswell, Plano Clark, 2017). In this way, the research attempts to reach a twofold intent. On the one hand, the mixed methods case study design can develop an enhanced description of multiple cases through quantitative and qualitative data. On the other, the mixed methods participatory-social justice design can "identify, understand, and take action against problems by involving the people who are most affected by the problem throughout the research process" (Creswell, Plano Clark, 2017: 140). Thus, these two designs integrated suit the purposes of this PhD project. Specifically, my research design entails three moments, one per each query that guides this research. Figure 2.1 summarizes the research design; and Figure 2.2 describes the timeline of these three phases of the research.

Figure 2.1 – Research design

Q1: How are social exclusion and inequality drawn, calculated, and framed by policies in the European Union?

AIM: Overview of the current policy, definitions, and data	METHOD: Literature review of policy briefs and statistical analysis of data from EU-SILC

Q2: How are they manifesting in European cities*? Who is experiencing "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality" in European cities*?

AIM: Investigation and description of these dynamics at city level	METHOD: Qualitative semi-structured interviews with organizations, communities, and experts

Q3: Are the current statistical tools able to capture these emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion? If not, what is missing?

AIM: Check the capacity and goodness of the European indicators	METHOD: Qualitative and quantitative analyses and comparisons

*In five selected cities (Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London)

Precisely, the first phase aims to answer the first question by offering an overview of the current policies, definitions, and data regarding inequality and social exclusion in Europe. It presents how the European Union defines, calculates, and frames these phenomena. Thus, it shows and describes the conceptualization of social exclusion and inequality. It involves a literature review of the descriptions, reports, and strategies developed regarding these dynamics. Secondly, it presents the indicators adopted to measure and monitor these dynamics (AROPE) at the European level from the EU-SILC database (the European Union – Survey on Income and Living Conditions). Thus, this part requires a statistical analysis of indicators proposed and adopted by this database through the software SPSS. Specifically, it involves univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses and regressions. Lastly, it describes how the European Union tackles social exclusion and inequality and through which strategies and projects. This part entails the qualitative analysis of the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and the quantitative analysis of the expenditures for social protection registered in the ESPROSS database (European System of integrated Social Protection Statistics).

The second phase describes the dynamics of social exclusion and inequality from a micro and meso level. It provides a panoramic of how and where these phenomena manifest, who they affect, and how European cities handle them. In addition, it investigates specific shades of inequality and social exclusion, namely "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality". This phase entails two moments: the selection of the cities involved and, later, the engagement with their most vulnerable groups and neighbourhoods. Thus, in a first moment, the data from EU-SILC, CSRs, and ESPROSS allows for choosing a country for each welfare state model[65]. Indeed, among the states of the same regime, the one that performed worse in specific indicators has been chosen[66] (look at Chapter 4). The countries individuated are Italy for the Mediterranean welfare model, Belgium for the Continent one, Sweden for the Scandinavian one, Romania for the Eastern one, and the United Kingdom for the Anglo-Saxon one. Hence, the cities involved are Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London.

Later, the second part of this phase focused on engaging with vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods. This involvement entails interviewing associations and organizations that work with, help, and defend the most excluded people and groups in the capital cities selected. In addition, the interviews also include experts, such as sociologists, criminologists, statisticians, urbanists, and geographers, that study these dynamics. In addition, at the end of each case study, I shared a preliminary report of what emerged with the participants, who could comment on and improve it. Within Santos' framework (Santos,

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[65] The welfare regimes are adopted as ideal-type models to facilitate the selection and evaluation of countries.
[66] The characteristics that are relevant for the selection are: (1) having prominent levels of inequality and exclusion, according to the indicator AROPE and Gini and the S80/S20 Ratio provided by Eurostat. The research compares the levels of each state in the year 2019 and how these data have changed since 2008. Through these comparisons, it is possible to assess which country per welfare regime has the highest level of these phenomena; (2) reporting fewer allocations for social protection benefits aimed at reducing social exclusion and inequality. The research compares the GDP distribution of each state in the year 2018 and how these resources have changed since 2008. Through these observations, it is possible to determine which country per welfare regime has the lowest level of allocations to fight exclusion and inequality; (3) receiving comments and recommendations related to social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs between 2011 and 2020.
Furthermore, as the research will take place in the capital cities of these countries, they need to be as much as possible like each other. Thus, they must have at least 500.000 residents. For this reason, the research did not consider Luxembourg, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta for the selection.

2014), it cannot be considered a co-authoring. Nevertheless, this sharing could be conceived as a constructive way through which I have balanced the extractivist side of the research.

During the research period, one hundred and fifty-four interviews were conducted (Appendix A[67]). Precisely, forty-nine were in Rome, thirty-three in Brussels, twenty-six in Stockholm, twenty-two in Bucharest, and twenty-four in London. The participants have been selected based on their experience, knowledge, and activism in the areas and among the categories considered more vulnerable. The interviews were semi-structured and realized through mixed modalities (in person, phone, online, and by mail[68]) and different languages (Italian, English, French, and Swedish[69]) based on the possibilities and needs of the participants. In this way, the research tried to avoid misunderstandings. The questions that guided them are in Appendix B. The aims of these interviews are fourfold. To begin with, they seek to outline the existing and emerging forms of exclusion and inequality and identify the main dimensions, causes, and consequences. Secondly, they intend to portray the people or communities most exposed to these disparities and to understand if there have been any changes over time. Thirdly, they seek to capture the role played by the space and context in determining and reiterating inequalities and exclusion. Lastly, these interviews attempt to explore whether the current indicators used[70] for the analysis of social exclusion and inequality are able or not to grasp these nuances.

The answers to the interviews have been decoded and presented through the content analysis from a research-action perspective (Losito, 2007).

Lastly, the third phase of the research attempts to validate whether the current indicators (individuated and described through question 1) can capture social exclusion and inequality

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[67] I inserted Appendix A for a twofold reason. On the one, it is a choice made due to methodological and research aims because it is essential to state and recognize the participants of this research. On the other hand, I also hope that the interviewees will reach out to each other within and among cities to share and compare their own experiences.

[68] It might be seen as a limitation. Nonetheless, as sometimes the participants were not fluent in English, they preferred to reply to the answer via e-mail or to speak in their own language. Thus, even if it might be methodological weakness, I believed it was more important to reach as participants as possible and make them comfortable by answering in the way suited them the most.

[69] Ibidem.

[70] This research adopts the European indicator AROPE ("at risk of poverty or social exclusion").

in European cities (investigated and explored through question 2). It entails comparing the data and results gathered from the previous phases. It aims at verifying whether the European indicator can detect these severe shades of exclusion and inequality. If not, it tries to propose new variables or indexes based on what emerged in the interviews. Thus, the objective is to provide new instruments for measuring and capturing exclusion and inequality. Through the engagement of the NGOs and communities, this research hopes to develop tools to take a stand, advocate for these groups, and call for changes and emancipation.

Figure 2.2 – Timeline of the project
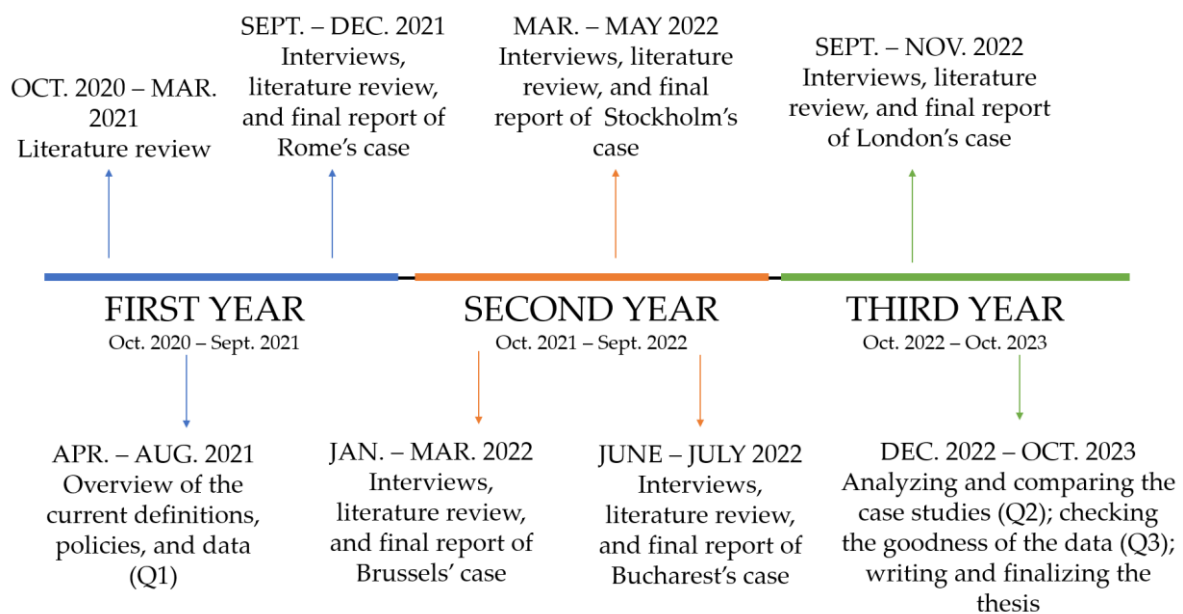
This research has a fourfold limitation. Firstly, some limitations are intrinsically due to the disadvantages of qualitative interviews, namely the impossibility of statistical analysis, the reliability and subjectivity of the interviewees, and the selection and adhesion of the participants (Creswell, Creswell, 2018; Creswell, Plano Clark, 2018; Babbie, 2010). Secondly, interviewing the associations and experts rather than the residents might be considered a limit. It could be seen as such for two reasons. To begin with, the people experiencing exclusion and inequality are not directly involved in the interview as to their opinions, perceptions, and experiences. Secondly, as the associations represent specific groups and their interests, they might be seen as impartial and not objective. Nevertheless, this decision

was due to practical and research reasons. On the one hand, it was easier to get in touch and speak with associations rather than the people affected by the exclusion, due to availability, time needed to gain their trust, and language skills. On the other, scholars and civic society play a nodal role in emancipating and promoting social equality and justice. So, it was relevant to consider their perspectives and narratives regarding inequality and exclusion. Thirdly, Wacquant describes and discusses the "zones" of marginality defining them as "no go", relegated, and socio-ethnically excluded areas by the residents and outsiders. Thus, he does not provide a statistical or geographical measure to grasp them. Therefore, I will use the term "area" to define both broader neighbourhoods and specific residential zones. Within this perspective, it represents a limit for comparison. Lastly, Santos described abyssal exclusion in a way that is difficult to operationalise. Hence, within this perspective, its application might be considered a limit as the interviewees have interpreted it subjectively. Nonetheless, this research used it due to its ability and strength to spotlight those shades of exclusion that are usually neglected.

Chapter 3 – How the European Union defines, calculates, and frames social exclusion and inequality

This chapter aims to respond to the first question of this research, i.e., how the European Union defines, calculates, and frames social exclusion and inequality. Thus, it is divided into three sections. The first paragraph presents how European Union describes these phenomena, offering an overview of its interpretation through the analysis of the strategies and documents of the Commission. The second part outlines how the official statistics of the European Union, i.e., Eurostat and EU-SILC[71], calculate and monitor social exclusion and inequality (Appendix C lists other likewise relevant databases). It also presents the groups most exposed to these dynamics. Lastly, the third section illustrates how the European Union, and the Member States frame social exclusion and inequality. On the one hand, it presents the principal strategies and projects promoted by the European Union to handle these issues. On the other hand, the paragraph shows the differences in social protection benefits provided by the Member states to combat social exclusion and inequality.

3.1 The European framework

Since the 1970s and 1980s, European countries have witnessed new forms of "disaffiliation" and exclusion and a rise in income and wealth inequalities. Indeed, since the 1970s, the European Commission documented a growth of new forms of poverty and marginalization, characterized by the rise of unemployment and social exclusion, that needed to be handled. It spotlighted a "frequent reference to the decline in social cohesion and social solidarity, and the need to reintegrate/insert the socially excluded into mainstream society (Commission, 1992, 1993c, 1995b, 1998b)" (Atkinson, Davoudi, 2000: 428).

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[71] I decided to consider this dataset because it is the most updated data on the issues of social exclusion, inequality, and living conditions at the European and Member State levels. Indeed, each country has its own data and statistics, and several of them participate in other surveys. Nevertheless, the data from EU-SILC and Eurostat are the only ones gathered in all the Member States each year and adopted to promote social policies and projects.

Thus, since the 1980s and 1990s, the issues of inequality and social exclusion have become central in the policy debate and programmes in the European Union.

On the one hand, the issue of inequality has always been central due to its importance for growth, cohesion, political stability, and intergenerational transmission of disparities. Nevertheless, after the financial crisis of 2008/9 and the consequent downturns that occurred since then, the issue of inequality became even more central and protagonist in the European policy debate regarding national and regional disparities[72]. Currently, its reduction pertains to the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan. Promoted in 2017 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, it arranges twenty principles divided into three main areas: equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; and social protection and inclusion. In 2021, the twenty principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission, 2021a, 2021b) became the "social rulebook" for the EU targets for 2030. Specifically, the third principle sets out the right to equal opportunities stating that "regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public. Equal opportunities of under-represented groups shall be fostered" (European Commission, 2021a: 44).

Regardless of its multidimensional nature, "inequality" was conceptualized and calculated from an economic perspective. Thus, the principal European measures are the Gini index and S80/S20 income quintile share ratio. According to the Eurostat glossary, the former "measures the extent to which the distribution of income within a country deviate from a perfectly equal distribution. A coefficient of 0 expresses perfect equality where everyone has the same income"[73]. While the S80/S20 income quintile share ratio "is a measure of the inequality of income distribution. It is calculated as the ratio of total income received by the 20 % of the population with the highest income (the top quintile) to that received by the 20

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[72] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637951/EPRS_BRI(2019)637951_EN.pdf.
[73] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Gini_coefficient

% of the population with the lowest income (the bottom quintile). All incomes are compiled as equivalised disposable incomes"[74].

On the other hand, the term "social exclusion" assumed a nodal role in the European Union policy since the 1980s, especially during the Presidency of Jacques Delors (1985-1992/3). The Commission of the European Communities initially delineated social exclusion as the result of "mechanisms whereby individuals and groups are excluded from taking part in the social exchanges, from the component practices and rights of social integration and identity. The social exclusion does not only mean insufficient income, and it even goes beyond participation in working life: it is felt and shown in the fields of housing, education, health and access to service" (COM, 1992 - 542: 8). Later, in 2010, Eurostat defined social exclusion as "a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives" (Eurostat, 2010: 7). These notions of social exclusion might be considered elusive and generic, as they might lead to different interpretations and meanings by country. As Silver suggested, "by highlighting the generalised nature of the problem, the idea of exclusion could be useful in building new broad-based coalitions to reform European welfare states. On the one hand, exclusion discourse may also ghettoise risk categories under a new label and publicise the more spectacular forms of cumulative disadvantage, distracting attention from the general rise in inequality, unemployment, and family dissolution affecting all classes" (Silver, 1994: 540).

Nevertheless, the advantage of using the concept of social exclusion at the European Union level was twofold. Firstly, it was a "shiny and new" definition for branding the controversial Poverty Programmes of the EU and for avoiding the stigma of the terms like "deprivation"

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[74] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Income_quintile_share_ratio.

and "poverty" (Peace, 2001). Secondly, it permitted the development of policies and strategies that trespassed the Member State competencies on social policy (Peace, 2001; Atkinson, Davoudi, 2000).

After 1993, the European Union supported the need to contrast social exclusion because "it threatened economic growth and competitiveness and undermined core elements of the European social model by placing unsustainable financial strains on the social protection system" (Atkison, Davoudi, 2000: 431). With the new Millennium, the need to monitor and combat social exclusion led to the development of strategies and the adoption of common indicators and targets. Among the former, the first was the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, a plan focused on strengthening employment, economic reform, and social cohesion[75]. In seeking to monitor social exclusion, in 2001, the European Council held at Laeken adopted a set of commonly agreed indicators, which should monitor the performance of the Member States and promote social inclusion[76]. However, in 2008, the worldwide economic and financial

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[75] It states that "the Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Achieving this goal requires an overall strategy aimed at (1) preparing the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society by better policies for the information society and R&D, as well as by stepping up the process of structural reform for competitiveness and innovation and by completing the internal market; (2) modernising the European social model, investing in people and combating social exclusion; (3) sustaining the healthy economic outlook and favourable growth prospects by applying an appropriate macro-economic policy mix" (Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000). According to this Strategy, its implementation happened through the promotion of existing processes and a new open method of coordination. Its key elements were the agreement of common objectives on poverty and social exclusion; the preparation of National Action Plans on social inclusion that the Member States have to submit every second year to the Commission; the exchange of good practices across the Member States through peer reviews; and the adoption of common indicators to monitor progress towards the common objectives and encourage mutual learning (Atkison et al., 2003). All these tools were coordinated and guided by the European Council, which had the duty to ensure a coherent strategic direction and effective monitoring of progress. In this perspective, the Lisbon Strategy represented an asset as it introduced an agreement that member states would develop a coordinated policy on poverty and social inclusion; the application of the Open Method of Coordination to social exclusion; the exchange of good practices across the Member States through so-called peer reviews; and the adoption of common indicators to monitor progress towards the common objectives and encourage mutual learning (Atkinson et al., 2003; Daly, 2006).

[76] The Social Protection Committee recommended the categorization of multidimensionality of social exclusion through two tiers: the primary indicators, consisting of lead indicators that cover the broad fields that have been considered the most important elements in leading to social exclusion (e.g., at risk of poverty, income inequality, long term unemployment); and the secondary indicators, supporting these lead indicators and describing other dimensions of the problem (e.g., persistent unemployment or poverty, low educational attainment).

crisis hit the European Union, worsening the situation. Thus, in 2010, the European Commission promoted the Europe 2020 strategy. Its aim was twofold. Firstly, it intended to reinforce economic and social progress. Secondly, it planned to turn the European Union into a smart, sustainable, and inclusive economy. To fulfil these priorities, the European Commission proposed five quantitative targets:

1. "75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed;
2. 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D;
3. the "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right);
4. the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree;
5. 20 million fewer people should be at risk of poverty" (European Commission, 2010a: 3).

To monitor the latter target, the European Union adopted the "at risk of poverty or social exclusion" indicator (AROPE) (Look at Paragraph 3.2). Unfortunately, albeit the improvements in social conditions and reduction of people experiencing AROPE in the last decade, the Europe 2020 Strategy did not reach the target of social exclusion and poverty. Thus, in 2017, through the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (2021a, 2021b), the European Commission commits to achieve three ambitious targets by 2030:

1. "At least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030;
2. At least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year;
3. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million by 2030" (European Commission, 2021b: 10-11).

The fact that reducing social exclusion and poverty is still one of the main goals of the EU targets for 2030 spotlights the importance of dealing with these dynamics as soon as possible.

3.2 How the European Union operationalizes inequality and social exclusion

Before describing the indicators, it is necessary to present the survey through which they are calculated.

The European Union gathers the data on social exclusion and inequality from the EU-SILC survey - the EU Survey on Statistics on Income and Living Conditions[77]. It collects information every year through the cooperation between Eurostat and the National Statistical Institutes, and it aims to provide comparable data on income, poverty, social exclusion, and living conditions[78]. Succeeded to the ECHP – European Community Household Panel[79], the EU-SILC was launched for the first time in 2003 through a "gentlemen's agreement" in six Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Austria) and Norway. It entered into force in 2004 and, currently, it covers all Member States, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and other countries that opt-in voluntarily. Compared to ECHP, EU-SILC is output-harmonised. It means that "instead of being based on harmonised questionnaires, the procedure involves the specification of a set of social and economic indicators which should be provided by the new data set, but it is up to each of the member states to decide how these are to be collected" (Iacovou et al., 2012: 1).

EU-SILC provides two types of data: cross-sectional data and longitudinal data. The former concerns a given time with variables on income, poverty, social exclusion, and other living conditions. The latter regards individual-level changes over time observed periodically over four years. The longitudinal data aims at identifying the incidence and dynamic processes

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[77] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/ilc_sieusilc.htm.

[78] EU-SILC provides comparable data on income, poverty, social exclusion, and living conditions. Thus, it gathers socio-economic background information and data about the employment situation of the interviewees. Furthermore, it supplies variables able to understand these dynamics and issues embedded (Appendix E). These variables are essential to comprehend the living, contextual, and sanitarian conditions and the collateral difficulties that people at risk of poverty or social exclusion experience.

[79] The European Community Household Panel was carried out from 1994 to 2004 in the then Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Sweden, and the United Kingdom).

of the persistence of poverty and social exclusion among subgroups in the population[80]. The data concerning social exclusion and housing conditions is collected mainly at the household level.

According to the Commission Regulation on sampling and tracing rules, "the cross-sectional and longitudinal one shall be based on a nationally representative probability sample of the population residing in private households within the country, irrespective of language, nationality, or legal residence status. All private households and all persons aged 16 and over within the household are eligible for the operation. Representative probability samples shall be achieved both for households, which form the basic units of sampling, data collection and data analysis and for individual persons in the target population. The sampling frame and methods of sample selection shall ensure that every individual and household in the target population is assigned a known and non-zero probability of selection." (Eurostat, 2019: 23). Thus, they define the minimum effective sample sizes to reach (Appendix D).

The information is collected through Pen-and-Paper Personal Interviews (PAPI) and Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the data are now gathered through Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) or Computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) modes.

As with every dataset, the EU-SILC has strengths and limitations. The main asset is that it is a unique and advantageous resource to capture and compare the living conditions in Europe. Its standardised methodology, variables, and indicators allow measuring and

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[80] Different to most other longitudinal surveys, the EU-SILC cross-sectional and longitudinal data are released separately. Both the cross-sectional and longitudinal data are delivered as four separate files: (1) Household Register (d-file), which includes information on weights, sampling, regional identifiers, and degree of urbanization. All variables refer to the household level; (2) Household Data (h-file), which covers information on the interview, household income, subjective economic situation, household level poverty and employment indicators as well as information on household assets and housing. All variables refer to the household level; (3) Personal Register (r-files), which is the only file that contains information on persons under sixteen years of age. It covers identifiers which can be used to analyse family relations, basic demographic information, and variables on childcare usage. All variables refer to individuals; (4) Personal Data (p-files), which contains variables referring to individuals. It includes information on demographics, income, work, unemployment, health, nationality, migration, and work intensity as well as person weights, identifiers, and information on the interview (Mack, 2016).

setting shared targets (Iacovu et al., 2012; Dewilde, 2015). These characteristics are a distinctive and singular advantage of EU-SILC. Hence, this peculiarity permits meaningful and informative research on housing and living conditions. Secondly, the rich portfolio of socio-economic information makes it possible to comprehend disparities at a more granular level than most other datasets. Thirdly, EU-SILC longitudinal data allows an opportunity to track time-varying trends (Arora et al., 2015).

On the other hand, it has some limitations as well. According to Iacovou et al. (2012), the main shortcomings are the sampling and design, the household dynamics, and the incomes. Regarding the sample and design, the data need to be collected using probability sampling. It is relevant to ensure comparable data on population characteristics. Even though appropriate procedures take place in most countries, few follow different protocols. Thus, each country can choose how to collect the data but must present them following a standard template and common outcomes (Arora et al., 2015). Hence, to obtain correct estimates from a dataset, Eurostat identified a minimum sample size for cross-sectional and longitudinal components (Arora et al., 2015). Secondly, regarding household dynamics, Iacovou et al. (2012) denounced the lack of a household grid and the consequential impossibility to establish the nature of some relationships. They affirmed that "because most households consist of a single person or a group of people all related by partnership and/or parenthood, it is only in a minority of households that we cannot identify all the relationships properly" (Iacovou et al., 2012: 8). Thirdly, regarding income, they highlighted three issues. The former is income aggregation. Although it provides harmonised and comparable information, it decreases the level of detail. The second problem is the reference period mismatch between income and non-income information. The last issue is that there is no uniformity across the country in collecting income components either in gross or net of taxes.

In addition, Caroline Dewilde (2015) affirmed that the cost of housing and tenure is another weakness of the EU-SILC. Lastly, another limit of the EU-SILC concerns with its precision in measuring phenomena at the regional and urban levels. Indeed, its indicators and variables are more suitable for national-level analysis rather than regional or urban (Verma

et al., 2017; Diaz Dapena et al., 2021). It is due to the smallness of the regional sample and the issues in estimating sampling error at this level.

3.2.1 Inequality indicators

Concerning inequality, Eurostat attempts to capture it through the Gini Coefficient and S80/S20 ratio, provided for each Member State and the European Union. As already mentioned (Paragraph 1.1.2), these have the limit to reduce inequality into a single number and a unique dimension. Indeed, this simplicity omits much of the texture and context of other approaches to measuring inequality (Perez-Arce et al., 2016).

Therefore, this research adopts the indicator AROPE as unique indicator for inequality and social exclusion because it simultaneously captures them. Indeed, as it includes the "at risk of poverty rate after social transfers", it captures those experiencing inequality. As demonstrated by Darvas (2017), this indicator essentially measures income inequality. "Conceptually, the definition of the "at risk of poverty" indicator and the explanation provided in the Eurostat glossary resemble an indicator of income inequality. In more equal societies, more people have incomes closer to the median income and consequently, the share of people with income below 60 per cent of the median income is low" (Darvas, 2017: 6). Hence, the Eurostat glossary affirms that "this indicator does not measure wealth or poverty, but low income in comparison to other residents in that country, which does not necessarily imply a low standard of living"[81]. Thus, as figure 3.1 below highlights, there is a strong empirical association (R^2 = 0.7599) between the at-risk poverty rate after social transfers and the Gini coefficient across the European Member States, that demonstrates that the former can capture the latter. Similarly, figure 3.2 reports the strong empirical association (R^2 = 0.8605) between the at-risk poverty rate after social transfers and the income quartile share ratio (S80/S20), illustrating and validating the same assumption.

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[81] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:At-risk-of-poverty_rate.

Figure 3.1 - Relationship between "At-risk-of-poverty after social transfers" rate and Gini coefficient in 2020 [except for the UK in 2018] (Eurostat, Data sources: T2020_52, TESSI190)
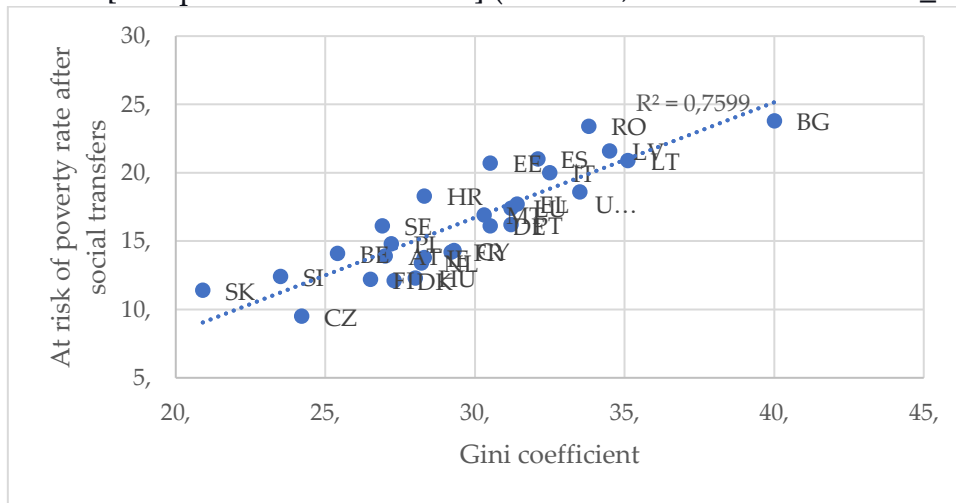
Figure 3.2 - Relationship between "At-risk-of-poverty after social transfers" rate and income quartile share ratio (S80/S20) in 2020 [except for the UK in 2018] (Eurostat, Data sources: T2020_52, TESSI180)
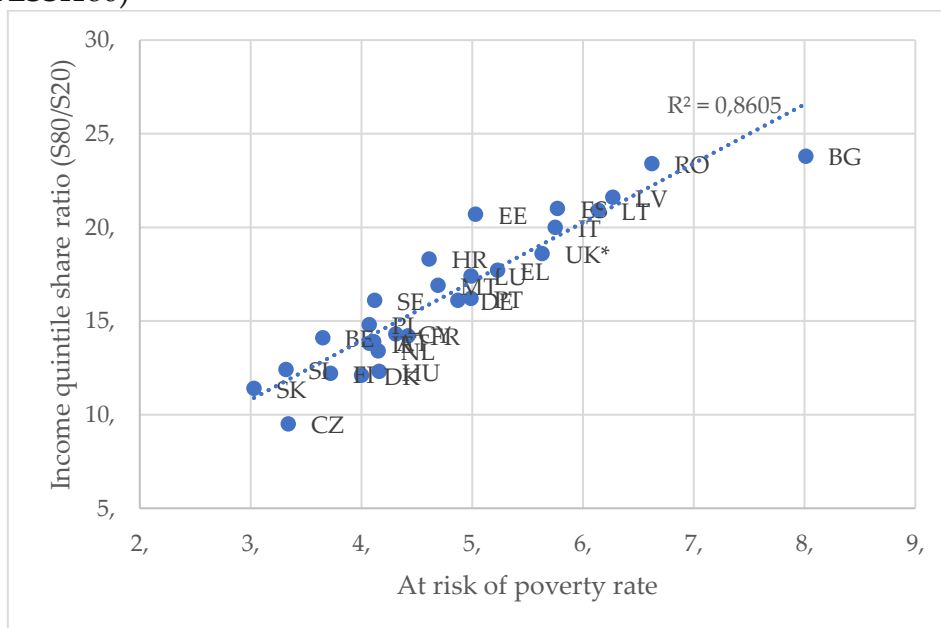
3.2.2 The AROPE indicator

In 2001, the European Council held at Laeken adopted a set of commonly agreed indicators to monitor the performance of the Member States and promote social inclusion. Hence, since 2008, social exclusion and inequality have been calculated and observed through the at-risk of poverty or social exclusion indicator (AROPE). Even though it is defined as an indicator, it is an index as it is a collection of compound or composite indicators. Indeed, AROPE refers to those who fall into one or more of three indicators:

- "At the risk of poverty after social transfer", referring to individuals with a disposable income below 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income;

- "Severely materially deprived", including people unable to afford at least four of the following deprivation items: i) to pay rent or utility bills, ii) keep home adequately warm, iii) face unexpected expenses, iv) eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, v) a week holiday away from home, vi) a car, vii) a washing machine, viii) a colour TV, or ix) a telephone;

- "Living in a household with a very low work intensity", corresponding to those aged 0-59 living in households where the adults (aged 18-59) worked 20% or less of their total work potential during the past year.

Moreover, in 2021, according to the new EU 2030 targets, the indicator has been modified. The severe material deprivation component has been adjusted by adding six items (Having an internet connection; replacing worn-out clothes with some new ones; having two pairs of properly fitting shoes; spending a small amount of money each week on him/herself; having regular leisure activities; getting together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month). According to this new definition, an individual is considered severely materially and socially deprived when unable to afford at least seven out of thirteen items. Furthermore, the (quasi)-jobless household indicator is defined as people from 0-64 years living in households where the adults worked less than 20% of their total combined work-time potential during the previous 12 months.

Figure 3.3 shows the differences in percentages between AROPE (based on Europe 2020) and AROPE (based on Strategy 2030)[82] by country and at the European level in 2020. The data for the United Kingdom are from 2018 as they left the European Union and stopped

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[82] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_statistics_on_income_and_living_conditions_(EU-SILC)_methodology_-_people_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion#Statistical_population.

the gathering of these information. Moreover, figure 3.4 shows these indicators and their components over time (from 2008 to 2020) at European level.

Figure 3.3 – Share (%) of AROPE (based on Europe 2020) and AROPE (based on Strategy 2030) by country and at the European level in 2020 (Eurostat, Source: TEPSR_LM410, ILC_PEPS01)
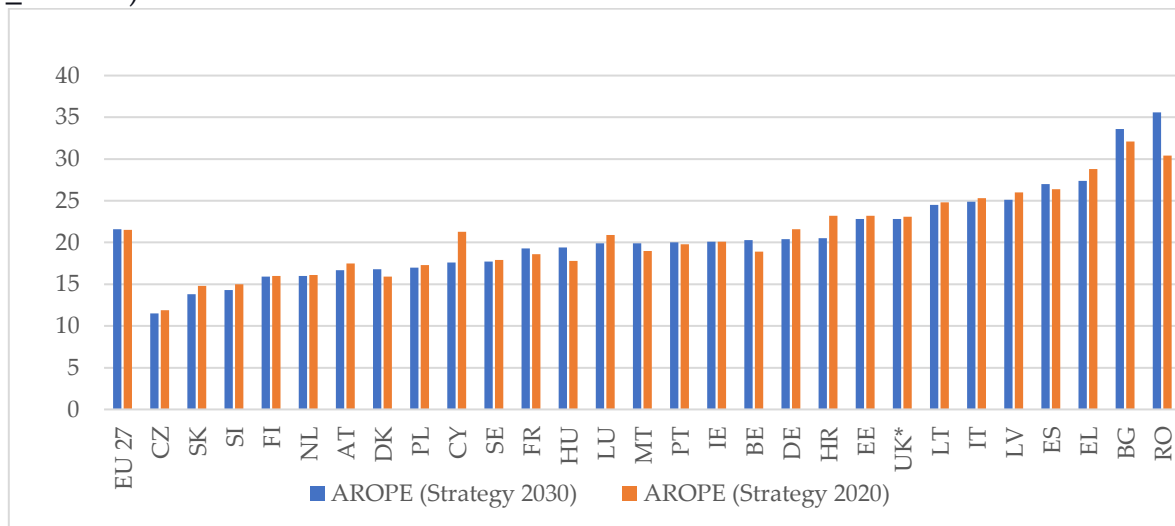
Figure 3.4 – Share (%) of AROPE (based on Europe 2020), AROPE (based on Strategy 2030), and their components over time (from 2008 to 2020) at European level (Eurostat, Source: TEPSR_LM410, ILC_PEPS01, TESSI010, ILC_MDDD11, ILC_MDSD11, ILC_LVHL11, ILC_LVHL11N)
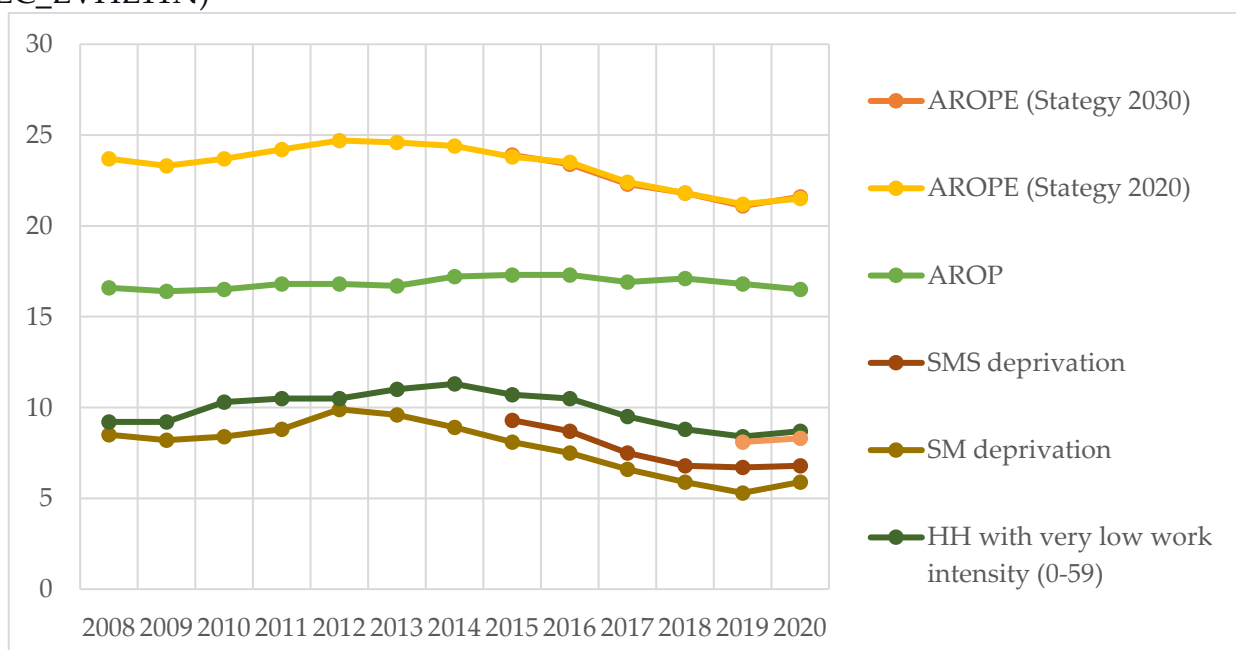
The AROPE indicator is a statistical asset in monitoring and combating poverty and social exclusion. Nevertheless, it has some strengths and limits related to its construction and the database through which is calculated. Hence, the AROPE indicator has several assets related

to the EU-SILC dataset and its composition. To begin with, as EU-SILC provides a standardized definition and methodology of social exclusion, it is a unique and advantageous resource that guarantees comparison among and within countries. Secondly, EU-SILC gathers cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Thus, it can track the improvements or worsening of social exclusion in each country over time. Thirdly, EU-SILC includes variables concerning living, working, and health conditions. They allow a deeper analysis of who is experiencing social exclusion and inequality in Europe and the related issues. Fourthly, looking at its construction, the AROPE indicator is a singular measure because it goes beyond poverty or economic inequality. Furthermore, as one of its components is "the risk of poverty after social transfers", AROPE can simultaneously capture the presence of inequality and social exclusion among and within European countries (Darvas, 2017).

On the one hand, like its strengths, the AROPE's weaknesses are due to the EU-SILC dataset and its composition. To begin with, the differences among countries in the data sampling and gathering represent an issue of representativeness. Indeed, even though they must present data following a standard template and outcomes, each country can choose how to collect them and set the target (Arora et al., 2015; Peña-Casas, 2011). It is even more relevant in studying exclusion as it fails to capture the most disadvantaged groups - e.g., homeless people, refugees, and undocumented people. Secondly, AROPE cannot dive into regional and urban-level analyses[83]. It is particularly relevant as they are more suited for specific thematic, like exclusion and its dynamics, rather than the national analysis (Ballas et al., 2017; Diaz Dapena et al., 2021). Thirdly, EU-SILC gathers the information on the intensity of household work referring to the year prior to the survey, while the relative consumer items collected in the deprivation indicator corresponding to same year (Faura-Martínez et al., 2016). Fourthly, the indicators of poverty and deprivation contemplate the set of the total population, while the indicator related to job insecurity refers to the people under 60 years of age (Faura-Martínez et al., 2016). Fifthly, EU-SILC provides several variables to

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[83] The lack of information at a more micro level may be due to the adjustment of the mechanisms of exclusion and poverty through averages at the national level. It is also due to the lack of reliable local data and difficulties accessing data at a small spatial scale (Diaz Dapena et al., 2021).

understand the circumstances of these disparities. Albeit that, in some cases, they are too narrow and general to comprehend the phenomena connected to social exclusion[84]. Sixthly, although the recent modification in 2021, AROPE still misses the services, political, and rights exclusion that certain groups experience. Moreover, the current components should be improved and ameliorated according to the differences among European countries and societies (Nolan, Whelan, 2011). Seventhly, as whoever falls into one of its three components is considered at risk of poverty or social exclusion, there is no distinction in the degree of this disparity. As a result, it might be difficult to interpret. Eighthly, it seems developed from a political consensus rather than a methodological base[85] (Peña-Casas, 2011).

Thus, EU-SILC and AROPE could be ameliorated in several aspects. To begin with, the EU-SILC database should better standardize the gathering and sampling of the involved interviewees. Thus, the institution of a unique protocol to collect data for all the Member States might help to have major representativeness. Nevertheless, capturing the conditions of those not included in the registers will still be arduous. Secondly, the EU-SILC database should improve the data at regional and urban levels to guarantee and allow deeper analyses. It is particularly relevant as "the real social divides within Europe are more often within states rather than between that is, between regions belonging to the same country" (Ballas et al., 2017: 176). Moreover, as these phenomena tend to manifest in the cities, EU-SILC should provide information at the neighbourhood level. Thirdly, the variables offered by EU-SILC are insufficient to comprehend the collateral phenomena of exclusion. In addition to the several variables on living conditions, it should include more specific questions related, for instance, to the exposure to organized crime, addictions, segregation, or discrimination. Fourth, notwithstanding the already advanced composition, the AROPE indicator could be enriched with political, services, and social aspects of social exclusion. Fifthly, the deprivation index and the criterion for jobless households should be

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[84] For instance, several studies pointed out that those experiencing social exclusion are more exposed to organized crime, exploitation, and environmental problems.

[85] Ramón Peña-Casas (2011) individuated the theoretical perspective in the assumption that promoting economic growth and increasing labour market participation is sufficient to reduce material deprivation or the number of jobless households. According to him, this vision might be incomplete.

reconsidered and adjusted to the societal differences among European countries. Currently, the political assumption that promoting economic growth and labour market participation is sufficient to reduce material deprivation or the number of jobless households might be incomplete. It might omit or underestimate other aspects of social exclusion. Lastly, the AROPE indicator cannot define the degree of exclusion that individuals are experiencing, as everyone who falls in one of its components is considered excluded. Thus, it might be advantageous to differentiate the degree of exclusion to grasp the different types and levels of segregation among and within European countries.

3.2.2.1 Who is excluded accordingly to AROPE?

Notwithstanding the implementations, the research will adopt the AROPE indicator developed for the Europe 2020 strategy because Eurostat provides the new AROPE indicator only from 2015. Thus, it does not allow comparisons with the previous situation. Hence, the AROPE developed for the Europe 2020 Strategy is more suitable and appropriate to understand the changes in social exclusion and inequality within and across countries.

Thus, this paragraph reports a panoramic of those most exposed to the risk of poverty and social exclusion at the European level over time by socio-demographic characteristics[86]. It allows observing who is more exposed and impacted by exclusion and monitoring the changes in these peculiarities over time. Thus, it shows the variations between the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy and its end. In addition, the paragraph will provide a more specific description of the current situation[87].

To begin with, in 2020, 22% of Europeans were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (2 pp less than in 2008). Figure 3.5 shows the share of AROPE by country in 2008 (except for Croatia, which refers to 2010) and 2020 (except for the United Kingdom, which refers to 2018). Overall, the level of AROPE decreased in all the European States, except in nine

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[86] The data are from the Eurostat website (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat) which provides tables regarding AROPE thoughtfully divided by socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.
As the data analyses happened in the first year of the PhD, mainly between April and June 2021, the year shown is 2020.
[87] The data are from the Microdata of the EU-SILC database.

countries where it remained stable or increased. Indeed, according to the EU-SILC database, in France, Denmark, and the United Kingdom, the level of AROPE did not change between 2008 and 2020. Differently, it increased in Sweden (+ 1 pp), Luxembourg (+ 6 pp), Germany (+ 2 pp), Estonia (+ 1 pp), Spain (+ 2 pp), and Greece (+ 1 pp).

Figure 3.5 – Share of AROPE (%) in the European Member States in 2008 and 2020 (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01)
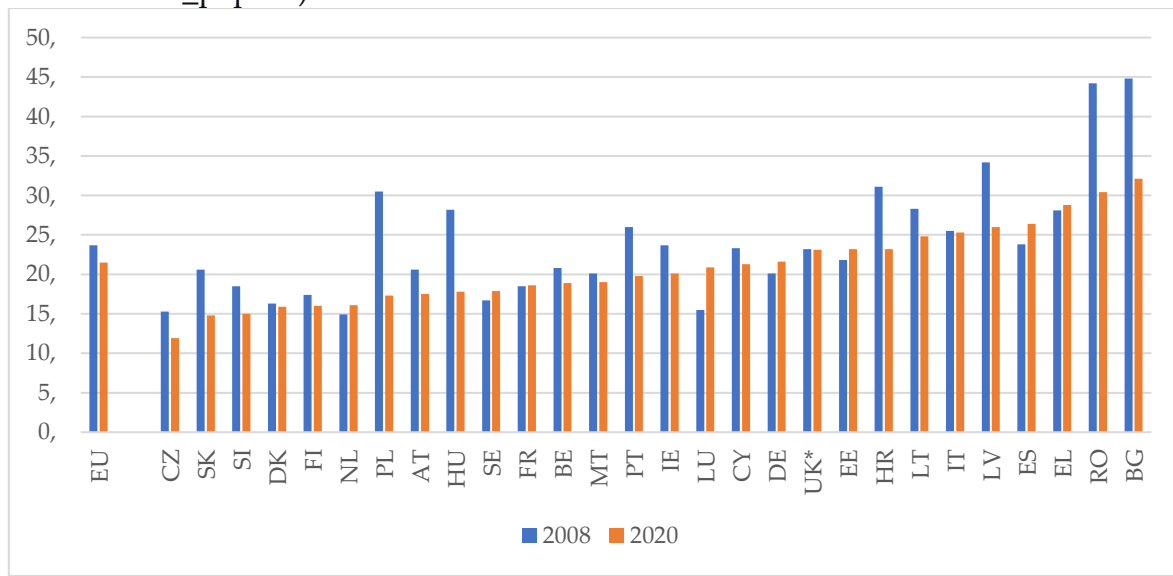
Figure 3.6 summarizes the share of AROPE by the main socio-demographic peculiarities in 2008 and 2020 at the European level. During this period, the levels of AROPE reached the highest levels in 2012 and 2013 (25%) (Appendix F). Retired people and those living in rural areas are the only ones who did not follow this pattern and progressively decreased their percentage of AROPE (Appendix F). However, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 (especially, in the case of parents with primary education attainment), unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially, those coming from outside of the European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels. Only in the case of people under 18 and single parents, the level of AROPE was less in 2020 than in 2008 (respectively, - 4 pp and – 9 pp). Differently, in the other cases, the conditions remained stable. In addition, compared to 2008, in 2020, the gap between men and women in experiencing AROPE was shorter (3 pp vs 1 pp); the level of retired people and those living in rural areas being AROPE decreased by 6 pp each;

and the share of children under 18 with parents with primary education attainment being at risk of poverty or social exclusion increased of 4 pp.

Figure 3.6 – Share of AROPE (%) in 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)
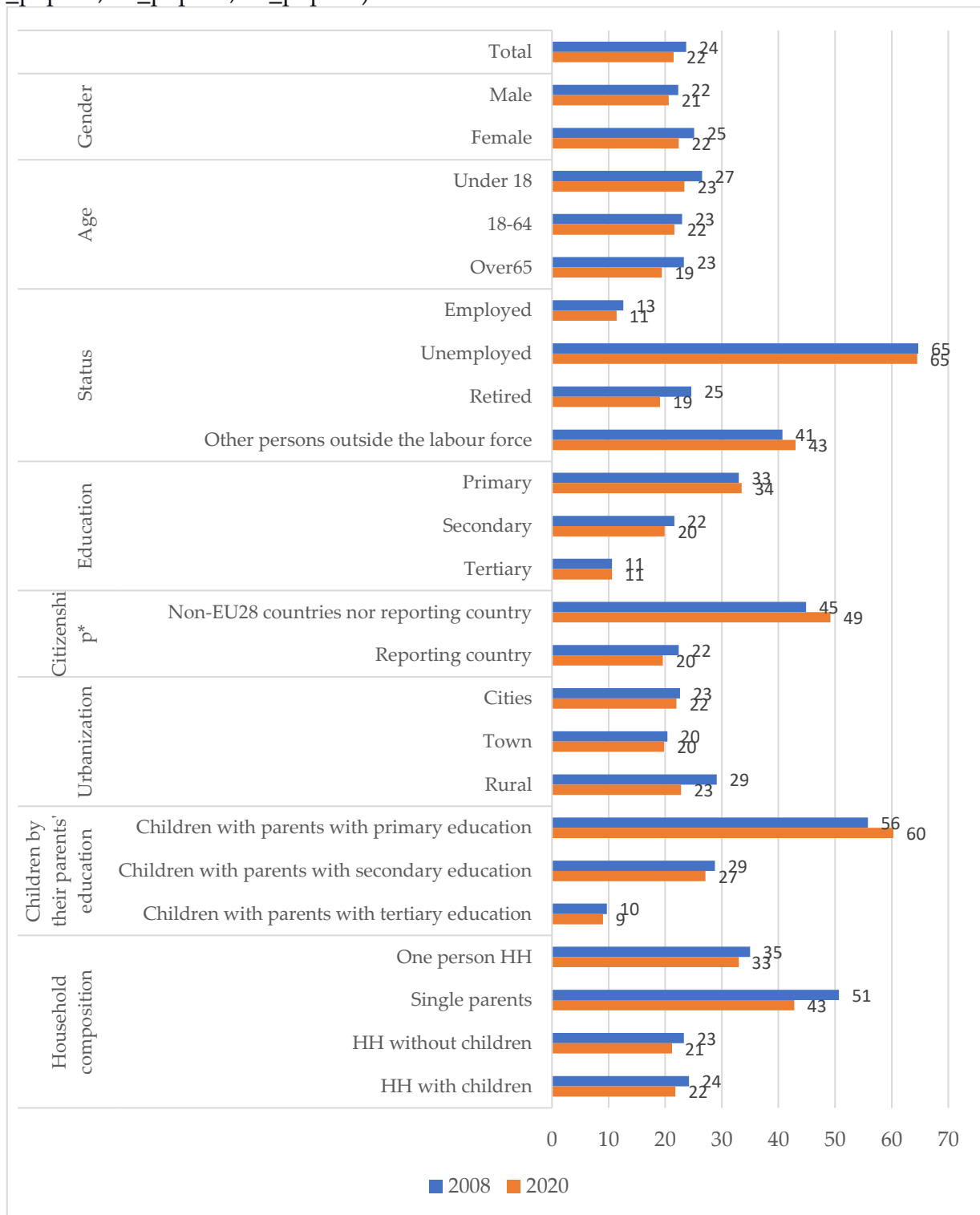
Note: Citizenship refers to 2009 and 2020 due to the availability of data.

Moreover, in 2020, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion were more likely to face economic difficulties, have health issues, and have less social life than Europeans who do not experience AROPE (Figure 3.7). It is particularly concerning as these situations affect their quality of life, living conditions, and risk of experiencing and reinforcing exclusion and inequality. However, this data spotlights another concern: a high percentage of people not at risk of poverty or social exclusion have economic difficulties. For instance, half of them (50%) do not go to a dentist because they cannot afford it, and more than a third of them (39%) can maintain the same standard of living using savings only for three months.

Figure 3.7 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things and go to visits by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2020 (EU-SILC)
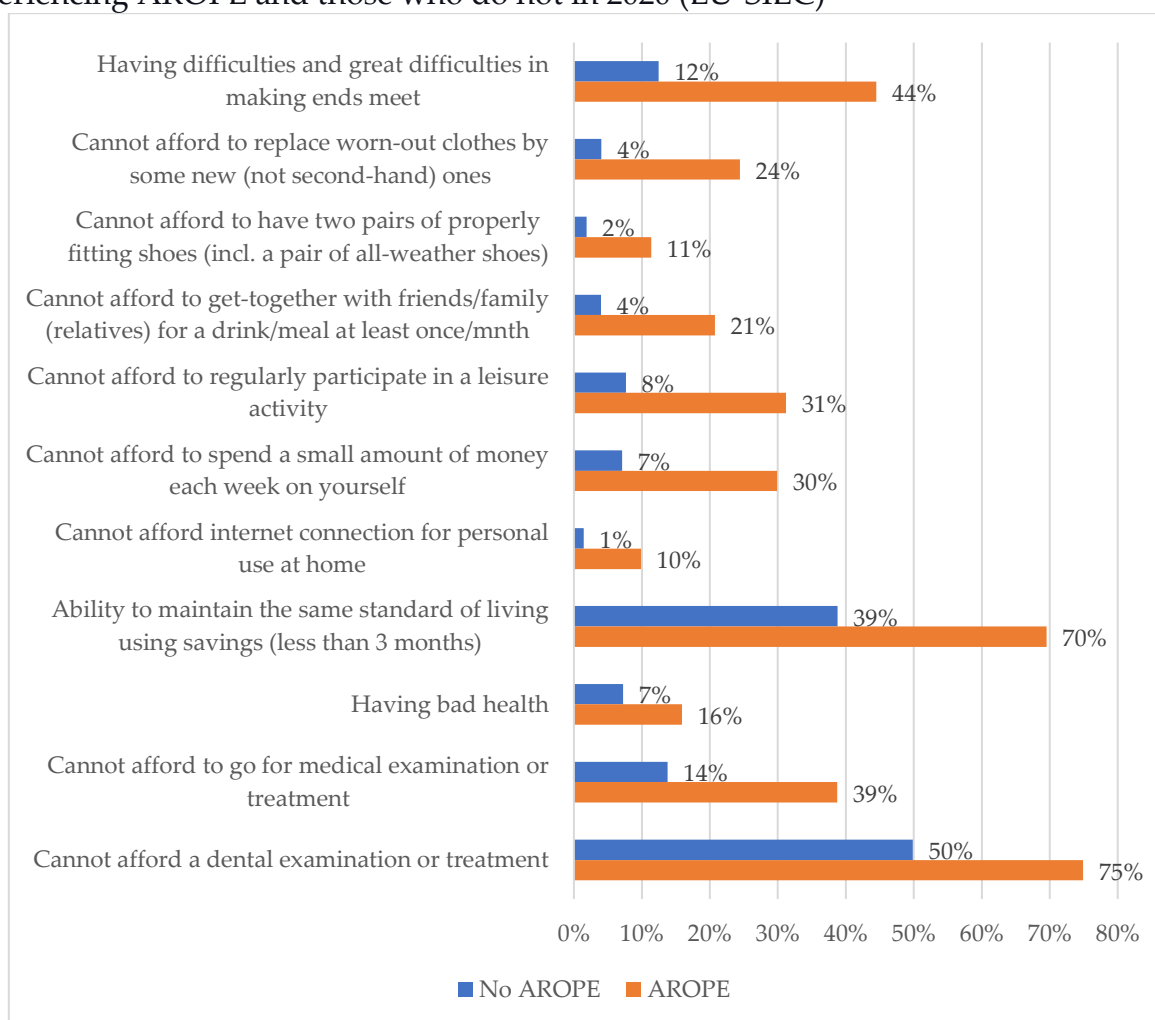
On the other hand, looking at the neighbourhood situation, the differences between those experiencing AROPE and those who are not at risk are less evident (Figure 3.8). However, regarding housing conditions, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are more likely

to live in overcrowded households. It was particularly relevant and impacting during the Covid-19 pandemic as they did not have enough space to study, attend online classes, and work. This aspect negatively affects the physical and psychological health of households.

Figure 3.8 – Quality of neighbourhood and living in an overcrowded household by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2020 (EU-SILC)
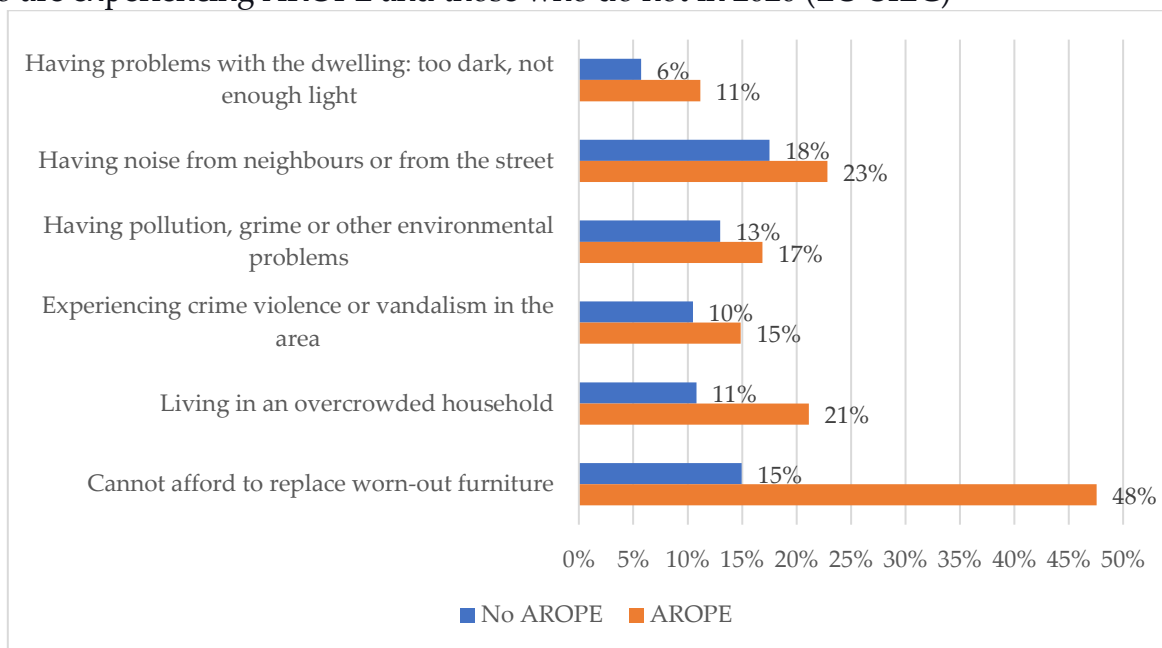
Moreover, the logistic regression below (Figure 3.9) shows some of the main factors behind the likelihood of ending up or avoiding at risk of poverty or social exclusion. It presents how being unemployed, not coming from a European country, living as a tenant, or having bad health rise the likelihood of becoming at risk of poverty or social exclusion. On the other side, it spotlights how having a high level of education, being employed, or owning a house are essential elements to prevent ending up in AROPE.

Figure 3.9 – Likelihood of being at risk of poverty or social exclusion for the categories listed in 2020 (EU-SILC)
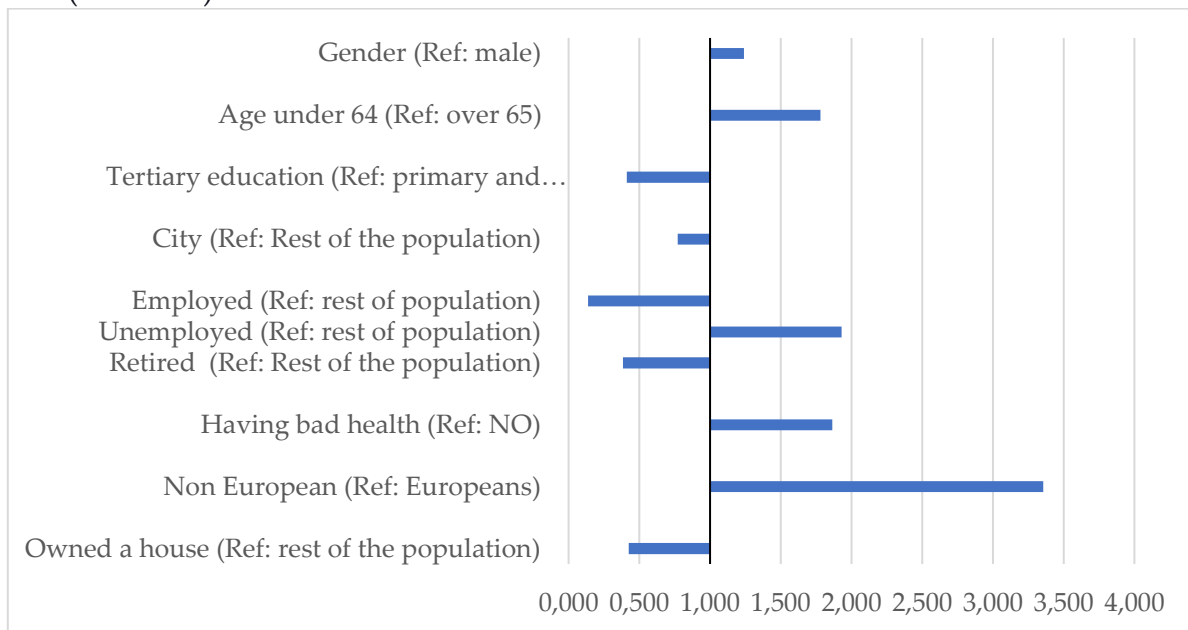
Note: Only variables with significant regression coefficients are shown. Country effects controlled but not displayed. The graph shows the odds ratio (Exp(B)) based on binary logistic regression and displays the difference in the likelihood of being at risk of poverty or social exclusion for categories listed.

3.3 How the European Union frames social exclusion and inequality

The European Union and each Member State frame social exclusion and inequality by issuing specific policies. Hence, this paragraph displays an overview and recap of the principal strategies and projects promoted by the European Union to handle these phenomena. In addition, it presents the European tools that allow monitoring from a macro level the policies and investments of the Member states to combat social exclusion and inequality.

As already mentioned, the principal strategies developed by the European Union to reduce social exclusion and inequality were the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 strategy. Then, in 2017, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission promoted the European Pillar of Social Rights at the Gothenburg Summit through the disposition of the

active inclusion strategy[88] and the Social Investment Package[89]. It inspired the EU targets for 2030. Later, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and how it severely hit the Member States, the European Commission promoted and financed the NextGenerationEU[90] through the National Recovery and Resilience plan[91], which identifies the objectives and monitors the achievements of the targets. In addition to these strategies and plans, the European Union carried out several projects to evaluate the improvement and promotion of policies[92] (European Commission, 2015).

On the other hand, each country decides how and through which investments to pursue and reach these targets. Within this perspective, two European tools allow monitoring the convergence of these achievements and observing the expenditures towards social protections and policies. They are the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS). The former tracked the achievement of the Europe 2020 strategy by country. Divided into two sections, the CSRs evaluated policies and conditions in the Member States and allowed acting promptly to address and target the concerns. Their first section presents an overview of the economic, social, and political events and situations occurring in each Member State. The second one

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[88] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1059&langId=en#:~:text=Active%20inclusion%20is%20intended%20to,risk%20of%20in%20work%20poverty.

[89] https://www.esn-eu.org/taxonomy/term/539.

[90] https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en.

[91] https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en.

[92] For instance, some of the most relevant projects regarding inequality and exclusion are: COPE – Combating poverty in Europe. Lasted from 2012 and 2015, it aims to map poverty and social exclusion in Europe, examine the complex governance structure of European, national, and local policies of minimum income schemes, and assess their impact on beneficiaries; EUMARGINS – On the margins of the European community. Lasting from 2008 until 2011, it focuses its in-depth analyses and interviews on the social inclusion and exclusion of young migrants. It aims at identifying and prioritising those factors that matter most for specific young adult migrant groups and in different countries. The project also proposes recommendations that can assist with the transition from exclusion to inclusion; INEQ - Inequality: Mechanisms, Effects and Policies. Lasting from 2006 until 2009, it attempts to investigate the economic and social mechanisms producing polarisation and inequality, examine the effects of inequality on societies and its connection to economic performance and social integration, and identify the actual and potential policies; EXCEPT - Social Exclusion of Youth in Europe: Cumulative Disadvantage, Coping Strategies, Effective Policies and Transfer. Lasting from 2015 until 2018, it aims at providing a comprehensive understanding of the consequences of youth labour market vulnerability for risks of social exclusion in Europe (European Commission, 2015).

lists the recommendations and suggestions to overcome and improve the issues identified. They are a list of actions to address and promote over the following year (Appendix G). Regarding inequality and social exclusion, there has been a rise of worry and attention to these problems in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequent economic crisis that might increase inequalities, poverty, and marginalization. Hence, in all the CSRs of 2020, the Commission and Council recommend to "in line with the general escape clause, take all necessary measures to effectively address the pandemic, sustain the economy and support the ensuing recovery. When economic conditions allow, pursue fiscal policies aimed at achieving prudent medium-term fiscal positions and ensuring debt sustainability while enhancing investment. Reinforce the overall resilience of the health system and ensure the supply of critical medical products". In addition, the CSRs suggest to each country to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of the crisis and ensure the coverage of the social protection system.

On the other hand, each country accordingly to their welfare state regime and political view decides how to invest in social protections and policies. To present an overview of the differences among countries and to monitor the implementation of them, the European Union provides a statistical tool, i.e., the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS). Its data are essential inputs for the Social Security Inquiry database (SSI), the report of the Social Protection Department, the World Social Protection Report, and other publications produced by the ILO (International Labour Organization).

Developed in the late '70s, ESSPROS is composed of a core system and modules. The modules contain supplementary statistical information on aspects of social protection, while the core system includes annual data gathered since 1990 by Eurostat. They regard quantitative and qualitative data. The former refers to the social protection receipts and expenditures by schemes, while the latter is the metadata of the program and detailed benefits. ESSPROS classifies the reception of social protection schemes by type and origin, while the expenditure of social protection by the nature of or the reason for the expense. On the other hand, referring to the qualitative data, social protection benefits are the transfers to households, in cash or kind, to provide for the financial burden of several risks or needs.

According to ESSPROS, these requirements and vulnerabilities are disability, sickness/healthcare, old age, survivors, family/children, unemployment, housing, and social exclusion not elsewhere classified.

Therefore, ESSPROS produces a comprehensive description of social protection measures in the Member States, which allows the comparison among them. In the European Union, the social protection system is highly advanced and refers to a set of procedures designed to protect people against the risks associated with unemployment, parental responsibilities, sickness/health care and invalidism, the loss of a spouse or parent, old age, housing, and social exclusion. Eurostat defines social protections as "all interventions from public or private bodies intended to relieve households and individuals of the burden of a defined set of risks or needs, provided that there is neither a simultaneous reciprocal nor an individual arrangement involved" (Eurostat, 2016: 8). ESSPROS divides them into social protection expenditures, receipts, and benefits. The former encompasses all interventions from public and private organizations aimed at relieving households and individuals of the burden of a defined set of risks or needs. Secondly, the social protection receipts are the units responsible for providing social protection. They consist of the social security contributions paid by employers, protected people, the general government, and others from sources. Lastly, the social protection benefits are direct transfers, in cash or kind, by social protection schemes to households and individuals. They are divided based on their functions: sickness and healthcare benefits; disability benefits; old-age benefits; survivors' benefits; family and children's benefits; unemployment benefits; housing benefits; and social exclusion benefits. Figure 3.10 reports the share of GDP spent at the European level on social protection benefits by function from 2008 to 2020.

Figure 3.10 - Percentage of GDP spent per social protection benefits by function at European level between 2008 and 2020 (Eurostat, Source: SPR_EXP_SUM)
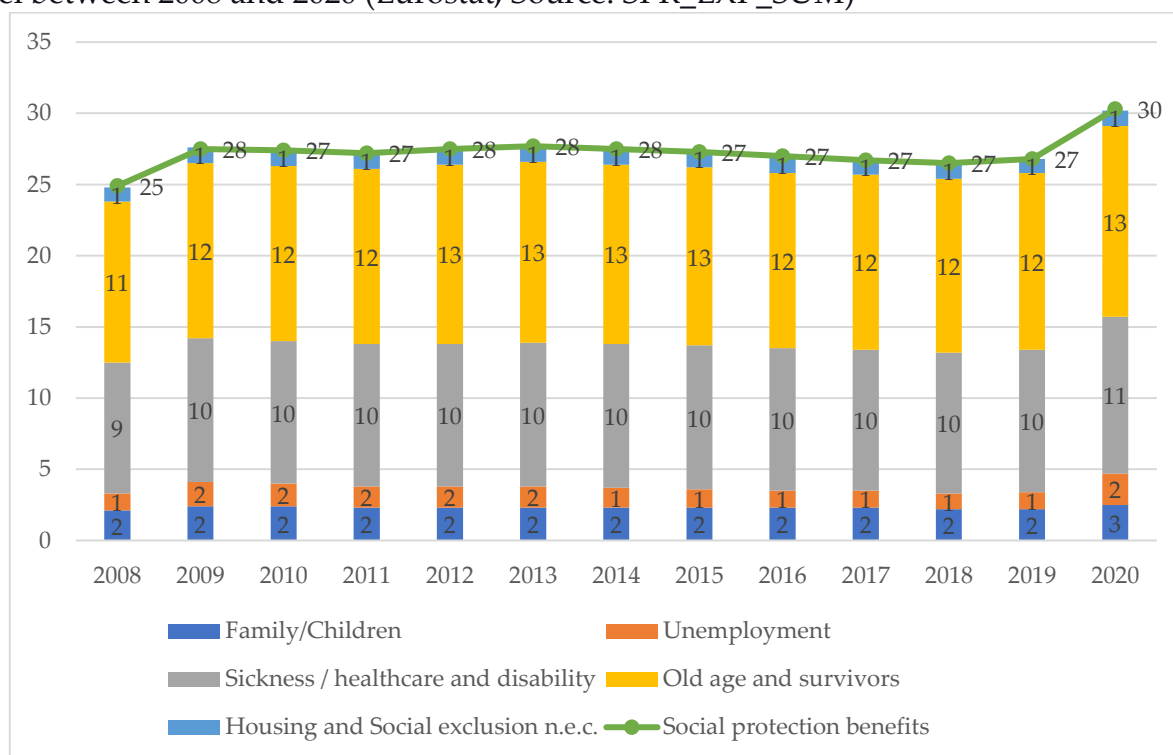
However, each country autonomously decides which social protection benefits to provide, through which mechanisms, and how much to invest in them. Thus, there are differences among the Member States. Table 3.1 presents the percentage of GDP spent on social protection benefits by countries from 2008 to 2020. This table allows seeing the differences in spending and investments among Member States.

Table 3.1 - Percentage of GDP spent for social protection benefits by countries from 2008 to 2020 (Eurostat, source: SPR_EXP_SUM)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FR	29	31	31	31	31	32	32	32	32	32	31	31	35
IT	25	27	27	27	28	28	29	29	28	28	28	28	33
AT	27	29	29	28	28	29	29	29	29	29	28	29	33
DE	26	29	29	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	29	29	32
DK	29	33	33	33	32	33	33	32	31	31	31	30	32
FI	24	28	28	28	29	30	31	31	31	30	30	30	31
BE	26	29	28	29	28	29	29	29	28	27	27	27	31
ES	21	24	24	25	25	25	25	24	23	23	23	24	30
NL	25	27	28	28	29	29	29	28	28	28	27	27	29

EL	22	24	26	27	28	26	26	26	26	25	25	25	29
SE	27	29	28	27	28	29	29	28	29	28	28	27	29
PT	22	25	24	24	25	26	26	25	24	24	23	23	26
SI	21	23	24	24	24	24	24	23	23	22	22	22	26
LU	19	21	21	21	21	21	21	20	20	21	21	21	24
HR	18	20	21	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	24
CY	17	19	18	19	20	21	20	20	19	18	17	18	24
PL	19	20	19	18	19	19	19	19	20	20	19	21	23
CZ	17	19	19	19	20	19	19	18	18	18	18	18	21
MT	18	19	19	19	19	18	18	16	16	15	15	14	20
LT	16	20	18	16	15	15	15	15	15	14	16	16	19
SK	15	18	17	17	17	18	18	18	18	18	17	17	19
EE	14	19	17	15	15	15	15	16	16	16	16	16	19
BG	14	16	17	16	16	17	18	17	17	16	16	16	18
HU	22	22	22	21	21	21	19	19	19	18	17	16	18
LV	12	16	18	15	14	14	14	15	15	15	15	15	17
RO	14	16	17	16	15	15	14	14	15	15	15	15	17
IE	20	24	24	24	23	22	20	15	15	14	14	13	15
UK	25	28	28	28	28	28	27	27	26	26	26		

More specifically, table 3.2 displays the percentage of GDP spent on social protection benefits for tacking social exclusion and inequality[93] (namely, unemployment, housing, and social exclusion) by countries from 2008 to 2020.

Table 3.2 - Percentage of GDP spent for social protection benefits for tackling social exclusion and inequality (i.e., unemployment, housing, and social exclusion) by countries from 2008 to 2020 (Eurostat, source: SPR_EXP_SUM)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FR	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
CY	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	5
IT	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4
AT	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	4

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[93] I consider the social protection benefits for unemployment, housing, and social exclusion as the ones for dealing with social exclusion and inequality.

FI	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	4
BE	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	4
ES	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	4
MT	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
DK	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
NL	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
IE	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	3
DE	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
SI	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
LU	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
LT	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
EE	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
SE	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
EL	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
PT	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
CZ	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
HR	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
LV	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
HU	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
PL	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
SK	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BG	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
RO	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UK	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		

More precisely, figures 3.11 and 3.12 show the share of social protection benefits by the specific functions to tackle social exclusion and inequality by each Member State in 2019 and 2020. I mentioned both years because the countries might have increased expenditures in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These tables allow spotlight simultaneously the differences among countries and functions. Indeed, they make evident how, tendentially, countries spend more in unemployment benefits rather than the ones for housing and social exclusion.

Figure 3.11 - Share of social protection benefits by function (i.e., unemployment, housing, and social exclusion) and countries in 2019 (except for the UK in 2018) (Eurostat, Source: SPR_EXP_SUM)
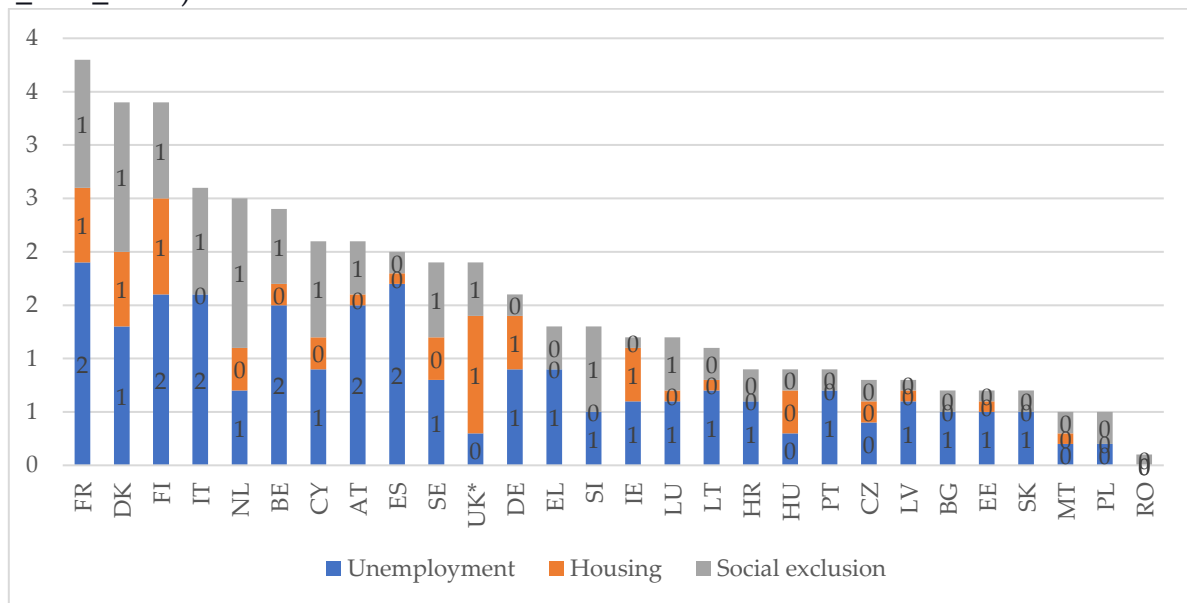
Figure 3.12 - Share of social protection benefits by function (i.e., unemployment, housing, and social exclusion) and countries in 2020 (except for the UK in 2018) (Eurostat, Source: SPR_EXP_SUM)
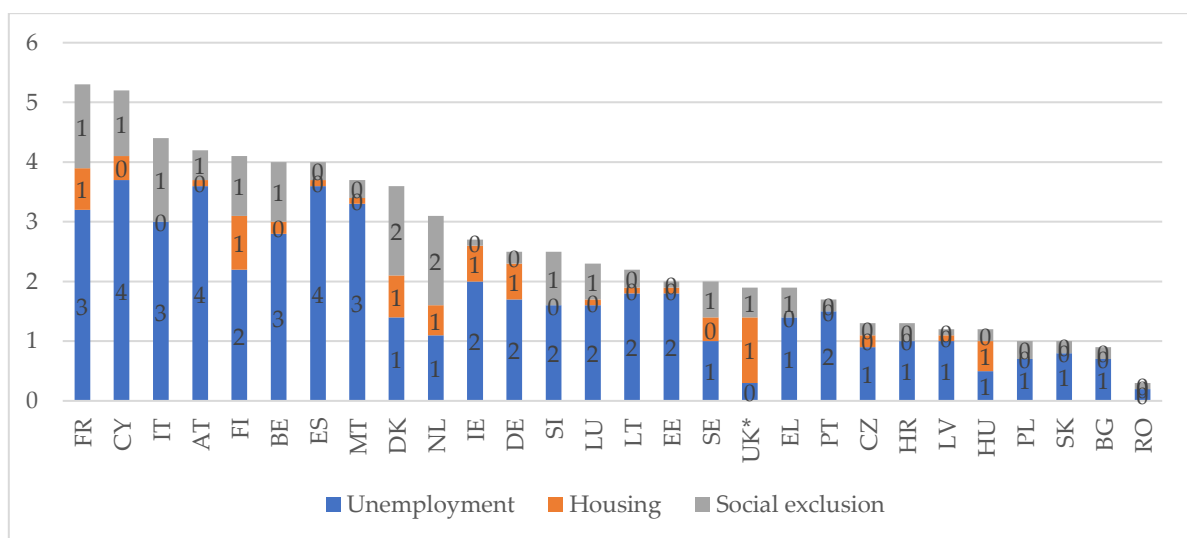
In conclusion, the social protection benefits combined with the CSRs represent the tools to frame social exclusion and inequality from a macro level. On the one hand, social protection benefits - especially, the ones focusing on unemployment, housing, and social exclusion - conceptualize and deal with these dynamics. On the other hand, until 2020, the country-specific recommendations provided by the European Union tracked the convergence or divergence of the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy in each country.

Chapter 4 – Selection of the case studies

This chapter presents how the research chose the cities adopted as case studies. It individuated a country per each welfare state regime[94] based on three features:

1. Having high levels of inequality and exclusion, according to the indicators provided by Eurostat. The research compares the results of each Member state in the year 2019[95] and how these data have changed since 2008. Through these comparisons, it is possible to assess which country per welfare regime has the highest level of these phenomena;

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[94] Developed in the XX century, the welfare state is the container of social policies implemented by the States to respond to the inequality produced by the capitalistic system (Crouch, 2001). Scholars defined and classified welfare regimes and their evolutions in several ways, referring to the levels of decommodification, stratification, and the different providers. The most notorious classifications are the ones developed by Titmuss (1974), Esping-Andersen (1990), and Ferrera (1996). Richard Titmuss distinguished three possible models of welfare: the residual, where the State intervenes only through minimal actions (typical till the XIX century); the remunerative, founded on the labour market (for instance, the Bismarck and Beveridge reforms); and the institutional-redistributive, based on the citizenship. Built on this first distinction, Gøsta Esping-Andersen proposed to distinguish the welfares models depending on three political regimes: the liberal, where the role of the State is minimal; the conservative or corporative, which is universalistic; and the socio-democratic, which promotes public interventions aimed at the egalitarian access to the services. Within this perspective, he individuated the social democratic model to be typical of the Scandinavian countries, the corporatist one of continental Europe, and the liberal one of the Anglo-Saxon states. In addition, Ferrera included and focused on the Mediterranean regimes. Furthermore, after the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Miroslav Beblavy (2008) studied the so-called Eastern European model. In his study, he considered the welfare state in the former communist states that joined the European Union. Beblavy affirmed that this welfare differs from the previous models presented and varies within the post-socialist countries. Specifically, he individuated five types of the Easter model: the invisible, which is prevalent in Latvia and characterized by a combination of a small welfare state with much smaller redistributive policy; the liberal light, which is prevalent in Estonia and Lithuania and has a residual welfare model; the conservative light, that is prevalent in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, and it has a conservative welfare model; the nearly conservative, that is prevalent in Slovenia; and the uncertain middle, that is prevalent in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia, and it is a provisional and in progress welfare model.
In addition, Chiara Saraceno reviewed these previous divisions and proposed six regimes of poverty (Continental-Nordic, Germanic, Mediterranean, Oriental, deprived Oriental, and unassigned) based on the combination of labour market conditions, the balance between public and private (family) responsibility in buffering against social risks, a gender division of labour within families and society, and (gendered) social norms and cultural values (Saraceno et al., 2022).
However, over the decades, the socio-economic and political events that marked the European countries modified and reshaped these models.
Thus, in this research, the welfare state models are adopted as an ideal socio-economic scheme to simplify and categorize European countries.
[95] The selection of the countries happened in the first year of the PhD, mainly between April and June 2021. Thus, the data adopted were the ones available at that time.

2.   Reporting fewer allocations for social protection benefits aimed at reducing social exclusion and inequality. The research compares the results provided by ESSPROS of each Member state in the year 2018[96] and how these resources have changed since 2008. Through these observations, it is possible to determine which country per welfare regime has the lowest level of allocations to fight exclusion and inequality;

3.   Receiving comments and recommendations related to social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs between 2011 and 2020 (Appendix G).

Thus, among the countries of the same welfare state regime, the one (or one of those) performing worse than others was the one picked.

Furthermore, as the research will take place in the capital cities of these countries, they need to be as much as possible alike. Thus, they must have at least 500.000 inhabitants. For this reason, the study excluded Luxembourg, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta from the selection.

4.1 Mediterranean model – Italy (Rome)

The Southern or Mediterranean welfare is prevalent in Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Malta, and Cyprus. Its core feature is the essential role of the family in supporting its socially unprotected members. Thus, its principal aspects are a high segmentation of status and rights, conditioned access to social provisions, a relevant role of trade, a low re-distribution, and a high level of poverty.

These countries were the ones most hit by the economic and financial crisis of 2008. Some of them are still recovering since then.

Among these countries, the research selected Italy as, in 2019, it registered the highest levels of the Gini coefficient and the 80/S20 Ratio at the national level. Moreover, even though Greece increased the most its level of AROPE between 2008 and 2019, Italy witnessed a higher growth in the S80/S20 ratio and Gini coefficient (Table 4.1).

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[96] Ibiden.

Table 4.1 – AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio in Mediterranean countries in 2019, and their difference between 2008 and 2019 (Eurostat, Source: ILC_PEPS01, TESSI190, TESSI180)

	2019			Difference between 2019-2008		
	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio
EL	30	31	5.1	1.9	-2.4	-0.8
ES	25	33	5.9	1.5	0.6	0.4
IT	26	33	6.0	0.1	1.6	0.8
PT	22	32	5.2	-4.4	-3.9	-1.0

Furthermore, observing the share of GDP invested in social protections for tackling social exclusion and inequality, Portugal was the Mediterranean country that allocated fewer resources (0,9) in 2018 (Table 4.2). Albeit Italy was the one that assigned and increased the most these shares (2,4 in 2018 and +1,2 compared to 2008), the CSRs underlined that the social protections promoted by Italy are still weak, fragmented, and ineffective (Table 4.3).

Table 4.2 – Percentage of GDP spent on social protection benefits for reducing inequality and exclusion and by functions, and differences between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, Source: spr_exp_sum)

	2018					Difference between 2018-2008				
	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion
EL	25,2	1,4	0,9	0	0,5	2,8	0,1	-0,3	-0,1	0,5
ES	23,2	2	1,7	0,1	0,2	2,1	-0,7	-0,6	-0,1	0
IT	27,9	2,4	1,5	0	0,9	2,7	1,2	0,4	0	0,8
PT	23,1	0,9	0,7	0	0,2	0,8	-0,4	-0,3	0	-0,1

Finally, Italy received several comments and recommendations concerning inequality, social exclusion, and poverty (Table 4.3). Since 2013, the CSRs kept pointing out a rise in people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, a decline in household disposable income, and insufficient social expenditures. These tendencies were mainly due to the financial crisis

of 2008 and the weakness and fragmentation of the provision of social assistance. Moreover, since 2018, differently from the European trend, the rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion has continued to increase. This countertrend mainly affected children, people with a migrant background, and temporary workers. Regarding the latter, the CSRs spotlighted a rise in in-work poverty. In addition, also income inequality is high and rising with substantial regional disparities.

Hence, notwithstanding the recommendations on strengthening the social assistance scheme and guaranteeing appropriate targeting, in 2019, the CSRs affirmed that the impact of social transfers on reducing poverty and inequality in Italy is one of the lowest in the EU. Finally, as, already before the Covid-19 pandemic, the social situation was slowly improving, the CSRs foresaw that consequent crises might exacerbate and raise the disparities, especially among the most vulnerable groups.

Table 4.3 - Presence of recommendations (R) and comments (C) on social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs in the Mediterranean countries between 2011 and 2020

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
EL																		X		X
ES			X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X		X		X		X
IT					X	X	X			X		X		X		X		X		X
PT								X				X				X		X		

4.2 Continental model – Belgium (Brussels)

The corporatist welfare, also known as the Continental model, is prevalent in Austria, Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Its fundamental principle is security. It assumes that social support is given to those already represented in the labour market, and it depends on the social accumulation of this exact person. Thus, its main features are a variety of degrees of decommodification and stratification, a high level of expenses on social support, insurance schemes insider/outsider divide, a male breadwinner model, and a moderate level of poverty.

The countries that belong to this welfare state regime handled and coped better with the economic and financial crisis of 2008 than other European countries. Notwithstanding this

ability, in the last decades, the rise of inequality and exclusion occurred even there. These differences and gaps among groups appeared more evidently and widely in the cities of these nations (Tammaru et al., 2016; Dikeç, 2017). Moreover, the CSRs have pointed out that the most marginalized and non-European groups face higher risks of poverty and disadvantages. Thus, inequality and social exclusion are a concern and threaten the social stability of these areas and countries.

Among these countries, the research selected Belgium as, in 2019, it had the highest levels of AROPE among Continental countries, notwithstanding the low levels of the Gini coefficient and S80/S20 ratio (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 – AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio in Scandinavian countries in 2019, and their difference between 2008 and 2019 (Eurostat, Source: ILC_PEPS01, TESSI190, TESSI180)

	2019			Difference between 2019 - 2008		
	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio
BE	20	25	3.6	-1.3	-2.4	-0.5
DE	17	30	4.9	-2.7	-0.5	0.1
FR	18	29	4.3	-0.6	-0.6	-0.1
NL	17	27	3.9	1.6	-0.8	-0.1
AT	17	28	4.2	-3.7	-0.2	0.0

Moreover, observing the percentages of GDP for social protections for combating inequality and exclusion, in 2018, the Continental country that allocated fewer resources was Germany (1,6), followed by Austria (2,1). Although the share of GDP spent by Belgium on social protections for combating inequality and exclusion in 2018 was in line with the other continental countries (2,7), it decreased the most these benefits between 2008 and 2018 (- 1,4) (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 – Percentage of GDP spent on social protection benefits for reducing inequality and exclusion and by functions, and differences between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, Source: spr_exp_sum)

	2018					Difference between 2018-2008				
	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion
BE	27,3	2,7	1,8	0,2	0,7	1	-1,4	-1,4	0	0
DE	28,5	1,6	0,9	0,5	0,2	2,3	-0,5	-0,5	-0,1	0,1
FR	31,4	3,6	1,9	0,7	1	2,7	0,5	0,4	-0,1	0,2
NL	27,1	2,9	0,9	0,5	1,5	2,4	0,5	0,2	0,2	0,1
AT	28,3	2,1	1,5	0,1	0,5	1,6	0,2	0,2	-0,1	0,1

Moreover, Belgium has received more comments on exclusion and inequality than other Continental countries (Table 4.6). Since 2013, the CSRs pointed out that those with a migrant background, the elderly, and low-skilled youth were the groups with the lowest participation in the labour market and more exposed to poverty and social exclusion. In particular, people with a migrant background are more likely to face inequality, exclusion, and disparities. The differences in the level of education between these groups partially explain this gap. However, the CSRs highlights this issue as, in Belgium, the employment gap between Europeans and non-Europeans born was the highest in the Union. Hence, in 2017, the CSRs recommended ensuring "that the most disadvantaged groups, including people with a migrant background, have equal access to quality education, vocational training, and the labour market"[97]. Furthermore, in 2020, the distance learning caused by the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated these inequalities. For instance, the equipment and internet connections were not equally available for all the students.

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[97] https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2017-05/2017-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations-belgium.pdf.

Table 4.6 – Presence of recommendations (R) and comments (C) on social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs in the Continental countries between 2011 and 2020

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
AT						X														X
BE						X						X	X	X		X		X		
DE												X		X				X		X
FR							X							X	X	X		X		
NL																				

4.3 Scandinavian model – Sweden (Stockholm)

The so-called Nordic or Scandinavian model is prevalent in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. Its fundamental principle is egalitarianism, and its principal characteristics are a strong universalism, a dual-earning model, a robust intervention of the state through social expenditure, social and labour market policies, and a low level of poverty. Hence, the countries that belong to this welfare state regime are known for their high standard of living, working, and societal conditions. Nevertheless, in the last decades, multiple changes in social, housing, and economic policies have transformed the ability of their welfare to cover and assist all. It has particularly relevant concerning migrants and refugees. Thus, people with a migrant background, the long-term unemployed and low-skilled workers remain a challenge in these countries. Among these countries, the research selected Sweden as, in 2019, it had the highest levels of AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio compared to Denmark and Finland (Table 4.7). Moreover, between 2008 and 2019, the AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio increased more in Sweden than in Finland or Denmark.

Table 4.7 – AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio in Scandinavian countries in 2019, and their difference between 2008 and 2019 (Eurostat, Source: ILC_PEPS01, TESSI190, TESSI180)

	2019			Difference between 2019 - 2008		
	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio
DK	16	28	4.1	0	2.4	0.5
FI	16	26	3.7	-1.8	-0.1	-0.1
SE	19	28	4.3	2.1	2.5	0.6

Moreover, Sweden experienced several policy changes in the last decades[98]. Within this perspective, observing the percentages of social protections for combating inequality and exclusion, in 2018, Sweden allocated the lowest share of GDP compared to Denmark and Finland. Moreover, between 2008 and 2018, Sweden did not increase these expenditures as much as the other Scandinavian countries (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 – Share of GDP spent on social protection benefits for reducing inequality and exclusion by functions and differences between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, Source: spr_exp_sum)

	2018					Difference between 2018-2008				
	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion
DK	30,5	3,5	1,3	0,7	1,5	1,1	1	0,2	0,1	0,7
FI	29,6	3,5	1,8	0,9	0,8	5,3	0,8	0,1	0,5	0,2
SE	27,7	2,1	0,9	0,4	0,8	0,6	0,3	0,1	0	0,2

Finally, Sweden was the Scandinavian country that received more comments on inequality and exclusion in CSRs (Table 4.9). Although they were not direct recommendations, between 2016 and 2019, the Commission pointed out how the arrival of refugees and new migration influxes impacted Sweden socially and economically. Moreover, the lack of available and affordable housing represented a limit to the integration of migrants and a cause of intergenerational inequality.

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[98] The economic reforms implemented in the past three decades, under both social democratic and centre-right governments, were far away from social democratic ideals. "With these reforms, austerity policies started cutting welfare back, the emphasis on full employment and redistribution of income gave way to deregulation, benefit cuts, deficit reduction and even to the introduction of collectively financed but privately organized public services such as education and healthcare" (Dikeç, 2017: 119). On the other hand, the shifting in housing policy occurring since the 1990s resulted in unaffordable housing. It produces socio-spatial segregation – especially in the Stockholm region – and a 'double sorting' process whereby low-income natives tend to live in other areas than low-income non-Western immigrants (Tammaru et al., 2016).

Table 4.9 – Presence of recommendations (R) and comments (C) on social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs in the Scandinavian countries between 2011 and 2020

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
DK																				
FI																X				X
SE												X		X		X		X		

4.4 Eastern European model – Romania (Bucharest)

Beblavy (2008) defined the Eastern European model as the welfare regimes adopted in the former communist countries that joined the European Union. Thus, they are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia.

After the fall and dissolution of the USSR (1988-1991), the former communist countries declared their independence and began a socioeconomic transition. Globalisation and neo-liberalisation processes profoundly hit and impacted these countries, causing a rise in income inequality and changes in housing policies (Tammaru et al., 2016). Notwithstanding this shared history, each country experienced different socioeconomic and political changes. Hence, their welfare regimes differ[99] (Beblavy, 2008). For instance, the expenses for social support are low in the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), moderate in Bulgaria and Romania, and high in the Visegrád States (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia) and Slovenia.

However, the welfare state of these countries is still in transition and development. According to Beblavy (2008), the size and shape of these welfare states depend on the size of ethnic heterogeneity and the shock undergone by each economy during the transition. Nevertheless, within the Eastern European countries, the shared features are a withdrawal of the state from the (public) welfare sector and the introduction of an institutionally pluralised welfare system (Sengoku, 2002).

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[99] Notwithstanding these differences, in this research, the Eastern European regime is considered a unique one. Hence, it is adopted as an ideal-type model to facilitate the selection and evaluation of countries.

Moreover, they are the youngest Member States as they joined the European Union in 2004 (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic), in 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) and in 2013 (Croatia).

Among these countries, the research selected Romania as, in 2019, it was the second country with the highest levels of AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio (Table 7). Even though Bulgaria reported the worse levels of all these indicators, Romania also reported the lowest share of social protections for tackling social exclusion and inequality (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 – AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio in Eastern countries in 2019, and their difference between 2008 and 2019 (Eurostat, Source: ILC_PEPS01, TESSI190, TESSI180)

	2019			Difference between 2008-2019		
	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio
BG	33	41	8.1	-12.0	4.9	1.6
CZ	13	24	3.3	-2.8	-0.7	-0.1
HR	23	29	4.8		-2.4	-0.8
LV	27	35	6.5	-6.9	-0.7	-0.3
LT	26	35	6.4	-2.0	0.9	0.3
HU	19	28	4.2	-9.3	2.8	0.6
PL	18	29	4.4	-12.3	-3.5	-0.8
RO	31	35	7.1	-13.0	-1.1	0.1
SK	16	23	3.3	-4.2	-0.9	0.0

Moreover, observing the percentages of GDP spent on social protections for combating inequality and exclusion, in 2018, the Eastern country that allocated fewer resources was Romania (0,2) (Table 4.11). Furthermore, between 2008 and 2018, Romania was one of the countries that decreased these expenditures for inequality and exclusion the most (- 0,3).

Table 4.11 – Percentage of GDP spent on social protection benefits for reducing inequality and exclusion and by functions, and differences between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, Source: spr_exp_sum)

	2018					Difference between 2018-2008				
	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion
BG	16,4	0,7	0,5	0	0,2	2,2	0,1	0,2	0	-0,1

CZ	17,9	0,8	0,4	0,2	0,2	0,7	-0,1	-0,2	0,1	0
HR	20,9	0,9	0,6	0	0,3	2,8	0,5	0,4	0	0,1
LV	15	0,8	0,6	0,1	0,1	3,2	0	0,1	-0,1	0
LT	15,5	1,1	0,7	0,1	0,3	0	0,5	0,3	0,1	0,1
HU	17,3	1	0,3	0,5	0,2	-4,6	-0,6	-0,5	-0,2	0,1
PL	19,1	0,3	0,2	0	0,1	0,3	-0,4	-0,2	-0,1	-0,1
RO	14,6	0,2	0,1	0	0,1	1,1	-0,3	-0,1	0	-0,2
SK	17,4	0,8	0,5	0,1	0,2	2,2	-0,2	-0,1	0,1	-0,2

Finally, Romania received several comments and recommendations about inequality, social exclusion, and poverty (Table 4.12). Since 2013, the CSRs kept pointing out that poverty and social exclusion remained a crucial challenge, especially for disadvantaged groups, i.e., Roma, children, the elderly, and people in rural areas. Even if social exclusion and poverty constantly and consistently decreased since 2008, they still affect more than 30% of the population in 2019. Specifically, in 2013, 49% of children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion while, in 2019, housing deprivation was one of the highest in Europe. On the other hand, since 2008, Romania has experienced a rise in inequality, especially related to income and education. According to the CSRs, the causes of these inequalities and exclusion are unequal access to health care, education, services, and the labour market. To alleviate these issues, the CSRs recommended increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of social transfers, reforming social assistance and strengthening its links with activation measures and improving the quality and inclusiveness of education.

Notwithstanding these recommendations, social benefits and services kept being inadequate. From 2013 to 2020, the CSRs denounced that they had a limited impact and coverage (Table 4.12). The social services had insufficient quality and uneven geographical distribution, not correlated with the specific needs of communities. In addition, the measures that should handle and solve the causes of exclusion and poverty were constantly delayed or postponed[100]. In addition, the taxes and social transfers are inadequate and

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[100] To give an idea, planned for 2015, the Minimum Insertion Income combining three existing social benefits (the Guaranteed Minimum Income, the family allowance and the heating benefits) was delayed in 2014. At the same time, the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy started in 2012 needed to be revised as the financial allocations were insufficient and the results modest. This revision and its actions were delayed. Another example is that, in 2015, the implementation of the social assistance reform proposed in 2011

insufficient. Hence, the difference between income inequality before and after taxes and social transfers is among the smallest in Europe. Moreover, in 2017, the CSRs underlined the presence and prevalence of undeclared work and its role in weighing on tax revenue, distorting the economy, and undermining the fairness and effectiveness of the tax and benefits system. In addition, the weak performance of the education system contributed to the high inequality of opportunities.

The Covid-19 pandemic worsened the situation and impacted the socio-economic conditions. Thus, in 2020, the CSRs expected poverty, social exclusion, in-work poverty, child poverty, and income inequality to increase. The groups more exposed to these deteriorations are the most disadvantaged, i.e., the non-standard workers, undeclared workers, the self-employed, Roma, people with disabilities, the elderly and the homeless. This forecasting is particularly worrying as, in 2020, the coverage and adequacy of social protection and transfers remain limited.

Table 4.12 - Presence of recommendations (R) and comments (C) on social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs in the Eastern countries between 2011 and 2020

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
BG	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X		X
CZ																				X
HR							X							X	X	X	X	X		X
HU		X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X				X
LT		X			X	X	X					X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LV		X			X	X	X			X		X		X		X	X	X		
PL					X															X
RO					X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	X	X		X
SK			X	X									X	X			X	X		

4.5 Anglo-Saxon model – the United Kingdom (London)

Liberal or Anglo-Saxon welfare is prevalent in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Its name derives from its liberal attitude to the market, as the state intervenes only to reduce, prevent, and handle extreme forms of marginality. Thus, the state provides social benefits to all in

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was still behind schedule. Then, in 2016, the Minimum Inclusion Income Law, which should increase the coverage and adequacy of social assistance, was sent to the Parliament for adoption. However, it was postponed to 2021.

need while the citizens accumulate social funds. Its key traits are a Beveridgean encompassing schemes, a weak universalism, a considerable portion of the funds to the working-age population, and the means-tested benefits for the poor, working poor, and excluded.

The economic and financial crisis of 2008 particularly hit Ireland. On the other, the United Kingdom experienced and witnessed the rise of exclusion and inequality and the consequent riots and manifestations (Dikeç, 2017).

The research selected the United Kingdom as, in 2019[101], it had higher levels of AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio than Ireland (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 – AROPE, Gini coefficient, and S80/S20 Ratio in Anglo-Saxon countries in 2018, and their difference between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, Source: ILC_PEPS01, TESSI190, TESSI180)

	2019			Difference between 2019-2008		
	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio	AROPE	Gini coefficient	S80/S20 Ratio
IE	21	28	4.0	-3.1	-2	-0.4
UK	23	34	5.6	-0.1	-0.4	0

Furthermore, observing the percentages of GDP spent on social protections for combating inequality and exclusion, in 2018, Ireland and the United Kingdom allocated fewer resources compared to 2008 (respectively, -1,4 and -0,7). Nevertheless, between 2008 and 2018, the United Kingdom increased the percentages of expenditure for social protection overall (+0,8) but decreased the ones for social exclusion and inequality (-0,7). Differently, Ireland diminished both (respectively, -6,6 and -1,4) (Table 4.14).

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[101] Here, in the UK, the difference is between 2008 and 2018, as there are no data for 2019.

Table 4.14 – Percentage of GDP spent on social protection benefits for reducing inequality and exclusion and by functions, and differences between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, Source: spr_exp_sum)

	2018					Difference between 2018-2008				
	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion	GDP for all social protections benefits	GDP for Inequality &Social exclusion	GDP for Unemployment	GDP for Housing	GDP for Social exclusion
UK	25,5	1,9	0,3	1,1	0,5	0,8	-0,7	-0,3	0	-0,4
IE	13,6	1,4	0,8	0,5	0,1	-6,6	-1,4	-1	-0,1	-0,3

Finally, the United Kingdom received almost as many comments and recommendations as Ireland (Table 4.15). Regarding the United Kingdom, the CSRs pointed out that, due to reforms and cutbacks, children and low-skilled workers are more likely and exposed to exclusion and poverty than others. Moreover, the housing costs and complex land market regulation represented a factor for intergenerational inequality. In addition, in 2020, the CSRs spotlights that the fare cuts and reforms might undermine the poverty-reducing effect of the United Kingdom tax-benefit system. Furthermore, before the Covid-19 pandemic, the risk of poverty or social exclusion was already increasing. Thus, in 2020, the CSRs foresaw that the crises resulting from the pandemic impacted more vulnerable groups.

Table 4.15 – Presence of recommendations (R) and comments (C) on social exclusion and inequality in the CSRs in the Anglo-Saxon countries between 2011 and 2020

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
IE							X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X				X
UK				X	X		X							X		X		X		X

Chapter 5 – Case studies: inequality and social exclusion in European cities

This chapter attempts to answer to the first part of the second question of the research, i.e., how social exclusion and inequality manifest in European cities according to vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods. This description results from the engagement through interviews with associations and organizations that work with, help, and defend the most excluded people and groups[102] in the capital cities selected. In addition, the interviews also included experts that study these dynamics. During the research period, one hundred and fifty-four interviews were conducted (Appendix A).

This chapter has one paragraph per each city and one dedicated to the similarities and differences emerged. More precisely, each paragraph has three sections. The first part introduces the context and the previous studies on social exclusion and inequality in the considered city. The second one presents how the interviewees describe social exclusion and inequality and their drivers in their cities. The last section reports the groups most affected by these dynamics and the changes that occurred.

5.1 Rome

This paragraph presents how social exclusion and inequality manifest in the Italian capital by reporting the results of a study conducted in Rome between September and December 2021. The data was gathered by engaging with the Roman most vulnerable communities

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[102] As social exclusion and inequality have several facets and dimensions, the organizations involved engage with different types of vulnerable people (i.e., economically disadvantaged people, homeless, Roma communities, undocumented people, segregated communities, children or elderly in precarious conditions, etc.). Thus, they operate through different services and aids.

and neighbourhoods[103]. During the research period, forty-nine interviews[104] have been conducted (Figure 5.1 and Appendix A).

Figure 5.1 – List of experts and associations participating in the research by municipality
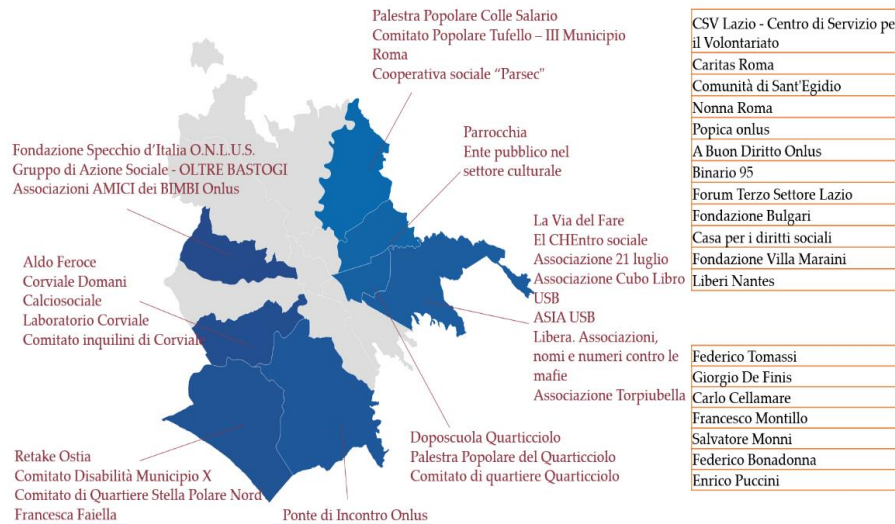

5.1.1 Context and previous studies

Capital since 1870, Rome is the most extended and populated city[105] in Italy. Geographically speaking, since 1977, it has been divided into 155 urbanistic areas clustered into fifteen municipalities since 2013 (Figure 5.2).

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[103] Precisely, the neighbourhoods which participated are: Fidene and Tufello in the Municipality III; San Basilio in Municipality III, Quarticciolo in Municipality V; Torre Maura, Tor Bella Monaca, and Giardinetti-Tor Vergata in Municipality VI; Laurentino 38 in Municipality IX; Acilia and Ostia in Municipality X; Corviale in Municipality XI; and Bastogi in Municipality XIV.

[104] The associations which participated are: Palestra Popolare Colle Salario; Comitato Popolare Tufello – III Municipio Roma; Cooperativa sociale "Parsec"; Parrocchia San Basilio; Ente pubblico nel settore culturale di San Basilio; Doposcuola Quarticciolo; Palestra Popolare del Quarticciolo; Comitato di quartiere Quarticciolo; La Via del Fare; El CHEntro sociale; Associazione 21 luglio; Associazione Cubo Libro; USB; ASIA USB; Libera; Associazione Torpiubella; Comitato di Quartiere Torrenova - Tor Vergata; Ponte di Incontro Onlus; Comitato Disabilità Municipio X; Comitato di Quartiere Stella Polare Nord; Francesca Faiella (scrittrice); Retake Ostia; Aldo Feroce (fotografo); Corviale Domani; Calciosociale; Laboratorio Corviale; Comitato inquilini di Corviale; Fondazione Specchio d'Italia O.N.L.U.S.; Gruppo di Azione Sociale - OLTRE BASTOGI; Associazione AMICI dei BAMBINI Onlus; CSV Lazio; Caritas Roma; Comunità di Sant'Egidio; Nonna Roma; Popica onlus; A Buon Diritto Onlus; Binario 95; Forum Terzo Settore Lazio; Fondazione Bulgari; Casa per i diritti sociali; Fondazione Villa Maraini; and Liberi Nantes. The experts who participated are: Federico Tomassi; Giorgio De Finis; Carlo Cellamare; Francesco Montillo; Salvatore Monni; Federico Bonadonna; and Enrico Puccini.

[105] According to ISTAT (2011, 2022), it has a surface of 1287 km² and an official population of 2.758.334 people. However, according to the Telco data and the analysis conducted by the "Camera di Commercio Roma", the actual residents are around 3,3 million people. Moreover, daily, there is an average of 230 thousand tourists in Rome (https://www.rm.camcom.it/archivio27_focus_0_582_0_10.html).

Figure 5.2 - Urbanistic areas and municipalities of Rome (Fonte: Ufficio di Statistica di Roma Capitale)
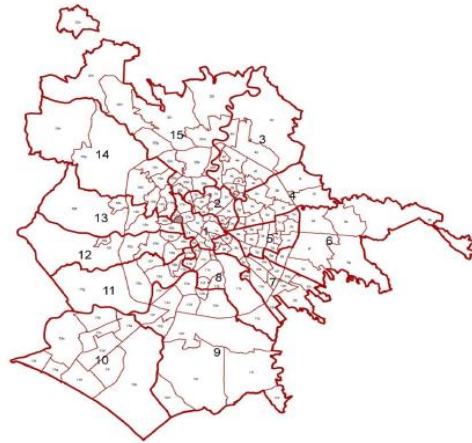
Several scholars have pointed out that Rome is a strongly unequal city in socio-urbanistic, economic, and ethnic manners (e.g., Colone et al., 2020; De Muro et al., 2011; Lelo et al., 2019, 2021). The roots of these disparities are embedded in the socio-economic changes, urban sprawl, and inefficient governance that characterized Rome in the last centuries.

In the end of 1800s, Rome missed industrialization, kept being a political and administrative city due to the decision of the Roman aristocracy (Lelo et al., 2021; Insolera, 1993). Nevertheless, since the beginning of the 1900s, it experienced urban and demographic changes. On the one hand, uninterrupted demographic growth and migration flow from the countryside and the Southern regions of Italy hit Rome. It resulted in the formation and expansion of the periphery (Insolera, 1993). On the other hand, the rise of fascism and its policies changed the shape of Rome through the disembowelment of the city centre and the repositioning of its households. Hence, during the 1930s, the fascist regime had to deal with this exponential rise in the population and the consequential need for housing. They responded through the construction of the "*borgate*", i.e., neighbourhoods for the poorer classes, the people living in the barracks, and the residents forced to move out due to the disembowelment of the city centre (Villani, 2012; Commissione Parlamentare d'inchiesta, 2018; Insolera, 1993). Built rapidly and with low-quality materials, the conditions of these
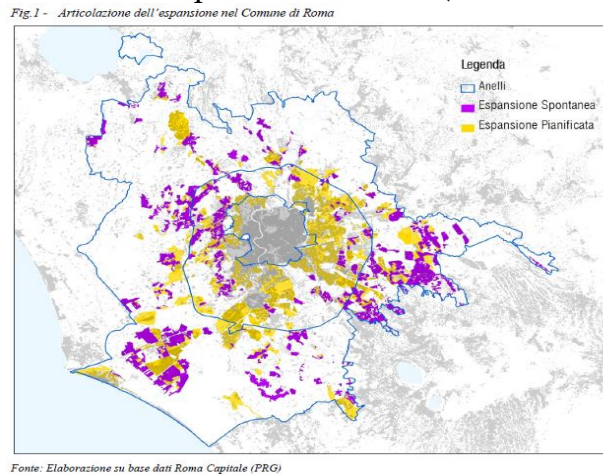
estates and their residents quickly became catastrophic and unbearable. Thus, the concept of *borgata* assumed a derogatory connotation[106].

After World War II, Rome as well as the rest of Italy faced the consequences of the conflict, a period of reconstruction, and industrial development. The '50s and '60s represented the decades of the economic "boom" or "miracle", which coincided with rising demographic growth. Even if Rome was not a protagonist city of this industrial progress, an intense urbanistic development began (Celata, Luccarini, 2016; Cerasoli, 2008; Lelo et al., 2021). In those years, Rome grew like wildfire and, due to the excuse of urgency and the need for housing, its limits were pushed far away by territorial exploitation (Insolera, 1993). These developments involved private and public initiatives through different directions and plans[107]. In addition, in correspondence with these new constructions, unauthorized developments arose. Hence, between 1951 and 1971, there was a grey urban policy characterized by housing emergencies, illegitimate buildings, and public amnesties (Celata, Lucciarini, 2016; Cerasoli, 2008; Lelo et., 2021; Insolera, 1993; Causi, Guerrieri, 2017). Figure 5.3 highlights in yellow the areas where the planned expansion occurred and in purple the spontaneous one.

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[106] It refers to a "subspecies of hamlet: a piece of city in the middle of the countryside, which in reality is neither one nor the other" [my translation] (Insolera, 1993: 135-136). In addition, as these neighbourhoods often hosted unemployed and under-occupied people, the prejudice against these residents soon came. These images of these neighbourhoods became the basis for the afterwards disparities and territorial stigmatization of peripheries (Cerasoli, 2008; Wacquant, 2007, 2008, 2014).

[107] The private initiative moved according to a twofold direction. On the one hand, it aims at filling and completing the already begun neighbourhoods. On the other, it focuses on urbanising the peripherical areas not built yet (Insolera, 1993). Simultaneously, the national Ina-Casa plan drew the planning and reconstruction of public housing (Lelo et al., 2019; 2021). Moreover, law 167/1962 introduced the Piano per l'Edilizia Economica e Popolare di Roma.

Figure 5.3 – Planned and informal expansion of Rome (Commissione d'Inchiesta, 2018: 263)

Fig.1 - Articolazione dell'espansione nel Comune di Roma

Fonte: Elaborazione su base dati Roma Capitale (PRG)

The '70s and '80s were a period of modernization and transition toward the tertiary sector (De Muro et al., 2011). This process saturated the housing market in the city centre and enlarged the border outside the *Grande Raccordo Anulare*. In these decades, several public neighbourhoods emerged, such as Tor Bella Monaca, Corviale, and Laurentino 38. These areas were built quickly, with prefabricated materials, and without services or connections with the city centre (Cellamare, Montillo, 2020; Macioti, 2019; Lelo et al., 2019). As happened to the fascist *borgate*, these neighbourhoods soon became places of marginalization, depravation, exclusion, and inequality due to the lack of active working and inclusive policies.

The '90s and the successive three decades represented a turning point on several levels. Firstly, regarding politics, in the 1990s, a political and administrative turn happened. Between 1993 and 2008, the governments of Veltroni and Rutelli started a structural change and a deep transformation of the city through the "Rome model" (Lelo et al., 2019; 2021; Bonadonna et al., 2013; De Muro et al., 2011; D'Albergo, Moini, 2015). This process increased the PIL, but the benefits of these developments were not distributed equally among the areas and social classes. This model lasted until the financial crisis of 2008, which produced the beginning of the Roman economic and occupational decline (Lelo et al., 2019). Secondly, regarding economics, the 1990s represented the beginning of the regime of accumulation and the structural change toward the knowledge-based economy (De Muro et al., 2011; Lelo et al., 2021). It went hand in hand with the "Rome model" but, as mentioned, they had a

flipside. Indeed, the economic growth they produced was not homogeneous. Thus, processes of segregation, polarization, and exclusion increased (De Muro et al., 2011). Thirdly, regarding urban development, the general plan promoted poles of socio-economic attraction in the peripheries. It was a neoliberal model oriented toward entertainment, decentralization, and polycentrism (Cellamare, 2016). Concretely, it resulted in the construction of malls without infrastructures and services, unable to connect and include these areas. The consequential extension of the city aggravated the disparities between the centre and periphery, resulting in areas even more isolated and general discontent among the residents. Moreover, in the last three decades, the conditions of public housing and neighbourhood did not improve (Puccini, Tomassi, 2019). Fourthly, since the 1990s, global processes have shaped Rome, namely globalization, the rise of migration flows, the financial crisis, the retreat of the urban welfare, the working precariat, etc. In this regard, new categories of people at risk of poverty and exclusion emerged, such as migrants, refugees, unemployed, homeless, Roma community, etc. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting crisis made Rome even more impoverished, fragmented, and polarized (Lelo et al., 2021; Caritas, 2022).

The literature regarding inequality and exclusion includes several studies[108]. However, the most recent and comprehensive analyses are the *Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sulle periferie* in 2016 and the maps produced by Lelo, Monni and Tomassi in 2019 and 2021. Both spotlighted the concentration of these phenomena in the areas closed to or outside of the *Grande Raccordo Anulare*, in the Eastern periphery, and a few areas in the city centre. Figures 5.4 and 5.5 show geographically the socio-economic fabric of Rome. Figure 5.4 reports the indicator of social and material vulnerability[109] made by the *Commissione Parlamentare di*

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[108] Among which: Fusco, 2013; Clementi, Perego, 1983; Stecchi, 2013; Raimo, 2021; Cippollini, Truglia, 2015; Violante, 2013; Cellamare, 2019; Caritas, 2020; D'Albergo, De Leo, 2018; Galantino, Ricotta, 2014; Davoli, 2018; Associazione 21 Luglio's studies (https://www.21luglio.org/cosa-facciamo/ricerca/); Ferrigni, 2021; Davoli et al., 2020.

[109] Elaborated through the ISTAT data on the analysis of the sub-municipality areas of Rome of 2011, it combines seven indicators: (1) the percentage of population aged 25-64 analphabet; (2) the percentage of households with 6 or more components; (3) the percentage of young single parents (less than 35 years old) or adult single parents (between 35 and 64) on the total of households; (4) the percentage of households with potential assistance vulnerabilities, meaning those households composed by elderly (over 65 years old) with

inchiesta sulle periferie in 2016. The data refer to 2011, and the spectrum goes from green (lower) to red (higher).

Figure 5.4 – Rome by the indicator of social and material vulnerability (Commissione d'Inchiesta, 2016: 293. Data of 2011)
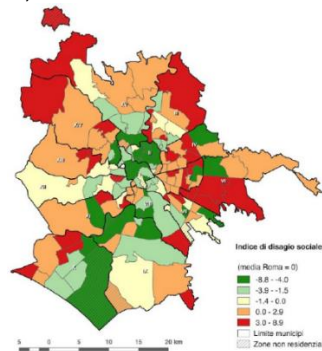

Figure 5.5 displays the seven[110] cities within Rome elaborated by Lelo, Monni, and Tomassi in 2021. According to several data and maps provided by them, they defined seven "cities": the city centre (burgundy), the rich one (ochre), the compact one (blue), the disadvantaged one (red), the city of the automobile (grey), the city-countryside (lite green), and the city of invisibles (not reported[111]).

Figure 5.5 – The «seven Romes» (Lelo et al., 2021)

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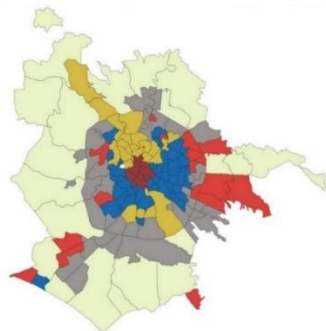
a component who is older than 80 years old; (5) the percentage of overcrowded households, calculated as the ratio between the population who live on a surface smaller than 40 m² and more than 4 tenants or 40-59 m² and more than 5 tenants or 60-79 m² and more than 6 tenants, and the total of the population residing in occupied housing; (6) the percentage of young people neither in employment nor in education or training (15-29 years old); (7) the percentage of households at risk of economic vulnerabilities, measured as the quote of households with children where none of the members is occupied or retired.

[110] Technically, Monni, Lelo, and Tomassi also individuated a seventh city which refers to the "invisible" and homeless. However, as they live in different neighbourhoods and often move around the borders of the city, it is not reported as a single area within Rome.

[111] Ibidem.

However, looking at the European data, in 2020, 25% of the Italian population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (0,2 pp less than in 2008), while the data on inequality reported that the Gini coefficient was 32,5 (1,3 pp more than in 2008) and the ratio S80/S20 5,8 (0,5 more than in 2008) (Appendix H). According to these data, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 (especially, in the case of parents with primary education attainment), unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially those not coming from other European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels (Appendix H). Moreover, in 2020, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion were more likely to face economic difficulties, be unable to buy things for themselves, and have less social life than those who do not experience AROPE (Appendix H). It is particularly concerning as these situations affect their quality of life, living conditions, and risk of experiencing and reinforcing exclusion and inequality. On the other hand, looking at the neighbourhood situation, the differences between those experiencing AROPE and those who are not at risk are less evident (Appendix H). Indeed, they are similarly likely to deal with problems with the dwelling, noise, pollution, and crime. However, regarding housing conditions, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are more likely to live in overcrowded households (Appendix H). It was particularly relevant and impacting during the Covid-19 pandemic as they did not have enough space to study, attend online classes, and work. This aspect negatively affects the physical and psychological health of households.

5.1.2 Social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees

In Rome, the interviewees defined social exclusion and inequality as the condition of not reaching the basic requirements of well-being and not having the same rights, opportunities, awareness, and tools to participate and be part of the society because of who you are, where you come from, where you live, or your socioeconomic status. They reported that they refers

to "*non avere le stesse opportunità in base a chi è e dove si vive o dove si è nati*"[112] (Interviewee ASS12_IT), "*una condizione che non permette agli abitanti di poter partecipare in maniera propositiva e attiva e costante alla vita sociale della città o di avere accesso a determinati contesti che sono poi contesti che determinano appunto la vita sociale della città*"[113] (Interviewee EXP4_IT), and "*l'impossibilità e incapacità di accedere a dei livelli minimi di benessere accettati, che però riguardano non solo il benessere appunto fisico, ma anche, per esempio certi livelli di informazione, cultura, formazione*"[114] (Interviewee ASS32_IT).

Some interviewees exemplified these dynamics through the images of the "blocked social lift" and "predestined destiny" meaning "*il fatto che ci siano intere categorie che, sin dalla nascita, hanno, diciamo, una statistica che dice loro che un ventaglio di possibilità nella vita sono escluse. E, cioè, noi oggi sappiamo che un bambino che vive, che oggi nasce, oggi stesso 1° ottobre nasce in una baraccopoli romana, non potrà mai diventare medico, avvocato, ingegnere*"[115] (Interviewee ASS11_IT).

Other interviewees underlined how social exclusion and inequality are treated as problems to tackle rather than issues to manage and plan.

> "*Fino ad oggi disuguaglianza ed esclusione sociale a Roma viene considerato come un problema da risolvere. L'errore è proprio questo, che dovrebbe essere considerato come un evento da gestire e probabilmente un investimento, qualcosa su cui investire. [..] Io credo che sia il momento che la disuguaglianza e l'esclusione sociale vengano considerati uno stato dell'essere delle grandi metropoli sul quale noi dobbiamo fare una pianificazione ragionata, intelligente, a lungo termine*"[116] (Interviewee ASS37_IT).

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[112] Translation: "not *having the same opportunities based on who you are and where you live or where you were born*".
[113] Translation: "*a condition that does not allow the inhabitants to be able to participate in a proactive and active and constant way in the social life of the city or to have access to certain contexts which are precisely those that determine the social life of the city*".
[114] Translation: "*the impossibility and inability to access the minimum accepted levels of well-being, which however concern not only physical well-being, but also, for example, certain levels of information, culture, training*".
[115] Translation: "*the fact that there are entire categories that, from birth, have, shall we say, a statistic that tells them that a range of possibilities in life are excluded. And, that is, we know today that a child who lives, who is born today, today 1 October is born in a Roman slum, will never be able to become a doctor, lawyer, engineer*".
[116] Translation: "*Until today, inequality and social exclusion in Rome is considered as a problem to be solved. This is precisely the mistake, as they should be considered as an event to be managed and probably an investment, something to invest in. [...] I believe that it is time that inequality and social exclusion are considered a state of being of large cities on which we must make a reasoned, intelligent, long-term planning*".

Hence, according to the interviewees' experiences, social exclusion and inequality can assume different layers and dimensions. As such, they affect people in their life course and every domain, risking to perdure over time and generations. In describing these aspects, the interviewees underlined the difficulties in drawing lines and borders among dimensions, drivers, and consequences. They often spotlighted how interrelated and embedded they are. For this reason, interviewees often speak of layers of vulnerability, accumulation of disparities, and vicious spirals or circles which feed and reinforce each other. Hence, the interviewees described some aspects simultaneously as dimensions, causes and consequences of social exclusion and inequality. Figure 5.6 grouped them into six principal sides, which are interrelated.

Figure 5.6 – Main dimensions, drivers, and consequences of social exclusion and inequality in Rome
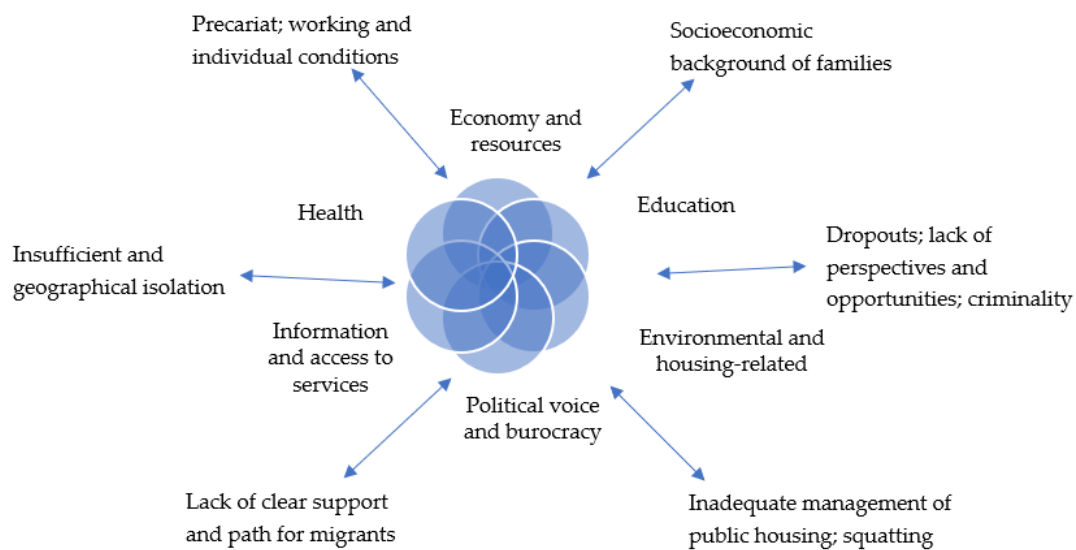
To begin with, the interviewees indicated that the economic and resources[117] dimension is the most known and evident aspect through which inequality and exclusion manifest. When people live in poverty or do not have enough funds to make ends meet, they must automatically compromise and choose how to spend their salary. Thus, it impacts their housing situation, living conditions, health, alimentations, and social life. The economic and resource dimension depends mainly on working conditions and family background. On the

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[117] By resources, the interviewees refer to the economic funds, social connections, educative background, and environmental services available.

one hand, having a good job usually guarantees a satisfied and adequate quality of life. However, in the last decades, the labour market has increasingly become precarious regardless of the people's qualifications. Simultaneously, several interviewees highlighted the difficulties in re-entering the labour market after a period of unemployment and accessing it for vulnerable categories and youth. It resulted in an insecure and unreliable working environment. Sometimes it might lead to demining, demanding, or without-contract positions. On the other hand, family background, social connections, and wealth represent a massive and predominant aspect in reducing the likelihood of ending up in poverty, exclusion, or disadvantage. Thus, having a low socioeconomic background or a difficult personal history is still one of the predominant drivers of exclusion and inequality. This economic and resource dimension is relevant due to evident wealth disparities and poverty within Rome[118]. Moreover, these differences widened over time due to the financial and economic crises that impacted disproportionally the already disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Secondly, the interviewees spotlighted the educative disparity in access and pursuit of studies. On the one hand, they pointed out the relevance of benefiting schools of all levels. Some interviewees affirmed that there are differences within Rome in terms of quantity and quality of institutes. As many interviewees reported, "*le scuole di periferia a Roma hanno il livello di didattica più basso, hanno un'edilizia scolastica di qualità inferiore, e si trova in una situazione di marginalità*"[119] (Interviewee ASS33_IT). The disparities in quality are often due to the changeableness of the teachers, lower budgets and infrastructures, and a higher

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[118] To give an idea of the differences among groups and municipalities, the data from Siatel – Agenzia delle Entrate given by the Dipartimento Risorse Economiche gives a picture (https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Il_reddito_dei_romani_2019_rev.pdf). According to them, in 2019, the individual annual income in Rome was 26.082,96€ on average. However, there are differences regarding municipality, gender, nationality, and age group. On average, municipal II was the richest one with an individual annual income of 41.513,92€, while the VI was the poorest one with 17.538,06€. At the city level, women earned less than men (21.180,9€ vs 31.172,27€), and foreigners less than Italians (14.576,41€ vs 27.567,23€). These differences are replicated in each municipality. Regarding age groups, in 2019, the category from 60-74 years old was the one who earned the most (32.041,7€), while the one under 29 years old was the least (10.277,4€). This difference in earnings was present in each municipality except in municipality II where the group earning the most was the one between 45 and 59 years old.

[119] Translation: "*suburban schools in Rome have the lowest level of teaching, lower quality school buildings, and are in a marginal situation*".

number of children attending. In terms of quantity, there are areas with fewer kindergartens, *licei* or specific high schools. These differences impact not only children's education and opportunities but also women's career.

> *"Noi in alcune nostre mappe l'abbiamo visto, c'è la nostra mappa numero venti, per esempio, è quella sulle differenze di genere, dove si vede chiaramente come l'assenza di alcuni servizi, penso agli asili nido, determini poi il fatto che in alcune zone della città noi abbiamo molte donne più laureate degli uomini e questo essere più laureate, più istruite, non corrisponde all'essere ugualmente occupate. E questo sicuramente non si può spiegare solo ed esclusivamente con la presenza o assenza di servizi, certamente quello è un elemento che ci aiuta a comprendere il fenomeno"*[120] (Interviewee EXP5_IT).

On the other hand, regarding the pursuit of studies, the interviewees reported high rates of dropping out. Leaving schools or missing academic achievements is an educative disparity. Simultaneously, though, it also generates working and participative exclusion, making people more at risk of ending up in exploitation or criminal activities. Indeed, dropping out of school at a young age (often in middle school) means not growing as a citizen and not developing specific skills and competencies for the labour market. Thus, those people are more likely to have problems accessing it and end up in low-qualified jobs or criminal dynamics.

> *"Persone che in qualche modo, già dai 12 anni in su, iniziano ad abbandonare la scuola, nonostante anche l'obbligo scolastico e cose del genere. L'incapacità della pubblica amministrazione, intesa come scuola ma anche come livelli superiori, di interessarsi a questo problema, secondo me per una mancanza di competenze, una mancanza di tempo e di interesse. Questo provoca chiaramente un'esclusione sociale, perché nel momento in cui il ragazzo cessa di andare a scuola, cessa quindi di essere formato come cittadino e diventa manovalanza della criminalità organizzata"*[121] (Interviewee ASS16_IT).

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[120] Translation: *"We have seen it in some of our maps, there is our map number twenty, for example, it is the one on gender differences, where it is clearly seen how the absence of some services, I am thinking of nursery schools, then determines the fact that in some areas of the city we have many women with higher degrees than men and this being more graduated, more educated, does not correspond to being equally employed. And this certainly cannot be explained solely and exclusively by the presence or absence of services, certainly that is an element that helps us understand the phenomenon"*.

[121] Translation: *"People who somehow from the age of 12 onwards start to drop out of school, despite compulsory schooling and stuff like that. The inability of the public administration, understood as an educative institution but also as a high school, to take an interest in this problem, in my opinion, due to a lack of skills, time, and interest. This clearly causes social exclusion, because the moment the boy stops going to school, therefore, ceases to be educated as a citizen and becomes a labour force in organized crime"*.

In addition, the interviewees spotlighted the differences in the treatments, tools, and supports given in schools, that might reinforce or push these dropouts. Specifically, they described the situation of the Roma children and those from marginalized neighbourhoods. According to the interviewees, even if the Roma children are obliged to go to school, there is a lack of care if they attend classes. For instance, the interviewees reported that they have specific buses that pick them up and bring them to the schools where they are enrolled. As it is often just one vehicle for many of them, the Roma children and teenagers arrive late at school or need to leave earlier. In doing so, they lose part of their classes, but nobody seems to care.

> *"Vai in giro con quel pulmino giallo, fai la metà delle ore scolastiche che fanno gli altri bambini perché arrivi due ore dopo e vai via ore prima perché lo stesso pulmino deve fare la raccolta di tutte le scuole. Sei considerato una specie di extraterrestre, se ti va bene riesci a prendere la terza media. Sennò non gliene frega. Insomma, non interessa a nessuno"*[122] (Interviewee ASS35_IT).

Moreover, they are often labelled as dirty or smelly and considered different. Thus, from a young age, these children experience prejudice and discrimination, which consolidate over time. Similarly, children from disadvantaged areas experience discrimination and prejudice when their teachers defined them as violent, boisterous, and unmanageable. Indeed, several interviewees reported that they are too difficult to deal with. *"Quindi per me la disparità sociale viene da lontano, viene dal fatto che qui i bambini vengono allontanati dalle classi elementari perché troppo fastidiosi perché troppo vivaci e quindi dicono: "Guarda, vieni tre volte a settimana. Così i maestri stanno tranquilli che hanno le lezioni". Anziché includerlo"*[123] (Interviewee ASS7_IT). These attitudes impact the self-perceptions, perspectives of the futures, and possibilities of these children.

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[122] Translation: *"You go around with that yellow minibus; you do half the school hours that other children do because you arrive two hours later and you leave hours earlier because the same minibus has to collect all the schools. You are considered some kind of extraterrestrial, if it goes well you can get to eighth grade. Otherwise, he doesn't care. In short, nobody cares"*.

[123] Translation: *"So for me the social disparity comes from afar, it comes from the fact that here the children are removed from the elementary classes because they are too annoying because they are too lively and therefore, they say: "Look, come three times a week. So the teachers can rest assured that they have the lessons". Instead of including it"*.

Moreover, they face differences in tools. Several interviewees pointed out that – especially during the Covid-19 pandemic – it was taken for granted that all the families have the same spaces and instruments. Thus, when the schools closed, several children remained isolated and unable to follow the classes because they did not have enough devices, rooms, or internet connections. The schools replied to this problem in a tardive and discriminatory manner. "*Praticamente i tablet li iniziarano a distribuire a maggio, quindi a fine anno scolastico*"[124] (Interviewee ASS6_IT). Thus, these children could not follow all the classes and remained behind with the programmes. Lastly, the interviewees denounced a general slowness in recognizing, intervening, and aiding disadvantaged children with learning issues (e.g., SLD). All these obstacles to enjoying a complete school experience often result in making children left behind or dropouts, especially because these episodes seem more frequent in the most vulnerable and less equipped neighbourhoods.

Moreover, dropping out of school impacts the social network of these youth and their possibilities to expand their circle of friends, perspectives, and opportunities. Indeed, they tend to close themselves in their neighbourhood like it was a stronghold. According to some interviewees, this attitude is particularly concerning as organized crime or criminality takes advantage of it as they become the only (or one of the few) options youth has. Thus, the risk for them is to remain blocked and anchored in the neighbourhood without being able to emancipate themselves[125].

> Indeed, "*c'è un effetto soglia, per cui i ragazzi che continuano a studiare smettono di vivere il quartiere, ci vengono a dormire la notte, ci continuano ad abitare perché comunque hanno 14 anni però di fatto non vivono più la socialità del quartiere. In quartiere non ci sono licei, quindi si iniziano a spostare, per motivi strettamente legati alla frequentazione della scuola però, di fatto poi vivono in altre zone. Iniziano una vita più metropolitana, mentre chi rimane in quartiere è chi smette di studiare he non necessariamente vuol dire che inizia a vendere, magari si arrangia con lavoretti o cose. Però sicuramente la presenza di 3 o 4 piazze di spaccio dentro il quartiere, è un grosso catalizzatore dei ragazzi*"[126] (Interviewee ASS8_IT).

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[124] Translation: "*Practically, they started distributing the tablets in May, therefore at the end of the school year*".

[125] Several interviewees exemplified this attitude by reporting that most youth has never been to or visited Rome's city centre.

[126] Translation: "*There is a threshold effect. So the kids who continue to study stop living in the neighbourhood, they come to sleep there at night, and they continue to live there because they're 14 but in fact, they no longer experience the*

Thirdly, in discussing exclusion and inequality, the interviewees pointed out the difficulties in accessing good quality accommodation – and related issues of public housing[127] - and the quality of neighbourhoods. The latter refers to disparities present within the municipalities of Rome. As mentioned, in the Italian capital, the gaps in services, public transportation, garbage and cleaning services, and sociosanitary, sportive or cultural structures are evident and impacting[128]. Currently, only social or volunteering realities provide for these deficiencies[129]. Thus, several interviewees pointed out that living and growing up in specific neighbourhoods significantly influence residents' lifepath and opportunities. On the other hand, the changes in the housing market made it more difficult to find adequate and approachable accommodations. Consequentially, the interviewees spotlighted a tendency to move further out from the city centre or into more deprived areas to get more accessible housing. These choices often negatively impact health, commuting time, services, etc. Both the quality of housing and neighbourhood is embedded in the management and supply of public estates. They should be the safety net to avoid ending up in deprived and unhealthy residences. However, as the management and quantity of these accommodations are insufficient[130], households living in overcrowded, unsafe, and destitute housing are concerning. In extremer cases, families and people live in squatted or illegal places as they

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sociality of the neighbourhood. There are no high schools in the neighbourhood, so they start moving, for reasons strictly related to school attendance, however, in fact, they then live in other areas. They begin a more metropolitan life, while those who stay in the neighbourhood are those who stop studying, it doesn't necessarily mean that they start selling, maybe they get by with jobs or things. But surely the presence of 3 or 4 drug dealing squares in the neighbourhood is a big catalyst for young people".

[127] The term "public building" covers several types of estates passing from the fascist *borgate* to the urban projects of the 1980s.

[128] Many interviewees stated that this problem is due to the geographical extension of Rome and the mismatch between resources and coverage of the municipality. They often exemplified this issue by affirming that the surface and population of each municipality could be comparable with a medium Italian city; however, the distribution and quantity of resources allocated are inferior.

[129] Some examples are the Palestre popolari, Calcio sociale, squadra di calcio rifugiati, etc.

[130] A part of these housings is under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Rome Capital and the other under the Region (ATER). Theoretically speaking, the assignments happen through a gradatory made by the municipality. Practically, there are not enough apartments for all the requests, and some improper or illegal allocations occurred.

Currently, according to the interviewees, most public housing residents are Italians. In the last years, the public administration started to allocate some of these accommodations for the Roma communities. This passage happened without specific policies. Thus, the integration became even more difficult integration and social rage grew.

have no other choices. Thus, public housing is "*un tema nel tema*". On the one hand, although they were supposed to be the solution to the need for housing, they became a driver of social exclusion and inequality due to their insufficiency, the lack of connections, the low and unhealthy quality, and the abandonment of their management and maintenance[131]. In some extremer cases, these accommodations became squatted or sold and bought by organized crime. On the other, these neighbourhoods with higher share of public estates witnessed an overrepresentation of social exclusion and inequality as people access these housing based on socioeconomic conditions. So, to some extent, there is a clustering of the most deprived groups in specific peripheries which adds a layer of exclusion and segregation. Indeed, they become neighbourhoods isolated geographically and in the access to services and the city.

> "*Hai una selezione, diciamo, forzata della popolazione. È come se fosse una specie di gated community al contrario, cioè siccome tu sei obbligato per legge ad assegnare queste case a nuclei che hanno criticità – e vabbè, e quello è un tema che anche giusto no, perché la casa pubblica la dai al nucleo quindi – il problema è come sono stati composti nel passato questi quartieri. Abbiamo costruito questi quartieri, diciamo molto grandi di case popolari, fra cui fra parentesi, Tor Bella Monaca con 5600 alloggi il più grande d'Italia, oltretutto esterno, collegato malissimo con la città, non in prossimità con altri quartieri, che vivono tutta una serie di barriere, anche di carattere fisiche, eccetera eccetera. È chiaro che quello lì è un fenomeno quasi di segregazione amministrativa perché, riprendendo anche il discorso che facevamo prima, se io ho un nucleo che già ha delle criticità socioeconomiche, lo metto anche in un contesto critico a livello socioeconomico, è vero che gli dai il benefit della casa, ma comunque ha pochissime chance di emanciparsi con le forze proprie. A questo devi aggiungere un altro dato che noi storicamente non facciamo politiche di accompagno all'interno degli alloggi delle case popolari. O meglio, non c'è un'integrazione fra le varie cose*"[132]
> (Interviewee EXP7_IT).

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[131] For instance, the lifts do not work; there is mould on the walls; the apartments are overcrowded; there are cracks, water leaks, issues with the sewer and garbage, etc. These dynamics make tenants' lives unbearable and unhealthy. They reduce the credibility, trust, and relationship between citizens and the public.

[132] Translation: "*you have, shall we say, a forced selection of the population. It's as if it were a sort of gated community in reverse, that is, since you are obliged by law to assign these houses to nuclei that have critical issues - and oh well, and that's an issue that is also right because you give the public house to the nucleus therefore – the problem is how these neighbourhoods were composed in the past. We have built these neighbourhoods, let's say very large, of social housing, including, Tor Bella Monaca with 5,600 lodgings, the largest in Italy, moreover external, very badly connected to the city, not in proximity to other neighbourhoods, which live a whole series of barriers, even of a physical nature, etc. This is almost a phenomenon of administrative segregation because, also taking up the discussion we made earlier, if I have a nucleus that already has socio-economic criticalities, I also put it in a critical context at a socio-economic level, you indeed*

Fourthly, the interviewees pointed out that a relevant aspect of exclusion and inequality is the possibility of enjoying the same rights as others and engaging in political processes, such as voting, joining a political organization, being part of a union, etc. Within this perspective, the interviewees denounced the situation and difficulties of those asking for the residence permit but also spotlighted the issue of the people occupying illegally[133]. Regarding the latter, article 5 of the so-called Decreto Lupi-Renzi[134], which establishes that "anyone who illegally occupies an untitled property cannot apply for residence or the connection of utilities", has a relevant impact. Not having a residence means not having access to sociosanitary services, schools, and welfare aids. During the pandemic, these issues and limits emerged as those people had difficulties getting socioeconomic support and vaccinations. The interviewees spotlighted the incapability of this law to propose a holistic and proper solution for the people and families living in these conditions. Indeed, they affirmed that it moves these groups away without a plan or programme. Some interviewees stated that what matter is not seeing them anymore. "*Da parte delle istituzioni non si è avuta altra risposta, se non lo sgombero. Poi vai dove vuoi, basta che non ti vedo*"[135] (Interviewee ASS36_IT). This law blames them for their situations, creating divisions within society and distrust of the associations and institutions that reinforce social exclusion and inequality. On the other hand, regarding the residence permit, the interviewees pointed out the centrality of the speed and clearness of the practices and bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the Italian administration is extremely complex and discriminatory to those not speaking the

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give it the benefit of the house, but in any case, he has very little chance of emancipating himself on his own. To this, you have to add another fact that historically we do not have accompaniment policies within the housing of social housing. Or rather, there is no integration between the various things".

[133] In Rome, there are different types of squatting. On the one hand, there are cases of political occupancy to proclaim or promote the right oh housing (e.g., the Housing Rights Movements). On the other, squatting represents the only and last choice of having a roof, refugee. It could be due to several reasons, e.g., poverty, discrimination, never-ending lists for social housing, etc. This thesis – and particularly this section – refers to "squatters" experiencing these latter situations.

[134] By the time I conducted the interviews, the law stated this way. However, in June 2022, the mayor of Rome – Roberto Gualtieri – signed a directive which allowed the registration and access to welfare and social assistance to the people living in occupied buildings.

[135] Translation: "*There was no other response from the institutions, other than the eviction. So, go wherever you want, as long as I don't see you".*

language or not knowing the procedures[136]. Thus, the interviewees denounced several cases of discrimination and the difficulties in reaching the state due to the lack of offices, aids, and accompaniment. Some of them described this obstacle course that migrants face as a bureaucratic mechanism of exclusion and inequality, which causes and reinforces these dynamics and has repercussions on their children. In addition, the lack of long-term plans for integration and inclusion worsens these situations and makes the voices of these groups unheard.

Moreover, in discussing social exclusion and inequality concerning the political sphere, several interviewees denounced and underlined the increasing disinterest and disfranchisement from the politics and decision-making processes. For instance, some reported the example of the last election.

> *"Basta anche leggere il voto che nessuno vuole leggere oppure fingono di non voler leggere, capito? Cioè, voglio dire a Roma non ha votato tutta. Ha votato Parioli, Prati, il centro storico e Flaminio. Il resto della città non ha votato perché non vota? Perché capisce perfettamente che chi governa i partiti, le cose sono al servizio di un'economia che non prevede che loro siano compresi, quindi voglio dire abbastanza chiaro a tutti. Poi si dice che sono distratti nelle periferie, che c'hanno altri territori, che non sono molto preparati culturalmente, che non partecipano"*[137] (Interviewee EXP2_IT).

Fifthly, the interviewees defined social exclusion and inequality as the gap in accessing services and the city. As already mentioned, most peripherical or marginal neighbourhoods have fewer structures than nearby or central ones. This disparity is often due to the lack of a holistic urban plan and proper resources to face the massive size and complexity of Rome. In addition, several barriers limit the "access to the state" due to its complexity, digitalization, and bureaucracy.

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[136] Several interviewees pointed out how the integration of migrants is handled as an emergency rather than an issue. For this reason, the solutions often are not long-term. Moreover, as the migrants do not know whom to ask for information or do not have the resources to get a lawyer, they go to the associations as there are no other institutions or centres for help.

[137] Translation: *"just read the vote that no one wants to read or they pretend not to want to read, understand? That is, I mean not all of Rome voted. Parioli, Prati, the historic centre, and Flaminio voted. The rest of the city didn't vote why aren't they voting? Because he perfectly understands that whoever governs the parties, things are at the service of an economy that doesn't expect them to be understood, so I want to say quite clearly to everyone. Then it is said that they are distracted in the suburbs, that there are other territories, that they are not very culturally prepared, that they do not participate"*.

"C'è una serie di persone che non sa neanche rapportarsi con lo Stato. Se io c'ho un figlio disabile, non so fare la richiesta per mio figlio disabile, non la sa proprio fare. [..] Per esempio, gli sportelli non sono assolutamente diffusi e, due, non c'è un accompagnamento e molte volte la burocrazia, in una città come Roma, è respingente. Uno dei dati, questo difficilmente reperibile, ma questo prova a naso, se tu vai a vedere, per esempio, quanto ci mette a riconoscere una disabilità su un bambino piccolo, in una parte di Roma e su un'altra, ti accorgerai che ci stanno un paio di anni di differenza. [..] Ci stanno parti della società che sono quelle che c'hanno meno spazio, meno risorse culturali e formative, che non accedono allo stato punto. Nessuno in questi in questi anni si è preoccupato di far sì che questa di come rimuovere 'sto gap"[138] (Interviewee ASS27a_IT).

Thus, within this perspective, not having access to services is an aspect of social exclusion and inequality but also a direct cause and consequence of living in these conditions.

Lastly, social exclusion and inequality have a sanitarian and health dimension. On the one hand, having psychological or physical problems affect the capacity and possibility to fulfil the societal life. In particular, the interviewees reported the example of the elderly and disable people who often find barriers to getting services and opportunities. In some extremer cases, they are confined and blocked in their accommodation for the lack and inadequacy of the structures. In addition, it has also consequences on their families.

"Mi toglie tutte le possibilità di poter avere una propria vita sociale, di poter avere delle amicizie, di fare rete [..] Per dire, ti concedi un cinema o un teatro o ti concedi una cena fuori e cioè sai che hai quattro ore di assistenza da dare a un'altra persona e sono 50 € alla volta, per dire per 3, 4 ore, cioè non è poco e non per le famiglie, anzi, la maggior parte delle famiglie non se lo possono permettere. A maggior ragione, chi non se lo può permettere diventa ancora più escluso in questa cosa"[139] (Interviewee ASS19_IT).

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[138] Translation: *"There is a series of people who don't even know how to relate to the state. If I have a disabled child, I don't know how to request my disabled child, he just can't do it. [..] For example, the counters are not widespread and, two, there is no accompaniment and often the bureaucracy, in a city like Rome, is repulsive. One of the data is difficult to find, but if you go and see, for example, how long it takes to recognize a disability in a small child in one part of Rome and another one, you will notice that there are a couple of years apart. [..] There are parts of society that are those that have less space, fewer cultural and educational resources, that do not have access to the state of the art. No one in these years has bothered to ensure that this is how to remove this gap".*

[139] Translation: *"It takes away from me all the possibilities of being able to have my own social life, of being able to make friends, to network [..] For example, you treat yourself to a cinema or a theater or you treat yourself to a dinner out and that is, you know that you have four hours of assistance to be given to another person and it's €50 at a time, say for 3, 4 hours, that is, it's not little and not for families, in fact, most families can't afford it. Even more so, those who cannot afford it become even more excluded in this matter".*

On the other, being or living at the marginals is more likely to face difficulties accessing and benefitting from sanitarian services. This aspect of the disparities is disproportionally present in the low socioeconomic or geographical contexts. Moreover, some interviewees spotlighted the issue of drug and substance addiction as a health aspect related, which is simultaneously cause and consequence of social exclusion and inequality. Especially, the interviewees spotlighted the difficulties and barriers that these groups of people encounter in the labour market.

5.1.3 Who is excluded and unequal

According to the interviewees, it is difficult to delineate a specific profile of who is at risk of exclusion and inequality today. Generally, they are both Italians and foreigners. Nevertheless, regardless of their nationality, excluded and unequal people tend to have similar socioeconomic, educational, living, and working characteristics, namely:

- Having a low socioeconomic background and connections;
- Living in a neighbourhood or areas with environmental and social stresses, often abandoned, and with deficient services, transport, and recreative or cultural structures. If they live in public housing without good management and interventions, they could face worse and more aggravated situations;
- Having a low educational level or having dropped out of school. It negatively impacts their ability to find a job or to reach the authorities or local entities;
- Working in low-skilled jobs or the black markets[140] or being a poor worker, unemployed, or on welfare. The most quoted occupations are the ones related to the supply and construction for men, while the care and services for women (e.g., cleaning, construction, restaurants, caregiver, under nursing, local shops, services, GIG economy, delivery, etc.). These are underpaid and tiring jobs with uncommon working time. For instance, they might work during the night or until late in the evening. It impacts the possibility of assisting and checking on their children. It also

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[140] It refers either to those working without a contract or those involved with criminality.

influences household relationships. In other cases, these jobs could affect the health of workers. This aspect was evident during the pandemic;

- Not owning an accommodation;
- Living in overcrowded households.

In addition, having specific individual characteristics (e.g., being a woman, belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community, having some psycho-physical diseases, etc.) might increase the likelihood of being excluded or mistreated in society.

However, foreigners run against even more difficulties which make inequality and exclusion harder due to the:

- The language. Moreover, there is an adding layer of difficulties for those coming from countries or contexts with low levels of schooling.

  > "*È dovuta proprio al fatto della scolarizzazione, cioè i ragazzi che vengono con una scolarizzazione medio-alta il percorso di inclusione è piuttosto rapido, cioè l'inserimento lavorativo, l'apprendimento della lingua. I ragazzi che hanno un basso tasso di scolarizzazione sono meno pronti ad adattarsi al cambiamento, ad una società che che è basata su principi diversi da quelli che a cui sono abituati*"[141] (Interviewee ASS42_IT);

- The bureaucratic barriers. Moreover, if they come from an extra-European country, they often have confused migration paths, characterized by several transfers and relocations across Europe. Due to this confusion and unclear regulation, they are often in possession of expired residence permits or visas;

- The unrecognition of education attainments;

- The discrimination in the housing and labour market;

- The non-participation in the political life of the city or the state, due to the lack of personal, time, and citizenship or other legal reasons.

Furthermore, the interviewees pointed out that social exclusion and inequality are increasing, and the few changes that occurred in the last ten years worsened these situations.

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[141] Translation: "*It is precisely due to the fact of schooling, i.e. the kids who come with a medium-high school have a rather rapid inclusion process, i.e. job placement, learning the language. Children who have a low level of education are less ready to adapt to change, to a society that is based on principles different from those they are used to*".

Nevertheless, they stated that the groups experiencing these dynamics remained the same, e.g., socio-economic disadvantaged households, single or large families, unemployed, migrants, people living in public housing or peripheries, etc. Within this perspective, the interviewees denounced social immobility in specific contexts. For instance, they reported that, even if public housing should be a temporary solution, these accommodations are often inherited with socio-economic disadvantages and backgrounds. It is problematic as these households and areas risk becoming enclaves of poverty, exclusion, and inequality.

> "*Anche a distanza di generazioni gli abitanti sono più o meno una grande fetta di quelli che sono venuti a vivere qua quando è stata fondata la borgata, 1938, abitata dal 1943, quindi siamo alla terza, quarta generazione di famiglie che continuano a rimanere, a rimanere qua. Ecco a rimanere una condizione di svantaggio rispetto a anche i quartieri limitrofi, cioè non soltanto l'esclusione rispetto agli standard del centro*"[142] (Interviewee ASS8_IT).

However, the interviewees spotlighted some changes in their conditions and the Roman context.

To begin with, they reported an entrenched and widespread impoverishment. Indeed, in addition to a "hard core" of chronic poverty that remains present and stable over time, the interviewees reported an increasing number of families and communities facing and struggling with poverty and socioeconomic difficulties. For instance, several interviewees reported examples of workers living in poverty or people having to work more than one job to make ends meet. Indeed, having a job position is not enough to guarantee a good quality of life and avoid poverty. The interviewees blame these changes on the disappearance of the middle class, the financial crises of 2008 and 2011, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the resulting crisis. These issues, combined with the structural, political, economic, and global processes, aggravated living conditions and quality of life for several Romans.

Secondly, the interviewees denounced how the constant cuts to services and retreat of welfare widened the gaps. Within this perspective, they stated a lack of governance and

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[142] Translation: "*Even after generations, the inhabitants are more or less a large portion of those who came to live here when the village was founded, 1938, inhabited since 1943, so we are in the third, fourth generation of the family who continue to stay, stay here. Here remains a condition of disadvantage compared to even the neighbouring districts, that is, not only the exclusion compared to the standards of the centre*".

planning to tackle social exclusion and inequality. Indeed, the municipality often proposed solutions without a long-term plan or goals. In extreme cases, the interviewees questioned the interests and willingness of local as well as national institutions in resolving these situations.

Furthermore, focusing on the conditions of peripherical neighbourhoods and public housing, the interviewees underlined that the municipality did not take care of their properties and lack of long-term governance of these areas. As some reported, it just made some cosmetic actions. So, the municipality tried to improve and beautify these districts without dealing with the causes of their discomfort.

Thirdly, in the last decades, the interviewees spotlighted economic and urban changes that push and move further out of the city centre of the socioeconomically disadvantaged population. It results in a different socio-demographic composition of the different areas of the city.

> *"Intanto la città era diversa, trent'anni fa. Oggi la città si è spopolata al centro, dove vivono principalmente persone anziane, come dicevo, e i giovani sono andati fuori o fuori dal Grande Raccordo Anulare o addirittura nei 120 comuni dell'hinterland della città metropolitana e quindi, appunto, una periferizzazione della periferia, mi verrebbe da dire. Questo è successo negli ultimi trent'anni. Quindi, la popolazione è la stessa, proprio perché trent'anni fa era sempre 2 milioni e 8 per intenderci, ma i romani non sono più gli stessi"*[143] (Interviewee EXP5_IT).

Fourthly, the interviewees underlined some changes among and towards migrants. On the one hand, they individuated some changes in the countries of origin. For instance, in the 2000s, the main groups coming were from Eastern Europe or South America, while in the last years, they are mainly from South Asia and Africa. On the other hand, the attitude towards migrants worsened due to political decisions (e.g., Decreto Sicurezza). "*Quello è stato proprio devastante, quindi ha determinato un aumento di persone che si sono rivolte a noi perché*

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[143] Translation: "*Meanwhile, the city was different, thirty years ago. Today the city has depopulated in the center, where mainly elderly people live personally, as I said, and young people have gone outside or outside the Grande Raccordo Anulare or even in the 120 municipalities of the hinterland of the metropolitan city and therefore, precisely, a peripheralization of the periphery, I would say. This has been the case for the last thirty years. Therefore, the population is the same, precisely because thirty years ago it was always 2,000,008 to be clear, but the Romans are no longer the same*".

rischiavano da un giorno all'altro di poter perdere il permesso di soggiorno"[144] (Interviewee ASS36_IT).

Lastly, the interviewees spotlighted an increasing awareness of the people living in disadvantaged areas or households. According to them, the residents of these deprived areas are more conscious of the possibilities and opportunities available and have the will to pursue and expand them. An example is the increasing number of associations created by the people living in these situations for themselves (e.g., Palestre popolari; doposcuola; local organizations). Nevertheless, these residents are still reluctant to engage with institutional or university projects. On the one hand, it is due to the lack of trust as they have already seen several of these activities being ineffectual and worthless. On the other, these residents - especially the ones in public housing - developed an attitude of self-exclusion for several reasons, e.g., distrust, disinterest, fear, shame, etc.

> "*Noi abbiamo fatto delle attività anche in zone periferiche ed è difficile coinvolgere, per esempio, le persone che vivono nelle case popolari. Hanno paura ad uscire perchè magari hanno paura che gli venga occupata la casa. E poi hanno paura perché hanno, diciamo sì, un po' si vergognano delle loro condizioni e quindi faticano anche a chiedere aiuto anche quando c'è bisogno*"[145] (Interviewee EXP5_IT).

5.2 Brussels

This paragraph presents how these phenomena manifest in the Belgian capital by reporting the results of a study conducted in Brussels between January and March 2022. The data was gathered by engaging with the most vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods[146].

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[144] Translation: "*That was really devastating, so it led to an increase in people who turned to us because they risked losing their residence permit overnight*".

[145] Translation: "*We have also carried out activities in peripheral areas and it is difficult to involve, for example, people who live in social housing. They are afraid to go out because maybe they are afraid that their house will be occupied. And then they are afraid because they are, let's say yes, a little ashamed of their conditions and therefore they also struggle to ask for help even when it is needed*".

[146] Precisely, the municipalities which participated are: Anderlecht (Cureghem); Molenbeek; Koekelberg; Bruxelles ville (Marolles, Sablon, Anneessens); Schaerbeek (Quartier Nord, Collignon); Saint-Josse-ten-Noode; Saint-Gilles; Ixelles (Matonge).

During the research period, thirty-three interviews[147] have been conducted (Figure 5.7 and Appendix A).

Figure 5.7 – List of experts and associations participating in the research by municipality
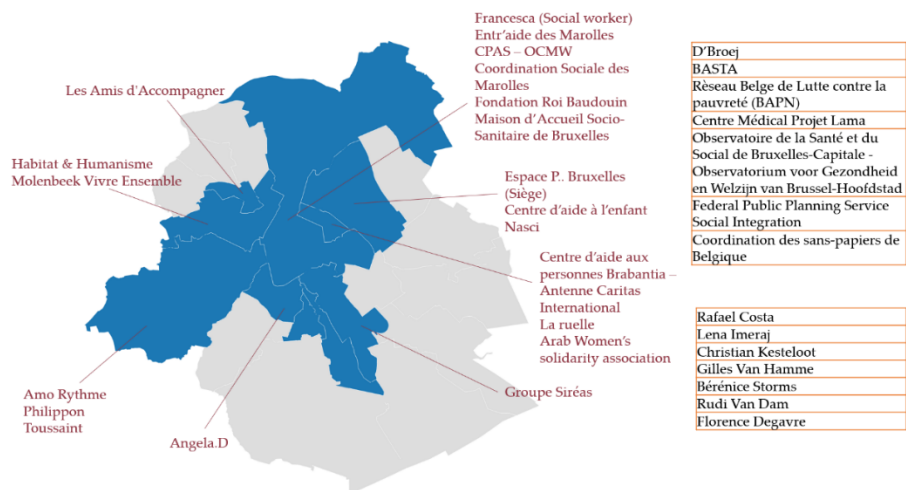
5.2.1 Context and previous studies

Capital of Belgium since 1830, Brussels is one of the three Belgian Regions since 1989 and the most populated one[148]. According to the Observatoire de la Santé et du Social Bruxelles (2020: 18), in 2020, 35% of the population has a foreign nationality, but around 70% has a migrant background[149].

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[147] The associations which participated are: Amo Rythme ; Services de l'administration de l'aide à la jeunes; Habitat & Humanisme and Molenbeek Vivre Ensemble; Les Amis d'Accompagner; Social worker; Entr'aide des Marolles; CPAS – OCMW; Coordination Sociale des Marolles; Fondation Roi Baudouin; L'atelier des droits sociaux; Maison d'Accueil Socio-Sanitaire de Bruxelles; Espace P… Bruxelles; Centre d'aide à l'enfant NASCI; Centre d'aide aux personnes BRABANTIA – Antenne Caritas International; La Ruelle; Arab women's solidarity association – Belgium; Angela. D; Groupe Siréas; D'Broej; BASTA; Rèseau Belge de Lutte contre la pauvreté (BAPN); Centre Médical Projet Lama; Observatoire de la Santé et du Social de Bruxelles-Capitale - Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad; Federal Public Planning Service Social Integration; Coordination des sans-papiers de Belgique; and Perspective Brussels.
The experts who participated are: Rafael Costa; Lena Imeraj; Christian Kesteloot; Gilles Van Hamme; Rudi Van Dam, and Florence Degrave.
[148] Chris Kesteloot (2005, 2013) individuated three predominant socio-spatial groups who live in Brussels: the working class that inhabits the inner-city neighbourhoods; the middle and upper class that works and lives in the suburbs or within the European areas; the city's users, who are mainly Flanders working in the city but habiting and paying taxes elsewhere.
[149] https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/brussels-population. https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/en/2018/09/13/71-of-inhabitants-in-the-brussels-region-have-foreign-roots/.
Moreover, according to the World migration report of 2015, Brussels is the second city for diversity in the World after Dubai, as migrants account for more than half of the population (IOM, 2015:1).

Bureaucratically, the first Article of the Belgian constitution declares that "Belgium is a federal state, composed of communities and regions". The Communities are: the Flemish Community, the French Community, and the German-speaking Community. While the Regions are: the Flemish Region (Flanders) in the north, the Walloon Region (Wallonia) in the south, and the Brussels-Capital Region. Moreover, Belgium comprises four linguistic regions: the Dutch-speaking region, the French-speaking region, the bilingual region of the Brussels Capital, and the German-speaking region. Even if they overlap (Figure 5.8), these divisions are relevant as they have different competencies that affect policies, regulations, and administration[150].

Figure 5.8 - Schematic overview of the basic federal structure of Belgium

Federal state	Kingdom of Belgium				
Regions	Flanders	Brussel (Capital-Region)		Wallonia	
Languages	Dutch	Bilingual (D/F)		French	German
Communities	Flemish		French		German

Geographically speaking, Brussels is divided into nineteen communes (Figures 5.9 and 5.10), which have powers relating to public works, social welfare, maintaining public order, housing, education, etc. This division impacts the quality and quantity of the services supplied[151]. Moreover, as each commune decides its policies and programmes, sometimes

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In the last decade, the ten most-represented nationalities in the Region of Brussels changed. Specifically, in 2010, the most numerous foreign groups were the French, followed by Moroccan and Italian ones. In 2020, France remained the largest group, followed by Romania and Morocco (Observatoire de la Santé et du Social Bruxelles, 2020: 19). Within these dynamics, the Romanian case is interesting because of its increase by 185% in ten years. Similarly, the Bulgarian group has been growing by 160%, while the Moroccan migrants (-11%) are the only ones that decreased. Moreover, an increasing number of Roma population increased (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020; https://vivre-ensemble.be/).

[150] The Regions have powers over their territory in terms of "economy, employment, agriculture, water policy, housing, public works, energy, transport (except Belgian Railways), the environment, town and country planning, nature conservation, credit, foreign trade, supervision of the provinces, communes, and intercommunal utility companies" (https://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/government/regions/competence).

On the other hand, Communities have powers "for culture (theatre, libraries, audio-visual media, etc.), education, the use of languages and matters relating to the individual which concern on the one hand health policy (curative and preventive medicine) and on the other hand assistance to individuals (protection of youth, social welfare, aid to families, immigrant assistance services, etc.)" (https://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/government/communities/competence).

[151] For instance, the communes differ by population, density, diversity, and wealth.

nearby areas promote different or opposite initiatives[152]. Moreover, concerning social exclusion and inequality, this division is relevant as the Public Centre for Social Assistance (CPAS – centre public d'action sociale; or OCMW – Openbaar centrum voor maatschappelijk welzijn) provides social services and operates at communal level.

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 – Brussels' communes and neighbourhoods
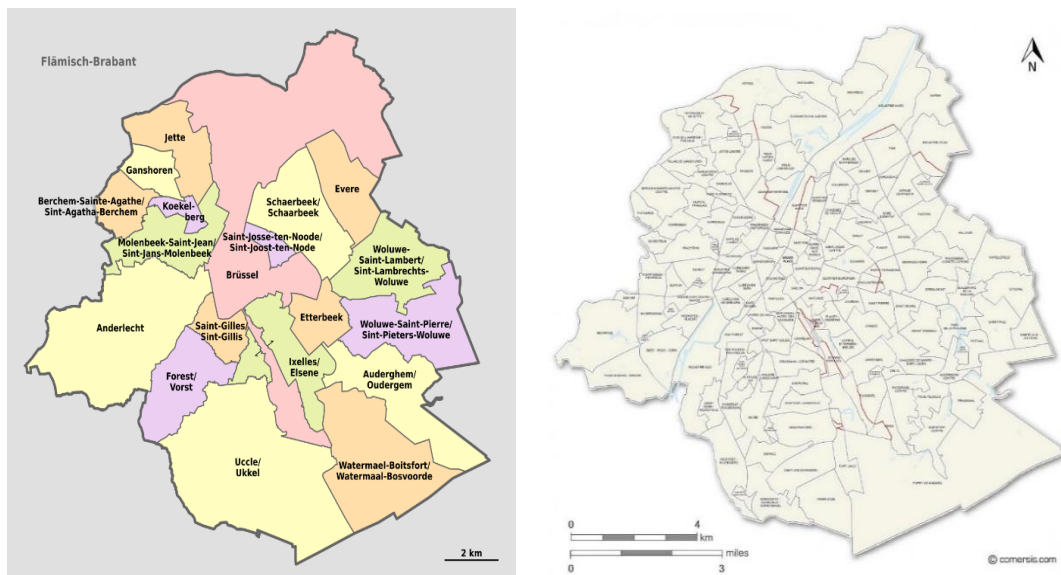
The socio-spatial conformation of Brussels results from historical, economic, and social changes and processes that shaped its configuration. According to Kesteloot (2005), it is possible to understand the socio-spatial arrangements through a geological metaphor. He individuated four main periods of accumulation that characterized Brussels: the competitive one in the 19th century; the extended one in the inter-war period; the intensive one during Fordism; and the flexible one during the post-Fordism.

During the 19th century, the Belgian industry grew with a reliable cheap source of coal from the Meuse Valley. Brussels built several factories close to the channel. Due to the working hours, the adjacent areas became high-density working-class neighbourhoods. By the beginning of the XX century, Brussels became the largest Belgian industrial centre with the highest concentration of industrial workers.

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[152] For instance, during the interviews, this issue emerged through the example of the management of social cohesion in Saint-Josse and Schaerbeek.

The economic crisis of 1929 and the two World Wars impacted Belgium and Brussels economically and politically. After World War II, Belgium – and, especially, Brussels – experienced the so-called "Glorious Thirty", i.e., thirty years of economic growth and prosperity.

Hence, in the 1950s, the rebuilding of Brussels and its mass urbanization began, reaching the peak of suburbanization in the 1960s. It reinforced the creation and stabilization of the middle-class suburbs around the city. Moreover, the economic boom in these years attracted several low-skilled workers from other countries, resulting in a demographic rise in the Brussels population (Martiniello, Rea, 2013). Initially, they were immigrants from Greece, Spain, and Italy, whereas later from Morocco, Turkey, and the former African colonies. Most of them moved to the central areas, such as Molenbeek and Saint-Jose, where the housings were older, cheaper, and low-quality (Rea et al., 2009; Costa, de Valk, 2018; Van Ham et al., 2021). Indeed, these neighbourhoods were the zones where the previous industrial workers lived. Thus, the 19th-century working-class neighbourhoods turned into ethnic ones (Kesteloot, 2005). These territorial divisions resulted in spatial segregation.

The industrial transformations, the shift to a post-industrial economy, and the recession that occurred in the 1970s augmented the spatial duality and segregation among Belgians, Europeans, and non-European migrants. Specifically, Brussels' transition to a post-industrial economy led to "polarization of the urban labour market between high- and low-skilled jobs. In the case of Brussels, this transition was also marked by the new positioning of the city in the global scene, hosting international institutions" (Costa, de Valk, 2018: 230). The crisis of the 1970s represented the end of Fordism and the beginning of the common roots of the exacerbation of socio-spatial fragmentation in Europe. Indeed, since the1980s, European cities have been experiencing several economic and political processes that have shaped their conformations and structures. In Brussels' case, the growing economic liberalisation that occurred in these years and the subsequent crisis led to income inequalities. Moreover, these spatial divisions strengthened, resulting in socioeconomic fractures within the city. As a result, the lower-income households lived in the city centre, while the richest were in the suburbs.

Hence, several scholars developed and engaged in studies on the segregation of these neighbourhoods and the Brussels region (e.g., Andersson et al., 2018; Costa, de Valk, 2018; De Corte et al., 2005; Van Hamme et al., 2016; Vercaigne et al., 2000; Lenel, 2013; Hedman et al., 2015). They pointed out the evident division between downtown districts and suburbs. These scholars called these deprived neighbourhoods the "*Croissant pauvre*" (the poor croissant) due to their conformation (Van Ham et al., 2021) (Figure 5.11). It covers the communes of Anderlecht, Molenbeek-Saint-Jean, Saint-Josse, Schaerbeek, Saint-Gilles, bas de Forest, and Brussels-ville with the neighbourhoods of Laeken, Annennes, Marolles, and Stalingrad. To tackle these situations, since the 1990s, several interventions and programs for the mixitè have been promoted (Lenel, 2013). Notwithstanding these efforts, these neighbourhoods keep being labelled and perceived as destitute, migrant-lived, and deviant (especially after the terroristic attacks in 2016). Moreover, several studies demonstrated the still present discrimination in the housing market and the disproportional negative impacts of Covid-19 on people with a migrant background living in these areas (Verhaeghe, Ghekiere, 2021; 2022).

Figure 5.11 - The "*Croissant pauvre*" area[153]
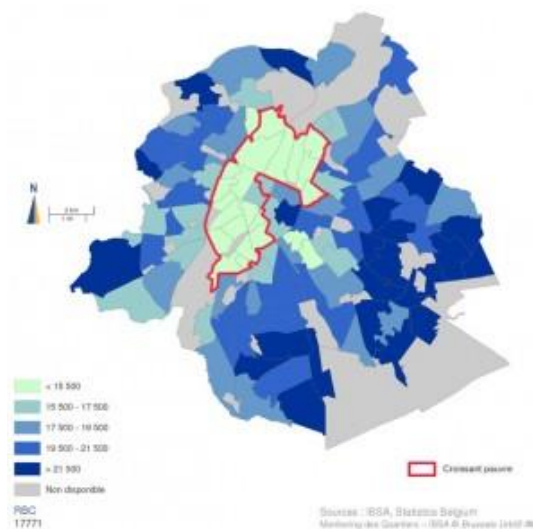
However, since the 2000s, the development of the European district, gentrification, and the housing crisis generated some changes. On the one hand, the presence of the European

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[153] https://monitoringdesquartiers.brussels/Indicator/IndicatorPage/2386?Year=2019&GeoEntity=2.

Union institutions in Brussels attracted a new wave of highly qualified migrants and promoted processes of regeneration of the area (Baeten, 2001). On the other hand, gentrification invested the downtown Brussels (the so-called "Pentagon") (Corijn, van de Ven, 2013; Vermeulen, Corijn, 2013). Thus, this process happened in some areas of the "*croissant pauvre*" resulting in demographic and socioeconomic adjustments. In addition, the housing crisis and the rise in housing costs resulted in more households being financially vulnerable. In some cases, the scholars witnessed the relocation of many of them to nearby neighbourhoods or outside the Brussels region (Van Criekingen, 2008; De Corte et al., 2005).

The literature regarding inequality and exclusion includes several scholars[154]. However, looking at the European data, in 2020, 19% of the Belgian population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (2 pp less than in 2008), while the data on inequality reported that the Gini coefficient was 25 (2 pp less than in 2008) and the ratio S80/S20 3,7 (0,4 less than in 2008) (Appendix I). According to these data, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially those not coming from other European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels.

Furthermore, in 2020, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion were more likely to face economic difficulties, be unable to buy things for themselves, and have less social life than those who do not experience AROPE (Appendix I). It is particularly concerning as these situations affect their quality of life, living conditions, and risk of experiencing and reinforcing exclusion and inequality. On the other hand, looking at the neighbourhood situation, the differences between those experiencing AROPE and those who are not at risk are less evident (Appendix I). Indeed, they are similarly likely to deal with problems with the dwelling, noise, pollution, and crime. However, regarding housing conditions, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are more likely to live in overcrowded households

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[154] Among which: Frère, 2016; BAPN, 2020; Kesteloot, Loopmans, 2009; Babhoutak et al., 2020; Corijn, van de Ven, 2013; Rea et al., 2009; Oxfam, 2013; Federal Public Service Social Security, 2019; Meert, 1997; Kesteloot, 2008.

(Appendix I). It was particularly relevant and impacting during the Covid-19 pandemic as they did not have enough space to study, attend online classes, and work. This aspect negatively affects the physical and psychological health of households.

Moreover, as Brussels is also a Region, EU-SILC allows having this information regarding this city (NUTS1). According to the data, in 2020, 33% of the Brussels population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, followed by Wallon (27%) and Flemish (15%) Regions. Compared to nationwide percentages, Brussels had a higher share of people with difficulties in making ends meet, who cannot afford to go to the doctors, who are more exposed to pollution and crime, and who live in overcrowded households regardless of if they are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Appendix I).

5.2.2 Social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees

The interviewees stated that inequality is something that everyone might experience in life and every society, while social exclusion impacts certain groups, situations, categories, and neighbourhoods. Thus, the interviewees often distinguished inequality and social exclusion, pointing out that the former refers to the unequal distribution of resources, whereas the latter to the gap or lack of having the same rights, means, opportunities, participation, and services as others.

> *"I think these two are different things, social exclusion and inequality. I think inequality is something everyone experiences. In Brussels, there are inequalities, and it is something that is inherent in societies. I mean, it is something that all cities and societies have. Inequality is something that, I think, everyone experiences at some point or in some dimension. Social exclusion, for me, is something else. Not everyone experiences social exclusion. This is more connected to specific groups or specific situations or specific dimensions and, sometimes, in a city, specific context or neighbourhood. Inequality is not everyone has access to the same resources or opportunities. In Brussels, you see a lot of inequality. [..] Social exclusion for me is more than that. When I think of social exclusion, it means that someone has limited chances to be fully part of society. [..] they have their life course really determined by this"* (Interviewee EXP1_BE).

According to the interviewees, being unequal or excluded means not being part of society as much as people or groups would. Moreover, the interviewees stated that inequality and social exclusion often manifest as the lack of awareness of services, programmes, or associations which provide support and help. On the other hand, some interviewees pointed out that sometimes the institutions are helpless in reaching and interacting with these vulnerable categories. "*At the service level, the services are not able or incapable to adapt themselves, so they can communicate with people*" (Interviewee ASS8a_BE).

Furthermore, even if inequality and social exclusion are two distinct concepts, the interviewees argued that, in the everyday life, they intersect and reinforce each other.

> Thus, social exclusion refers to being "*unable or less able to find access in many spheres of society and to participate in all these different domains, going from educational training, access to work and types of work, participate in public space, in cultural activities. Inequalities, of course, relate to the exclusions that are generated. So, those two exclusions and inequalities go hand in hand, as far as I am concerned. They happened in tandem rather than they are very separated concepts to be considered*" (Interviewee EXP2_BE).

Hence, the interviewees underlined the difficulties in drawing lines and borders between them and among their dimensions, drivers, and consequences. They often spotlighted how interrelated and embedded they are. For this reason, interviewees often speak of layers of vulnerability, accumulation of disparities, and vicious spirals or circles which feed and reinforce each other. Hence, the interviewees described some aspects simultaneously as dimensions, causes and consequences of social exclusion and inequality. Figure 5.12 grouped their faces into six main aspects, which are interrelated.

Figure 5.12 – Main dimensions, drivers, and consequences of social exclusion and inequality in Brussels
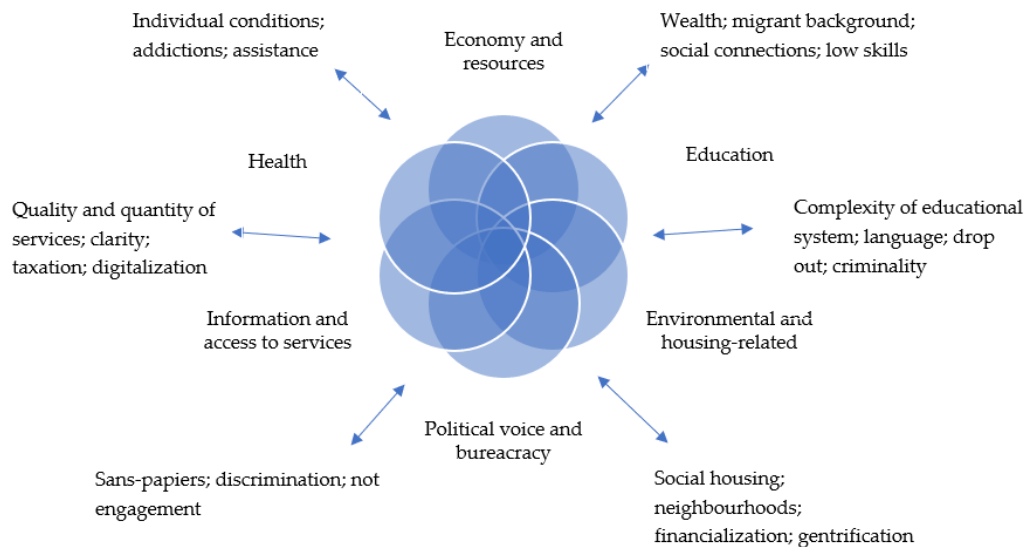
To begin with, the interviewees indicated that the economic and resources[155] distribution dimension is the most known and evident aspect through which inequality and exclusion manifest. When households live in precarity, they face difficulties and compromise to make ends meet. Thus, it impacts their housing situation, living conditions[156], health[157], alimentations, and social life[158]. In some cases, when there are children in the household, the risk is often the impossibility of supervising them because of work or lack of time. Thus, from financial poverty, it becomes a social and relational one.

> "*Je vais donner un exemple qui est plus parlant pour le commun des c'est quelqu'un qui est pauvre, qui n'a pas d'enfant. Il va vivre dans le désordre, il va plus nettoyer son appartement, il va mal manger, il va se négliger lui même. Quelqu'un qui est très pauvre, il va se négliger. Ça peut arriver à abandonner. Surtout si s'il est perdu, il y a trop ou il y a trop de pression*

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[155] By resources, the interviewees refer to wealth, social connections, educative, family background, and environmental services available.

[156] In addition, the beginning of the war in Ukraine on February 20th, 2022, increased poverty concerning energy and food.

[157] By health, the interviewees also included psychological well-being. Within this perspective, several vulnerable people often perceive themselves as burdens to society because they ask for financial help and support. This feeling is due to an increasing attitude of blaming the poor for their poverty, which results in a self-exclusion of these people because they are ashamed. It is problematic as they become even more invisible and difficult to reach and help.

[158] It is even more relevant in the case of households with a migrant background and parents with low education levels. They often are unaware of the value or incapable of supporting the pursuit of their children's education and social connections. In extremer cases, these households remain in their communities and do not interact or amalgamate with the rest of the population.

sur lui. Il doit de l'argent, là, il doit de l'argent, là, il n'a pas et n'a pas. Il sait pas comment il va faire et donc il va négliger ce qui est autour de lui. Alors la dernière chose à négliger, c'est ses enfants. Bien entendu, c'est la dernière chose. Mais même ça, il y a des gens qui n'y parviennent plus et qui se laissent aller et qui négligent leurs enfants. Pourtant, je suis sûr qu'ils aiment leurs enfants. C'est important pour eux. Mais voilà, ils n'y arrivent pas. Ça, c'est tirer le premier. Le principal enseignement, la principale analyse que je fais de mon expérience par rapport à l'exclusion sociale dans mon travail"[159] (Interviewee ASS2_BE).

Within this perspective, the economic and resource distribution dimension depends mainly on working conditions and family background. On the one hand, the transition towards a post-industrial economy influenced the access and quality of jobs. Firstly, several low-skilled workers have lost their jobs or have difficulties finding them due to the relocations of the factories. Secondly, current low-qualified workers have more precarious and unfair working conditions. It results in a rift between well-paid and high-level jobs and the rest. It is a working inequality as all deserve the same protection, assurances, and repayment[160]. On the other hand, the family and contextual background are still relevant and essential in causing or avoiding exclusion and inequality. Indeed, living and growing up in a low socio-economic environment or marginalized neighbourhood or household might negatively impact their lives and choices. It influences their trajectories in work, education, lifestyle, and health. In this perspective, the most common and dangerous cause - and consequence - is the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages, inequalities, and exclusion (to explain this accumulation of issues, the interviewees often mentioned Bourdieu and his theory of "social reproduction"). Even though Belgium has invested in and promoted

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[159] Translation: *"I'm going to give an example that is more telling for the common people, it's someone who is poor, who has no children. He will live in disorder, he will clean his apartment more, he will eat badly, he will neglect himself. Someone who is very poor, he will neglect himself. It can happen to give up. Especially if if he is lost, there is too much or there is too much pressure on him. He owes money there, he owes money there, he does not have and does not have. He doesn't know how he is going to do it and therefore he will neglect what is around him. So, the last thing to neglect is her children. Of course, that's the last thing. But even that, there are people who can't do it anymore and who let themselves go and neglect their children. Yet I'm sure they love their children. It's important to them. But then, they can't. That's shooting first. The main lesson, the main analysis that I make of my experience in relation to social exclusion in my work".*

[160] According to the interviewees, it appears clearly during the pandemic as the most flexible jobs have not been considered, targeted, and protected by social and economic help and support because they do not fit into the typical works or categories. These workers have already had problems in terms of poverty and exclusion before the pandemic. After, they became even more vulnerable to those dynamics.

policies to close these gaps over time, these mechanisms still exist. They are particularly evident for those with a migratory background. As mentioned, Brussels witnessed two principal migration waves. The first one involved the low workers from the South of Europe in the 1950s and 1960s. They were "*poor people that actually replace the Belgian low working class that evaporated through economic growth, or they could slowly climb up the social ladder thanks to a good education system, thanks to a good, well-functioning state*"[161] (Interviewee EXP3_BE). Differently, the second migration wave that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s was about globalization and brought high and low workers from all over the world. Thus, there has been a diversification of migration. Within this perspective, having migrant background is particularly relevant regarding exclusion and inequality as it could impact the feeling of belonging and recognition of second or third generations.

> "*Je pense que le problème numéro un, c'est ce qu'on pourrait appeler la désaffiliation sociale. [..] Mais quand on demande à ces jeunes s'ils se sentent Belges ou Marocains, il nous répète Je suis ignoré. Ils nous disent je suis Marocain et quand on leur parle du Maroc, ils ne connaissent du Maroc que ce qu'ils vivent pendant les vacances et qu'ils sont touristes au Maroc*"[162](Interviewee ASS1_BE).

Secondly, the educative dimension is a central aspect of social exclusion and inequality as well as one of the principal causes and consequences of these dynamics. Indeed, the complexity of the educational system in Brussels does play a role in the reinforcement or creation of this spiral of disadvantage. As Brussels is a bilingual Region, the Flemish and French Communities oversee the education and are concerned about its management, enrolment, and didactic. The interviewees pointed out several imbalances between these two systems regarding resource allocations, reputation, and pursuit of education. To begin with, each speaking community decides and regulates the resource allocation, system, and provision of their schools. It impacts the quality, quantity, and location of schools. Some

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[161] These workers often stay temporarily in the country to earn and send back the money to their countries. The main types of jobs were in the clean or restaurant services, mines, construction, transportation, etc.

[162] Translation: "*I think the number one problem is what you might call social disaffiliation. [..] But when we ask these young people if they feel Belgian or Moroccan, they tell us I am being ignored. They tell us I am Moroccan and when we talk to them about Morocco, they only know about Morocco what they experience during the holidays and that they are tourists in Morocco*".

interviewees specified that the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods often have the worse schools. Consequentially, it does not improve their conditions. These children are more likely to end up in professional or technical high school[163] and, consequentially, to become low-skilled or qualified workers.

> "*Ils n'ont pas tort à Bruxelles, dans le croissant pauvre, puisque à partir de 15 ans, donc du deuxième degré, l'immense majorité des sections et parfois dans des écoles, toutes les sections ne sont plus que des sections professionnelles. Je n'ai rien contre l'enseignement professionnel et quelqu'un qui veut devenir chauffagiste, plombier, coiffeur ou mécanicien. C'est là qui doit aller. C'est un choix. Le problème, c'est que ça ne fonctionne plus par choix*"[164] (Interviewee ASS1_BE).

Secondly, Dutch schools have a better reputation than French ones. Due to that, parents, especially those with a migrant background, tend to want to enrol their children in these schools as they want the best option for them and their future. Regardless of the good intentions, it often leads to linguistic issues or the impossibility of expressing their potential. Indeed, in the case of children with a migrant background, they find themselves speaking their parents' language at home, French with friends, and Dutch at school. As much as stimulating it seems, it is also problematic when they struggle in doing homework or learning as they have no one to ask for help, and their parents often do not have the funds for private tuition. Even though the Region of Brussels has promoted support and after-school initiatives[165], these children are less likely to achieve the same levels and grades as the others. Hence, they often remain behind schedule or with the programmes. In extremer

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[163] In Belgium, the education system is divided into general, technical, and professional schools. Those going to general secondary schools can easily access universities, higher schools, etc. Those attending technical schools can still access universities, but they will probably face more difficulties than others. Differently, those going to professional schools go directly to a job and, then, the gap is too deep to be crossed.

[164] Translation: "*They are not wrong in Brussels, in the poor area, since from the age of 15, therefore from the second degree, the vast majority of sections and sometimes in schools, all sections are only professional sections. I have nothing against vocational education and someone who wants to become a heating engineer, plumber, hairdresser or mechanic. This is where it should go. It's a choice. The problem is that it no longer works by choice*".

[165] Examples are the Maisons de jeunes (https://servicejeunesse.cfwb.be/subventions/centres-jeunes/maisons-de-jeunes/), the Maisons de quartier (https://www.bruxelles.be/maisons-de-quartier), and the activities after school to help children with their homework. Regarding the latter, some interviewees stated that French schools are more likely to propose these programmes rather than Dutch ones. "*The Dutch part doesn't want to organise them because they think that the school system should provide, has to do it, provide the support*" (Interviewee ASS20_BE).

cases, these children end up in technical schools or drop out. "*If you have a migration background, it does mean that Dutch is your third, fourth language, and then it's really difficult to keep up or live up to the level. And so that's why a lot of them get thrown back and drop out. We call it the waterfall system*" (Interviewee ASS20_BE). It produces exclusion and inequality on several levels. Firstly, children cannot pursue their real interests, and they will probably end up in precarious or low-qualified jobs. It will impact their working, living, and health conditions. Secondly, when they drop out, they are not just excluded by the educational system, but they enter a vicious circle that will make them excluded from work and political participation. Indeed, leaving the school system at a young age means not being trained as a person and citizen. Not having specific qualifications affects the possibility of entering the labour market and the probability of becoming a low-level labour force in organized crime or the black market.

> "*I ragazzi sono molto più esposti alla microcriminalità che poi può sfociare nella macro, grossa criminalità organizzata. [..] Qui le stesse situazioni di esclusione sociale o portano all'avvicinarsi alla criminalità organizzata o alle organizzazioni terroristiche, come abbiamo vissuto in passato. Ad esempio, i ragazzi del Bataclan, degli attentati di Parigi e di Bruxelles, sono tutti ragazzi di Molenbeek, in una zona in cui le disuguaglianze sono molto forti, in cui c'è una forte esclusione sociale. La loro rabbia e disinteresse per la vita si è manifestata in questo modo*"[166] (Interviewees ASS21_BE).

These situations are even more dramatic with the newcomers who arrive with older children who do not speak the language. Moreover, the Covid 19 pandemic worsened and expanded these gaps between education systems as the quality of their classes depended on devices, spaces, and internet connections that areas and families could provide.

Thirdly, another aspect of social exclusion and inequality relates to housing and neighbourhood conditions. Regarding housing conditions, the main disparity is in terms of access and affordability of accommodations. Indeed, the interviewees pointed out that the

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[166] Translation: "*Young people are much more exposed to micro criminality which can then lead to macro, major organized crime. [..] Here the same situations of social exclusion either lead to organized crime or terrorist organizations, as we have experienced in the past. For example, the kids from the Bataclan, from the attacks in Paris and Brussels, are all kids from Molenbeek, in an area where inequalities are very strong, where there is strong social exclusion. Their anger and disinterest in life manifested itself in this way*".

number of social housing available is inferior to the increasing requests. Social housing can be either entirely public, semi-private, or managed by associations or societies receiving regional or national funds. The interviewees denounced the growing number of applications, the endless queue for having them, the mismatch between the houses available and the type of families[167], the paradoxes of the requests[168], and the constant need of renovation of the buildings because unhealthy. Moreover, in the last decades, the cost of living and renting has grown, resulting in even more difficulties in finding a good and affordable place where to live. "*Especially in the recent years, the housing market mechanisms, financialization, also in Brussels, it is not as far advanced as it is, for example, compared to cities like Amsterdam or Stockholm, for example. But still it is happening*" (Interviewee EXP2_BE). It also impacts the low-middle class as, even if they face similar difficulties as vulnerable groups, they cannot request subsides as they are slightly over the threshold of poverty and, so, not eligible or entitled for them.

In a few cases, the interviewees mentioned the presence of squatted buildings. It rarely happens and mainly involves specific communities (e.g., the Roma population or undocumented people). Someone might try to squat the social housing, but the managers of the buildings intervene quickly to avoid these dynamics.

Concerning neighbourhood conditions, the Region of Brussels has some areas characterized by old, densely inhabited, and unhealthy buildings. People who live in these houses are often tenants and not the owners. So, they do not have the competencies, rights, and resources to change these apartments. The repercussions are in terms of energetic and hydric precariousness and the risk of being evicted. In addition, the discrimination within the housing and renting market reinforced these situations. It causes districts with low levels of diversity, closed communities, and socio-spatial segregation within poor and rich

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[167] It might happen that the accommodations are not suitable for the need of the households. For instance, large families (it is usually more the case for migrants) often have problems in finding social housing with enough space.

[168] Access to social housing happens by a graduator based on income and the number of household components. The paradox is that the family compositions might change between the time they apply for the social housing and the one they can access it.

neighbourhoods[169]. For instance, the "*croissant pauvre*" is a typical example of the prior areas. In this case, people often live in overcrowded houses without the needed space for everyone. It has represented a huge problem during the pandemic period and online school. Differently, the Uccle commune or the European neighbourhood are typical examples of the wealthier areas of Brussels with new and modern buildings. This difference between the inner-city districts and suburbs has historical roots in the large-scale suburbanization that occurred in the 1960s.

However, in the last decades, the processes of gentrification and financialization changed these divisions and strengthened the precariousness of the inner-city residents. Indeed, as consequence, the rents in these districts rose, and the living conditions of the disadvantaged communities worsened. Thus, the housing became less affordable, suitable, and safe and, in some extreme cases, the residents got evicted or into debt or decided to move out or go to cheaper areas (often far away from work or schools). Living in such conditions impacts people's lives in all domains. To explain these dynamics, the interviewees reported a few examples of this process of gentrification and financialization and the increasing tendency to neglect the need and involvement of these residents in the decision-making of urban planning. The erection of the Madou towers in Saint-Josse and the "Sablon-ification"[170] of the Marolles are examples of these dynamics of urban transformation. In addition, the constriction of the metro line 3 without the consultation of the population in Stalingrad[171] is an example of the tendency of overlooking the residents' needs.

> *"Strategie come ad esempio qua di fianco stanno costruendo la nuova linea della metro, quindi altre stazioni principali della nuova linea della metro e stanno distruggendo una piazza che fino ad oggi era super vissuta da commercianti locali che quindi erano per la maggior parte commercianti di origine araba con appunto un pubblico di di quell'origine. Di recente, tra l'altro, c'è un documentario che ti ti consiglio. Non so se è prettamente legato alla tua ricerca, ma sta girando in questi. In queste settimane si chiama. Stalingrad Stalingrad o qualcosa del*

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[169] Several interviewees pointed out that as much as disadvantaged or vulnerable groups tend not to leave their neighbourhoods, the rich are inclined to avoid mixing with them. It happens at the urban, housing, school, and social level. For instance, some interviewees pointed out that the "Belgo-Belgians" do not want to enrol their children in schools with a high share of students with a migrant background.

[170] Sablon is a wealthy neighbourhood close to the Marolles. The term "Sablon-ification" comes from there.

[171] https://www.rtbf.be/article/stalingrad-avec-ou-sans-nous-un-documentaire-sur-l-impact-du-metro-3-a-bruxelles-10879519.

genere. E quindi, appunto, parla della Place Stalingrad che questa qua di fianco, dove appunto stanno costruendo la metro e il documentario è stato fatto dal network che si è creato appunto tra i vari commercianti e c'è un politico di cui non farò il nome, che interviene. E che dice che la piazza deve essere per i veri belgi. Oggi, quindi, anche questo utilizzare il vocabolo il francese, cioè il concetto di belgo belge, che sono le persone belghe di origine belga"[172] (Interviewee ASS6_BE).

Fourthly, the interviewees spotlighted the relevance of the political and welfare dimension in reinforcing and causing social exclusion and inequality. Regarding the political voice, the principal group exposed to these precarious conditions is the "*sans-papiers*" (without papers). As they do not have the documentation to stay legally in the country, they cannot access services and participate in political and societal life. Automatically, they are more likely to be at risk of living in unpleasant housing conditions and working in the black market with precarious contracts. According to the interviewees, in Brussels, between eight and fourteen thousand people live in this condition. "*L'immigration clandestine, l'importance de sans papiers dans notre pays et particulièrement à Bruxelles renforce ce phénomène. Ces publics se retrouvent quasi sans droit à part l'aide médicale urgente. A part un bon réseau (amical/familial) et/ou un travail en noir, il y a très peu de solution pour en sortir*"[173] (Interviewee ASS7a_BE). Furthermore, even those with the right to enjoy societal and political life often do not engage. The reasons are several, e.g., they prioritize different things or do not have the education, the time, or the mental availability to be interested as much as they would. On the other hand, regardless of the number of investments and projects, the interviewees

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[172] Translation: "*Strategies such as for example here next door are building the new metro line, therefore other main stations of the new metro line and are destroying a square which until now was lived in by local traders who were therefore mostly traders of Arab origin with precisely an audience of that origin. Recently, among other things, there is a documentary that I recommend. I don't know if it's strictly related to your research, but it's going around in these. In recent weeks it's called. Stalingrad Stalingrad or something like that. And so, precisely, it talks about the Place Stalingrad which is next door, where they are building the metro and the documentary was made by the network that was created between the various traders and there is a politician whose name I won't mention, who intervenes. And that he says that the square must be for true Belgians. Today, therefore, this also uses the French word, i.e. the concept of Belgian belge, which are Belgian people of Belgian origin*".

[173] Translation: "*Clandestine immigration, the number of undocumented migrants in our country and particularly in Brussels reinforces this phenomenon. These people find themselves almost without rights apart from urgent medical aid. Apart from a good network (friends/family) and/or a black job, there are few solutions to get out of it*".

spotlighted that welfare does not cover all[174], and specific groups keep having problems benefiting from it.

> "*De mon point de vue, ce sont en premier lieu les choix de nos élus politiques, de soutenir des politiques sociales néfastes, qui est le principal facteur d'une forme d'entretien et d'accroissement de l'exclusion. Il n'y a pas assez de politiques sociales courageuses qui prennent soin des citoyens. [..] Selon moi, le problème principal de tout cela est le fait que nos sociétés privilégient le capital sur le travail, le profit sur le bonheur et la qualité de la vie. Tant que nos politiques sociales et économiques sont tournées vers les entreprises et non les personnes en tant que travailleurs et travailleuses, le constat sera le même*"[175] (Interviewee ASS11_BE).

Fifthly, social exclusion and inequality exhibit through access to good quality services. On the one hand, the ability of services to answer, understand, and communicate with these fragile people is essential. In this regard, several interviewees underlined the still present discrimination towards minorities (especially, the Moroccan and North-African communities) and the difficulties in knowing the rights and services people could benefit from and whom to reach to declare them. Within this perspective, they also affirmed that sometimes the procedures are not tailored for customers. To some extent, there is a sort of Eurocentrism in the production and supply of these schemes and a tendency to apply and respond to problems through "middle-class solutions". "*Siamo portati a pensare che tutti funzionino e ragionino nella stessa maniera, quando in realtà non è così*"[176] (Interviewee ASS6_BE). Thus, especially those who are not French or Dutch native speakers or come from outside Europe might find more obstacles in accessing services. In addition, in the last decades – and especially during the Covid-19 pandemic – part of governmental services and offices became virtual. Thus, the digital divide became a central issue in the discourse of inequality and exclusion. The interviewees denounced that this "dematerialization" of public services

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[174] The main coverage is the Mutuelle.

[175] Translation: "*From my point of view, it is primarily the choices of our elected politicians, to support harmful social policies, which is the main factor in a form of maintenance and increase in exclusion. There are not enough courageous social policies that take care of citizens. [..] In my opinion, the main problem with all this is the fact that our societies value capital over work, profit over happiness and quality of life. As long as our social and economic policies are geared towards companies and not people as workers, the situation will be the same*".

[176] Translation: "*We are led to think that everyone works and thinks in the same way, when in reality this is not the case*".

worsened the contacts with municipalities, organizations, and politicians for vulnerable groups. Within this perspective, the possibility and ability to access the internet or devices played a central role in accessing rights and assistance. Some interviewees exemplified these difficulties saying that most people do not own a computer but only a smartphone. However, several procedures are only readable and completable by a computer.

On the one hand, having and enjoying good quality services is a nodal to avoid exclusion and inequality. In this matter, Belgian taxation and the regional system play a role. As mentioned, Brussels attacks several workers, especially high-profile ones, due to the number of job opportunities and institutions. Nevertheless, these people do not live and pay taxes in the Brussels Region as they often commute. Thus, they enjoy the city without funding the communes they exploit. On the other hand, as Brussels is a Region divided into nineteen communes, each decides how to spend and invest their funding and for which projects and policies. Thus, within Brussels, there are some differences. For instance, some communes promoted programs of inclusions or improvements, while others did not. It depends on the budgets the communes have, the amount and socio-economic characteristics of the population that inhabits them, and the party they elected.

Lastly, social exclusion and inequality have a sanitarian and health dimension. On the one hand, having psychological or physical issues[177] affects the capacity and possibility to fulfil the societal and urban life. On the other, being or living at the marginals is more likely to face difficulties accessing and benefitting from sanitarian services. This aspect of the disparities and disproportions in the presence of structures based on socioeconomic or geographical manners emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, the virus hit those living in peripherical areas or doing a low-qualified job more than the rest of the population. Moreover, some interviewees spotlighted the issue of drug and substance addiction as a health aspect which can be considered a psycho-physical issue, cause, and consequence of social exclusion and inequality. They described the vicious circle of the interdependence of

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[177] Interviewees listed several examples of psycho-physical wellbeing. They refer to mental stress, isolation, old age, depression, lack of perspectives, scepticism about the future, malnutrition, impossibility to access specific cures or treatments, and difficulties in expressing themselves (sexuality and identity issues).

these phenomena and how having proper and prompt answers is a pivotal aspect in limiting additional outcomes (e.g., intergeneration transmission, diseases, housing issues, debts, etc).

5.2.3 Who is unequal and excluded

According to the interviewees, in Belgium, both natives and foreigners face inequality and exclusion, but the latter the most. Regardless of their nationality, people dealing with these phenomena tend to have similar socio-economic, educational, living, and working characteristics, namely:

- Having low socio-economic resources and connections;
- Having low education attainment or socio-cultural capital;
- Having individual characteristics (e.g., some physical or mental issues, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc);
- Having specific household compositions (for instance, single parents, elderly, migrant or large families are often more likely to face social exclusion and inequality. Moreover, some interviewees underlined how the second demographic transition made situations less predictable and more exposed to these dynamics);
- Living in a household with low-intensity work;
- Being unemployed or working in a low-qualified or precarious job with unfair contracts;
- Receiving some sustain or social help;
- Living in unsafe and inadequate houses;
- Living in a neighbourhood or area with environmental stresses, e.g., fewer services and transportation, more crime and pollution due to the old industrial zones, more noise, less green spaces, etc.

As mentioned, people with a migrant background or coming from a foreign country are more likely to face social exclusion and inequality than natives. They are more exposed due

to language issues, discrimination, and bureaucratic barriers. Thus, migrants who are excluded or in unequal conditions might deal with even more difficulties, e.g.:

- Facing more language and administrative issues, especially when they have never been to school;

- Having to accept a downgrading job as their educational attainments or diplomas are not recognized;

- Being a transmigrant or exploited worker;

- Dealing with discrimination in the housing and working markets due to their origins (especially, when they are Turkish, Moroccan, Algerian, or Northern Africans).

However, among this group, it is necessary to distinguish between European and non-European migrants and clarify their legal status and qualifications.

In addition, migrant women face even more barriers and worse conditions. Indeed, they often face inequality within their families or communities and withstand the cultural and religious rules. Hence, they are more likely to live in close communities and excluded from any social, political, and cultural activities.

> *"Although there are many institutions, there are possibilities, and you have literacy classes, you have organisations, houses for women, it's not, still now, it's not all the women who are coming who are aware of all of this, and some women also don't dare. Just don't dare to go out and take the bus. If they can, they don't dare. And some other stories, very sad stories where the husband is really, literally controlling her, her movements, her body. And yeah, we have testimonies like this. We met some woman who had experience in the past when they arrived and now they are here for 20 years or 25 years and children has grown. And so that's why we met them in our activities because now they allow themselves to have activities. But in the past, when they arrived, they didn't have activities they didn't participate in this kind of structures or organisation for women"* (Interviewee ASS17_BE).

In some cases, women do not dare to denounce these situations of violence and control because they are scared to be sent back to their country of origin, where they might not have any family, rights, and possibilities[178]. Indeed, as they often arrive in Brussels through

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[178] These women often have low education levels or did not go to school either in their countries or in Brussels. So, there is an educational gap.

family reunification, they are in a vulnerable, inferior position, and their husbands often use this excuse as blackmail to reinforce their dominance.

In addition, looking at the variations over time, the interviewees pointed out that the situation changed. To begin with, the increasing costs of living and housing in Brussels influenced the capacity of households to provide and afford good quality food, housing, social life, and services. It impacts regardless of employment or household type. For instance, it is evident in the rising amount of people working in poverty. Secondly, interviewees reported that the profile of the people facing inequality, social exclusion, and poverty remained stable over time. Simultaneously, though, their number grew. Within this perspective, a considerable share of those struggling with inequalities and exclusion ten years ago still do today. Even if some Belgians moved out from these conditions, they still are at a tipping point. Thus, if the current situation worsens, they might step back in their status of poverty and exclusion. Thirdly, more people became homeless or lived in the park or streets. Most of them are men, young, or migrants but, recently, more families ended up in this situation. It is particularly concerning as more children experience and grow up in these conditions. Fourthly, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted social exclusion and inequality on different levels. It resulted in the widening gender gap as more women lost their jobs or had to leave to stay home with their children due to online school. It also produced an increasing number of families and people who asked for financial and food help or fell into precarity. It influenced the job market unevenly. It disproportionally affected artists, restaurant and bar workers, freelancers, and the already precarious employees. It strengthened the relationship between inequality and health. Indeed, as people in unequal conditions or exclusion live in denser neighbourhoods and houses and work in more at-risk environments, they were more likely to get sick. Lastly, the interviewees denounced how policies are often more oriented to short-term solutions rather than providing a structural answer to poverty, exclusion, and inequality.

5.3 Stockholm

This paragraph presents how social exclusion and inequality manifest in the Swedish capital by reporting the results of a study conducted in Stockholm between March and May 2022. The data was gathered by engaging with the most vulnerable communities[179] and neighbourhoods[180]. During the research period, twenty-six interviews[181] have been conducted (Figure 5.13 and Appendix A).

Figure 5.13 – List of experts and associations participating in the research by municipality

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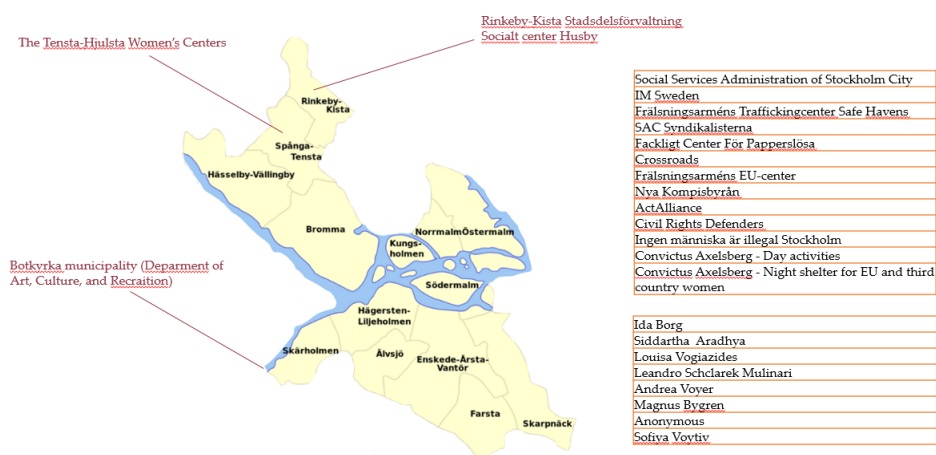
[179] Some of the contacted associations had to decline because they were too occupied and busy, while others did not reply at all. In just one case, the organization decided not to participate because it has already taken part in other interviews where similar questions/issues have been asked, but nothing has concretely changed. Even if they declined my request, I found the reply and reaction interesting. It transpires frustration and annoyance to keep participating in interviews and debates without seeing results or improvements. To some extent, it shows the ambivalences and contradictions of these realities: on the one hand, these areas are often under the attention of media, politics, and scholars in different ways; on the other, their voices and answers are unheard.

[180] Specifically, the neighbourhoods belong to the Stockholm municipality: Rinkeby-Kista, Spånga-Tensta, Hässelby-Vällinlgby, Skärholmen, and neighbourhoods in Botkyrka municipality.

[181] The associations and organizations that participated in the interviews are: Rinkeby-Kista Stadsdelsförvaltning (District administration); Socialt Center Husby; Unga Station Järva – Husby (Stockholms Stadsmission); Kvinnocenter i Tensta-Hjulsta (The Tensta-Hjulsta Women's Centers); Botkyrka municipality (Department of Art, Culture, and Recreation); Social Services Administration of Stockholm City; IM Sweden; Frälsningsarméns Traffickingcenter Safe Havens; SAC Syndikalisterna; Fackligt Center För Papperslösa; Crossroads; Frälsningsarméns EU-center; Nya Kompisbyrån; ActAlliance; Civil Rights Defenders; Convictus Axelsberg - Day activities; Convictus Axelsberg - Night shelter for EU and third country women; Ingen människa är illegal.

The experts who contributed to the research are: Ida Borg; Siddartha Aradhya; Louisa Vogiazides; Leandro Schclarek Mulinari; Andrea Voyer; Magnus Bygren; Sofiya Voytiv; and an anonymous.

5.3.1 Context and previous studies

Stockholm is the largest city in Sweden with almost one million inhabitants. As well as Sweden, it witnessed increasing and changing migrant flows since the 1970s[182]. Hence, according to the Official Statistics of Sweden, in 2021, 34% of Stockholmers has a foreign background[183]. Geographically speaking, it is divided into thirteen district administrations, which are responsible for: municipal preschool, elderly care, support and service for people with disabilities, management of parks, social psychiatry, individual and family care, consumer guidance, and leisure and cultural activities[184] (Figure 5.13).

According to several studies (e.g., Andersson et al., 2015; Tunström, Wang, 2019; Östh et al., 2015), Stockholm is one of the most segregated cities in Europe. The urban division has ethnic and socio-economic patterns, as well as a class dimension (Tammaru et al., 2016; Andersson, 2013; Malmberg et al., 2018; Reardon, Dymen, 2015). The socio-spatial

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[182] In the past, the principal immigration flows came from Scandinavian countries. In addition, since the 1970s, there has been a phenomenon of family reunions and refugees from the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. Then, in the 1990s, with the war in the Balkans, an increasing number of refugees from Yugoslavia arrived (Appendix J). In terms of policies, in 1975, a progressive reform on migration passed and promoted a liberal universalistic conception of citizenship. It guaranteed "access to almost all established rights of civil, political and social citizenship, even for immigrant non-citizens" (Schierup, Ålund, 2011: 48). On the other hand, a so-called "Sweden-wide" strategy for refugee reception (Hela Sverige strategin) was implemented in 1985. It limited the freedom of new-arrived refugees to settle where they wanted by assigning them to a municipality for 18 months. This strategy had the twofold advantage of offsetting the concentration of refugees in cities and balancing their presence in the municipalities (Vogiazides, Mondani, 2020). However, after that period, refugees tended to move away and, in 1994, the "own housing legislation" (Lagen om eget boende or EBO-Lagen) allowed asylum seekers to arrange their accommodations. It led to a concentration of migrants in specific and disadvantaged areas of cities and an uneven distribution of them among municipalities (Vogiazides, 2020; Grundström, Molina, 2016). With the New Millenium, the wars in the Middle East and the enlargement of the European Union towards the East impacted the migration flows in Sweden (Appendix J). It resulted in a refugee crisis in 2016 and several riots all over the major cities in Sweden. To avoid even deeper segregation, the government introduced the Resident law (Bosättningslagen) in 2018. Then, in 2019, the "own housing legislation" reinstated restrictions on refugees' freedom of choosing where to settle. On the other hand, in the 2000s, the European Union enlarged its borders towards the East. It resulted in new labour migration flows, especially from Poland, and the arrival of Roma communities. Especially concerning the latter, this enlargement brought up the issue of the "vulnerable EU citizens", meaning those Europeans that live in Sweden without formal permission or residence.

[183] http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101Q/UtlSvBakgGrov/. Due to the immigration flows, the largest foreign-born groups are Iraqis, Finns, Iranians, Polish, Somalian, Indians, and Syrians (Statistisk årsbok för Stockholm, 2022).

[184] https://start.stockholm/om-stockholms-stad/organisation/stadsdelsforvaltningar/.

conformation of Stockholm is the result of historical, economic, and social changes and processes that shaped its configuration.

Like at the national level, between the 1930s and 1970s, the implementation of the "Swedish Model"[185] and the development of the Million Programme[186] improved the living and working conditions of Stockholmers. Within its borders, the *stadsdel* of Rinkeby, Tensta, Husby, Bredäng, Skärholmen, and Vårberg witnessed the erection of Million Programme residential housing. However, the consequences of the economic, social, and institutional changes occurring since the 1970s in Sweden have affected Stockholm. The neoliberal shift in social and housing policies had a nodal role in the socio-spatial formation of the city[187].

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[185] The Swedish model refers to the progressive policies implemented between the 1930s and 1980s. Before the 1930s, Sweden was a country characterized by poverty, disastrous housing conditions, and emigration (Grundström, Molina, 2016; Vogiazides, 2020). Thus, to overcome these difficulties, the Swedish government implemented this welfare model, based on the ideas of "the strong state" (Lindvall, Rothstein, 2006) and the "People's home" – Folkhemmet (Castell, 2010). On this concept, there are some criticisms. Several scholars have stressed that it alludes to the "ethnic entity, the folk" (Hübinette, Lundström, 2014; Levy, 2022). Thus, it draws a line between the Swedes and the "other". Like many other European countries, Sweden has a "dark past" in dealing with racial differences, and its studies underexplored the concept of race. For instance, until 1976, it was still legal the forced sterilization of Swedish residents. This eugenic programme went against those considered "unfit" to reproduce, mainly the Sàmi and Roma communities. On the other hand, Sweden does not adopt the concept of race in its studies. Indeed, Statistics Sweden does not keep official statistics on racial identity but might use the concept of "visible minorities", corresponding to having origin in a non-European or non-Anglo-Saxon country. That is because the county of birth is registered. However, according to the "People's home", a strong state should be able to accomplish social change and solve social problems through a specific political and administrative process. Thus, through a rationalistic and planned model, the strong state could manage and steer social change and issues. On the other hand, Swedish policies have been based on the central notion of Folkhemmet. Albin Hansson, the leader of the social-democratic party in 1928, formulated the "People's home" as "the foundation of the home is the feeling of togetherness and cohesion [..]. In a good home, equality prevails, as do attention, cooperation, and helpfulness. Applied to the people's and the citizen's home at large, this would mean tearing down of all social and economic barriers now dividing the citizens into privileged and deprived, rulers and dependent, rich and poor, propertied and pauperised, plunderers and plundered" (Castell, 2010: 2).

[186] Since the beginning, a central aspect of this model was the universal housing regime. Within this perspective, the principal and more massive universal housing policy promoted were the "Million House Programme" (Miljonprogrammet). This label refers to the large-scale building programme developed between 1965 and 1974, following a parliament decision targeting one million new homes in ten years (Castell, 2010; Andersson et al., 2020; Grundström, Molina, 2016; Levy, 2022; Fjellborg, 2018). These new dwellings were located on the periphery, generating a rapid expansion of the metropolitan areas. In the beginning, the Million Programme was a successful initiative, as it raised the standard of housing for many families, providing them with more modern accommodations. Lately, they mainly became associated with economic and ethnic segregation, as their inhabitants were the Swedish working class, immigrants, and young people (Vogel, 1992; Castell, 2010; Dikeç, 2017).

[187] Since the 1970s, Sweden "has been a slow dismantling of many of the principles that formed the backbone of the Swedish model" (Levy, 2022: 13). Indeed, in 1975, Sweden reached a peak in its post-war development,

This radical change manifested by offering fewer and more targeted subsidies for specific groups and depressed residential areas and by building and distributing housing according to the market principles (Tammaru et al., 2016). Between 1991 and 2014, there has been a rise in the share of co-ops and homeowners in Stockholm. This shift was not uniform. On the one hand, it mainly regarded Swedish-born or high-income deciles (Fjellborg, 2018). On the other, it is concentrated in the inner city, while poorer neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Stockholm had fewer chances of buying apartments to form co-operatives and less to gain if they were able to buy (Fjellborg, 2021a, 2021b). Nevertheless, the effects of these shifts disproportionally affected the disadvantaged suburban neighbourhoods (Schierup et al., 2014), strengthening the income gap between owners and rental tenures and the link between income levels and housing tenure (Fjellborg, 2021a, 2021b). Within this perspective, adopting the geographic location and dominant housing type, scholars identified four neighbourhood types (Andersson, Turner, 2014; Tammaru et al., 2016). Thus, they classified two inner-city neighbourhood types, i.e., the historical inner city and the inner suburbs, and two outer-city neighbourhood types, i.e., those dominated by multifamily dwellings built during or shortly after the 1965–1974 'Million Programme' era and either mixed neighbourhoods or those heavily dominated by single-family housing (Figure 5.14). Thus, the peripherical districts of the Million Programme are mostly the neighbourhoods with more exposure to exclusion, marginalization, and inequality. Hence, these structural and institutional changes resulted in a widening of the gaps among groups, increasing income

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and its economy struggled with the oil crisis and extensive structural transformations. Consequentially, the Swedish position in the global economy declined, and the welfare state was increasingly considered the root cause of the relative economic fall (Hedin et al., 2011). Thus, as in other nations, a shift towards neoliberalism occurred since the 1980s through several processes, namely de-regularization, decentralization, and partial privatization of aspects of the welfare state. Consequentially, the belief that the state, through centralized reforms and planned processes, would manage social problems withered, and the central administrative institutions weakened (Lindvall, Rothstein, 2006). This change coincided with the rise of neoliberal reforms in housing, health, education, employment, finance, and taxation (Hedin et al., 2011). In 1993, through the so-called Danell system for housing finance, subsidies were either discontinued or radically reduced (Gustafsson, 2022; Turner, Whitehead, 2002; Andersson et al., 2020; Grundström, Molina, 2016; Fjellborg, 2018). Moreover, this shift towards more market-based housing resulted in the conversion from rental housing into owner-occupancy or tenant cooperatives (Tunström, Wang, 2019). Some scholars defined this passage as a "monstrous hybrid" (Christophers, 2013).

and social polarizations, and exacerbating spatial segregation. They created, reproduced, and intensified social and economic inequalities among and within its neighbourhoods.

Figure 5.14 - Stockholm city neighbourhood segments (Andersson, Turner: 2014: 10)
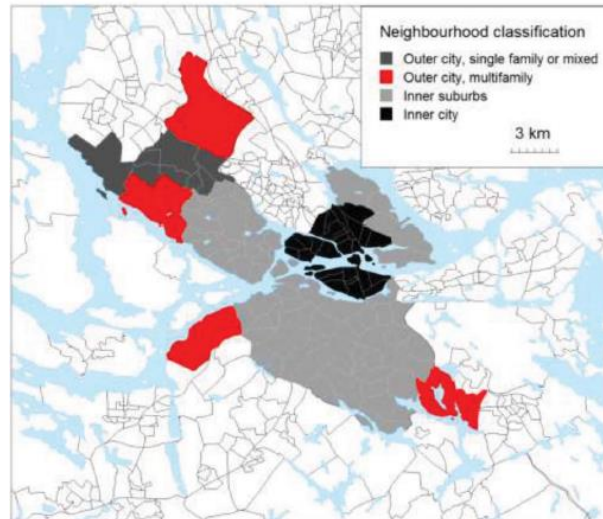
Lately, in the new Millennium, three processes hit Sweden and Stockholm: an increasing neo-liberalization and financialization of the housing market (Grundström, Molina, 2016; Gustafsson, 2022), new immigration flows (Levy, 2022), and the rise of an extreme-right party. Concerning the former, it had several consequences, e.g., a rise of households having difficulties in making ends meet and crowded housing conditions, and social polarization manifested by super-gentrification and low-income filtering (Christophers, 2013; Levy 2022; Gustafsson, 2022; Andersson, Turner, 2014; Borg, 2019; Hedin et al., 2012; Wimark et al., 2020; Grundström, Molina, 2016). Thus, "the current housing system in Sweden creates, reproduces and intensifies social and economic inequalities and their reflection in urban space" (Dikeç, 2017: 125). In addition, the process of tenure conversion of the centre of Stockholm shrank the rental sector and led to "an inner-city population that is overwhelmingly wealthy and white" (Tunström, Wang, 2019: 23). Thus, it seems that, in Stockholm, a "double sorting" is going on: "whereby the level of disposable income predicts a certain housing location to a greater extent than before, and whereby low-income natives tend to live in other areas than do low-income non-Western immigrants" (Tammaru et al., 2016: 128). Several studies (Andersson, 2013; Fjellborg, 2018, 2021a, 2021b; Andersson et al., 2015) found that, in Stockholm, there is an inclination to the so-called "white avoidance" or

"flight out"[188]. Thus, according to these studies, in Stockholm, the "native-born Swedes are less inclined than most immigrant categories to move into an immigrant dense area while ethnic origin does not seem to matter much when explaining who lives in such areas" (Andersson, 2013: 163). Moreover, several analyses (e.g., Anderson et al., 2015; Östh et al., 2015) mapped the concentration of visible minorities within the Stockholm region. As Sweden does not keep official statistics on racial identity, they adopted the concept of "visible minorities", corresponding to having origin in a non-European or non-Anglo-Saxon country. According to these studies, in Stockholm, they are "localized to densely populated, multistory building suburbs in the outskirts of the urban areas" (Östh et al., 2015). Specifically, according to the Statistisk årsbok för Stockholm (2022), the areas with the highest share of people with a foreign background are Rinkeby-Kista, Skärholmen, Hässelby-Vällingby, Enskede- Vantör (Figure 5.15). Moreover, as the rental sector is largely concentrated in the suburbs, low-income and foreign backgrounds households tend to seek accommodation there, as it is where they might afford it. Thus, this ethnic segregation overlaps with an economic one. This segregation is high in the highest and lowest income quartile (Fjellborg, 2018).

Figure 5.15 - Share with foreign background (Statistisk årsbok för Stockholm, 2022: 132)

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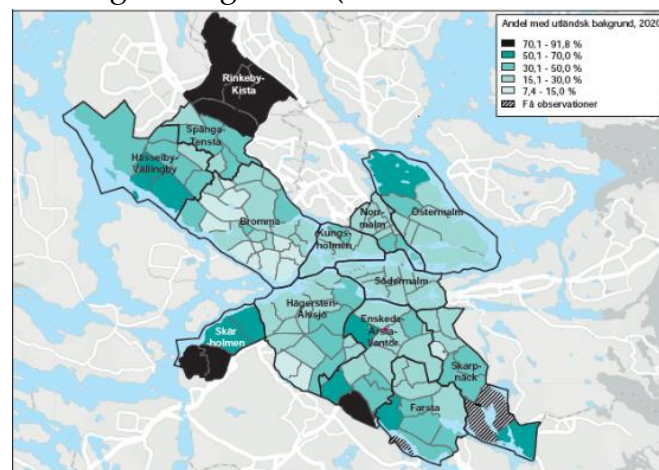
[188] Derived from the US segregation discourse, they refer to the attitude of native people to avoid moving into ethnic neighbourhoods or areas experiencing growing numbers of immigrants. However, in the Swedish context, some doubts over their use arose. Among these, Åsa Bråmå stated that "although the out-migration rates of Swedes have increased in some residential areas, this increase has been accompanied by a similar increase among immigrants. Therefore, the increase seems to have been caused by other factors than the changed residential composition" (Åsa Bråmå, 2006: 1143).

Regarding the new migration flows, wars in the Middle East and the enlargement of the European Union towards the East impacted these waves. Indeed, the conflict in Iraq in 2003 and the ongoing situation in Syria resulted in an increasing number of asylum seekers. This flow "culminated in 2015 with over 160,000 applications being filed" (Vogiazides, 2020: 8), resulting in a refugee crisis in 2015-2016. These events signed the end of "Swedish exceptionalism", including the idea that Sweden would greet any migrant[189]. Also in the 2000s, the European Union enlarged its borders towards the East[190]. It resulted in new labour migration flows, especially from Poland, and the arrival of Roma communities (Amnesty International, 2018; Djuve et al., 2015). Especially concerning the latter, this enlargement brought up the issue of the "vulnerable EU citizens", meaning those Europeans that live in Sweden without formal permission or residence[191]. These people found themselves in a paradoxical situation: "their EU citizenship, which is supposed to provide an enhanced set of rights in Europe, can actually detract from their access to certain rights in Sweden" (Levy, 2022: 19), that is, rights that refugees from outside the EU have.

Lastly, concerning the political shift, the election of the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*) in 2018 raised several concerns and testified to the increasing and growing anti-immigrant attitude in Swedish public opinion.

Therefore, inequalities and exclusion in Stockholm mainly manifest themselves in these suburban neighbourhoods, producing income polarization, uneven education upgrading, school inequality, and ethnic restructuring (Andersson, Turner, 2014; Andersson et al., 2021; Andersson, Malmberg, 2015; Tunström, Wang, 2019). Moreover, ethnic segregation is so visible and tangible that these neighbourhoods became a place of otherness. For instance, since the 1980s, Swedes-born labelled the language spoken in the Northern part of

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[189] Swedish exceptionalism is the idea of Sweden having a self-image of being superior to others, mainly based on the country's understanding of itself as being a "moral superpower".

[190] Specifically, in 2004, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined, while in 2007 Romania and Bulgaria.

[191] According to the law, migrants and visitors from the European Union can remain in Sweden for up to three months with only a valid identity card. After this period, specific conditions (i.e., enrolment in education, formal employment, proof of sufficient funds to support yourself in Sweden) need to be met to request and gain Swedish residence. Unfortunately, the "vulnerable EU citizens" often do not satisfy these requirements.

Stockholm as "*Rinkebysvenska*" (Rinkeby Swedish). This subtle but powerful metaphor puts a distinguishment between the "real Swedes" and the others, contributing "to the social reproduction of hierarchical and unequal societies" (Stroud, 2004: 210). Moreover, the imagery and narrative of these suburbs are strictly related to the media[192] and politics[193]. In the last decades, several newspapers have described these neighbourhoods as "no-go zones" and the inhabitants as criminals. Thus, since the 2000s, these areas increasingly became security hotspots under continuous police surveillance and repression (Schierup et al., 2014). Territorial stigmatization combined with rising inequality, resentment, and frustration resulted in the uprising of 2013[194]. As explained by Mustafa Dikec (2017), these unrests were a response to the current housing policy and dynamics in Stockholm that are working to concentrate the most socio-economically disadvantaged groups of the population in the less desirable parts of cities. On the other hand, in response to the increasing inequalities, polarization, social exclusion, and marginalization of the urban peripheries, several bottom-up organizations and associations started to emerge (Sjöberg, Kings, 2021). This shift towards the civil sphere is relevant as it relates to the collective empowerment and construction of a community network aimed at promoting social change and justice. One of the most famous examples was the Megafonen in Husby, which was also part and voice of the urban riots of 2013 (Sjöberg, Kings, 2021; Ålund, 2014; Schierup et al., 2014). Within this perspective, these social movements represent narratives of "dislocation and alterity" (Anthias, 2002: 499).

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[192] For instance: https://www.thelocal.se/20190603/sweden-vulnerable-areas-decrease-positive-trends-police/; https://www.thelocal.se/20211015/three-new-entries-added-to-swedens-list-of-vulnerable-areas/; https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/three-new-districts-added-to-polices-list-of-vulnerable-areas.

[193] Particularly, the rhetoric of the Swedish Democrats.

[194] On 19 May 2013, violent disturbances broke out in Husby. The riots were reportedly in response to the shooting to death by police of an elderly man, reportedly a Portuguese expatriate, armed with a puukko knife, after entering his apartment and then allegedly trying to cover up the man's death. The Husby political group Megafonen published a blog post on 14 May, the day after the shooting, in which the deceased man was referred to as "non-white". Megafonen also called for a demonstration against "police brutality" on 15 May, two days after the shooting, in the same post. The disturbances involved several hundred youths and resulted in the injury of at least seven police officers. On Tuesday 28 May, the Stockholm police reported that the situation was "back to normal" with no rioting, only a few burned-out cars, and no reports of unrest in other Swedish towns either (Wikipedia).

However, looking at the European data, in 2020, 18% of the Swedish population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1,2 pp more than in 2008), while the data on inequality reported that the Gini coefficient was 27 (1,8 pp more than in 2008) and the ratio S80/S20 4 (0,4 more than in 2008) (Appendix K). According to these data, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially those not coming from other European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels (Appendix K). Moreover, in 2020, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion were more likely to face economic difficulties, be unable to buy things for themselves, and have less social life than those who do not experience AROPE (Appendix K). It is particularly concerning as these situations affect their quality of life, living conditions, and risk of experiencing and reinforcing exclusion and inequality. Similarly, looking at the neighbourhood situation, those experiencing AROPE were more likely to witness contextual issues than those not at risk (Appendix K). Particularly, regarding housing conditions, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are more likely to live in overcrowded households (Appendix K). It was particularly relevant and impacting during the Covid-19 pandemic as they did not have enough space to study, attend online classes, and work. This aspect negatively affects the physical and psychological health of households.

5.3.2 Social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees

The interviewees defined social exclusion and inequality in four main ways. A part of them described these phenomena as not having the same opportunities and chances to participate in society, the labour market, or education as others.

> "It is the ability to affect your own life, to achieve personal goals and dreams and so forth. If you have that ability, if you believe you can do that, then you are in a more privileged place. If you don't, you are just looking for how to pay the next rent, then you are probably in a social exclusion situation. [..] It is the same all over the world. It's the same economical system

where we live under capitalism and capitalism is competition. And it's unfair competition because we don't start at the same level, so we don't have the same tools to achieve" (Interviewee ASS9_SE).

This possibility depends on different factors, such as nationality, race or ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background (i.e., wealth, class, parents' education level), religion, education level, sexuality, etc. All these aspects influence the access to resources in a society, how it treats and considers people inhabiting it, and how they perceive themselves and what they can achieve. Within this perspective, social exclusion and inequality are "*both something that is physical, so in terms of like your financial possibilities and opportunities that you have, but also something that exists in the mind. So, what you believe you have access to, what places you believe you have access to*" (Interviewee ASS5_SE).

On the other hand, part of the interviewees conceptualized social exclusion and inequality as being outside society or the "box". By that, they meant those who, regardless of nationality or any specific connotations, live isolated or cannot live up to the Swedish lifestyle. On the one hand, they stated that Sweden is an individualistic and sometimes closed society. Thus, getting in touch with people or social life is difficult for Swedes and even more for migrants.

> "*Persone chiuse di fatto in Svezia vivono da sole perché è molto difficile avere, farsi degli amici, avere dei contatti. La vita sociale in Svezia, in generale, non è la stessa che si ha nei paesi del Sud Europa. Questo si riverbera fortemente sugli stranieri, chiaramente, perché se già avviene negli svedesi, che magari non hanno famiglia oppure non hanno contatti con la famiglia, perché così è in Svezia, per gli stranieri questa cosa è ancora più forte, perché farsi degli amici, farsi dei contatti in Svezia è difficile per uno straniero*"[195] (Interviewee ASS11_SE).

On the other hand, being outside of the "box" means not being line with the norms or with the "*svenska livsstilen*" (the Swedish lifestyle).

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[195] Translation: "*Closed people in Sweden actually live alone because it is very difficult to have, make friends, have contacts. Social life in Sweden, in general, is not the same as in Southern European countries. This has a strong reverberation on foreigners, clearly, because if it already happens in Swedes, who perhaps have no family or have no contact with the family, because this is the case in Sweden, for foreigners this thing is even stronger, because making friends, making contacts in Sweden is difficult for a foreigner*".

"If you have like a house, if you have like a family, if you have like a normal job, usually people say if you have a Volvo, then you are part of the norm. Everything outside than that you are not part of the norm. If you are struggling with your economy, if you do not have a job or you have been jobless for quite a long time, or if you have been like homeless, if we have any signs of unhealthy, not only physically, but also psychologically, mentally, then you are outside. Immediately people will discriminate on you" (Interviewee ASS16_SE).

Differently, several interviewees affirmed that the official way to describe social exclusion and inequality is being or falling out from the official system, i.e., not having a personal number[196] or an identification number[197].

"There are different scenarios that can make you like momentarily falling, falling out of the system. So, either you're here illegally like you came here on a tourist visa and you didn't seek asylum, but you need to. Or that your asylum claim is denied, and then you stay even though migration told you to return. But you don't feel safe to return, so you still stay and then you here illegally. Or if you're an EU citizen who stays here for longer than you're allowed to without having proper work or any form of financial support. So if you don't work in Sweden, then you're technically here illegally" (Interviewee ASS8_SE).

Regardless of how this process of falling out happens, these people become illegal as they are not part of the official system and, automatically, they have access only to a limited number of services.

Lastly, some interviewees described social exclusion and inequality through the "recognition gap". It refers to the disparities in consideration and treatment among groups in a society. Within this perspective, it impacts vulnerable groups at the individual and structural levels. On the one hand, it could manifest by making some groups think not to be part of society. As some interviewees reported, "*the integration policy has failed. The integration policy is not working well. There is no integration at all. People see themselves alone, and that's why in such areas such as Husby can't think themselves, mostly Arab and then foreigners*" (Interviewee

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[196] Everyone registered in the Swedish Population Register receives a personal identification number. You will receive it from the Swedish Tax Agency (https://www.skatteverket.se/servicelankar/otherlanguages/inenglish/individualsandemployees/livinginsweden/personalidentitynumberandcoordinationnumber.4.2cf1b5cd163796a5c8b4295.html).
[197] A coordination number is an identifier for individuals who are not or have not been registered in the Swedish system (https://www.skatteverket.se/servicelankar/otherlanguages/inenglish/individualsandemployees/livinginsweden/personalidentitynumberandcoordinationnumber.4.2cf1b5cd163796a5c8b4295.html).

ASS2_SE)[198]. Consequentially, this perception distorts the expectations and interactions among groups. For instance, an interviewee reported a conversation with a woman regarding the neighbourhood where he moved in. As it is densely inhabited by migrants, she asked: "*Does it feel like you're in Sweden when you're living there*?". This quote is offensive and shows the prejudice of what makes a person a Swedish and, consequentially, part of society. On the other, the recognition gap impacts the treatments and interactions at the structural level. Indeed, it influences how governments promote policies, how businesses or investments are oriented, and how the police, social services, and institutions interact with different communities. A typical example of that is the racial profiling of the police.
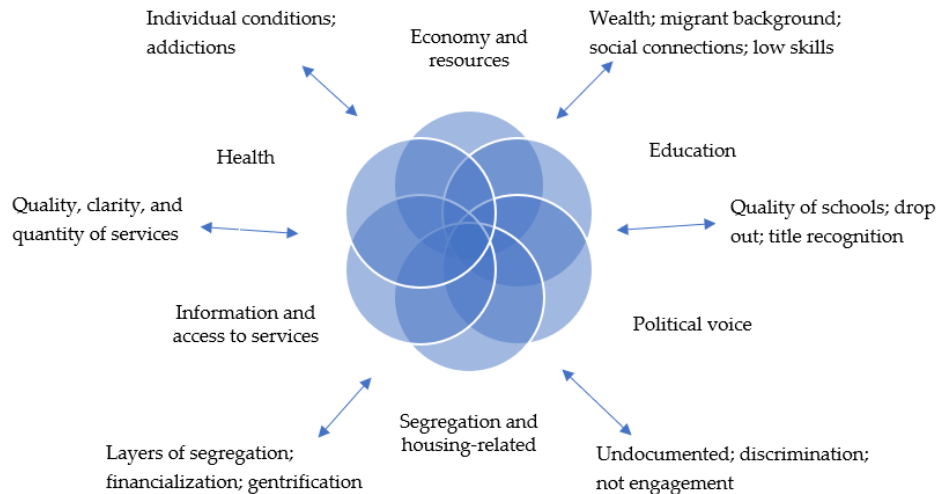
> "*I mean one thing that we've worked a lot with during the past few years is racial profiling by the police. So, when they take action based on people's skin colour or ethnicity. And, when we talk to people living in in these areas, they say, well, the police is always here and they surveil us and what we do. But then when we move and go into the city centre, we are surveilled as well because we don't look as we belong there. So, we are controlled when we are where we belong, but when we move out of that area, we're also controlled. It's very sad. But it's interesting because the argument from the side of the police is well, we need to be in these areas because that's where crime is committed and also violent crime. So, we need to be there. But when they then move out, they're still controlled. So, it's not only the place, it's the individuals or the people or the types of people*" (Interviewee ASS15_SE).

Hence, according to the interviewees, social exclusion and inequality are multidimensional phenomena that operate at different layers and reinforce each other. Thus, they often talked about the vicious circle of disadvantages, which affect people in their life course and every domain, risking to perdure over time and generations. In describing these aspects, the interviewees underlined the difficulties in drawing lines and borders among dimensions, drivers, and consequences. They often spotlighted how interrelated and embedded they are. Hence, the interviewees described some aspects simultaneously as dimensions, causes and

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[198] Moreover, some interviewees pointed out that policies played a role in the creation of areas with higher shares of immigrants. Indeed, over time, in Stockholm, the newcomers were dislocated in specific districts (mainly in the suburbs and the Million Programme apartments). Their difficulties in integrating and catching up with the rest of society reinforced their segregation, resulting in areas self-managed and with smashed rules.

consequences of social exclusion and inequality. Figure 5.16 grouped their faces into six main aspects, which are interrelated.

Figure 5.16 – Main dimensions, drivers, and consequences of social exclusion and inequality in Stockholm

Individual conditions; addictions

Economy and resources

Wealth; migrant background; social connections; low skills

Health

Education

Quality, clarity, and quantity of services

Quality of schools; drop out; title recognition

Information and access to services

Political voice

Layers of segregation; financialization; gentrification

Segregation and housing-related

Undocumented; discrimination; not engagement

To begin with, the interviewees indicated the economic and resources[199] distribution dimension as the most known and evident aspect through which inequality and exclusion manifest. Being economically disadvantaged affects the priorities, life choices, support, health, alimentation, housing, and living conditions of households. As some interviewees summarized, "*a very poor life, bad economy, bad support, probably very bad housing, sort of being out of the social context*" (Interviewee ASS10_SE). Moreover, the rise in living and housing costs worsened this situation, increasing the number of households having difficulties making ends meet. Nevertheless, the economic and resource distribution dimension depends mainly on working conditions and family background. Regarding the former, the changes that occurred in the last decades made the labour market more volatile, flexible, and segmented. The differences in access, quality, and remuneration between low- and high-quality jobs increasingly became significant. On the other hand, the family background remains a relevant aspect, cause, and consequence of social exclusion and inequality. Indeed, living in an economically and socially disadvantaged household severely influences the opportunities and trajectories of its members. "*I mean, class processes and social background*

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[199] By resources, the interviewees refer to wealth, social connections, educative, family background, and environmental services available.

is the main driver of where you end up. And then education comes in. Also, that's extremely important so. Social background determines education, which in turn determines a lot" (Interviewee EXP6_SE). In particular, it impacts children due to their parent's financial situation and their possibility to be present. The intergenerational transmission of deprivation (as well as wealth) represents a central aspect of the reproduction or avoidance of exclusion and inequality. "*Så det konsekvensen blir att barnen som växer upp i ekonomisk socioekonomiska familjer som är utsatta har sämre ekonomisk förutsättning, har sämre framtidstro och rekryteras lättare till kriminalite*t"[200] (Interviewee ASS4_SE). Within this perspective, the interviewees spotlighted that, in Stockholm, this divergence in the accumulation of resources is unbalanced between migrants and white Swedes. Thus, children with a migrant background tend to live and grow up in more deprived contexts, neighbourhoods, and housing conditions than their Swedish peers.

Secondly, another dimension through which social exclusion and inequality manifest is education. Even if it should be the principal tool to reduce and eradicate these phenomena, its access and quality made it one of their aspects, causes, and consequences. Indeed, several interviewees spotlighted the differences between the inner and outskirt schools. These distinctions regard the quality of the personnel, the number of students in the classrooms, the resources, and the social issues connected with being in vulnerable areas. Specifically, according to the interviewees, fewer teachers want to work in the suburbs, resulting in a discontinuity in the training and lectures. In addition, as there are not a lot of professors and resources, the classrooms have more children than elsewhere, leading to a fewer quality of teaching. Moreover, as sometimes the children in these areas might have some socioeconomic vulnerabilities or lack assistance from their parents, the teachers at these schools have to provide for these issues.

> "*I don't know if there are like more schools or less schools. But I know that there's already a difference in personnel. Like who is hired and who is going to be teaching the kids. So, some teachers, for instance, would not like to work in a difficult area. So there are already problems*

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[200] Translation: "*So the consequence is that the children who grow up in socioeconomically vulnerable families have a worse financial condition, have a worse faith in the future and are more easily recruited into crime*".

with hiring enough teachers and hiring enough qualified teachers. Then it might happen that there is still like a high amount of students, but more students are put into one class. The teacher cannot take care of all the kids in a similar way. The kids are already going to have a disadvantage. Then I would also say that because if we take, for example, Kungsholmen as a very rich part of the city or Södermalm, and then we take Rinkeby or Kista as another with a different socioeconomic index and a different social class, then I would say that their, the network that your parents have because of their social situation is already different, so you already bring a different, a Swedish full of settling, a prerequisite with you into your school life and into the labour market, where there are differences. So, for instance, if we have a bigger class size in Kungsholmen or we have a bigger class size in the Rinkeby – Kista that makes a difference because the parents of the children and in Kungsholmen probably have more timely resources or more educational background to help their children in a way and more language background to help their children in a way that moves them forward in their career. While in the Rinkeby – Kista we have a problem with the language background, and we don't always have parents who have the timely resources because they have to make their money themselves and work 50 hours a week, for instance. So, I wouldn't say it's always like how it is in the authorities, but also by many influenced by many surrounding factors that you already bring with your yourself. But then of course, it is on the authority to like balance this out and take care of these problems that are existing, which is not done in the best way, I would say" (Interviewee ASS13_SE).

As these differences between the inner and outskirt schools became more evident, the government tried to counterattack these dynamics by promoting and allowing free school choice[201]. So, people were allowed to choose which school to enrol their children in regardless of where they lived. Instead of improving the situation, this measure deepened school segregation as those who could afford to register their children elsewhere (the white Swedes) did it, while migrants – who should have been the ones that should enrol the children elsewhere – did not. Moreover, these academic differences became even more visible through the privatization of schools.

Another aspect through which social exclusion and inequality manifest in education is the gap between migrants and natives. Not all newcomers are uneducated, but a consistent part has neither gone to school nor had their academic titles recognized. They are two different

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[201] It refers to the school choice reform in 1992. Several studied underlined its effects (e.g., The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2003; Böhlmark, Lindahl, 2007; Wondratschek V., Edmark K., Frölich M, 2013).

situations which sometimes result in a similar condition of instability and precariat. Indeed, the ones who never went to school are analphabets, and it is problematic for social, economic, and working reasons. On other side, though, those migrants whose degrees were not recognized face economic, financial, and self-esteem problems. Hence, they accept demining or less qualified jobs, which might generate frustration and dissatisfaction in them or their children. Indeed, several interviewees pointed out that, even if these people do a job that does not correspond to what they have studied, most of them are grateful to have had the opportunity to move to Sweden. Differently, though, their children might see these episodes as an injustice.

Thirdly, a central aspect of exclusion and inequality in Stockholm is the spatial conformation of these phenomena.

> Starting from the geographical division of the city, "*it lends itself perfectly to segregation. The waterways divide the city in such a way that, they divide the city in such a way where these areas, these nice areas, are easily defined. They're distinct geographical locations with clear boundaries and the time it takes to get into the city is driven largely by the fact that there's these waterways that are passing right and you have to cross them*" (Interviewee EXP2_SE).

The interviewees pointed out the different layers of segregation that characterized the Swedish capital, which make it one of the most segregated cities in Europe. In Stockholm, segregation has three main dimensions - residential, economic, and ethnic - which overlap. Firstly, residential segregation is related to the quality and possibility of owning or renting a house. Most people in the inner city of Stockholm bought their housing, while most of the population in the outskirt live in social or rented apartments. This difference is due to the housing market's changes and the Million Programme housing in the suburbs. On the one side, in the last decades, access to housing changed, becoming less affordable. In the past, renting an apartment was cheaper and the norm, regardless of their financial or social situation. Differently, nowadays, because of the shift to financialization and privatization of the housing market, owning a house is cheaper than renting and an economic asset. So, those with financial resources or who could ask for a loan to buy their own houses did it, while the rest of the population had to rent apartments at higher prices. Furthermore, this

tendency to buy reduced the renting apartments, mainly located in the suburbs. Hence, this uneven geographical distribution exacerbates spatial and residential exclusion and inequality. In addition, a process of gentrification pushed further and further out the poorer and more vulnerable groups. On the other side, the Million Programme housing in the suburbs of Stockholm played a role. Indeed, when they were built in the 1960s and 1970s, they had a high standard of living but, nowadays, they became cheaper as they got older. Thus, several low-skilled workers or working-class people moved there, even if their jobs remained in the city centre. Consequentially, their commuting hours increased, impacting their quality of life. Moreover, the Million Programme housing often became the first place for newcomers and refugees. This tendency exacerbated ethnic segregation and developed a bad reputation and image of these areas.

Secondly, the economic segregation is tangible looking at the income levels throughout the city: the further out you go from the city centre, the poorer people are. As mentioned, the fact that the people in the inner part of Stockholm own their houses is another proof of the financial and economic differences.

These economic and residential divisions have ethnic characteristics as well. Indeed, the wealthiest people are usually white Swedish-born people, whereas newcomer migrants or people with a migrant background tend to inhabit the poorest neighbourhoods in the outskirt of Stockholm.

> *"There's like a symbolic train you can take, actually see the segregation. If you look at the sub metro line. There's, we have a red line. So, our different lines are different colours. So, the red line starts in Norsborg and it ends in Ropsten. Norsborg is in the outskirts where if you get on, you walk onto the train at like seven in the morning, you will see people going into their work. Everyone will basically be going from like 5:00 o'clock in the morning until like 7:00 o'clock in the morning because they start very early. They work in like service. They work in elderly care, they work in all these types of fields were, I guess your call was like the service sector and care sector. And basically everyone will be an immigrant or a child of an immigrant. And then as you move closer to the city with the train, you will start seeing like probably halfway to the city centre you will start seeing people, more white Swedish people get on train. This will also happen around like probably 7-8 nine o'clock since there's also people from a different work sector that are, that have an academic background. So, they have a job at the office. They don't have to be at work at 7:00 in the morning, they can be at work*

at 9:00 in the morning for example. Or they can take some time off in the morning to go in a little bit later. So, at the end of this line, we will be in the parts of the parts of Stockholm and there you will see the people that will get on the train and walk around in these in this area will basically only be upper class white Swedish people. So, you can literally see the segregation of the city" (Interviewee ASS5_SE).

Hence, the overlapping of these three dimensions of segregation is simultaneously an aspect, a cause, and a consequence of exclusion and inequality.

Fourthly, the interviewees pointed out the relevance of the political dimension of inequality and social exclusion. Within this perspective, these phenomena can manifest as the lack or impossibility of engaging in political processes, such as voting, joining a political organization, being part of a union, etc. These impediments are often due to the legal status and their lack of interest, knowledge, and time resources. On the one hand, several cannot engage in politics due to their legal status. For different reasons, they fall out of the system or are undocumented. Living in this situation means not having rights, not accessing services, and being disproportionately more likely to be exploited, mistreated, and unheard.

> *"They live not only in the shadows, but they live completely hidden, and they are exploited to a point where we actually call it like slavery. We try to say that that group is exploited to very large extent and that. Because the trade unions are often worrying about wage dumping, and the people are sort of trying to get a job by asking for as little salary as possible, by which I we very early realised that this group. This isn't dumping. This is slavery, so it's a a big difference. It's a big gap between wage dumping, which we of course don't think it's a good idea because it will in the end harm everyone but slavery is sort of, it's a big gap. So, that was all of all the things that we could see that this group is so vulnerable and that is. As trade unions, we need to see that someone need to be on that side and also speak for them"* (Interviewee ASS10_SE).

Living out of the system precludes possibilities and exposes them to higher health risks.

> *"They are excluded in any possible sense. They don't have any Social Security in anyway. They can't get a job. Or it's really, really hard. Sometimes it's possible to find something, but generally not. And to not have a place to stay. It is obviously very prominent. Yeah, but I think the most maybe striking thing to meet is how the people living here undocumented don't have usually, or often they don't have any like social contact. Obviously, they are excluding from like the whole system, but also a lot of people lack friends or just to know anyone to reach out to"* (Interviewee ASS18_SE).

For this reason, being excluded or unequal politically represents an aspect of being disadvantaged as well as a cause and consequence. On the other hand, those not participating due to the lack of time and interest are often people regularly in the country who might not have the education, knowledge of and interest in laws, rights, and systems, and time to keep informed and engaged in politics as much as they would.

Fifthly, the interviewees individuated another dimension of exclusion and inequality in access to the state and services. The struggles in benefitting services mainly regard those undocumented who cannot enjoy welfare. Beyond them, migrants often face more difficulties accessing the state as they might not know how the system works. In addition, the interviewees reported episodes of racism and discrimination due to race, nationality, gender, religion, sexuality, etc.

Lastly, social exclusion and inequality have a sanitarian and health dimension. On the one hand, having psychological or physical issues influences the capacity and possibility to fulfil the societal life. Within this frame, the interviewees also mentioned distress, depression, and addictions to drugs or alcohol as an impede to enjoying societal life. On the other, being or living at the marginals is more likely to face worse living conditions and difficulties benefitting from sanitarian services. Regarding the latter, the interviewees reported two principal examples: the shootings and Covid-19 death rates. In the former case, the interviewees denounced how an increasing escalation of shootings is happening in Stockholm. However, they mainly involved and injured inhabitants of suburban areas or belonging to some minority. In the example of Covid-19, the interviewees pointed out that migrants have been hit by the virus harder than the rest of the population. The Somali group was the one with higher cases and deaths. It might be due to the types of jobs that they do. For instance, they are often in service, construction, and care. However, the pandemic showed how inequality and exclusion impact people's health and mortality in Europe.

5.3.3 Who is unequal and excluded

The interviewees underlined that, even if Stockholm is known and perceived as a city of a high standard of equality, it presents differences and disparities within its neighbourhoods and among the inhabiting communities. In describing social exclusion and inequality, they often exemplify what they mean by quoting the groups most affected by these dynamics. According to them, the immigrants living in the suburbs or being in vulnerable situations are those experiencing the most social exclusion and inequality in Stockholm. Within them, it is necessary to distinguish between European and non-European migrants and clarify their legal status and qualifications. By "migrants", the interviewees meant those outside Europe or not from a Western country. "*I would say that there is a category of, a cultural category of the immigrants*" (Interviewee EXP5_SE). For instance, when politicians or media talk about migrants or their related issues, they do not refer to Europeans or Americans living in Sweden. Moreover, Swedish immigration law has become increasingly punitive and restrictive towards those without EU passports. However, the interviewees reported two principal examples to specify the diversity of treatments towards specific groups and nationalities. Firstly, the government put exceptions in the migration law for the United Kingdom after Brexit. Secondly, when the war in Ukraine began, Ukrainian refugees were treated and welcomed differently and better than those from the Middle East.

> "*We see a lot with Ukraine, people take on Ukrainian refugees like nothing else and they want to help. But when the Syrian refugee crisis like started that was not met with the same type of help and the fact that we have the mass refugee directive that was being pushed through EU upon all EU member countries, so Ukrainian refugees can move freely within the EU, because this EU directive has put into force. It was available in 2015, but it was never used. That's why all of these refugees from Syria had to stay in Greece and Italy and those countries because of the Dublin decision*" (Interviewee ASS8_SE). Or even, "w*hen Ukrainian refugees come, some politicians have gone out in the papers and saying that these are real refugees*" (Interviewee ASS9_SE).

Thus, within this perspective, the most excluded are tendentially non-white and non-European people from Somalia, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Syria, Turkey, Nigeria, Senegal, India, and Mongolia. They might be recently arrived but also of the second or third

generation. Being a migrant or having a migrant background makes inequality and exclusion harder due to:

- The language;

- The religion, especially if they are Muslim;

- The bureaucratic barriers;

- The unrecognition of education attainments;

- The discrimination in the housing and labour market. To avoid this prejudice, several interviewees affirmed that people change their names to make them sound more Swedish or English. Moreover, the discrimination passes through some specific expressions such as the "potential to integrate" referring to specific groups.

  "That's kind of this cultural, racist argument that there are some people from some cultures when they come here, "they don't have enough potential to become part, become part of our rational, reasonable, great humanitarian society". [..] And so there's definitely that kind of cultural racism and cultural essentialism and feeling of cultural superiority happening" (Interviewee EXP5_SE).

This situation is even more difficult for those in Stockholm without papers or illegally.

Nevertheless, regardless of their nationality, excluded and unequal people tend to have similar socioeconomic, educational, living, and working characteristics, namely:

- Being a single parent;

- Working in low-skilled and hard jobs (e.g., driving buses, taxis, metros, cleaning, construction, restaurants, caring, local shops, services, GIG economy, and delivery). Thus, these are underpaid and tiring jobs with uncommon working time. For instance, they might work at night or until late in the evening. It impacts the possibility of assisting and checking on their children. It also influences household relationships. In other cases, these jobs could affect the health of workers. This aspect was evident during the pandemic. Moreover, concerning undocumented people or those illegally in Stockholm, their principal jobs are mainly informal occupations

161

aimed at surviving day by day. They often do not have guarantees to be paid at the end of the day but, as they have no other options, they go anyway to these jobs;

- Having a low socioeconomic and educational background;

- Being unemployed, on welfare, or struggling with the labour market;

- Living in overcrowded households. Some families live in small apartments with several children. It complicates the possibilities for these children to study properly or to have their own space. It was evident during the pandemic as they could not have private rooms or computers to attend classes. Moreover, some interviewees affirmed that, sometimes, this lack of space in the houses is why young people stay out in the streets with their peers. Furthermore, some of these overcrowded households often are in this situation because they host friends or family members coming from abroad who recently arrived;

- Living in a neighbourhood or areas with environmental and social stresses;

- Being an informal worker without assurances and contracts;

- Not owning an accommodation.

Furthermore, the interviewees have pointed out that exclusion and inequality are increasing, and some changes occurred in the last decades. Firstly, the shifts happening in the housing market and welfare state influenced living and working conditions. On the one hand, renting and affording accommodation became more difficult due to the increasing costs, the difficulties in accessing loans, and the shortening of housing available. Within this perspective, the interviewees pointed out a legal and illegal second-hand market and increasing evictions. On the other, the shift towards privatization and neoliberalism of the 1980s and 1990s profoundly impacted the welfare and their ability to cover all those in need.

Secondly, the interviewees spotlighted a change in the attitude towards migrants. They defined the crisis of migrants in 2015/2016 as a landmark. Before that, Swedish society was more open and welcoming towards migrants, regardless of their nationalities. Since 2016, there has been an increasing discourse about crimes committed by foreigners and a political shift towards right-wing parties. Several interviewees reported the example of the rise of

the Swedish Democrats. Their ideas have always been considered extremist and racist. However, in the last years, they have become mainstream, and the other right-wing parties are adapting their proposals and agendas to them. Furthermore, this closeness towards migrants seems to have a racial or ethnic connotation. Indeed, according to the interviewees, it is possible to see different treatments based on nationalities or appearance. The principal example reported is the different attitudes that Swedish society had toward the Syrians in 2016 and the Ukrainians in 2022. Within this perspective, the latter group seems to have an easier path into the country. It might be related to several reasons. For instance, they are less than other groups of refugees; they have previous humanitarian pacts and economic deals; they are geographically closer; there is a European directive for their temporary displacement. Nevertheless, some interviewees supposed that this different attitude might also be related to racism and a more similar appearance between Ukrainians and Swedes than other refugees.

Regardless of these changes in attitude, the interviewees stated that the group more excluded and unequal in Stockholm remained the same over time: the most recent migrants.

> *"It's always the most recent migrants who are the most affected, the most, the weakest group who don't have the connexions, who don't have the language, who don't know the laws or the rights. And stuff like that. [..] 50 years ago people from Finland were all criminals. I mean so. But now people from Finland, they're fucking great. So, because they had the chance to get into society and, you know, get their education, have their children growing up there"* (Interviewee ASS9_SE).

Over time this group has been marginalized, stigmatized, and discriminated against. On the other hand, what is changed is the nationality of these people and the reasons behind their arrival. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Finnish were the most problematic group described as drunk, criminal, and dangerous. Indeed, Finland was the only Scandinavian nation discriminated against. Since then, new waves of migration came from all over the world, producing a racialization of exclusion and inequality. Thus, in the 1980s and 1990s, more migrants were from Yugoslavia, Turkey, and South America (mainly Chile) due to conflicts. Finally, since the 2000s, people mainly come from Africa or the Middle East. Specifically, in the last decade, there has been a rise in migrants from Somalia, Afghanistan,

and Syria. Even if all these groups have been discriminated against and stigmatized, they are experiencing different paths toward integration. The ones who arrived in the 1990s have been able to assimilate into the society and labour markets, while the most recent groups are still struggling with this amalgamation. Some interviewees affirmed that it is just a question of time before they will be completely part of society; others pointed out that this difficulty in assimilation might be due to cultural, religious, and national reasons. However, most interviewees underlined a racialization of the groups excluded and unequal in Sweden.

In addition to these groups, since the 2000s and the enlargement of the European Union, the Roma population began to appear and be present in Stockholm. They mainly come from Romania and Bulgaria; thus, they could be included in the Swedish system or welfare. Most of the time, though, they do not register or declare themselves in the countries and, consequently, are invisible and treated as undocumented. They often build camps in the forests on the outskirts or sleep in the streets or shelters. Most of the Roma population begs in the streets or recycles cans.

Thirdly, the interviewees denounced an increase in violence and shotguns. They stated that they often happened in the suburbs, and, for this reason, the media and right-wing parties (mainly the Swedish Democrats) tend to blame and stigmatize the people who live in these areas.
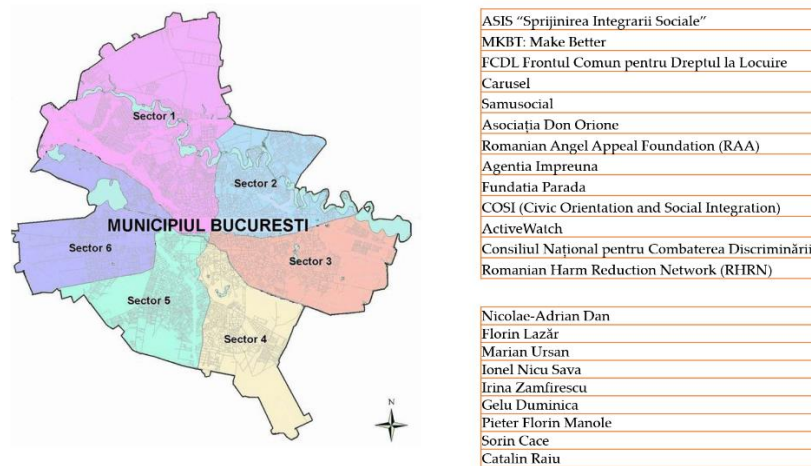
5.4 Bucharest

This paragraph presents how social exclusion and inequality manifest in the Romanian capital by reporting the results of a study conducted in Bucharest between June and July 2022. The data was gathered by engaging with the most vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods and experts. More precisely, the associations that participate in the research work at the city level; thus, figure 5.17 shows the division of Bucharest by sectors and the participants without specifying in which districts they operate[202]. During the

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[202] The associations that participated are: ASIS "Sprijinirea Integrarii Sociale"; MKBT: Make Better; FCDL Frontul Comun pentru Dreptul la Locuire; Carusel; Samusocial; Asociația Don Orione; Romanian Angel

research period, twenty-two interviews have been conducted (Figure 5.17 and Appendix A).

Figure 5.17 – Bucharest's sectors and list of experts and associations participating in the research

ASIS "Sprijinirea Integrarii Sociale"
MKBT: Make Better
FCDL Frontul Comun pentru Dreptul la Locuire
Carusel
Samusocial
Asociația Don Orione
Romanian Angel Appeal Foundation (RAA)
Agentia Impreuna
Fundatia Parada
COSI (Civic Orientation and Social Integration)
ActiveWatch
Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării
Romanian Harm Reduction Network (RHRN)

Nicolae-Adrian Dan
Florin Lazăr
Marian Ursan
Ionel Nicu Sava
Irina Zamfirescu
Gelu Duminica
Pieter Florin Manole
Sorin Cace
Catalin Raiu

5.4.1 Context and previous studies

With two million inhabitants[203], Bucharest is the largest city in Romania as well as the most important political, economic, cultural, and scientific centre. According to the census of 2011[204], most of its population (86%) is Romanian, while 14% belong to other minorities. Among which, the Roma ethnicity[205] (Appendix L) is particularly relevant. Geographically speaking, it is divided into six administrative sectors (Figure 5.17). Each has its mayor and council. Each sector is responsible for local affairs, such as secondary streets, parks, schools,

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Appeal Foundation (RAA); Agentia Impreuna; Fundatia Parada; COSI (Civic Orientation and Social Integration); ActiveWatch; Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării; Romanian Harm Reduction Network (RHRN).

The experts that participated are: Nicolae-Adrian Dan; Florin Lazăr; Marian Ursan; Ionel Nicu Sava; Irina Zamfirescu; Gelu Duminica; Pieter Florin Manole; Catalin Raiu; Sorin Cace.

[203] https://web.archive.org/web/20200216134845/http://metropotam.ro/La-zi/Rezultate-recensamant-2011-pe-Bucuresti-Infografic-art7723859596.

[204] https://www.citypopulation.de/en/romania/bucuresticity/. https://web.archive.org/web/20200216134845/http://metropotam.ro/La-zi/Rezultate-recensamant-2011-pe-Bucuresti-Infografic-art7723859596.

[205] Romania is one of the European countries with the highest share of the Roma population. Their history is embedded and interrelated with the Romanian ones. For this reason, Appendix L focuses on them.

and cleaning services. The sectors differ in terms of population, density, and share of Roma communities.

Since its proclamation as the capital of Romania in 1862, Bucharest witnessed formal and informal development within its borders (Florea, Dimitriu, 2016). Bucharest's political, socio-economic, and urban development can be divided into three main periods. The first one covers the period from 1862 until the end of the Second War World. The second one describes the communist time. The third one considers the period from the end of the dictatorship until today.

The first period covers the end of the XIX century and the first half of the XX century. It was a moment of enormous changes and progress. Indeed, by the end of the 1800s, Bucharest was invested in a series of improvements (Danta, 1993). The planning of Bucharest was influenced by the French style and architecture. Simultaneously with this formal growth of the city, an informal expansion began mainly due to the absence of walls that demarked and limited its borders. Thus, at the beginning of the XIX century, several factories flourished, and the resulting new migration flows led to the rapid growth of the population and the emergence of a new poor class.

The second period of Bucharest's development covers the communist era. This period witnessed the end of Bucharest's interwar atmosphere and the beginning of a grey, minimalistic architecture. During the Second War World, Bucharest was bombed and severally damaged. Thus, the housing situation was tragic and was treated as a priority by the new communist regime. During this first period (pre-1965), the nationalisation of industries, lands, and residences transformed the landscape of property ownership and the social order of living spaces. The city centre of Bucharest "contained the large majority of the houses that had been nationalised in 1950 by decree 92/1950, by which the authorities confiscated a quarter of the total housing stock of the city" (Lancione, 2019: 10-11). Even though the ideological frame was to abolish private property to reduce social inequality and inefficient development, the allocation process of dwelling went differently. Indeed, the type of dwelling, neighbourhoods, and accessible infrastructures depended on the person's

position in the new economic and political structure. Thus, nationalization generated ambiguity. However, before 1965, the communist government embarked on a housing program aimed at accommodating the influx of workers on the outskirt of the city. For instance, Drumul Taberei, Berceni, and Titan Balta Alta were some of these new districts[206]. Later, between the 1960s and 1970s, mass housing production began (Marin, Chelcea, 2018), and it was based on a nested hierarchy of density and concentration of functions[207].

Then, when Ceaușescu assumed control of the Romanian Communist Party in 1965, things and urban plans changed. In Bucharest, in the first phase of his dictatorship (1965-1980), he promoted a systematization of the settlement system, decreased the administrative districts from eight to six, restricted internal migration, intensified the housing constructions in the outer residential areas, and began the subway system (Danta, 1993). In the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the densification of existing housing estates began, generating poorer-quality apartments (Marin, Chelcea, 2018). Compared to the previous buildings, these had a reduction in quality, facilities, and aesthetics. The housing estate and their neighbourhoods became smaller, less green, and denser. Simultaneously, Ceaușescu implemented social and economic policies[208] that impacted the demography and living

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[206] Developed as though the *cvartal* model (Marin, Chelcea, 2018), "initially, apartment blocks were limited to a height of four stories and separated by sufficient open space for vegetable gardens" (Danta, 1993: 171).

[207] Thus, "several such units, jointly accommodating 4,000 to 12,000 residents, formed a *mikrorayon*, and were outfitted with food, clothing, and shoe shops, restaurants, libraries, cultural centres, sports facilities and medical centres. A cluster of *mikrorayons* housing up to 40,000 inhabitants made up a rayon, which required secondary schools, sporting facilities, cinemas, post offices and hospitals. Finally, an agglomeration with over 40.000 inhabitants needed a theatre, a concert hall, a university, parks, hospitals and offices for state institutions. The buildings were simple, with large windows that opened onto large green spaces, with natural ventilation for bathrooms and with balconies and pantries" (Marin, Chelcea, 2018: 175).

[208] In 1966, Ceaușescu introduced Decree 770 (https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/177), which restricted abortion and contraception. According to this law, the interruption of pregnancy was prohibited, except in six cases. "In a completely exceptional way, the interruption of the course of pregnancy will be authorized according to the provisions of art. 5, in cases where: a) the pregnancy puts the woman's life in a state of danger that cannot be removed by any other means; b) one of the parents suffers from a serious disease, which is hereditary, or which causes serious congenital malformations; c) the pregnant woman has serious physical, mental or sensory disabilities; d) the woman is over 45 years old; e) the woman gave birth to four children and takes care of them; f) pregnancy is the result of rape or incest" (Translation of the Article 2). Furthermore, the regime introduced a tax on childless adults older than twenty-five years old (the so-called "celibacy" tax). Simultaneously, families with children got finances or benefits for each child they had (Keil, Andrescu, 1999; Hord et al., 1991). In 1985 and 1986, Ceaușescu restricted, even more, the "access to legal abortion to women over 45 years of age and having four children was no longer sufficient grounds for abortion

conditions of Romanians. If the focus of his first phase was the suburbs of Bucharest, after the 1980s, Ceaușescu switched his ambitions and attention to the city centre. This shift was due to four main events that occurred in the 1970s. Firstly, his visit to North Korea in 1971 impacted his view of urban plans. Secondly, a tremendous earthquake in 1977 destroyed several parts of Bucharest and gave Ceaușescu the occasion to remodel it as he wanted. Thirdly, as his economic and social plans were failing, he sought new ways to exert his influence. Fourthly, by the end of the 1970s, Romania became a police and totalitarian state through the rise of the secret police, the fabrication of the personal cult of Ceaușescu, and the running of the government as a family affair (Danta, 1993). Thus, in the second phase of his dictatorship (1980-1989), the centre of Bucharest was the central attention of his urban plans. Changing Bucharest's architecture was only one of the many disturbing methods to empower Ceaușescu's absurd cult of personality[209]. By 1989 almost a fifth of Bucharest had been destroyed to make way for the new Centru Civic.

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on request; to qualify for a legal abortion, a woman had to have five living children, all under the age of 18 (Geausescu, 1985 and 1986)" (Hord er al., 1991: 232).

The consequences of these laws had irreversible repercussions on women and children. On the one hand, women who wanted an abortion had to do it illegally in unsafe and unhealthy environments. Their life and socio-physical health conditions worsened. If they were caught trying to terminate their pregnancy, they had to pay fines or get punished (Keil, Andrescu, 1999; Hord et al., 1991). On the other hand, especially in the 1980s, several children ended up in state-run orphanages. Most of these children were not orphans, but their families abandoned them as they could not afford another child (Glasper, 2020). These children grew up malnourished in unhealthy and unhygienic environments, without proper and qualified staff. Some got abused, raped, beaten, exposed and sicked of HIV (Human Rights Watch, 2006; Glasper, 2020), and used as human goods. Others escaped from these orphanages and started living in the canalization of cities – mainly Bucharest's – or on the streets. They became known as "the Ceaușescu's children". However, the consequences of this lack of material, social, and caring resources have irreversibly impacted their lives physically and psychologically (Glasper, 2020).

Moreover, in 1982, Ceaușescu decided to pay off the large foreign debt that his government accumulated through mismanaged industrial ventures in the 1970s. To achieve this goal, he ordered the export of much of the country's agricultural and industrial production. It resulted in an extreme shortage of food, fuel, energy, medicines, and other necessities, which drastically lowered living standards and intensified unrest.

[209] Thus, he decided to build an imponent monument to house all party and state institutions in the earth of Bucharest (Palace of Populii), together with Piata Unirii, the Victory of Socialism Boulevard, and the canalization of the river Dimbovita. Their construction began in 1984. To achieve this plan, he destroyed the historical districts of Uranus and Vacaresti, and thousands of families had to move out of their own houses. Particularly, many Roma families "still living there were consequently moved further out, but instead of leaving the properties empty, the State allowed "[a] significant number of lower-class families, including many Roma, [to move] as temporary residents into the houses aimed for demolition. When demolition plans were cancelled in 1990, they remained" (Chelcea, 2006, p. 136)" (Lancione, 2019: 11).

The third period of Bucharest's history is the post-1989. In December 1989, the execution of Ceaușescu and his wife Elena put an end to the dictatorship. The 1990s represented a decade of slow progress and several changes. Bucharest embarked on a gigantic economic, housing, and political transformation[210] due to the interruption of the process of socialist modernization[211]. The drivers of this transition were neo-liberal reforms and privatization (Popescu, 2020), which were implemented through property restitution of the nationalized housing. It creates several jurisdictional, social, and economic problems (Zamfirescu, 2015). As recommended by the World Bank, communist countries needed to sell housing estates, resulting in higher difficulties in accessing social housing (Florea et al., 2022) and ending mass housing estates[212]. These processes of selling, privatization of state housing, the liberalization of utility costs, and privatization of state companies were implemented chaotically and without clear legislation. Thus, on the one hand, the state sold the dwellings to the inhabitant for a low price, turning the tenants into owners. On the other hand, some groups and people were left out of the legal housing system and forced to become illegal dwellers. Hence, many low-income households became unable to cover rising utility costs

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[210] This passage resulted in a chaotically managed privatization and neo-liberalization of lands, houses, and factories (Stan, 1995). Specifically, the post-1990 economic restructuring was messy due to the shrinking of the oversized socialist industrial sector, the legislative inconsistency, and the absence of urban regulations (Popescu, 2020).

[211] Some scholars critically pointed out that the advancement of capitalism was a process of political subjection. Eniko Vincze (2019) affirmed that, in the last three decades, a (re)production of Romania's semi-peripherality occurred. According to him, Romania (1) keeps being a semi-periphery country subjected to a long-durée dependency; (2) has an uneven development underlay by imperial politics as an endemic feature of the neoliberal European Union; (3) is shaped by the 'Eastern enlargement' and its economic conditionalities; (4) has faced uneven and dramatic consequences in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis (Vincze, 2019). This process of subjection happened through three mechanisms of imperial politics, "i.e., conditionality politics, the geopolitics of centre-periphery, and the civilizational discourse (Vincze, 2019: 142). He concluded by affirming that "in the post-1990 capitalist world system, Romania's semi-periphery status was reproduced due to its economic dependency, which at its turn resulted from how its dismantled socialist economy created a new space for foreign capital investment, for the goods produced in the West and for profitable businesses exploiting a cheap labour force" (Vincze, 2019: 162).

[212] To give an idea, "in 1990, the ratio of privately financed to state-financed housing construction was 1:7; by 2008, that ratio had changed to 10:1" (Marin, Chelcea, 2018: 178). Another interesting data is the exponential growth in the rate of homeownership. "In 1989 around 67% of housing in the country was private (Dawidson, 2004), but this figure rose to 96.5% by 2016" (Lancone, 2019: 12). These buildings faced new challenges that condominium associations and local and central governments need to deal with (Marin, Chelcea, 2018). For instance, the ageing of structures and the population, urban infrastructures and connectivity, energy efficiency, high densities, weak and pro-business planning, post-privatisation condominium administration, and aesthetic challenges.

and private market rents, which also led to the loss of homes and evictions (Florea et al., 2022). In addition, the lacking and difficulty of accessing social housing exacerbated these situations. As demonstrated by Zamfirescu (2015), there is a linkage between the privatization of most of the existing housing stock, the lack of social housing policies and displacement/homeless in Bucharest. The privatization happened "either through purchase by the sitting tenants, or re-privatized through the restitution of housing confiscated by the socialist state" (Zamfirescu, 2015:141). It often generated conflicts over housing governance and episodes of corruption. Moreover, the responsibility for the lack of social housing is diffuse among Bucharest's local and central administrations. Indeed, there is an unclear legal context about whom should address and answer for them (Zamfirescu, 2015). Simultaneously, the privatization of industries and lands resulted in the deindustrialization of cities, completely changing the economic and urban context and system that dominated socialism. Thus, this long, deep, and painful economic restructuring was accomplished chaotically in Bucharest as well as in the rest of the country (Grigorescu et al., 2012; Popescu, 2020; Zamfirescu, 2015).

All these dynamics and processes resulted in a rise in unemployment and homelessness. At the beginning of the 1990s, these social issues were tackled and addressed by NGOs or charity organizations (Florea et al., 2022). Especially, homelessness represented a newness in the post-1989. During the communist era, there was no homelessness as intended in the Western way[213]. Thus, during the communist period, the so-called "unhoused" were managed within the frame of the existing institutions[214]. After 1989, this strategy collapsed with the regime. Thus, from the 1990s, homelessness assumed a new categorization and became a social issue with a spatial connotation. The solution proposed after 1989 was mainly directed towards two directions: (1) moving away the homeless from the city centre

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[213] Hence, "some Romanians during the communist era went without regular access to housing. They even slept in the streets when left with no other option. However, Romanians under communism conceived of `the unhoused' (for lack of a better phrase) in ways that do not match the Western category of homelessness in any cultural, political, or economic sense" (O'Neill, 2010: 255).

[214] For instance, "the state interpreted some of the unhoused as orphans and located them in orphanages; the government labelled the healthy but unhoused as `sick' and then placed them in sanatoriums and asylums, and the unproductive became understood as criminals to be located only within prisons" (O'Neill, 2010: 256).

and (2) producing shelters. The idea to put the shelters and move them to the periphery exacerbated and produced segregation, limiting the homeless' fundamental rights to access public space and making the unhoused an emerging labour pool (O'Neill, 2010). Nevertheless, the issues of homelessness, eviction, and squatting remained silenced in the field of housing contention for a long time. They are just brought up in the public discourse in correspondence with contestation for being expulsed (Florea et al., 2022).

Within the issue of homelessness, since the 1990s, another unique and problematic phenomenon emerged: the children in the streets or city canalization. Indeed, with the fall of communism, its institutions also collapsed and made visible the tremendous conditions of orphanages. They were unsafe, unhealthy, and unhygienic environments where to grow up in. Some of the children living there got abused, raped, beaten, exposed and sicked of HIV (Human Rights Watch, 2006; Glasper, 2020; Sullivan, 2014), and used as human goods (look note 208). Thus, some decided to escape and start living in the canalization of Bucharest, mainly close to *Gara de Nord*. This phenomenon is still relevant as these children who grew up in the streets are often still living there or in squatted buildings with their families. Furthermore, the gentrification and beautification of Bucharest have affected and speeded up the processes of evictions (Florea et al., 2022).

Moreover, notwithstanding the economic growth at the beginning of the 2000s, the financial crisis of 2008 deteriorated the situation such that "the European Commission indicated that housing exclusion as one of the biggest challenges" (Zamfirescu, 2015: 144). In response to this economic crisis, the government placed three programs[215] aimed at stabilizing the real estate market, the market for housing credit, and the construction market, limiting the drop in prices. However, they did not pass any legislative changes to protect debtors, and the funding for social housing was insignificant (Florea et al., 2022). Thus, "these programs revealed a differentiated class orientation. Those who could access and afford them required approximately a medium income, provided by jobs mostly concentrated in urban centres"

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[215] "The Prima Casă (First Home) program of state-guaranteed mortgages for first time homebuyers; the Banca pentru locuinţe (Housing Bank or Bauspar) program for housing-related savings and credit, with state-covered bonuses; and a broad program covering 50% of the costs of the thermal insulation of the almost 85,000 blocks of flats built before 1990 in Romania" (Florea et al., 2022: 134).

(Florea et al., 2022: 134). Consequentially, due to the crisis and the subsequent austerity programs, there has been an intensification of racist and anti-poor discourses of political leaders. Lately, the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified and worsened these previous dynamics, portraying the poor, squatters, and Roma as dangerous (Florea et al., 2022). Regarding the latter group and how they have been treated during this time, some scholars affirmed that they experienced and were subjected to a "negative" quarantine (Berescu et al., 2021).

Regarding social exclusion and inequality in Bucharest, the post-socialism decades are central. Indeed, the advent of democracy and capitalism brought advantages and disadvantages to the city. On the one hand, Bucharest has been affected by economic growth that facilitated and improved living and working conditions. On the other, these improvements were not homogeneous and, consequentially, there have been several socioeconomic discrepancies. They consolidated a socio-spatial conformation of the city of Bucharest based on income or ethnicity that, in extreme cases, resulted in a process of ghettoization of some areas and minorities[216] (Mionel, Negut, 2011; Serban, 2011). In Bucharest, the most notorious areas considered marginalized and affected by inequality and social exclusion are the neighbourhoods of Ferentari and Rahova. More precisely, the most relevant examples of segregation are the streets of Aleea Livezilor, Iacob Andrei, Zabrauti, and Amurgului (Figure 5.18).

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[216] In particualr, as part of the population – especially the most disadvantaged – were left out by the housing system, most decided to occupy the areas and buildings abandoned because of the industrial decline. It produced a process of ghettoization of certain areas of Bucharest. This process involves "the discrimination on the labour force market; the economic evaluation of the zone; the discrimination on the real estate markets; the discrimination regarding the access to services; the architectural space degradation; and the isolation and self-isolation" (Mionel, Neguț, 2011: 199).

Figure 5.18 - The Map of Bucharest Urban Segregation (Mionel, Neguț, 2011: 201)
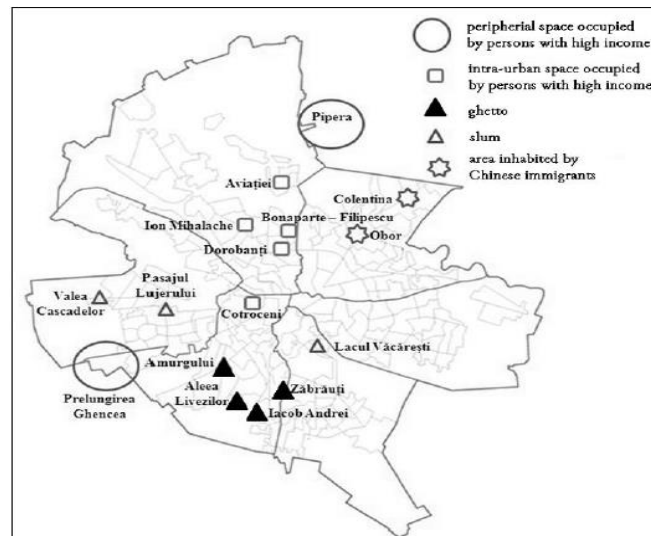
These disadvantaged areas have common socio-demographic characteristics (Berescu, 2011; Şerban, 2011; Mionel, Neguț, 2011). Their inhabitants have a low income, as they are unemployed or have a low-qualified or informal job. They live in overcrowded households, which is a clear indicator of poverty and deprivation. They have a low education level, and the youth tend to drop out of education. Moreover, the Roma population are overrepresented there. On the other hand, these areas also have similar housing situations. Thus, they are districts without good services and where the infrastructures are precarious and degraded (Berescu, 2011; Şerban, 2011; Mionel, Neguț, 2011). The dwellings are unsafe and inadequate[217]. In addition to low housing levels and poor living conditions, these excluded areas are stigmatized and perceived as insecure and violent[218].

However, looking at the European data, in 2020, 30% of the Romanian population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (14 pp less than in 2008), while the data on inequality reported that the Gini coefficient was 34 (2 pp less than in 2008) and the ratio S80/S20 6,6 (0,4 less than in 2008) (Appendix M). According to these data, the categories most exposed

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[217] They are made of large prefab panels projected in the '70s. Hence, it is not unusual that they have no electricity, hot water, or gas. Moreover, from a hygienic perspective, they experienced problems with smells and parasites.

[218] The typical stereotype is that they are Roma ghettos, even though the ethnic composition is mixed. Other stereotypes are related to the presence of juvenile delinquency, and the sale and consumption of drugs. These descriptions make these neighbourhoods no-go areas (Berescu, 2011; Şerban, 2011; Mionel, Neguț, 2011). Roma is disproportionally affected due to historical, racial, and capitalistic reasons (Lancione, 2019) (Appendix L).

to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, people out of the labour market, people living in rural areas, single households and parents, and people with low education levels. Compared to 2008, all the categories improved their conditions and reduced their likelihood of being at risk of poverty or social exclusion except those unemployed (+ 6 pp than in 2008). Furthermore, in 2020, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion were more likely to face economic difficulties, be unable to buy things for themselves, and have less social life than those who do not experience AROPE (Appendix M). It is particularly concerning as these situations affect their quality of life, living conditions, and risk of experiencing and reinforcing exclusion and inequality. On the other hand, looking at the neighbourhood situation, the differences between those experiencing AROPE and those who are not at risk are less evident (Appendix M). Indeed, they are similarly likely to deal with problems with dwelling, noise, pollution, and crime.

5.4.2 Social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees

In describing Bucharest's situation, the interviewees stated that the Romanian capital represents a unicity in the country. Indeed, it is the wealthiest, most developed, and most populated city in Romania. It is the centre of the diplomatic, financial, and administrative systems. Here, the standards of living, GDP and expenses are higher than in any other part of the country. Thus, this clarification of its unicity is relevant concerning social exclusion and inequality as they have specific connotations in Bucharest compared to the rest of Romania. Thus, in defining and describing these phenomena, the interviewees often pointed out that the conditions and difficulties that people in vulnerable conditions encountered in Bucharest are very different from the ones experienced in other parts of the country. For instance, in some counties or rural areas, people still have issues accessing water, resources, clean sanitarian supplies, opportunities, schools, infrastructures, and formal and safe housing. In Bucharest, most of the population does not have these difficulties but can still live in extreme exclusion and inequality.

"In theory, Bucharest is very, quite well-developed city with above the national standard of living, and even if we look at the GPD per capita expressing the purchasing power parity it's a few times higher than the national average, or if we compare with some regions from Romania. Nevertheless, we still have social exclusion. And I would say that this can be found in so-called pockets of poverty. In some neighbourhoods, so it's specific areas of Bucharest where you can find groups or people which are socially excluded" (Interviewee EXP2_RO).

In addition, Bucharest acts as a magnet; thus, it simultaneously attracts wealthy and less advantageous groups of people. Indeed, the interviewees described a twofold phenomenon. On the one hand, Bucharest is the heart of the Romanian financial and economic market. Hence, the most qualified and wealthiest personalities tend to live in the city and increase their resources, deepening the gap with the rest of the population. On the other hand, the poorest and low-qualified people from all over Romania - often from the poorest and least developed Romanian counties – come to Bucharest looking for opportunities. This magnetism risks increasing the gap between these groups and their living and working conditions. Particularly, the groups more exposed to this economic disparity are the retired elderly and those working in low positions. Thus, economic and material deprivation represents an aspect of social exclusion and inequality in Bucharest.

Hence, in describing and reporting what social exclusion and inequality are and how they manifest, the interviewees underlined the difficulties in drawing lines between them and among their dimensions, drivers, and consequences. They often spotlighted how interrelated and embedded they are. For this reason, interviewees often speak of layers of vulnerability, accumulation of disparities, and vicious spirals or circles which feed and reinforce each other. Hence, the interviewees described some aspects simultaneously as dimensions, causes and consequences of social exclusion and inequality. Figure 5.19 grouped their faces into six main aspects, which are interrelated.

Figure 5.19 – Main dimensions, drivers, and consequences of social exclusion and inequality in Bucharest
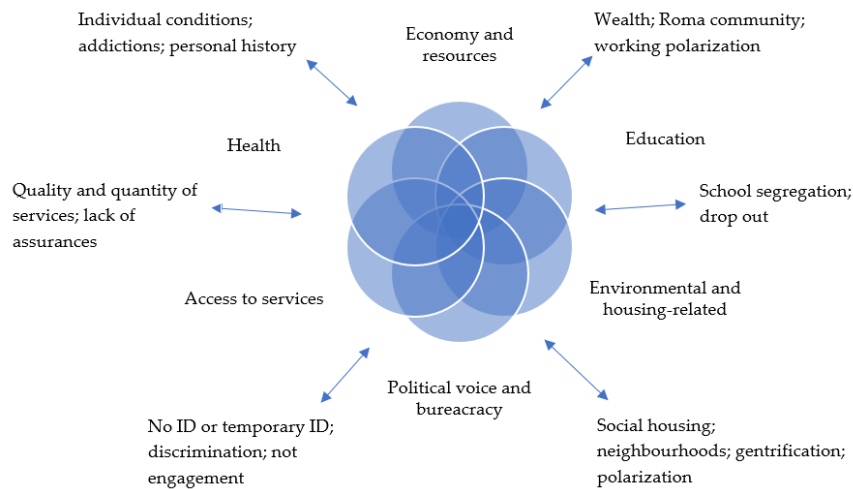
To begin with, the most relevant aspect of social exclusion and inequality is the lack (or affluence) of economic and social resources. As mentioned, the interviewees pointed out how, notwithstanding the developed economy that marks Bucharest, the gap is increasing and becoming a concern. Indeed, the contrast between the wealthiest and poorest communities is quite visible and tangible in Bucharest, according to the high level of working polarization and spatial segregation.

> "*Insomma, Bucarest è una città, lo vedi a occhio nudo, è una città che pompa soldi, è una città, probabilmente una delle più dinamiche d'Europa nell'ultimo decennio dal punto di vista economico, però, lo vedi che insomma, rimane quel 30% di popolazione che è assolutamente in situazione di esclusione. Così come se guardiamo i tassi di abbandono minorile sono sostanzialmente costanti dalla fine degli anni 70 ad oggi. Cioè, nonostante tutto, il processo di sviluppo del paese, eccetera, si continua ad avere 7000 bambini abbandonati l'anno, perché vuol dire che c'è un nucleo di popolazione che non è stata assolutamente toccata da questi processi positivi*"[219] (Interviewee ASS9_RO).

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[219] Translation: "*In short, Bucharest is a city, you see it with the naked eye, it is a city that pumps money, it is a city, probably one of the most dynamic in Europe in the last decade from an economic point of view, however, you see that in short, it remains that 30% of the population which is absolutely in a situation of exclusion. Just as if we look at the child abandonment rates they are substantially constant from the end of the 70s to today. That is, despite everything, the country's development process, etc., we continue to have 7,000 abandoned children a year, because it means that there is a nucleus of the population that has absolutely not been touched by these positive processes*".

Besides a part of the population, many still work in informal or low-paid jobs[220]. Furthermore, as Bucharest increasingly became expensive[221], working-class, low-income, or retired households faced difficulties making ends meet and accessing services and health. It is particularly concerning as, according to the interviewees, many started economizing or prioritizing their expenses and ended up having unhealthy alimentation, living in poor-quality housing, and reducing their social life. Moreover, these dynamics of social exclusion and inequality tend to be intergenerationally transmitted. Thus, the background represents the cause as well as the consequence and dimension of exclusion and inequality. "*If you are born in a family and in a community which is poor, it's very difficult towards impossible to overcome this situation. So that's why it's perpetuating*" (Interviewee ASS10_RO). Hence, growing up in a household with low economic, educational, and social resources negatively impacts the lifepath, perspectives, and opportunities of the children. Within this perspective, the interviewees often reported the example of the children living in the canalization of Bucharest. They stated that the last channel was closed in 2019[222]. Children and teenagers who grew up in these conditions (and are still alive) often continue living in abusive or squatted buildings with their families. Or even, the interviewees reported cases of children

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[220] By that, interviewees described a vast spectrum of occupations, e.g., day-by-day, low-qualified, or without contract positions. In extreme cases, they also talked about prostitution, drug dealing, and begging.

[221] Several interviewees illustrated how the fast and unprogrammed switch to the capitalistic system exacerbated and created inequalities. In the specific case of Bucharest, they pointed out that this quick change made it wealthier. Nevertheless, not all the inhabitants of the capital enjoyed this enrichment. Hence, the socio-economic gap within the city grew. Moreover, due to the mismanagement of this capitalist shift, the supply of services changed and became more expensive, making it even harder for people to afford them.

[222] In describing these phenomena, the interviewees pointed out the lack of attention of the politics regarding social issues.

> "*I ragazzi di canali sono nati nell'89, subito dopo la caduta del regime. Insomma, l'ultimo, ripeto, l'abbiamo chiusa nel 2019 e stavamo parlando di una popolazione di 3/4000 persone. Ora è chiaro che per una città di due milioni e mezzo di persone, 3/4000 è niente. Voglio dire, numericamente parlando, è un incidente dello 0,0 qualcosa per 100. È chiaro che se ci fosse stata una volontà politica di risolvere la questione seriamente, era un fenomeno che tranquillamente nel giro di qualche anno avresti risolto. Se si prolungato per circa trent'anni dei motivi ci sono*" (Interviewee ASS6_RO).

Translation: "*The canals boys were born in 1989, immediately after the fall of the regime. In short, the last one, I repeat, we closed it in 2019 and we were talking about a population of 3/4000 people. It is now clear that for a city of two and a half million people, 3/4,000 is nothing. I mean, numerically speaking, that's a 0.0 something per 100 incidents. It's clear that if there had been a political will to seriously resolve this issue, it was a phenomenon that you would have quietly resolved within a few years. If it lasted for about thirty years, there are reasons*".

who grew up in orphanages, poor households, or squatted areas of the city. Obviously, the longest people and children live in these conditions the longer it takes to re-insert them in the society. It is particularly concerning as many of them did not attend schools or had always lived in a "survival mood".

Secondly, another dimension of social exclusion and inequality refers to education. As known, it represents the principal tool to break the circle of disadvantage. Indeed, having a good and high-level education allows accessing more and better opportunities and positions, regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. It improves and influences the living and working conditions of the entire household. This aspect is even more evident recently due to the more marked division and compensation between high- and low-skilled jobs. Moreover, achieving a good position impacts well-being, self-esteem, and personal satisfaction. Nevertheless, the access and quality of schools in Bucharest differ by sector and area. According to the interviewees, school segregation is present in the Romanian capital. Indeed, they pointed out the differences in resources, type, and quality of the schools between the city centre and the peripherical districts. The interviewees justified these differences through four explanations. Firstly, the discrimination and prejudice towards the Roma community are still robust and impacting. Indeed, Romanian parents and public opinion consider mediocre the schools in the peripherical areas, as the Roma children often attend these institutions. Secondly, teachers prefer not to teach in these schools as the situations and students might be more unmanageable than other pupils in different institutions. For instance, children in specific areas might need more support and help than others because they do not have the economic resources to buy the necessary tools or the family background to fund them during their studies. Thirdly, the resources are fewer or insufficient to manage and take care of the children in these peripherical schools. Some interviewees have even denounced that, sometimes, teachers let students pass the academic years to get rid of them because they might be too difficult to handle. So, these teenagers get a diploma without knowing or acquiring some competencies or skills. Lastly, there is a disparity in the type of institutions present among areas. Indeed, the interviewees

exemplified the lack of high schools in the suburbs. Within this perspective, education represents a dimension, a cause, and a consequence of social exclusion and inequality.

Thirdly, the interviewees spotlighted a spatial and housing dimension of social exclusion and inequality in Bucharest. On the one hand, they underlined the differences among areas and sectors due to three principal reasons. Firstly, there is a historical division between the North and South due to the development and construction of the city. The Northern part of Bucharest was designed for the high profiles of the Communist Party and Ceaușescu residences. Even after the fall of his dictatorship, this area (mainly in sector 1) witnessed the development of the financial district and became one of the most expensive zones of Bucharest. Differently, during the Communist period, the Southern part saw the construction of most of the factories and the related working-class blocks in its territories. Secondly, as mentioned, the discrimination against and prejudice towards the Roma community is still present and entrenched in the spatial division of the city. Indeed, Bucharest has neighbourhoods with higher concentrations of this minority (mainly in the peripherical areas or the squatted buildings in the city centre). The stigma makes these areas less desirable. Lastly, there are differences concerning services and infrastructures among neighbourhoods. In addition, in these deficient areas, the presence of the Roma community is disproportionate. Thus, it results in an accumulation of disadvantages. On the other hand, the interviewees pointed out how these spatial divisions of the city combined with the housing policies, the rise of its costs, and gentrification impact the living conditions of many households. Within this discourse, they identified different scenarios that are frequent in Bucharest. Firstly, several struggles or cannot afford adequate housing in the Romanian capital due to the costs of housing and city, insufficient income, lack of social housing, long queues to enter those, etc. Thus, these people decided to rent a house instead of buying it. It is relevant as, in Bucharest, most dwellings have undeclared rents. Hence, living in this situation provides less protection, the impossibility of declaring to live there on official documents, and exposure to discrimination in the housing market (e.g., the examples were the Roma community, disabled or large families). Moreover, they ended up either in worse neighbourhoods or outside Bucharest. The first solution often results in living in not safe,

serviced, or healthy areas and housing; the second one leads to more hours of commuting and less quality time for the people. Secondly, the interviewees reported the situation of homeless. Some of them are former "Ceaușescu's children" who lived in the canalization of the city; others are new poor or vulnerable people who ended up in these extreme conditions. The rise in housing costs negatively impacted this category. A third scenario presented by the interviewees is the case of squatted buildings[223]. In the city centre – especially in the formerly nationalized buildings – there are several old and abandoned dwellings, which are often occupied illegally by people who cannot afford other housing, the homeless, or the Roma community. These people living in informal or squatted buildings tend to have lower living standards and issues accessing electricity, running water, or heating. They often connect their houses illegally to the networks. Moreover, the children of these families might encounter problems in school because of their legal status, living conditions, or discrimination. Within this perspective, several interviewees pointed out that the only solution proposed for this problem was the evacuation of these dwellings without any projects or other places to go. Thus, they often used the discourse of cleaning the city centre of dirtiness and poverty to justify their actions.

> To give an example, "*according to the law, the General City Hall is the one that holds the patrimony of the city. So, it has the buildings and ground on which a district could build social housing, but the General City Hall should give to the district. Actually, the General City Hall now is in the process of building, the first social housing building of the last 30 years or something. And what is more, and what is worse, I think it's that they evict people. So, the General City Hall, which should have the policy of social housing in Bucharest, is among the biggest evictors in Bucharest*" (Interviewee EXP5_RO).

In addition, the conditions of the blocks and buildings in Bucharest are often precarious because of the lack of maintenance or illegal construction[224]. Indeed, the city mainly developed and grew during the communist regime. The neighbourhoods built were industrial blocks, constituted by several tiny flats. Thus, over time, these areas became increasingly overpopulated, and their apartments were overcrowded. This issue persists.

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[223] To some extent, it is embedded with the issue of homelessness, but it is not only related to that.
[224] Several mentioned the Colectiv nightclub, a deadly fire on 30 October 2015 due to the lack of controls, which killed 64 people (26 on site, 38 in hospitals) and injured 146.

Moreover, as the material of the construction of these blocks was low-quality, they need structural restructurings. As they are the responsibility of the owners of the flats, they often do not make the adjustments because they are too expensive.

> *"We are very proud that we are homeowners, most of us. But this is a thing that hides other problems. So, we are homeowners of apartments in old blocks of flats. And it will come the time -and my estimation that is in 10 years the most - when we will have to pay a lot of money we as a homeowners for the renovation of this building. And it will mean that, for example, I'm a homeowner, let's say retired person, I have a retirement pension of let's say 300 dollars. In Bucharest, I can get by, but at the limit. My children maybe pay for some of my things. And then, at one point, like if I live other ten years, let's say I will have to pay for the renovation like of the whole building. I will have to pay around 1000 euros per month for 10 years. So it's a lot like I would have to pay the amount that is again like the same amount the value of my apartment. Let's say it's 70,000 euros and the renovation, my part of the whole building, would be around like 50,000 euros. So, I think, I have this idea, I don't know where I got it from. I don't know if in other countries it happened that it will become a turning point where most home owners in Romania, they will sell their home ownership to companies that are doing the renovation or other companies that are administering buildings or to investors because you cannot support. So they will sell their home ownership. That person will pay for you the 50,000 and then they will continue living in your apartment as a tenant. [..] And I think that the civil society will have to be very worried about this because it will be an opportunity for some people to get very rich very fast"* (Interviewee ASS7_RO).

Moreover, it is particularly worrying considering that Bucharest is the European capital more at risk of earthquakes. According to the interviewees, at least 3000 buildings in Bucharest are unsafe, but the number might be bigger due to the deficiency of information[225]. Hence, it makes these situations even more dangerous and unstable. Nevertheless, in Bucharest, there are buildings signed with a red stamp that inform the precarity of the structure. Even if these dwellings are manifestly inadequate and unable to survive an earthquake, people still rent them for a cheaper price[226].

Fourthly, the interviewees spotlighted a political dimension, cause, and consequence of social exclusion and inequality. They referred to the possibility of participating in socio-political life and the capacity to interact with the institutions. On the one hand, the

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[225] http://seismic-alert.ro//.
[226] Bădescu G., Muntenaru R., București orașul vulnerabil, 2017.

interviewees denounced the high level of corruption and the disinterest of institutions towards poverty and social issues. Indeed, they often stated that politicians care about these issues only in concomitance with elections. On the other, the main obstacle in engaging with politics is the document.

> *"When you do the ID at the age of 14, you should prove that you are living somewhere. It is either that you own a house – no one at 14 can own a house - either that you have somebody who guarantees that you are living there. So that's the main issue, let's say. Other than that, some other people prefer not to do the ID. They think it's not important, and I know, I know also personal cases like this, they're just postponing. At the age of 14, you are forced by the law to make an ID. But they are just postponing it and when you start postponing you receive a fine that you haven't done it in time. [..] That's a big, big issue because without it, basically we don't exist. Basically, you don't exist. And how can it be an higher exclusion than not existing? So, there's the main issue and it's not a specific Roma issue, but it's a general issue that includes, of course, a lot of Roma. There is also a lack of education of their parents, most of the times, and they don't give that much importance to this and the aspect of the ID. And there are some organisations who are focusing on this direction because unfortunately local authorities don't do much[227], but there are some organisations who have lawyers, I don't know, this kind of bureaucrat team and they're helping people to get an idea because, you know, otherwise you cannot get a job, you cannot get a house, you cannot do anything, you cannot get medical insurance, anything. [..] It's a long-term issue. It's not something recent. But it's still debating, and I found maybe around, I don't, I have to check because I will throw a number and I hope that I will not be mistaken as I don't know for sure. But around 140,000 people don't have an ID in Romania. Yeah, and not only young people. So, imagine that's like quite medium city of people without identity"* (Interviewee ASS10_RO).

Thus, this lack of documentation prevents people from enjoying services and participating in decision-making. Thus, they are left out of the decision-making process at the national and local levels. Consequentially, NGOs fill the gap by representing and speaking on their behalf. On the other hand, regarding access to public services and opportunities, the interviewees pointed out that Bucharest presents differences within its borders and sectors. In addition, discrimination against minorities (e.g., the Roma, Hungarians, and homeless) or based on individual features and sexual orientation is still present and affects the

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[227] Several interviewees denounced the lack of interest, planning, and policies towards vulnerable communities and categories. They often talked about a structural violence and discrimination against them.

treatments and perceptions of these groups. This attitude towards vulnerable groups is often due to the collective imagination produced by the media and the Orthodox church. Indeed, the former do not often adopt politically correct words to describe people or situations, reinforcing the stigma of specific communities. For instance, "*for the homeless people we have term, it's "boschettar". So "boschet" means like a "bush", the small bushes that you see on the streets. And those guys are, the guys that sleep under them. So, it's kind of bad. They use it no problems*" (Interviewee ASS13_RO). On the other hand, the Orthodox church influences the discussion over socio-political matters and groups in a twofold manner. On one side, as it is a conservative institution, it ostracizes the LGBTQIA+ community or any progressive reforms and negatively influences the image of this group. On the other side, in the past, the Orthodox church was one of the principal owners of the Roma slaves. For this reason, their relationships are still tense and discriminatory.

Fifthly, related to the political aspect, the interviewees spotlighted access to services as a dimension, cause, and consequence of social exclusion and inequality. To begin with, to benefit them, people need to have an ID. As mentioned, as much as it seems normal, in the Romanian case, it is more complex. Thus, identity is strictly related to property. The groups most impacted by these rules are the Roma community and the homeless. The former often squatted building and, consequently, do not have any rights to ask for documents. The latter can request a temporary ID which is different from the official one in terms of consistency – this one is in paper rather than plastic – and duration – it lasts only between six and twelve months. This temporary card makes it quite clear and visible when someone is homeless. It might cause some discrimination in the job search, as the employees might not want a homeless in their business. This aspect of the documents for benefitting services is relevant as people cannot access socio-economic or sanitarian services without them. In addition, the interviewees denounced the inefficiency of the structure, funding, and supply of services. Indeed, in Romania, the resources for services are mixed between the private and public sectors. Furthermore, besides the document, their access is based on domicile. Thus, in Bucharest - where there are six districts and one general hall - people could access some

services at a general level and others at a municipal one. Moreover, each sector has its strategy and plan regarding resources.

Lastly, a relevant aspect, cause, and consequence of social exclusion and inequality is health conditions and access to medical services. The interviewees pointed out how relevant psycho-physical well-being is to participate in society. On the one hand, induvial conditions play a role. The interviewees stated that there is still a stigma attached to people who are mentally or physically disabled or have some disease – i.e., HIV, AIDS, TB, or hepatitis. Some interviewees pointed out that, until recently, having a relative with some disabilities was considered a shame, something to hide. In some extreme cases, these people have lived without going out of their houses. On the other hand, access to sanitarian services is unequal and exclusive. Indeed, unless people have assurances and documentation, it is not chargeless except for emergencies (only the first 72 hours). Thus, an increasing number (even if it is still small) of people do not have insurance and do not access proper medical assistance.

> *"Traditionally, we've had most people insured, but now because of the increased cost of living because of unemployment, because of migration, we have many people. And The thing is that we don't know how many they are not insured, but still the majority is insured, and I think that this is why the system is not yet under the pressure to change itself. Because even if we talk about thousands or hundreds of thousands of people not uninsured, I don't think that there are more than, let's say, below 5%. Huge number but still is not large enough to change things. So, these people that are excluded from health services, they are not excluded from emergency services, but they are excluded if they have non transmittable diseases that are chronic. For example, if you have HIV, then, there is no problem for you getting health service. There is no problem for getting health services even if you're not insured, you get insured while you are, you get automatically insured while you are ill and you are under treatment. But for other diseases, that are not transmittable, so, they do not pose a threat to the public health. Then, for those diseases, it's difficult for people who are not insured to get treatment. So, for example, if you're a person homeless and you have, I would not say cancer because I think for cancer you will get treatments too, but you have, for example, I don't know you get you have an infection of the ear. The infection of the ear, it's acute. So, you are in pain and things like this. You can go even if you're not insured. You go to the emergency room, they will treat you and they will even commit you to the hospital if needed, but not for more than 72 hours if you're uninsured. But if you're not uninsured, and then you go home and I don't*

know, you need the prosthetics for your ear or something. So, this is not you will not get it because you're not covered. You don't have insurance, so for chronic diseases, people who are not insured, they do not have access to treatment unless you pay" (Interviewee ASS7_RO).

Hence, vulnerable communities are more likely to face medical problems. In extreme cases, such as children or teenagers in the canalization system or homeless adults, the effects of exclusion, inequality, and incapability to access what people need is death. The interviewees, particularly the ones who worked with these marginalized groups, pointed out that a part of them died in the undergrounds of the city and underlined that dying on the streets is still a possibility for many of them.

Moreover, in the last decades, the increasing selling of synthetic drugs might disproportionally impact the most vulnerable groups in society.

In addition, the interviewees included underage pregnancy in the discourse over health. As there is no sex education in school and, in some communities, having children early is recommended, many young teenagers get birth. It directly impacts these women's lives because the services – e.g., daily care, kindergarten, etc. – or the resources to support them and their future are insufficient. Moreover, in Romania, the number of abandoned children is still quite high and, sometimes, related to teenage pregnancy. It is problematic as it generates a circle of disparities.

5.4.3 Who is excluded and unequal

In describing social exclusion and inequality, the interviewees often exemplify what they mean by quoting the groups most affected by these dynamics. According to them, the Roma community, elderly, and children are those experiencing the most social exclusion and inequality in Bucharest. To begin with, the Roma community has a long history of abuse, which is still present in nowadays societies. Indeed, even if Romania abolished slavery in the 1800s, it never implemented a comprehensive integration program. Thus, the Roma community still lives in worse housing and neighbourhood conditions (in some cases and areas of Bucharest and Romania, there are ghettos) and keeps being more exposed to exclusion, inequality, and poverty than other Romanians. The discrimination against this

community is still predominant and impacts access to services, education, labour, and the housing market. To give an idea of the embedded stigma towards the Roma population, an interviewee reported this example: "*when a Roma woman is pregnant and goes to the doctor, she should be the last one to be checked. So that means the discrimination starts even before you are born*" (Interviewee ASS10_RO). Secondly, old or retired people are increasingly overrepresented in facing exclusion and inequality. It is principally due to an incapability to keep up with the expenses and afford the lifestyle of Bucharest. Lastly, the interviewees mentioned children as one of the groups most exposed to exclusion and inequality. Part of them reported the mismanagement of the orphanages and the presence of children in the streets. This problem was more predominant during the 1990s and 2000s with the "children in the canalization". Today, these channels are closed, but the interviewees pointed out how those who survived still live in the streets or abandoned buildings with their families. So, only a few tried and succeeded in reintegrating into society. On the other side, several interviewees denounced how children face exclusion and inequality more than adults. Indeed, some live in deprived households which cannot provide as much as they would for their kids. Others are still abandoned or given custody of the institutions. According to the interviewees[228], they are still at risk of ending up in human trafficking.

Moreover, in the last decade, Bucharest attracted migrants[229] from South-Eastern Asia, Arabia, and Africa. The interviewees stated that it is a newly emerging phenomenon and, currently, the studies on this subject are limited. Thus, they affirmed that they might face more discrimination and experience worse living and working conditions than Romanians, but no research proves it. In general, they seem to work in construction, services, and restaurants, often for lower wages. However, according to the interviewees, the Romanians – especially from the poorest regions or counties of the country – are principally more exposed to exclusion and inequality than any other foreign group.

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[228] Interestingly, some interviewees in Stockholm and Brussels reported similar concerns.
[229] The interviewees often pointed out how Ukrainians did not stay in Romania but decided to move to other Europeans countries.

Nevertheless, regardless of their nationality, excluded and unequal people tend to have similar socioeconomic, educational, living, and working characteristics, namely:

- Belonging to a minority;

- Not having an adequate and safe housing situation;

- Working in low-skilled and hard jobs;

- Lacking financial education;

- Being former orphans or children/teenagers on the streets;

- Being a single parent, especially if a woman;

- Having a low socioeconomic background;

- Belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community;

- Having physical or mental diseases;

- Living in a overcrowded or large households;

- Being unemployed, on welfare, or struggling with the labour market;

- Living in a neighbourhood or areas with environmental and social stresses.

Furthermore, the interviewees stated that some improvements occurred in the last ten years. To begin with, they spotlighted achievements reached after the join to the European Union in 2007. Indeed, between the 1990s and 2000s, Romania suffered from a vacuum of powers and the lack of an alternative after the fall of the social structure. Most of the problems that Romania and Bucharest still face today were born in those decades.

> *"Però, appunto, questi fenomeni hanno radice, appunto, in quel decennio, nel senso che crolla un sistema sociale, nessuno riesce a far fronte perché le élite politiche eccetera sono quelle che poi sono son quelli che stanno finendo in galera negli ultimi mesi, Eh, i vari ministri, tutta la gente che ha fatto la transizione della Romania, son quelli che poi in qualche modo stanno così e, giustamente, pagando le conseguenze dei loro misfatti. Anche perché, questo non so se ha avuto l'opportunità di girare la Romania, però se ti capita di andare fuori Bucharest e poi chiaramente Bucharest non rappresenta il paese, eh. Bucharest è un universo a parte e come tutte le grosse città in questi paesi. Ecco, se giri un po' per la Romania, ti rendi conto che era un paese, che era, che si vedeva che era un paese solido che poi è stato completamente abbandonato"*[230] (Interviewee ASS9_RO).

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[230] Translation: "*However, precisely, these phenomena have their roots precisely in that decade, in the sense that a social system collapses, nobody manages to cope because the political elites and so on are what they are, they are the ones who*

However, in the period of the pre-subscription to the EU, Romania developed policies and passed several laws to improve the welfare and social assistance. Thus, even if exclusion, inequality, and poverty are still high in the country, they have bettered since 2007.

> "*The situation was much, much, much worse than now. Like the number of homeless persons was like really higher than nowadays. Back then we there weren't shelters. So, let's say in the mid-90s or late 90s, Bucharest had no public shelters for homeless persons, or the social protection system were inexistent*" (Interviewee ASS5_RO).

Secondly, another change was the attitude towards the LGBTQIA+ community. Even if Romania is still not completely open on these subjects, their conditions and acceptance improved.

On the other hand, several changes worsened and reshaped social exclusion and inequality in Bucharest. To begin with, homelessness is not anymore only due to the closure of orphanages or escape of children during the 1990s. Indeed, nowadays, the production of these streets' phenomena is due to the urban and socioeconomic development of Bucharest and the generation of those kids who lived in the canalization and did not integrate. Secondly, the inflation and rise in costs of living and housing made it difficult even for full-time workers. It represents a new issue as, in the past, only people outside the labour market or in informal positions faced economic struggles and poverty. Thus, this phenomenon of in-work poverty is a concern. Thirdly, the Covid-19 pandemic and its related crises showed the deficiency of the welfare and assistance systems. On the one hand, people who were never associated with exclusion and inequality found themselves in difficult or precarious positions. On the other, it disproportionally hit those already in vulnerable conditions, e.g., the Roma community, the elderly, children, etc. Lastly, the interviewees pointed out a general disinterest in these social issues in the public discourse and lack of empathy towards vulnerable or poor communities. They spotlighted a tendency of ignoring or blaming them

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are ending up in jail in the last few months, Eh, the various ministers, all the people who made the transition of Romania, they are the ones who somehow stay like this and, rightly, paying the consequences of their crimes. Also why, I don't know if he had the opportunity to tour Romania, but if you happen to go outside Bucharest and then clearly Bucharest doesn't represent the country, eh. Bucharest is a world apart and like all big cities in these countries. Here, if you go around Romania for a bit, you realize that it was a country, that it was, that you could see that it was a solid country that was then completely abandoned".

for their conditions. In extreme cases, the interviewees talked about the criminalization of poverty, namely the increasing violent attitude towards vulnerable people by the police. It is both cause and consequence of exclusion. Indeed, homeless, squatters, sex workers, or Roma might be more exposed to getting fines for their situations. Simultaneously, these fines aggravate their conditions and access to services. Indeed, as they often cannot pay them, they result in debt to the state. It might be impacting when they look for a job because it appears they had troubles with justice. The criminalization of poverty also has an ethnic component, especially toward the Roma community. Moreover, some interviewees denounced how the way of acting of police toward the homeless and squatters makes them scared to have a voice.

> For instance, public authorities "*are using their kids* [of these invisible communities or squatters] *in order to intimidate them and not make a scandal, they are threatening them that they will take, they will take their children away. They should not stay there, so they are using this situation to convince them to willingly leave. A lot of people are really scared to, I don't know, have a voice here because they would take my children away*" (Interviewee EXP5_RO).

Nevertheless, the interviewees spotlighted that the groups most exposed to exclusion and inequality remained stable over time. Indeed, although the standard of living improved, it did not apply to everyone.

> "*The people who were already integrated and, you know, functional in society, they became, they became better, and they developed their financial situation. They can travel now. It's very easy. But the ones who were excluded back then, there are examples of people who manage to do it and like you hear about this example of "man, he was born in rural area, very poor child. I look at him now". You know which is great. It's amazing. Like Bravo, you know? But it wouldn't be a story if it would be common, you know*" (Interviewee ASS10_RO).

Thus, those excluded (e.g., the Roma communities, children in the streets, people in rural areas, etc.) entered a circle of disadvantages that is hard to break. They feel trapped as they do not have the opportunities, abilities, tools, and models to escape this vulnerability. Within this perspective, some interviewees pointed out the role of the associations in trying to break this circle of exclusion and inequality. Indeed, they stated that, in the last decade,

the share of the Roma enrolled in college increased thanks to organizations that put a lot of effort into promoting education and providing resources and possibilities for these families.

5.5 London

This paragraph presents how social exclusion and inequality manifest in the British capital by reporting the results of a study conducted in London between September and December 2022. The data was gathered by engaging with the ones of the most vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods[231]. During the research period, twenty-four interviews[232] have been conducted (Figure 5.20 and Appendix A).

Figure 5.20 – List of experts and associations participating in the research by municipality
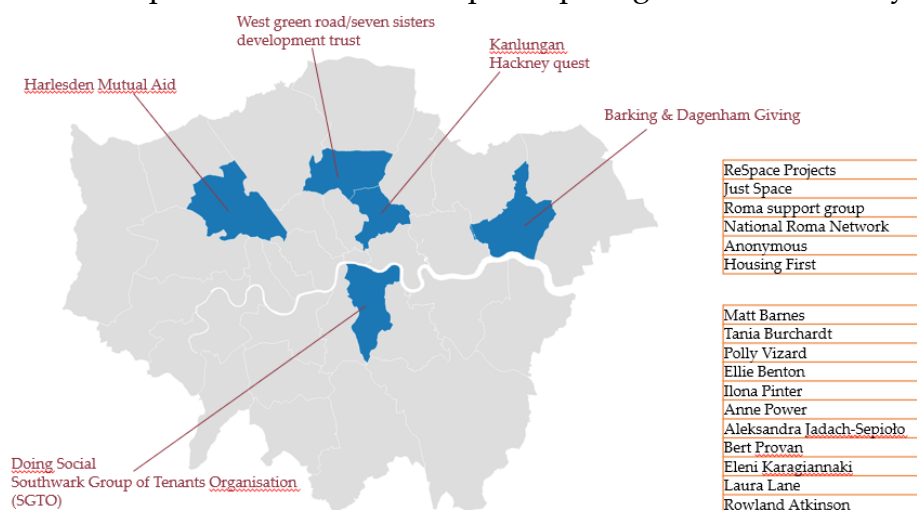
5.5.1 Context and previous studies

Capital of the United Kingdom since 1707, London is one of the most influential cities in the world. Geographically speaking, since 2000, its area corresponds to the region of the Greater London, which comprehends 32 local government districts (Figure 5.21). Elected every four

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[231] Precisely, the boroughs which participated are: Brent, Hackney, Haringey, Southwark, and Barking and Daghenam.

[232] The associations that participated are: Harlesden Mutual Aid; Kanlungan; Hackney quest; West green road/seven sisters development trust; Doing Social; Southwark Group of Tenants Organisation (SGTO); Barking & Dagenham Giving; Just Space; Roma support group; National Roma Network (Migration Yorkshire); Housing First; ReSpace Projects; and Anonymous.

The experts that participated are: Matt Barnes; Tania Burchardt; Polly Vizard; Eleni Karagiannaki; Ellie Benton; Laura Lane; Ilona Pinter; Anne Power; Aleksandra Jadach-Sepioło; Bert Provan; and Rowland Atkinson.

years, each council provides most local government services. Aside from the local government councils, the Greater London Authority provides services all over the territory.

Figure 5.21 – London's councils

London has a population of almost 9 million people, becoming one of the largest and most populated cities in Europe. Throughout the 1980s, its population grew slowly before accelerating in the 1990s[233]. In 2019, around 37% of people living in London were born outside the United Kingdom[234], compared to 14% of the rest of the country (Eurostat, source: MIGR_IMM8, DEMO_PJAN).

Capital of a worldwide colonial empire, London was the heart of the industrial revolutions and capitalism in the XIX century. It impacted urbanization, resulting in a planned city with fine buildings as well as horrific slums, where existing settlements grew until they formed a large metropolis. On the other hand, industrialization attracted waves of internal and international migrants, producing demographic growth. After the two World Wars, London was severely damaged and destroyed. Since the 1950s, a demographic and economic decline began. It led to a reduction of the manpower available. Hence, immigrants from the ex-colonies[235], especially from the Caribbean and Jamaica, replaced these empty positions.

The 1970s was a troubled decade. The oil and economic crisis severely hit the United Kingdom, producing unemployment, stagflation, and recession. These resulted in general

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[233] https://www.statista.com/statistics/910658/population-of-london/.

[234] https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06077/.

[235] The development of the status "Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies" (CUKC) by the e British Nationality Act in 1948 played a role. It was an act that allowed the colonist to work and live in the UK. This migrant flow from all over the world profoundly impacted the British context.

dissatisfaction and riots, which had their pick between 1978-1979 during the Winter of Discontent. In 1979, the leader of the Conservative Party, Margaret Hilda Thatcher, won the election and became the first female prime minister in the United Kingdom. She implanted a massive economic restructuring that shaped the British economic structure. The crucial policy adopted by Thatcher was the privatization of industries as, in her vision, the private sector worked better than the public one. Moreover, she drastically reduced the role and power of the unions, whose leadership she accused of undermining parliamentary democracy and economic performance through strike action. In addition, the Thatcher government influenced the decline of social housing. Indeed, among other factors, the introduction of the "Right to buy" decisively impacted the decrease and disqualification of these estates (Power, Provan, 2007). It was a policy which gave secure tenants of councils and some housing associations the legal right to buy - at a large discount - the council house they were living in. As there was no replacement or new construction of social housing, the number of council estates available decreased. Thus, from this period, these estates started to be increasingly associated with deprivation, reaching their peak of stigma in the 2000s when they were defined as "welfare ghettos", "sink estates", and "scummy estates" (Hasting, 2004; Hancock, Mooney, 2013; Wacquant et al., 2014; Slater, 2018; Denedo, Ejiogu, 2022; Watt, 2020).

In the 1980s and 1990s, under the Thatcher government, the United Kingdom – and especially London - experienced three main processes: the neo-liberalization of industries and markets, the de-industrialization, and the retreat of the state from economic and social interventions. These events profoundly influenced the structure of the British labour market. Firstly, the neoliberal changes increased job flexibility and the re-emersion of older forms of working relationships. Consequentially, several people ended up in part-time or low-paid jobs, making them working poor individuals and households. Secondly, the de-industrialization and passage to technology-driven jobs produced an increase of low-qualified and unskilled workers, who became excluded underclass. Thus, it resulted in occupational and class structure changes. Specifically, "the expansion of banking, finance, insurance, and business services has altered the class structure of London from one

dominated by a large working class in the post-war era, towards one where affluent, middle-class managerial and professional groups are the ascendant social groups" (Smith, 2005: 4). As Sassen argued, "the labour market restructuring is polarising the service sector between 'knowledge and information intensive' sectors and 'labour-intense low productivity sectors' with large increases in low-wage service jobs forecasted" (Sassen, 1996: 70). Consequentially, the gap between rich and poor groups, households, and neighbourhoods increased. Thirdly, the retreat of the state from economic and social interventions had a relevant impact on social housing and low income. All these processes widened the inequality and polarization, especially in the post-industrial city where exclusion also became spatial (Smith, 2005). In London, the decline of the manufacturing sector and the weakening of the welfare state led to the rise of unemployment and homelessness. Within this frame, the New Right ideology influenced the United Kingdom in a twofold manner: "first, laissez-faire individualism, with its emphasis on the minimal state and free market; and second, conservatism, with its adherence to traditional patterns of family type, gender relations and values" (Smith, 2005: 52). As a result, poor people were seen and described as dependent on the state and deserving of their conditions as they were not able to succeed. Moreover, the 1980s were also years of race riots and tensions[236] (Zanfrini, 2016).

After eighteen years of conservative governance, in 1997, the election of the labourist Anthony Charles Lynton Blair represented a change of path. He mainly reflected the political philosophy of the "Third Way" (Etzioni, 1994; Blair, 1998; Giddens, 2000) and attempted to reconcile right-wing and left-wing politics by advocating a varying synthesis of centre-right economic platforms with some centre-left social policies. Within this "Third Way" discourse, the notion of the community became central (Bertotti et al., 2012) through the implementation of several programmes, e.g., the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Deprivation (NSND), the neighbourhood renewal fund, the new deal for communities, the

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[236] For instance, in London, racial tension exploded during the Brixton riot or uprising in 1981. It was a series of clashes between mainly black youths and the Metropolitan Police, caused by the perceived racism and discrimination against the black community by the predominantly white police.

neighbourhood management pathfinders, and the single community programme 2001 (Watt, Jacobs, 2000; Jackson, Bradford, 2006; Bertotti et al., 2012; CRESR, 2010). In addition, this government developed and adopted the concept of social exclusion in the public discourse to address the issue of the "underclass" (Smith, 2005). Hence, they instituted the Social Exclusion Unit (1997-2010), which aimed to ensure the delivery of services for the most disadvantaged members of society and to monitor and prevent these forms of marginalization.

In the early 2000s, the economic growth rate was parallel to the one of England as a whole. However, from 2004, in London, financial services drove an economic rise while manufacturing continued to decline. Even though the financial crisis of 2008 hit London as well as the rest of the United Kingdom, its economy proved to be more resilient. Indeed "between 2006/08 and 2010, the decline in full-time employment in London (-1.6 percentage points) was smaller than elsewhere, as was the rise in unemployment (+1.2 percentage points)" (Lupton, 2013: 2). Nevertheless, within London, the poorest 10% of the population were hit harder by the recession than others. Especially, it happened in the Outer London neighbourhoods. Therefore, the crisis and recession of 2008 increased the income and wealth inequality within the city. Indeed, although London enjoyed economic and financial growth since 2010, it kept having differences and polarization within its borders. It became even more evident through the uprising of 2011 (Newburn et al., 2018). These riots were rooted in a sense of injustice and inequality resulting from the widespread deprivation, exclusion and anger that went beyond individual neighbourhoods. Indeed, differently from previous riots, "it was not a sign of localized disenfranchisement" (Dikec, 2016: 64). Moreover, according to the GLA Economic, in 2015, there was "a general trend whereby increased economic prosperity is associated with better economic outcomes for its residents. London instead appears as an outlier: scoring highly in terms of prosperity but relatively low in terms of inclusion" (GLA Economics, 2016: 516).

These economic disparities have socio-spatial connotations. The maps below (Figures 5.22 and 5.23) show Index of Multiple Deprivation[237] (IMD) in 2019 by LSOA[238] and borough. The wealthiest areas are the boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond, Westminster, and Camden. On the other hand, the poorest are in Barking and Dagenham, Newham, Enfield, Haringey, Brent, and Ealing areas. As the pictures highlight, there is no homogeneity in all the boroughs. Thus, there are not boroughs entirely wealthy or deprived but rather a mix. To give an exhaustive example of this heterogeneity, the Royal Council of Kensington and Chelsea is one of the wealthiest areas in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, it hosts within its borders low-quality and social housing. Thus, households with different socio-economic conditions coexist in the same council facing dissimilar living and working situations. This example is particularly notorious because of the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017[239]. Moreover, occupational segregation declined between 2001 and 2011,

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[237] The Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) is based on 39 separate indicators, organised across seven domains of deprivation, which are considered and weighted as follows: Income (22.5%); Employment (22.5%); Education (13.5%); Health (13.5%); Crime (9.3%); Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%); Living Environment (9.3%).

[238] Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are small areas designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households. LSOAs are a standard statistical geography produced by the Office for National Statistics for the reporting of small area statistics. LSOAs are also referred to as neighbourhoods throughout this release.

[239] On 14 June 2017, a high-rise fire broke out in the 24-storey Grenfell Tower block of flats in North Kensington, West London, at 00:54 BST and burned for 60 hours. 79 people died. Investigations indicated that the tragedy began with a broken refrigerator which ignited exposed gas pipes and highly flammable building materials.
The Grenfell Tower fire demonstrates a failure of resilience on multiple levels, from policy, planning, and law to engineering to market incentives for safer building materials.
Prior to the fire, residents had feared that installation of exposed gas pipes would result in a disaster, going as far as to contact the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to notify them of their fears. A fire safety consultant had approved the pipes and risers on the condition that they were clad in fire-rated boxing; on March 27th National Grid told the local council that the pipes would be protected; however, only one third of pipes were protected by June 14th, when the fire started.
Moreover, the cladding on the outside of the Grenfell Tower was identified as another contributor to the spread of the fire.
Lastly, the Grenfell Tower also lacked other basic fire safety features including an absence of "fire alarms, sprinklers, and a fire escape," with only a single staircase. Furthermore, residents were reportedly warned by the Fire Brigade and by the management company to stay inside of their apartments in the event of a fire, because the building was supposed to be made to resist fires.
(Sources: Wikipedia, https://globalresilience.northeastern.edu/grenfell-tower-fire-information-demonstrates-effects-cascading-failures/).

suggesting that London is becoming a more integrated city (van Ham et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there are still sharp divisions within the city landscape (van Ham et al., 2021).

Figure 5.22 – The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) by LSOA in London in 2019[240]
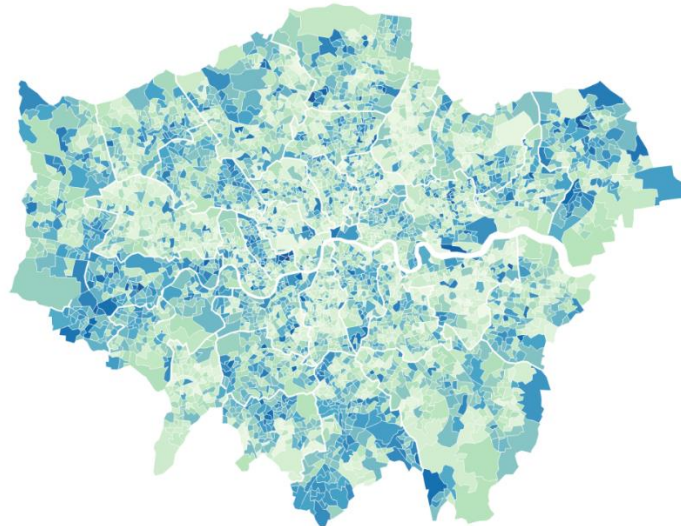
Note: the scale of colours goes from white to blue. The darker an LSOA gets the highest IMD has; contrarily, the whiter it is lowest IMD scores. According to the data, in 2019, the three LSOAs that scored the highest levels of IMD were Haringey 013A in Haringey (64,7), Kensington and Chelsea 001E in Kensington and Chelsea (59), and Croydon 015D in Croydon (58,2). On the other hand, the ones that scored the lowest were Havering 019A in Havering (2,5), Havering024C in Havering and Bromley 025B in Bromley (2,3).

Figure 5.23 – The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) by borough in 2019[241]
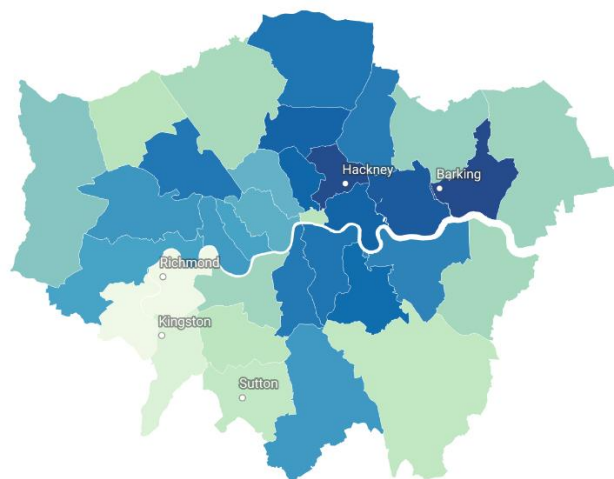
Map data: © Crown copyright and database right 2018 · Created with Datawrapper

Note: the scale of colours goes from white to blue. The darker a borough gets the highest IMD has; contrarily, the whiter it is lowest IMD scores. According to the data, in 2019, the three boroughs that got the highest average score of IMD were Barking and Dagenham (32,8), Hackney (32,5), and Newham (29,6). On the other

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[240]   Data   source: https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/indices-of-deprivation; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf.

[241]   Data   source: https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/indices-of-deprivation; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf.

hand, the ones that scored the lowest were Richmond upon Thames (9,4), Kingston upon Thames (11,4), and Sutton (14).

Moreover, according to several studies (e.g., Lupton, 2013; Watt, 2018; Hills et al., 2019) poverty is spreading. It relates and embeds with other three phenomena: the struggle for housing, the processes of gentrification, and the trend in dismantling social housing. Regarding the first issue, having good quality and affordable housing in London is becoming more complex and impossible due to the changes in the housing market and its relationship with the finance (Madden, 2019; Watt, Minton, 2016; Travers et al., 2016; McKenzie, Atkinson, 2020; Fields, 2017). It enormously affects and drives the rise of inequality and segmentation in the city (Trust of London, 2020). Concerning the processes of gentrification, London experienced tremendous changes. For instance, areas – such as Hackney, Stratford, Canary Wharf, and Lambeth – that have been always described as deprived are becoming increasingly interesting for developers and wealthy households, pushing further out the residents. One of the principal examples is the development of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (Lees, Ferreri, 2016; Kennelly, 2017; Watt, 2013; Yee, Dennett, 2020). Lastly, related to the issues of dismantling council estates, since the 1980s and 1990s, there have been projects and programmes for renovation and regeneration (Watt, 2021; Lees, 2014; Fenton, 2016). This scheme aims to provide new, better housing in socio-economic mixed estates. To achieve this goal, a ten-year programme should dismantle social housing, displace its residents, and relocate them to new buildings. As much as this programme wants to improve their living conditions, it breaks down the communities and their networks (Watt, 2021; Gillespie et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in London, the spatial division is not only related to income but also ethnicity and housing (Van Ham et al., 2021; Coulter, Clark, 2018; Mogra, 2021; Clark, Cummins, 2015; Powell, Robinson, 2019). As already mentioned, since the 1950s, the immigration waves from the ex-colonies started, especially from the Caribbean and Jamaica. Since then, several flows of migrants came in succession. They accelerated since 1988 when London became a global financial centre. Moreover, the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 resulted in the rise of migrants, especially from Poland and belonging to the Roma

community (Lane et al., 2014; Brown et al., 2016; Felja, Greason, 2016; Burchardt et al., 2018). In addition to other worldwide phenomena, it resulted in flows of migrants from new trajectories, such as South America, South-Eastern Asia, etc.

Currently, the introduction of the No Recourse to Public Funds policy and the related schemes worsened the living and working conditions of people subject to immigration control (McIlwaine, 2015; Jolly et al., 2020; Sumption, Fernández-Rein, 2020; The Children's Society, 2020).

In 2016, the referendum for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union resulted in 51.89% votes in favour of leaving the EU and 48.11% of remaining a member. After 47 years of membership, the United Kingdom is the first and only country to have left the EU. To some extent, the economic and wealth inequalities impacted the decision to leave Europe. Several studies[242] have pointed out that some of the poorest regions, the elderly, and those without qualifications were the ones in favour of Brexit. Differently, London as well as the major British cities were in favour of remaining[243]. In the last years, the consequences of this withdrawal are becoming more evident and concrete, e.g., lack of personnel, inflation, the rise of costs, etc. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic and the energetic crisis caused by the Russian-Ukraine conflict worsened and spotlighted these situations (LSE Covid 19 Blog, 2021; Rowley et al., 2022; Stewart, Sanders, 2022).

However, looking at the European data, in 2018, 23% of the British population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, while the data on inequality reported that the Gini coefficient was 34 and the ratio S80/S20 6 (Appendix N). These shares and values remained stable between 2008 and 2018. According to these data, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, people living in rural areas, and single parents (Appendix N). In 2018, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion were more likely to face economic

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[242] https://www.politico.eu/article/brexit-economy-inequality/. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2016/08/31/brexit-should-be-a-wake-up-call-in-the-fight-against-inequality.
[243] https://hidden-london.com/miscellany/eu-referendum/. https://www.statista.com/statistics/912939/brexit-major-cities-vote-share/.

difficulties, be unable to buy things for themselves, and have less social life than British who do not experience AROPE (Appendix N). It is particularly concerning as these situations affect their quality of life, living conditions, and risk of experiencing and reinforcing exclusion and inequality. Similarly, looking at the neighbourhood situation, those experiencing AROPE were more likely to witness contextual issues than those not at risk (Appendix N). Particularly, regarding housing conditions, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are more likely to live in overcrowded households (Appendix N). It was particularly relevant and impacting during the Covid-19 pandemic as they did not have enough space to study, attend online classes, and work. This aspect negatively affects the physical and psychological health of households.

Moreover, EU-SILC allows having this information regarding London (NUTS1). According to the data, in 2018, 22% of the population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Thus, overall, it was in line with the share at the national level (23%). Compared to nationwide percentages, London has a higher share of people experiencing AROPE who cannot afford dental examinations or treatments because of their cost, who are more exposed to pollution and crime, and who live in overcrowded households (Appendix N).

5.2.2 Social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees

Some interviewees described social exclusion and inequality as different but interrelated phenomena. Both have several dimensions which reinforce and feed each other. Here, I will report the definitions of the two separately as mentioned by some of them, even if later I will summarize together their dimensions, causes, and consequences due to their embeddedness.

Hence, some interviewees described inequality as the unfair and unequal distribution of goods, resources, risks, etc., among a population. In the case of London, they reported that inequality takes four principal dimensions.

"Inequality of resources. So wealth, income, assets. And there's enormous inequality of those things in London. Then, tied to that, there is inequality of recognition. So, inequality of status, inequality of respect, inequality of kind of social esteem and so on. Then, inequality of risks. So, some people, some people experience more danger of physical violence, of unemployment, of being kicked out of school, of all kinds of negative outcome, health, health outcomes. And, then there is inequality of state retribution. So, like state, well, however you wanna call it: punitive state responses, oppression, whatever you wanna call it. So, there are people who are over punished and so and across all of those, it tends to be working class, people of colour, who suffer most, I guess, for want of a better word from those different kinds of inequality. So I'm not saying they're the only dimensions, but they're four important dimensions of inequality in London. I think they're tied to one another" (Interviewee ASS3_UK).

On the other hand, the interviewees pictured social exclusion as a broader concept. Part of them described it concerning the different perspectives through which can be defined and experienced. Others focused on its development in the last decades in the British context. Thus, some defined social exclusion as *"a group of factors which have a direct influence on my ability to take part in social life of my city or the community that I am living in and also to be able to meet, you know, or achieve the minimum needs that I need as an individual to have a decent life"* (Interviewee ASS9_UK). They stressed those obstacles that impede people and communities from benefitting from services, opportunities, or power and getting involved in the social and political life of a country, city, and neighbourhood as others. Several interviewees remarked how race, discrimination, wealth, and class affect the enjoyment of equal treatment and opportunities to speak up. Within this discourse, some mentioned the "equality act" of 2010[244] as a tool to address exclusion. Nevertheless, they also pointed out its lack and possible room for improvement.

"This defines nine groups that are excluded within the UK Society and requires action in law to address their exclusion. However, the issue of class, which is a very strong issue in the UK, is not protected by this Equality Act. When they make this Equality Act, which is 2010, they actually have a debate around the issue, whether the issue of class is an equality issue or not. And they've made a compromise, which was to include what they call socioeconomic issues as a voluntary issue to be addressed within the act. So, it's not a it's not a legal requirement, but

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[244] The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance#:~:text=The%20Equality%20Act%202010%20legally,strengthening%20protection%20in%20some%20situations).

you are encouraged to look at it if you would like to. That's called the socioeconomic duty and some of the London local authorities have voluntarily agreed to implement the socioeconomic duty as well as the legal equality duties. So that's it. That's for us is very interesting, but they don't do it very well and that's another big answer as we come along. However, even the equality duties as well as class, there's a number of other issues that are not mentioned, which also lead to exclusion. So, the clear ones, that there's no disagreement on is, if you've been in an institution, so it may be a, a prison or it may be a mental health hospital as an example" (Interviewee ASS8_UK).

Furthermore, the participation in the decision-making of the district where people live is an increasing concern due to the several actors that operate on London's territory. Indeed, especially in the last decades, because of the rise of finance and changes in the housing market, the role of the citizens in deciding how to manage their neighbourhoods decreased.

"When we talk about social exclusion, we try and, like, ground it in, you know, how our people cut out from make being able to make decisions that impact their lives. And that's sort of like manifesting, you know, a lot of different ways is it in, you know, who Statutory services listen to, you know, who gets to demand their attention and who can claim their time. And, in the same in terms of that organisations, you know. Who are organisations helping? Who are they listening to? Who's been sort of left out of conversations?" (Interviewee ASS7_UK).

On the other side, some interviewees stressed the history of the concept in the British context and its development in academia. Indeed, they pointed out that the term "social exclusion" had a unique and unconventional path. Adopted and promoted in the British public discourse in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it captured the attention of academics later. Within this perspective, several focused on its meanings, usages, and measures.

"There seemed very little consensus actually on what is actually is, and I think perhaps partly because at least in the UK context, it was a term that was used first politically and then kind of retrofitted academically. There was, there was a lot of alternative and uses and, of course, as is so typical of an emerging field that not everybody was, there was a lot of talking past one another because people were actually using the term to mean quite different things. And again, you know, back in that early period, so I'm talking about the very late 1990s and early 2000s, one quite big difference was between people who saw it as a concept that particularly picked up on highly marginalised groups who were a very small proportion of the population. You know, perhaps, I don't know, less than 1% or something. But they are really suffering extreme hardship and very entrenched exclusion. So that that might include, for example, asylum seekers or prisoners who had been released ex prisoners, ex offenders, or people with drug and

alcohol. Yeah, but particularly, you know, very, very severe drug and alcohol issues. So, certain group you know, set of scholars and, you know, advocates, activists, et cetera, using the term and finding it useful to identify groups who often didn't really appear on a kind of regular mainstream social policy agenda. And then there was another group of scholars which I think I was identified with more at early at that time who found the idea of social exclusion attractive, in contrast to a more conventional definition of poverty, because it seemed to bring in other dimensions of life that seemed important beyond the purely material and in which people might be suffering, hardship or marginalisation independently with or in association with material hardship" (Interviewee EXP2_UK).

Hence, according to the interviewees, social exclusion and inequality are multidimensional phenomena that operate at different layers and reinforce each other. Thus, they often talked about vicious circle of disadvantages, which affect people in their life course and every domain, risking to perdure over time and generations. In describing these aspects, the interviewees underlined the difficulties in drawing lines and borders among dimensions, drivers, and consequences. They often spotlighted how interrelated and embedded they are. Hence, the interviewees described some aspects simultaneously as dimensions, causes and consequences of social exclusion and inequality. Figure 5.24 grouped their faces into six main aspects, which are interrelated.

Figure 5.24 – Main dimensions, drivers, and consequences of social exclusion and inequality in London
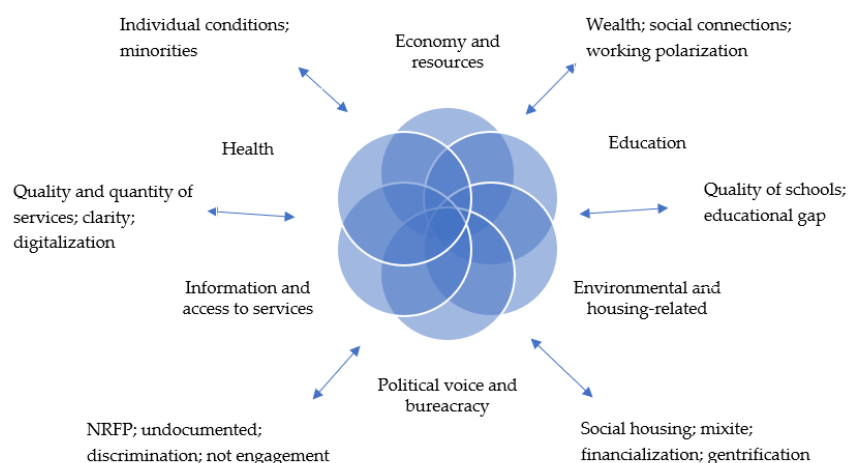
To begin with, inequality and social exclusion have an economic and resource dimension. It includes the financial disparities as well as the differences in social connections and

relationships. On the one hand, the interviewees pointed out how London has enormous wealth, assets, and income gaps within its population. It is rooted and grounded in global capitalism where London is one of the alpha cities. Hence, due to its history, development, financial role, and wealth, it is an attractive place to settle or move in the businesses because of its central position within the global financial market. However, its high concentration of wealth is unbalanced and unfair. Indeed, only a small group of people held it. Simultaneously, it attracts low-qualified or low-skilled workers, producing economic, financial, and housing inequalities, which represent most of the population. Thus, in the (re)production of this economic and social resource dimension, education, work position, and family background play an influential role. Indeed, having a high socio-economic situation, high-remunerative job, or high-level education positively impacts living and working conditions, aspirations, well-being, and opportunities. Oppositely, having a low socio-economic background, a low-qualified job, and a low education level negatively affects the life path of households in all its domains. Thus, poverty represents one of – if not the principal – drivers of social exclusion and inequality. Moreover, it influences the trajectory of their children and household members, reproducing the spiral of disadvantages, inequalities, and exclusion through generations. In the British case, it is particularly evident looking at the wealthy families over time.

> *"In London, a lot of that is intergenerational, so there's interesting historical stuff about how the aristocracy in England in like the 19th century. A lot of their wealth was in the land, and then land was getting less valuable, agriculture getting less valuable, and there was a kind of in some cases quite a strategic planned shift like within families, to switch more into kind of financial markets and banking and stuff like that. So, the City of London has always been full of old aristocrats, basically. So, it's kind of entrenched into general intergenerational wealth. And then with the Big Bang in the 1980s, deregulation of the financial markets, the extent of the wealth that those people have got as well as you know, newer wealthier people, it is utterly ludicrous, but at the same time, the welfare state's been eroded, and so the poverty and the kind of the deep poverty, the destitution exists. London has got worse and worse. [..] Historians did it, did trace the surnames of the barons that William the Conqueror brought over in the year 1066. [..] This paper looked at the like family names of the wealthy barons that William the Conqueror brought across in 1060. And they traced those names to, I think it was the 19th century or even early 20th century. And basically there's remarkable continuity in*

terms of like loads of those names still feature in like the richest families in the country and that's obviously that's just one paper and quite an extreme example, but I think it's basically indicative of the extent to which there's a kind of hoarding of wealth and a hoarding of power through the centuries in England, and especially it's kind of centred around London. And the rich have always seen London as for them" (Interviewee ASS3_UK).

Moreover, this socio-economic aspect increasingly became central because of the housing crisis and the rise in the costs of living. Hence, many households struggled to make ends meet and have problems in buying good quality food, keeping the house warm, having a computer or internet, etc. Furthermore, several interviewees pointed out that, in extreme cases, some households became indebted, which could lead to eviction and social isolation.

"It's not London specific at all, but the study they did was in Newham, one of the boroughs in the east London. One thing that study uncovered really crippling levels of debt, particularly from high cost lenders, so so-called so, where you haven't been able to access just say a bank loan or let alone a mortgage or something like that, but where you're paying really very extremely high interest rates on small amounts of money initially, but which quickly build up to be really quite unmanageable debts, particularly for people on very low incomes. So, and that kind of has a ripple effect. So, it may mean that you get evicted because you can't keep up with your rent or your utility payments. So, then you got problems to access employment. Then came the kind of stigma associated with debt can easily lead to social isolation. So that's kind of a boomerang effect" (Interviewee EXP2_UK).

Within this perspective, this dimension is simultaneously an aspect, cause, and consequence of social exclusion and inequality.

Secondly, another dimension of social exclusion and inequality is education, concerning achievements and quality. On the one hand, the interviewees stated that marginalized communities are less likely to have high-level education and, consequently, to achieve social mobility or access to better opportunities. "*Even as adults, there isn't suitable provision, education provision, lifelong learning opportunities and that kind of thing that enables them to progress in their lives, achieve social mobility*" (Interviewee ASS5_UK). On the other hand, even if, in London, the quality of schools is better than the rest of the country, some differences are still present. The interviewees pointed out the interrelationship with other aspects of social exclusion and inequality, e.g., wealth, socio-economic status, connections, and

housing. Indeed, as the British educational system consists of private and public schools, wealthy households living in good areas are more likely to enrol their children to better and more prestigious institutes. They can also pay for private tuitions. Differently, those household with lower socio-economic resources or in more deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to enrol their children to public and less funded schools.

Thirdly, housing and neighbourhood conditions are central to discussing social exclusion and inequality. On the one hand, housing conditions are an aspect, cause, and consequence of being in vulnerable situations. Living in London is increasingly expensive, and the housing costs often push people into poverty. As it is difficult to find affordable places, disadvantaged groups often live in overcrowded, unsafe, precarious estates. These conditions influence their health and their ability to socialize. The latter is particularly true for children who cannot invite their friends or have the needed space for playing or studying. Regarding health, living in inadequate housing (e.g., with mould, leaking, or in a bad, low-quality neighbourhood) impacts physical and mental well-being. Moreover, the increasing costs – due to Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine – exacerbated and worsened the conditions of these vulnerable households and exposed more groups to these issues. In addition, the changes in access, management, quality, and quantity of social estates negatively impact the possibility of benefitting from this service.

> *"Because of policies like the right to buy, you've seen the amount of council housing reduce quite drastically since the 1980s, and council housing hasn't actually been built to the required level. So, the actual choices of people on low incomes who are more likely to rely on council housing over the years their choices have actually been slimming down and down as more council housing has been sold off. And so I think for me it kind of inequality is often related to income because it does restrict your choices in terms of housing and it can lock you into quite poor quality housing as well. So one, I mean you can look at this centre here, this was built in 1979. This centre is gonna be demolished in about 6 months time, but moving this to a different place. But I think, I raised that just because not just community centres, but also more importantly, County Council housing, a lot of it was erected very quickly in say in the 60s or 70s, and it wasn't really designed for a long term lifespan, and it was kind of put up quickly to house people. Now we've got a situation where a lot of these blocks are really decaying. People are living in terrible housing, conditions in are suffering from damp, mould,*

you know, and they're struggling to heat their homes as well. That's a big issue at the moment, of course, with the cost-of-living crisis that we're in" (Interviewee ASS6_UK).

Hence, due to policies like the Right to buy, social housing is insufficient and inadequate for all the requests. Moreover, some interviewees denounced that the Councils owned several estates which are often left empty. According to them, several citizens are frustrated and outraged because of this mismanagement of resources.

On the other hand, regarding the condition of the neighbourhoods, groups with different socio-economic backgrounds coexist in London. The British capital is unique as these diverse groups tend to live in similar areas regardless of their socio-economic status.

> *"I think what's quite unique about London is that you have people with vastly different wealth living alongside each other. So that Kensington and Chelsea, which is the kind of classic example of, I'd say, that's a more extreme end of the spectrum. So, you've got vastly wealthy people, probably the most wealthy people in the whole of London, living next to like the Grenfell Tower fire"* (Interviewee EXP5_UK).

The interviewees explained it by the presence of social housing in each borough and the fact that, in the past, the people working for the aristocracy lived close to their employers. However, the housing market, de-industrialization and gentrification changed this mixite and influenced neighbourhood compositions. Indeed, even if London is a heterogeneous city without areas that might be described as ghettos, these changes resulted in less affordable housing. Thus, several households responded to that by either moving further out or living in poor housing conditions. All these coping solutions influence the creation and development of pockets of poverty and deprivation. In addition, the changes due to the capitalistic restructuring of manufacturing and industries shaped and modified the city and the relationships among its residents. One example is the area around the docks, namely in the boroughs of Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Lewisham, Newham, and Greenwich. This part of London was known for poverty, deprivation, slums, and migration. Since the closure and relocation of the docks after the 1980s, these zones underwent massive projects of regeneration and gentrification. Another case is the Ford factory in Barking and Dagenham. Opened in 1935, it was the economic core of the borough, and its activities were tied up with the local community in terms of services, culture, social activities, identities, etc. At the

beginning of the 2000s, they decided to move the manufacturing elsewhere and, consequentially, they took the soul out of the borough. On the one hand, several people got fired, and their expertise went wasted. On the other, the borough lost its connectedness and cohesion.

Fourthly, social exclusion and inequality have a political dimension, stressing the importance of having a voice, being sure to be heard, and having access to power. Within this regard, the interviewees often pointed out that minorities, racialized, young, elderly, lower-income groups are less likely to engage in political or social issues because of disinterest, lack of time, and feeling of being disempowered and disenfranchised. Indeed, they disproportionally suffer from discrimination and abuse of power. Within this perspective, some interviewees stated that their voices do not matter as they feel to be often unheard, ignored, and neglected. Furthermore, regardless of ethnicity or economic status, several interviewees denounced how citizens are often cut out from the conversations and processes of decisions which will impact their lives. A typical example is an exclusion or lower consideration of residents' opinions on urban planning or council decisions.

> *"We found that the processors and the way in which decisions were made were highly exclusive of the citizens level. So, community groups like ours very rarely took part, whereas the voluntary sector did. They would be invited because they were funded by the local authority. So, the local authority had a relation with them, and they would invite them. And of course, they would be there themselves, the local authorities, and then a number of businesses, usually the larger ones, not the smaller ones, but a number of businesses would be invited and consultancies, this type of things, think tanks, universities. So, all these would be invited to take part in deciding the policy for planning in London, but the citizens level wouldn't be"* (Interviewee ASS8_UK).

On the other hand, this political dimension of exclusion and inequality manifests structurally under the UK legislation which excludes people who are subject to immigration control from the social security system (e.g., the NRPF). Furthermore, the immigration legal framework became more complex, expensive, and restricted over time. So, to work and settle in the UK, they need to reach and meet specific requirements and standards. In the past, these requirements were only requested for non-EEA nationals but, after Brexit, all

nationalities are subject to the same rules as others. However, the conditions of the EU settlement scheme were more generous. In addition, over time, the price of extending the visa has increased.

"So, one of the trends in the last kind of 10 years we've seen increases in the difficulties and the barriers to routes to regularisation. So, when people come here, it's very difficult to remain and to settle. And part of this is because, like, visa fees to apply to extend your visa or permission to remain have increased. And so that has kind of pushed, had implications for people's kind of material deprivation, but also pushed lots of people into undocumentedness potentially" (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

Thus, it disproportionally affects more low-income households contributing to and enhancing socioeconomic and health inequalities. Moreover, an additional barrier is due to the tendency of migrant communities, asylum seekers, refugees, etc., to hide themselves because they fear to be reported.

Fifthly, another dimension of social exclusion and inequality refers to access to services. They include a huge spectrum of benefits and supports concerning health, education, public transportation, local authorities, police, housing, green spaces, etc., provided by the welfare state. In London, there are disparities in enjoying them. An issue refers to the barriers or discriminations that some communities (especially minorities) might encounter. It can be structural as well as individual. The typical example reported is the racial profiling of the police. In addition, this perception that the police have prejudices towards minorities or migrants influence their relationship. Indeed, as the services are perceived as hostile, people often do not trust them or avoid asking for help because they fear being reported, discriminated against, or charged. In doing so, they might experience violence and avoid denouncing it. Another gap relates to a lack of knowledge, information, awareness, digitalization, and language, which reinforces and exacerbates exclusion and inequality.

"A lot of things are online. And not everybody knows how to do that. Most people use a phone, not a laptop, not a tablet. They use a phone and trying to open a document and read a document on a phone when you haven't got any skills in the first place. And then you're trying to go to the next page or download it and you're not sure how to download it. And then when you downloaded it. Or they ask you to complete it online and you cannot do it by yourself. Then you give up. Then, 3-4 months, 3-4 weeks down the line. But they're 4 weeks

behind. So, their benefits have been stopped, their housing benefit has been stopped because they've been given an e-mail or some message by the DWP[245], but they can't read" (Interviewee ASS1_UK).

Again, these obstacles disproportionally affect minorities, migrants, or the elderly. Within this frame, several interviewees pointed out that, even if London is one of the most developed cities in the world, it is still unable to acknowledge the vulnerable communities and their needs. Indeed, some services or public resources are not adapted or available for them. For instance, linguistic and cultural barriers influence the understanding, requesting, and accessing services, rights, and benefits. Lastly, as mentioned, the difference in access to services and benefits between citizens and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is a problematic and central issue.

> *"It's a sort of policy framework which has been sustained under successive governments, called the no recourse to public funds policy. So, it's, I don't know, it's, I mean that's kind of the stamp that people get in their passports when they have or when they get a visa. So it's kind of a restriction that's applied to most migrants, to the UK. It used to be only for non-EEA nationals because EEA nationals were exempt from being subject to immigration control. So, it meant that they didn't have to gain permission from the government to work and live here because of free movement, but after Brexit., in effect, EEA nationals now have the same have to be subject to the same rules as the others. So, you have this kind of visa free travel for tourism, but if you want to come and work and live here then you know you need to kind of meet the same kind of rules. And, so, this NRPF policy – this no request to public funds restriction - acts on anyone who's coming to work and live in the UK, and visitors and students. But obviously it affects those who are living and working most because you know, they're here long term. And it also affects people who are undocumented. It's kind of a blanket policy which applies to people to individuals and family members so that they can't access any Social Security benefits regardless of need or their income"* (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

In addition, several interviewees denounced how this policy impacted economically and sanitary the employees during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some exemplified this by reporting that, because of the fear of the virus, people fired domestic workers, and they could not access benefits or housing or have any safety net.

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[245] Department for Work and Pensions.

Lastly, social exclusion and inequality have a sanitarian and health dimension, cause, and consequence. On the one hand, people with physical and mental health or who had a trauma might encounter more obstacles in fulfilling social life. Related to wellbeing, there is also the issue of drug or alcoholic addictions. The relationship between substances and inequality and exclusion is a circle difficult to break. On the other hand, living in a condition of inequality and exclusion often results in bad health conditions and high mortality rates. The life and well-being of the most excluded groups or neighbourhoods are worse than the rest of the population. The interviewees exemplified this evident consequence by presenting the rates of people who died because of the Covid-19 pandemic. On the one hand, the BAME were disproportionally more affected by it.

> *"Within the UK, there's been plenty of reports written around which groups in the society were more likely to die from COVID. Again, black people were high on that. You then look at issues around NHS staff who died under COVID when they were looking after people. When I say black, I mean black, Asian or minority ethnic groups. They were much more likely to die if they were NHS nurses. The reports have actually said that there was a lack of care showing towards black nurses, that they were more likely to be put on the frontline, more likely to be in situations like of danger. Why nurses? What is the excuse for that? Black nurses are much more likely to be actually agency workers. So, do you know what I mean? So, they're not employed by the NHS, but because the NHS has so many vacancies and they need many more staff than they have. Then, then there's many thousands who they hire from agencies, and they're able to pay them a lot less. And on the agency side, it's nearly not all, but maybe 70% or something, a very high proportion of black. And because the NHS wants to look after those its employees, then when it comes to danger zone situations, they're more likely to put the agency workers there and the agency workers are more like much more likely to be black"* (Interviewee ASS8_UK).

Moreover, according to the interviewees, similar statics demonstrated that disadvantaged communities are more exposed to pollution. They denounced it as a failure of the Equality Act. On the other hand, the pandemic also showed the importance of mental health. Indeed, several founded themselves depressed, isolated, without interactions, and discouraged.

In addition, the barriers to accessing health services cause delays in discovering and monitoring illnesses.

5.5.3 Who is unequal and excluded

According to the interviewees, it is difficult to delineate a specific profile of who is at risk of exclusion and inequality today. Indeed, these phenomena take several shades and layers that impact differently various groups of people. Generally, the interviewees pointed out that minorities (BAME), migrants, and refugees tend to be more exposed to extremer forms of vulnerability. In addition, this situation is even more difficult for those without papers or homeless. However, white British people can end up in these conditions as well. Indeed, except for the fact that they do not encounter exclusion or unequal treatment because of the colour of their skin or nationality, they still experience marginalization and vulnerability.

> White British "*are very easy to be included in this group if you stay away from the fact that they're white. You accept that as a white person, they won't suffer certain types of exclusion but other types they will, depending on where they stand within the social network. So, if they're in this connected to this top 30%, they'll be less likely to go under the line at this moment in time*" (Interviewee ASS12_UK).

Thus, regardless of nationality and ethnicity, the archetype would be a person or household with similar socioeconomic, educational, living, and working characteristics, namely:

1. Having a low socioeconomic, network, and educational background;
2. Being unemployed, on welfare, out of the labour market, or struggling with it;
3. Being a single parent or large family. They often have problems with the housing and labour market. Moreover, large families are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions;
4. Having low-skilled and hard jobs, e.g., working in factories, cleaning, construction, hotel, restaurants, care, services, GIG economy, delivery, etc. These are underpaid and tiring jobs with uncommon working time. It impacts the possibility of assisting and checking on their children. It also influences household relationships. In other cases, these jobs could affect the health of workers. This aspect was evident during the pandemic.
5. Living in a neighbourhood or areas with environmental and social stresses;
6. Not owning an accommodation;

7. Being elder;

8. Having health problems, due to the presence of disability or long-term sickness in the household, or the type of jobs, or the alimentation.

In describing the characteristics of those more exposed to social exclusion and inequality, interviewees argued about the intersectionality and overlapping of disadvantages. Indeed, these features are more likely to appear together and reinforce the vulnerability and marginalization that a person, household, or community faces and experiences.

Nevertheless, as reported by the interviewees, minorities, migrants, and refugees tend to be more exposed to inequality and exclusion as they have other adding layers of barriers and discrimination to face, namely:

- The language;

- The bureaucratic barriers and the knowledge of the system;

- The discrimination in the housing and labour market;

- The different types and quality of services that you can access;

- The stereotype and prejudice on top of their conditions.

Among them, the groups experiencing the severer forms of social exclusion and inequality are the people with NRPF, the refugee, and the Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller communities. Regarding the former two groups, they face higher levels of vulnerability than others because they either do not have access to national services or have a separate support system. Thus, they encounter higher risks and the likelihood of ending up in exclusion or deprivation because they do not have the same benefits, safety net, and aids as others. Concerning the Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller communities, the interviewees have pointed out some differences among them. Indeed, they are three diverse communities classified under the same umbrella term as they share few similar characteristics. They are often treated in policy and victimized and pictured jointly. For instance, they are described as criminals, thieves, or deviants in the media. However, they have different traditions, histories, and migration statuses. The differences between Roma, and Gypsy and Travellers are relevant. The latter have been in the United Kingdom for centuries and have different

lifestyles and living situations compared to Roma. Nowadays, they mainly live in housing or temporary housing rather than caravans or mobile structures. On the other hand, the Roma community mainly appeared after the expansion of the European Union in 2004. Indeed, before that year, a small community in the United Kingdom identifies as Roma. Thus, the current definition of the Roma community is essentially linked to the migrant Roma from Central and Eastern Europe. Hence, they are not British citizens but EU migrants. Consequently, they face more cultural, linguistic, bureaucratic, and legal barriers than Gypsy and Travellers. Notwithstanding these differences, both still face discrimination in school, services, health, housing, and employment markets, etc. Their identity impacts their ability to have fair opportunities and treatment. Thus, they are overrepresented among the groups experiencing higher rates of exclusion and inequality.

Furthermore, the interviewees pointed out that exclusion and inequality are increasing, and some changes occurred in the last ten years. Indeed, although the groups experiencing these dynamics remained the same, namely the BAME and GRT communities, single parents, large families, a household with health problems, unemployed, migrants, etc., some conditions and aspects changed.

To begin, interviewees pointed out how poverty became deeper and more entrenched. Thus, households and communities struggle even more to get out of deprivation. As a result, they live in exclusion, marginalization, and destitution.

> *"There's a charity, called Joseph Rowntree Foundation, does a lot of research about poverty and they basically coined this idea about deep poverty. So, they've got reports out. And it's basically poverty is getting worse and it's getting more entrenched. So, it's becoming harder for households or families to get their way out of poverty. And so there's a kind of depth to it, a kind of entrenchment. And that's getting more common and it's something they've written interestingly about. It's about the whole country, but there'll be stuff about London in it"* (Interviewee ASS3_UK).

Related to that, the interviewees pointed out two added changes. The first one is that the work is worth less than ten years ago. Thus, as mentioned, it is harder to keep up with the expenses, costs of living and housing, and bills. For this reason, an increasing number of working people and households are now living in poverty. Potentially, they might end up

living and experiencing unequal conditions. The second change is the housing market. Renting and affording accommodation became more difficult. It is due to the rising costs and the shortening of housing available. Within this context, the reduction, restructuring, and regeneration of the council estates impacted. Moreover, gentrification changed the perception and image of some neighbourhoods or areas. Hence, more people started to be interested in moving there, while the previous resident communities faced and struggled with even more issues and expenses.

> *"I would say in terms of area, I mean you have these kinds of ongoing issues around gentrification. So, for instance, you know, I've mentioned earlier the former Heygate estate in Elephant and Castle. The redevelopment of what used to be the Heygate estate and that has just led to this exodus of people from the area influx of wealthier, wealthier residents in areas like Peckham. You know, Peckham is kind of becoming seen as being hip or trendy or whatever, and you have this growth in younger professionals, you know, coming in, changing the look and feel of the area. It's a complex issue because of course you don't want a community to feel gated and inaccessible to the rest of society, but on the other hand, you don't want gentrification to lead to businesses that poorer communities rely on being closed or for rent or housing to become more expensive. So, there are issues connected to that I think in terms of the how certain geographical areas are perceived, I think there has been some change as a result of gentrification. I think probably the way people might view areas like, I don't know, say Elephant and Castle or Peckham or even, you know, Bermondsey in Canada Water. I think the way that those areas might be perceived in the public eye may have changed, but I think the actual communities that need help there they haven't, they haven't really changed. They've remained the same to a greater or lesser extent"* (Interviewee ASS6_UK).

Fourthly, immigration laws and perceptions of foreigners changed. On the one hand, more restrictive requirements, more expensive visas, and more limited policies were proposed and arranged. The interviewees stated that, between 2012 and 2013, the Conservative government cut the expenditure for legal advice, making the applications much harder to complete and challenge them, and introduced the 10-year route to settlement. This latter aimed at breaking the link between migration and settlement. Indeed, in the past, people could apply for a definitive settlement after five years while, with this new regulation, they require more money and time to request it.

"I think one of the biggest problems has been, I mean certainly the right to work checks[246] and the right to rent checks[247], but also like the legal aid cuts that I mentioned in 2013 which basically just decimated legal advice. So, it's been much more difficult for people to put it to put in their applications and to challenge those applications when they refused. And then the increasing fees" (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

Later, in 2016, the Theresa May government targeted and tried to tackle illegal immigration by denying different public and private services based on immigration status. Moreover, as migrants fear jeopardizing their immigration status, they often do not report unsafe working environments, underpaid conditions, or abuses of their job position. On the other, there has been a rising hostile environment towards migrants.

*"The environment towards migrants is much more hostile than compared to 10 years ago, so the amount of abuse on the streets, in the public spaces, racial abuse and by employers, and not just employers but work colleagues, has increased exponentially, as has from partners as a result of tha*t*"* (Interviewee ASS2_UK).

According to the interviewees, the discourse around migration twisted in the last years because of Brexit, the refugee crisis in 2015, and the rise of migrants trying to reach the United Kingdom on boat through the channel. In addition, the policies mentioned, and the media and politicians' narratives influenced this perception. Especially, several interviewees pointed out how the government discourse over low-skilled workers became harsher and more derogatory.

"We're starting to see the narrative around we want to reduce the numbers of low skilled, low skilled migrants. So now you know the politicians are not specifically mentioning, you know, EU migrants or Eastern European migrants. But now they're saying low skilled migrants. We have too many of them. We have these we need to cut on that we need to cut on this and so on. So, they keep maintaining this topic on the agenda" (Interviewee ASS9_UK).

Fifthly, according to the interviewees, the surveillance culture around benefits increased. They reported that, sometimes, those on welfare feel guilty or perceived to be judged by others as dependent on the state or layabout. This attitude towards them increased due to

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[246] A right to work check is a Home Office process to establish that each employee or casual worker has the right to work in the UK before they start their employment. (https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work).

[247] Private landlords and agents are legally required to check the immigration status of all tenants, lodgers and any other adults who will be living in the property. (https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-rent)

the rhetoric around benefits cheats. In addition, some interviewees stated that welfare became more punitive.

Sixthly, the interviewees spotlighted an increasing awareness and engagement in decision-making by the citizens and organizations. Indeed, understanding how inequality and social exclusion impact groups gave more consciousness and knowledge to the communities, associations, and groups. Thus, they improved their tools to tackle these issues and stand for themselves in decision-making processes.

> "*I think that what has changed is our awareness and understanding of how inequality affects different groups of people. And I think our awareness and understanding has become much more prolific because we have social media, we have, you know, we're using the Internet a lot more. We're talking to each other. We're reading reports. So, I think that our understanding has improved*" (Interviewee ASS5_UK).

Within this perspective, several perceived an increasing interest and participation in political conversations. However, they pointed out that as long as a community keeps being ignorant regarding the laws and ways to assert their rights and willing, it will remain marginalized and exploited.

Lastly, the interviewees described the Covid-19 pandemic as a sort of litmus paper in highlighting those groups lacking safety nets and experiencing inequalities. On the one hand, it underlined which groups are more exposed to social exclusion and deprivation. For instance, the homeless and people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) were two explicative examples. The former were housed through the "Everyone In"[248] policy, which also allows counting the dimension of the phenomenon, monitoring their conditions, and proving support. The interviewees applauded this measure but denounced the lack of following programmes in the aftermath. Thus, when the Covid-19 pandemic ended, most of them returned to the streets. Differently, concerning the people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), the government did not promulgate any specific policies towards them. Hence, their struggles and gaps with the rest of the population appeared more vividly. On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic showed the relevance of digitalization

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[248] https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information-and-resources/policy/covid-19-and-everyone-in.

and the disparities in having the tools and equipment to access it. For instance, the differences in the possibilities of attending a school or a job from work were visible and tangible. Thus, the digital dimension represents a new aspect of exclusion and inequality, which might enlarge the groups of people experiencing these phenomena. In addition, the pandemic spotlighted those neighbourhoods that were more cohesive and aware of the funding. Indeed, some interviewees reported that the areas with much stronger communities, relationships, and social capital responded more promptly to face their needs and problems.

5.6 Similarities and differences

In this last paragraph, I attempt to compare what emerged in these five cities and spotlight their similarities and differences.

As reported, social exclusion and inequality have different facets that I grouped into six dimensions based on what the interviewees reported during the interviews. Thus, the main aspects through which these dynamics manifest, perdure, and reinforce each other are: economic and resources; education; environment and housing-related; political voice and bureaucracy; information and access to services; and health.

Although the dimensions of social exclusion and inequality are the same in each city considered, they have peculiarities and specific traits. Table 5.1 summarizes these similarities and differences. To begin with, in all the case studies, the background and context of origin still play a central role in avoiding or reinforcing social exclusion and inequality. They impact the interests, opportunities, possibilities, and lifepaths of people. Secondly, in all the cities, the interviewees pinpointed several mechanisms and changes that increase the possibility of experiencing disparities or obstacles. Indeed, the administrative choices (which could refer to urban planning, school funds and organization, policies towards poverty, etc.), the structural and individual discrimination, the insufficient clarity and quality of services, the digitalization, the exposure to addictions, and the lack of documents influenced the possibility to face social exclusion and inequality. A third aspect

is the relationship between social exclusion/inequality and criminality. In all the cities involved, the interviewees pointed out how it is tight and embedded with these dynamics. However, only in Rome and Brussels, interviewees add and describe the role of organized crime in addition to criminality in reproducing and feeding these dynamics.

On the other hand, only in Rome and Bucharest, social exclusion and inequality also manifest through the phenomenon of squatting. Moreover, in all the cities analysed except Bucharest, social exclusion and inequality apply differently between natives and migrants.

Table 5.1 – Peculiarities of the dimensions of social exclusion and inequality in the cities involved

Peculiarities	Rome	Brussels	Stockholm	Bucharest	London
Family background	x	x	x	x	x
Dropouts	x	x	x	x	x
Administrative choices	x	x	x	x	x
Stigma/discrimination	x	x	x	x	x
Bureaucracy/Documents	x	x	x	x	x
Squatting	x			x	
Gap natives and migrants	x (yes, but not so much)	x	x		x
Criminality	x	x	x	x	x
Organized crime	x	x (yes, but not so much)			
Geographical isolation	x		x	x	
Lack/inadequate services	x	x		x	x
Individual conditions	x	x	x	x	x
Clarity of services	x	x	x	x	x
Addictions	x	x	x	x	x
Digitalization	x	x	x	x	x

Concerning the people and communities involved, the European cities considered have similarities as well as differences (Table 5.2). To begin with, in all the involved capitals, the interviewees mentioned the Roma, Gypsy, and Travellers communities, the elderly, and the homeless as the ones more at risk and disproportionally overrepresented in exclusion and unequal conditions. In addition, the interviewees pointed out a "gender gap" in being more likely to experience and face these situations. Nevertheless, they often underlined that this

"gender bias" is mainly due to the community or family of origin rather than a structural issue.

However, there are some differences among the cities analysed. For instance, only in Bucharest, the interviewees did not mention the "migrants" as a group at risk. It is due to the low flow of migrants and the lack of research and associations about them. Another difference is that, in Rome and Bucharest, children were (and increasingly became) at risk of exclusion, inequality, and disadvantage. It is particularly concerning due to the possibility of intergenerational passage of vulnerabilities over time and in adulthood. Lastly, only in Bucharest – and partially in Rome, the LGBTQIA+ community might still face discrimination, prejudice, and political difficulties in making its voice heard. Indeed, the Orthodox Church still has a relevant role and power in socially and politically influencing what and who is accepted. It is not only referred to the LGBTQIA+ community but also to Roma and other minorities.

Table 5.2 – Groups most exposed to social exclusion and inequality in the cities involved

Groups	Rome	Brussels	Stockholm	Bucharest	London
Roma, Gypsy, and Travellers	x	x	x	x	x
Migrants	x	x	x		x
Locals	x	x (yes, but not so much)		x	x
Elderly	x	x	x	x	x
Black, Asian, and Minorities Ethnicity	x (more related to specific nationalities)	x (more related to specific nationalities)	x (more related to specific nationalities)		x
Children	x (yes, but not so much)			x	
Homeless	x	x	x	x	x
Women	x (more related to specific communities)	x (more related to specific communities)	x (more related to specific communities)	x (more related to specific communities)	x (more related to specific communities)
LGBTQIA+	x (yes, but not so much)			x	

In addition, table 5.3 reports the characteristics that make people or communities more likely to be at risk of exclusion and inequality.

Table 5.3 - Characteristics that make people or communities more likely to be at risk of exclusion and inequality in the cities involved

Characteristics	Rome	Brussels	Stockholm	Bucharest	London
Low socioeconomic background	x	x	x	x	x
Disadvantaged area	x	x	x	x	
Low education	x	x	x	x	x
Low-skilled jobs	x	x	x	x	x
Not owing an accommodation	x	x	x		x
Migrant background	x	x	x		x
Language	x	x	x		x
Facing bureaucratic barriers	x	x		x	x
Single parents or large families (often overcrowded)	x	x	x	x	x
Being unemployed, on welfare, etc	x	x	x	x	x
Individual characteristics (health, sexual orientation, religion, etc.)	x	x	x	x	x

Moreover, during the interviews, some interesting issues and conflicts came up (Table 5.4). To begin with, in all the cities except Bucharest, the interviewees reported an increasing clash and separation between the socioeconomic conditions between natives and migrants. The media and politicians' discourses played a role in these dynamics, divisions, and perceptions. Secondly, in three out of five cities, the difference between suburbs and inner-city is increasingly visible and relevant. It impacts socioeconomic backgrounds, services, possibilities, etc. In the case of Rome (except for a few neighbourhoods, i.e., the EUR, Talenti, Tor di Quinto, etc.) and Stockholm, the city centre is the wealthiest part, while it is the opposite in Brussels. Thirdly, in Rome and Bucharest, the interviewees stated the presence of hard-core poverty that remains and perdures over time. Moreover, due to the general impoverishment that affected all the cities involved, this group experienced poverty that became more entrenched and difficult to tackle. Fourthly, the Roma, Gypsy, and Travellers community is a central issue in all the European cities involved in the research. Indeed, even if it has different histories and past in these capitals, this group face and experience extreme shades of exclusion and inequality. Hench, these cities adopted different and various

schemes and policies to tackle these disadvantages. However, none of them solved it. Fifth, the interviewees pointed out the visibility and invisibility of the groups considered excluded and unequal in these cities. Indeed, they often stated that these people are visible in everyday life and the urban fabric. However, they kept being invisible in the policies, planning, and decision-making processes. A typical example of this double relationship between visibility and invisibility is homelessness. Sixthly, the interviewees often questioned the direction of exclusion. So, they argued that sometimes it is due to structural forces and processes that push away or expel some categories. Nevertheless, in other cases, the excluded people tend to distance themselves from society. Especially, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds or contexts tend to remain in their neighbourhoods and not amalgamate or explore other areas. The interviewees often described this attitude as either a claim of pride or mechanism of self-exclusion for shame or feeling out of place. Within this perspective, they affirmed that organized crime or local criminality are the ones that take advantage of these situations and push for an even more clear-cut, self-segregation, and separation from the rest of the city. In doing so, they keep institutions away from their territories and continue controlling and managing the neighbourhood with their own rules and interests. Lastly, in all the cities analysed, the interviewees spotlighted how the increasing precarization of the labour market and the disappearance of the middle class resulted in a polarization of working positions and conditions.

Table 5.4 – Issues and conflicts in the cities involved

Issues and conflicts	Rome	Brussels	Stockholm	Bucharest	London
Native vs immigrant	x (yes, but more not so much)	x	x		x
Suburbs vs inner	x	x	x		
"Hard core" poverty	x			x	
Roma, Gypsy, and Travellers	x	x	x	x	x
Social housing	x	x	x		x
Visibility vs invisibility	x	x	x	x	x

Direction of the exclusion (system or self)	x	x	x	x	x
Job polarization	x	x	x	x	x

Table 5.5 summarizes the principal changes influencing social exclusion and inequality in the five cities analysed. As reported, the increasing living and housing costs, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the cuts to the welfare state are common aspects and changes that impacted these capitals and their communities. In addition, in all the cities except Stockholm, the profile of the people at risk of exclusion and inequality remained the same and, in some cases, their conditions worsened. Moreover, in all the cities except Bucharest, the attitude and perception of migrants changed and became more hostile. In some cases, laws and policies (e.g., the decreto sicurezza and the No Recourse to Public Funds scheme) amplified these misrepresentations and aggravated the conditions of migrants. In addition, this negative attitude was also towards those receiving benefits and aid from welfare. Indeed, several interviewees stated that many felt judged and accused of being lazy and stealing from the state. Moreover, in all cities, the housing market changed and became more private and owner oriented. It aggravated the conditions of those living in rented accommodations. Differently, only in Stockholm and London, the interviewees reported an increase in shotguns and violence.

Table 5.5 – Changes over time in the cities involved

Changes	Rome	Brussels	Stockholm	Bucharest	London
Same profile	x	x		x	x
Impoverishment	x				
Cuts in the welfare	x	x	x	x	x
Increasing costs	x	x	x	x	x
Poverty more entrenched	x	x		x	x
Work worths less	x				x
Housing market changes	x	x	x	x	x
Immigration law changes	x				x
Attitude towards migrant	x	x	x		x
Surveillance culture around benefits	x			x	x
Awareness	x				x

Covid-19	x	x	x	x	x
Increase in violence			x		x

Chapter 6 – Abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in European cities

This chapter attempts to answer to the second part of the second question of the research, i.e., whether and who is experiencing "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality" in European cities. Within this perspective, the research aims at grasping these severer nuances of inequality and social exclusion. Hence, this chapter focuses on the presence and manifestation of abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality, reporting how the interviewees described them in each city analysed.

6.1 Rome

According to the interviewees, in Rome, these types of social exclusion and inequality exist and manifest separately and simultaneously. Table 6.1 summarizes the groups and type of disparities they face.

Table 6.1 – Groups facing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in Rome

	Abyssal exclusion	**Advanced marginality**
Roma community	- Process of dehumanization and invisibilization - Criminalization	- Disconnection to cyclical fluctuations - Territorial stigmatization - Spatial alienation - Erosion of the hinterland
Squatters	- Process of inferiorization - Invisible for political and administrative entities	- Disconnection to cyclical fluctuations - Territorial stigmatization - Spatial alienation - Erosion of the hinterland
People living in public housing	- Processes of invisibilization and inferiorization - Absence of public authorities and aids	- Wage work as driver - Disconnection to cyclical fluctuations - Territorial stigmatization - Spatial alienation - Erosion of the hinterland - Social fragmentation
Homeless	- Processes of invisibilization and inferiorization - Criminalization	/

Undocumented (Victims of exploitation)	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization • Disinterest of political discourse	/
Elderly and disabled people	• Processes of invisibilization	/
Addicted people	• Process of invisibilization • Stigma	

The interviewees pointed out that some communities are more likely to experience these phenomena jointly because, to some extent, there is a tendency to cluster disadvantaged groups in marginal areas. Within this perspective, the groups simultaneously experiencing disparities that can be interpreted as advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion are the Roma community, those living in public housing, and those squatting in buildings.

Concerning the Roma community, they face advanced marginality as they live spatially alienated and disconnected from cyclical fluctuations and the rest of the city. Tendentially, they dwell in institutional or informal camps. The former type of camps is formally managed, planned, and allowed by the municipality. Located in marginal and invisible zones and equipped with the minimum services, these camps host the Roma community and the former Yugoslavian asylum-seekers who were unproperly defined as nomads.

> *"Tendenzialmente i rom dell'ex Jugoslavia sono quasi tutti più o meno regolari. Ah, vivono moltissimi, comunque in situazioni ancora molto precarie. C'è il problema del superamento dei campi. Che sta avvenendo in maniera super lenta e complicata su Roma, quantomeno pare, non se ne aprano più. Però son persone che sono state proprio toccate fortissimamente dalla segregazione, dalla nascita e dalla vita intera dentro i campi rom che sono posti, sono ghetti, che emarginano tantissimo"*[249] (Interviewee ASS35_IT).

Differently, the illegal camps are quantitative and spatially smaller than the former. Located in different areas of Rome – usually in remote and not visible zones to avoid being spotted and reported to the authorities – they are precarious and in an institutional forgetfulness. According to the interviewees, the inhabitants of these informal camps are often Romanians

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[249] Translation: *"Roma from the former Yugoslavia tend to be almost all more or less regular. Ah, there are many who live, but in very precarious situations. There is the problem of overcoming the fields. Which is happening in a super slow and complicated way in Rome, at least it seems, they don't open it anymore. But they are people who have been very strongly affected by segregation, by their birth and by their entire life inside the Roma camps that are located, they are ghettos, which marginalize a lot".*

or Bulgarians coming temporarily to earn some money to send back to their families in their countries. However, regardless of the type of camps, as they live segregated and closed like a ghetto, they also face sociosanitary and socioeconomic repercussions, such as psychological diseases, illiteracy, premature marriages, and teen pregnancies. Moreover, advanced marginality manifests in terms of economic and spatial disconnection from the rest of the city. Within this perspective, the Roma community tend to be excluded from the labour market and legal system and, thus, they do not enjoy any benefits from the economic trends. In addition, another aspect of advanced marginality they face is a place-based label. This territorial stigmatization is simultaneously due to the living conditions of the Roma community and the prejudice and discrimination towards them. It impacts the perdurance and reproduction of these realities.

On the other hand, the Roma community experiences abyssal exclusion as they are considered and treated as sub-humans to whom only some rights and services are guaranteed.

> "*Servizi minimi proprio perché si ha l'idea che la baraccopoli sia abitata alla fine da una subumanità che non ha poi tutta questa necessità di avere, di godere, diciamo, di servizi ulteriori. E quindi è il luogo della concentrazione dello scarto umano. Dove addirittura non c'è più un'umanità diversa, ma come dicevo una subumanità, cioè un'umanità non pienamente riconosciuta. Quindi sono delle famiglie, dei bambini, delle donne, degli uomini che si, però, alla fine, si vabbè, i diritti si ce l'hanno però alla fine garantiamo il minimo*"[250] (Interviewee ASS11_IT).

Thus, through these mechanisms of discrimination and negligence, this community experience processes of invisibilization, dehumanization, and inferiorization. There is a form of interiorized discrimination against them, a habit to treat them with violence, and a rooted stigma. This (territorial and social) stigma and collective imaginary toward this community impacts their interactions with others and institutions.

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[250] Translation: "*Minimal services precisely because there is the idea that the slum is inhabited in the end by a subunit that doesn't have all this need to have, to enjoy, let's say, additional services. And therefore it is the place of concentration of human waste. Where even there is no longer a different humanity, but as I said a sub-humanity, that is, a humanity that is not fully recognized. So they are families, children, women, men that yes, but in the end, yes, yes, we have rights, but in the end we guarantee the minimum*".

"L'esclusione più grande che invece io negli anni ho in qualche modo percepito, anzi noi abbiamo percepito, vissuto, visto coi nostri occhi è per la comunità serba rumena [...] I più invisibili, i più emarginati, i più esclusi dalla società italiana, sono i rom. [..] perché ce l'abbiamo interiorizzata questa forma di discriminazione e loro sono i più esclusi. E loro un po' a me davano fastidio, no? Soprattutto per alcuni atteggiamenti che, in realtà, poi ho capito leggendo, informandomi veramente. Non solo conoscendo queste persone, ma proprio leggendo la loro storia, parlando anche con una del collettivo nostro che è molto attiva, che sa tutto di loro dall'inizio alla fine. E ho scoperto questo mondo. Devi sapere che qui intorno al Quarticciolo ci sono stati dei campi, cioè ci sono stati dei campi comunque sgomberati e sgomberati in maniera veramente violenta. Perché se tu parli con i bambini, i bambini ti raccontano che tutta le loro cose venivano gettate in aria, ti raccontano di episodi raccapriccianti ed è il motivo per cui loro hanno paurissima della polizia. Noi cerchiamo sempre di spiegare loro, "guarda, non vi fanno niente, non dovete aver paura di loro". Qui hanno questa funzione, però sì, però negli anni abbiamo capito che effettivamente loro hanno subìto delle violenze dalle forze dell'ordine. Che è assurdo. Eh, però è così, loro hanno subìto delle violenze psicologiche perché erano bambini molto piccoli, perché appunto hanno vissuto degli sgomberi terribili. Per non parlare degli incendi"[251] (Interviewee ASS6_IT).

This quote underlines and reports both the effects of territorial stigmatization explained by Wacquant and the justification of violence towards sub-humans theorized by Santos.

Concerning those living in public housing in the peripheries[252], the interviewees denounced that they experience territorial exclusion and a strong sense of inferiority. On the one hand, they face advanced marginality as these estates were developed and located at the edge. According to the interviewees, Rome grew through processes of expulsion and segregation

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[251] Translation: *"The greatest exclusion that I have somehow perceived over the years, indeed we have perceived, experienced, seen with our own eyes is for the Romanian Serbian community [...] The most invisible, the most marginalized, the most excluded from Italian society, are the Roma. [..] because we have internalized this form of discrimination and they are the most excluded. And they annoyed me a bit, didn't they? Above all for some attitudes which, in reality, I later understood by reading, truly informing myself. Not only by getting to know these people, but by reading their stories, also speaking with one of our collective who is very active, who knows everything about them from beginning to end. And I discovered this world. You must know that here around the Quarticciolo there have been camps, that is, there have been camps that have been evicted anyway and evicted in a really violent way. Because if you talk to the kids, the kids tell you that all their stuff was being thrown in the air, they tell you gruesome incidents and that's why they're so scared of the police. We always try to explain to them, "Look, they don't hurt you, you don't have to be afraid of them". Here they have this function, but yes, but over the years we have understood that they have actually been subjected to violence by the police. Which is absurd. Eh, but that's how it is, they suffered psychological violence because they were very young children, precisely because they experienced terrible evictions. Not to mention the fires"*.

[252] Over time, this concept evolved and meant different areas and neighbourhoods. Sometimes, it is overused and stigmatized.

of the "undesired". Within this perspective, the planning and development of social estates followed this logic.

"*La storia delle borgate*[253] *è che la gran parte viene messa nel sud-est della città, che è una zona malsana, cioè ci stavano le marane, che sono delle specie di fiumi. C'è stata la malaria per tanti anni e lontani dalla città pensando di nasconderli*"[254] (Interviewee ASS8_IT).

Thus, the interviewees denounced that administrative segregation guided their realization and development.

"*La politica e le istituzioni in generale hanno abbandonato totalmente, non solo questo contesto, quindi, il quartiere dove sto io, ma in generale c'è stato un abbandono delle periferie negli ultimi decenni. E questo è stato sempre più evidente nel momento in cui ci c'è proprio una disparità sia a livello economico che lavorativo, ma che appunto anche culturale, di possibilità di accesso, di servizi a cui uno può accedere*"[255] (Interviewee ASS7_IT).

Born and projected as a solution to the need for housing, social estates became gated communities of vulnerability and disparities due to the lack of infrastructures and services, low quality of accommodation, high concentrations of communities with low socioeconomic backgrounds, and deficiency of compensating policies to reintroduce them in the labour market. "*Quando tu hai di fronte i quartieri di edilizia residenziale pubblica, tu hai un mondo che è sfuggito al controllo ordinario, hai un mondo sul quale l'amministrazione pubblica non ha potere decisionale, ma non è in grado neanche di relazionarsi perché è sfuggito al suo controllo*"[256] (Interviewee EXP4_IT). It is due to structural reasons and planning. Indeed, as several interviewees reported, if social estates represent more than 30% of a neighbourhood's buildings, it could become an enclave of socioeconomic disadvantage.

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[253] Even if today, most of the twelve official *borgate* are not anymore considered as peripheries or disadvantaged.

[254] Translation: "*The history of the borgate is that most of them are located in the south-east of the city, which is an unhealthy area, that is, there were maranas, which are a kind of river. There has been malaria for many years and away from the city thinking of hiding them*".

[255] Translation: "*Politics and institutions in general have totally abandoned, not only this context, therefore, the neighborhood where I live, but in general there has been an abandonment of the suburbs in recent decades. And this has been increasingly evident at a time when there is indeed a disparity both at an economic and a working level, but also at a cultural level, of the possibility of access, of services to which one can access*".

[256] Translation: "*When you are faced with public housing districts, you have a world that has escaped ordinary control, you have a world over which the public administration has no decision-making power, but is not even able to relate to it because it has escaped its check*".

"I quartieri di edilizia residenziale pubblica sono automaticamente dei luoghi di concentrazione del disagio sociale perché la modalità di accesso alla casa pubblica impone alcuni criteri, cioè essere sotto una certa soglia di reddito, una certa presenza di handicap e di disabili all'interno della famiglia, essere sotto sfratto [..] rispetto proprio all'accesso alla casa pubblica per legge quelli diventano quartieri di concentrazione del disagio, quindi diventano automaticamente di serie B poi si aggiungono altri fattori" [257] (Interviewee EXP3_IT).

Moreover, the mismanagement and planning of these estates played a role.

"Non c'è una politica pubblica nel senso, non non c'è la riassegnazione del patrimonio, una gestione del patrimonio pubblico delle case popolari. A Roma abbiamo un finto dato perché non è reale di 13.000 persone che chiedono casa. Tra l'altro la metà di questi sono tutti single, persone separate. Però moltissimi, almeno tre volte di più non fanno la domanda, perché non ci si crede più alla graduatoria. Almeno sono almeno 50.000 quelli che hanno bisogno di una casa popolare" [258] (Interviewee ASS13_IT).

Moreover, advanced marginality manifests in these areas through a collective imagination and a deep-rooted and heavy stigma developed by the public discourse, political debate, and media coverage[259].

"C'è del processo di stigmatizzazione per esempio dei bambini, dei ragazzi che vengono dai quartieri sensibili, dai quartieri più difficili, con conclamati, conclamati e segnati da una nomea. Tor Bella Monaca è un esempio chiaro, ma all'interno di Tor Bella Monaca determinate strade, i ragazzi che vengono da viale dell'archeologia sono segnati da uno stigma,

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[257] Translation: *"Public housing districts are automatically places of concentration of social unease because the method of access to public housing imposes certain criteria, i.e. being below a certain income threshold, a certain presence of handicaps and disabled people within the family, being evicted [..] with respect to having access to the public house by law, those become districts of concentration of discomfort, so they automatically become second-class, then other factors are added"*.
Moreover, architectonic barriers and the deficient of infrastructures make these areas even more closed.
[258] Translation: *"There is no public policy in the sense, there is no reallocation of assets, no management of public housing assets. In Rome we have a fake figure because it is not real of 13,000 people asking for a house. Among other things, half of these are all single, separated people. But very many, at least three times as many, don't ask the question, because they no longer believe the ranking. At least there are at least 50,000 people who need public housing"*.
[259] The interviewees highlighted how continuing to describe these neighbourhoods as degraded and drug and crime related only fuels the stigma. For instance, a recurring example is the interventions by Brumotti with Striscia la Notizia, which return and narrate only a partial image of these contexts. Moreover, this narrative obscures the issues, causes, and consequences related to these situations. Indeed, it only focuses on the rhetoric and blames these communities and areas. For instance, in the media or public debates, nobody seems to care about this youth ending up dealing with or consuming drugs. There is rather a tendency to avoid questioning or proposing any solution. Differently, the positive experiences, e.g., the commitment of the associations, the presence of green areas, the possibility of reusing empty places, etc., must be valued. From this perspective, it is central to recognize these aspects and not just their difficulties.

quindi chiaramente questo è una esclusione al cubo perché sei vittima di una situazione sociale, educativa, culturale particolarmente svantaggiata"[260](Interviewee ASS39_IT).

It aggravated the marginalization of these contexts. The basic idea is that these people are degraded as much as their neighbourhoods. There is an internalization of disparity and a distorted self-perception generated by these labels. It has multiple repercussions. From a job perspective, many people change their residence or report living in nearby neighbourhoods during job interviews or on resumes because they fear being discriminated against[261]. Similarly, from an investment standpoint, these areas do not attract businesses and companies for fear of criminal infiltration. Otherwise, the few cases of economic or public attractions built there did not associate with the name of these neighbourhoods. Examples are the Torre Gaia metro stop and the Casetta Mattei shopping centre. According to the interviewees, both take their name from the more famous and rich area rather than the real one. In the first case, the Torre Gaia station is located in Tor Bella Monaca, but the name derives from the neighbouring rich enclave of Torre Gaia.

> "*Se la metro porta aumento, come dicevamo prima, dei prezzi delle case, alza il valore del mattone e dei servizi che stanno intorno. Ma se io la fermata la chiamo Tor Bella Monaca non lo alza più, diventa quella metro dove tutti hanno paura. Quello che è stato ad esempio Laurentina nella storia, perché tra l'altro la metro di Laurentina sta a 200 m dai ponti che sono le case popolari di Laurentina. E quindi no che rifacciamo lo stesso errore?*"[262]
> (Interviewee ASS10_IT).

In the second case, however, despite being built close to the Corviale building, the shopping centre took the name of the nearby and more famous area of Casetta Mattei. According to the interviewees, this is a form of etiquette and a clear desire not to associate these services

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[260] Translate: "*There is a process of stigmatization for example of children, of young people who come from sensitive neighbourhoods, from the most difficult neighbourhoods, with full-blown, full-blown and marked by a reputation. Tor Bella Monaca is a clear example, but within Tor Bella Monaca certain streets, the kids who come from Viale dell'Archeologia are marked by a stigma, so clearly this is a total exclusion because you are the victim of a social situation, educationally, culturally particularly disadvantaged*".

[261] For example, many of the residents of Via dell'Archeologia declare a different address as they fear being discarded because they are associated with drug dealing and crime. Similarly, it happens in other neihgborhoods, e.g., Quarticciolo, Corviale, etc.

[262] Translation: "*If the metro brings an increase, as we said before, in house prices, it raises the value of the brick and the services around it. But if I call the stop Tor Bella Monaca it doesn't raise it anymore, it becomes that metro where everyone is afraid. For example, what Laurentina was in history, because among other things the Laurentina metro is 200 m from the bridges which are the public housing of Laurentina. So we're not going to make the same mistake again?*".

and commercial entities with neighbourhoods deemed to be infamous. Moreover, the stigma plays a role in the interventions of the police. They tend to take exaggerated and violent intervention measures. According to the interviewees, they intervene in this way as they blame those living in these areas and consider all residents colluded or connected to crime or drug dealing. Indeed, they stated that, in other neighbourhoods, they would act and tell the facts differently[263].

> *"E questo non è semplicemente una distorsione degli abitanti e anche proprio la percezione che arriva dagli interventi del legislatore. Cioè, ti dico in Italia, la commissione parlamentare sulla questione delle periferie che si chiamava, che è stata fatta due legislature fa col governo Renzi, che comunque è una Commissione, ha fatto un lavoro per cui noi conosciamo I dati, ad esempio ha pubblicato i dati sull'ISTAT, e il titolo se te la vai a guardare era la Commissione parlamentare sul problema delle periferie sulla sicurezza e sul degrado, cioè l'idea che siano contesti in cui i problemi principali siano relativi alla criminalità e al degrado è prevalente. Ok anche chi va a scuola coi ragazzini, delle insegnanti, c'è questa cosa. I giornali, con la palestra, la prima cosa che ci dicevano era che era la prima volta che si parla di Quarticciolo e non se ne parla solo per parlare dello spaccio. Cioè c'è l'idea che te sei visto dal resto della città come la discarica umana, che vengono raccontati solo i dati deteriori, che quando la polizia interviene qua e questo è innegabile [..] quando intervengono chiudono tutto il quartiere, perquisiscono tutti, ti fermano tutti, ti entrano dentro casa alle 7 col mitra, cioè è una cosa, non è che a Vigna Clara, se arresti uno spacciatore, fai tutta una palazzina, no? Cioè è una modalità di intervento che tende a dire comunque che c'è una responsabilità collettiva dell'ambiente in cui maturano dei fatti, per cui le persone che ci abitano dicono "ma io già mi sveglio alla mattina alle sei, non vendo niente, mi faccio un culo tanto, ma devo essere comunque visto negli altri quartieri, dall'amministrazione pubblica, dalle forze dell'ordine come uno complice, ed è una cosa che invece subisco""[264]* (Interviewee ASS8_IT).

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[263] For example, if an event takes place in a renowned area, such as the Parioli, the tones and modes are different compared to the description of similar events in the peripheries.

[264] Translation: *"And this is not simply a distortion of the inhabitants and also the very perception that comes from the interventions of the legislator. That is, I tell you in Italy, the parliamentary commission on the question of the suburbs which was called, which was made two legislatures ago with the Renzi government, which is a commission anyway, did a job for which we know the data, for example it published the data on ISTAT, and the title if you go and look at it was the Parliamentary Commission on the problem of the suburbs on safety and degradation, that is, the idea that they are contexts in which the main problems are related to crime and degradation is prevalent . Ok even those who go to school with kids, teachers, there's this thing. The newspapers, with the gym, the first thing they told us was that it was the first time that Quarticciolo was mentioned and it wasn't just to talk about drug dealing. That is, there is the idea that you are seen by the rest of the city as a human dump, that only the worst data are told, that when the police intervene here and this is undeniable [..] when they intervene they close down the whole neighbourhood, they search everyone, they all stop you, they enter your house at 7 with a machine gun, that is, it's one thing, it's not like in Vigna Clara, if you arrest a*

Finally, the stigma of these areas also has repercussions on the nearby neighbourhoods. According to some interviewees, when some episode occurs in the district, the headlines cite or refer to the degradation or proximity of these neighbourhoods as a cause. On the other hand, other interviewees also pointed out how these adherent labels obscure the nearby neighbourhoods and the phenomena that cross them. Therefore, when there are funds, they are always spent on the "known" areas and not on all those in need.

Nevertheless, according to the interviewees, these areas and estates face advanced marginality as they seem extraneous to the benefits and improvements of the global dynamics. Indeed, most residents work in low-skilled, precarious, and underpaid positions[265]. In some cases, they are on welfare, unemployed, and in the informal market, referring to occupations related to criminality and those without legal contracts. On the other hand, though, in case of crises or adverse worldwide events, they negatively and disproportionally impacted these communities. For instance, these contexts did not enjoy the "Rome model" or the transition towards a knowledge-based economy. Contrarily, they worsened and widened the socioeconomic, working, and spatial gaps with the rest of the city. Differently, the Covid-19 pandemic showed how these deprived areas were the ones most exposed to the socioeconomic and sanitarian consequences. Within this perspective, public buildings represent the places with the highest levels of exclusion and social disadvantage within a neighbourhood[266]. Furthermore, people living in public housing experience advanced marginality in terms of spatial alienation and erosion of the hinterland. On the one hand, they increasingly live and perceive their neighbourhoods and estates as insecure due to the loss and dissolution of places. On the other hand, many end

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drug dealer, you build a whole building, right? That is, it is a method of intervention that tends to say in any case that there is a collective responsibility of the environment in which facts mature, so that the people who live there say "but I already wake up at six in the morning, I don't sell anything, I work my ass off a lot, but I still have to be seen in other neighborhoods, by the public administration, by the forces of order as an accomplice, and it's something I suffer instead"".

[265] For instance, the most quoted position for men relates to logistics or construction, while for women occupations in services and care. Tendentially, they are low-qualified and underpaid mansions but have a high working intensity which might impact and damage the well-being and work-life balance of households.

[266] For instance, marginality is overrepresented in Via dell'Archelogia in Tor Bella Monaca and in the buildings called "the favelas" in Quarticciolo. In San Basilio, Via Pollenza divides the neighbourhood socioeconomically. In Ostia, the area of Ostia Nuova with the public estates is labelled as the more complex and difficult to manage.

up in informal or criminal working conditions, which affect and fragmentize the fabric of these neighbourhoods.

On the other hand, people living in social housing experience abyssal exclusion as they feel of being citizens of "*serie B*". Interviewees denounced and reported that the residents of these estates are often seen as inferior or valued less than the others. "*È così che ci si sente e quindi è proprio brutto sentirsi costantemente inferiori rispetto a qualcun altro. Ma è così perché lo vuole qualcuno dall'alto, perché c'è una volontà politica ben precisa*"[267] (Interviewee ASS7_IT). This feeling of inferiority is often connected with the history of some neighbourhoods or *borgate*, which are labelled and judged because of their precarious living and housing conditions. "B*orgataro, già nota proprio un'idea, non semplicemente di distanza fisica, perché le borgate erano lontane dal centro, ma anche proprio c'è un'accezione, proprio un giudizio dietro alle espressioni, quindi sicuramente questo c'è*"[268] (Interviewee EXP5_IT). This image is rooted since childhood, as they are often described as unmanageable and rude due to the context in which they live. Marginalization, stigma, and low consideration impact the ability to speak up and declare their needs. Indeed, several interviewees reported examples of disinterest, abandonment, and inattentiveness to the administration[269]. These dynamics make the life of residents unbearable and unhealthy and reduce the credibility, trust, and relationships between citizens and public authorities. Moreover, these mechanisms of marginalization and feeling of inferiority replicate within the public estates. So, for instance, the Roma community, minorities, or addicted often live in worse buildings or basements. So, an added layer of exclusion and low consideration is attached to these groups. It is due to the mismanagement of the public estates. On the one hand, public authorities and administration did not provide any path of social inclusion for the families of the Roma community. Thus, this passage happened without accompaniment from the entities in

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[267] Translation: "*That's how it feels and so it's really bad to constantly feel inferior to someone else. But it is like this because someone from above wants it, because there is a very specific political will*".

[268] Translation: "*Borgataro already gives an idea not simply of physical distance, because the borgate were far from the center, but there is also a meaning, a judgment behind the expressions, so surely this is there*".

[269] A typical example is the lack of management and cure of lifts. On the other hand, as the administration did not properly manage these estates, many apartments ended up under the control of criminal organizations or abusive occupations. Thus, part of them were used for prostitution and selling and consuming drugs.

charge, resulting in a complicated cohabitation and a constant fight between old and new residents.

> *"È un gioco politico mettere cinquanta rom in un contesto già degradato e lasciato all'abbandono è una miccia ed è chiaro che crei dei ghetti, dei ghetti nei ghetti. Perché quei rom non vengono messi ai Parioli? [..] è chiaro che quello è un gioco politico che fanno le Istituzioni per creare una guerra tra i poveri"*[270] (Interviewee ASS7_IT).

Lastly, the interviewees stated that those squatting buildings face simultaneously advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion. On the one hand, they experience the former as they live hidden and neglected. The squatters are those settling in abandoned buildings or factories[271] and those occupying public estates[272]. Regardless of the differences in the practices and reasons, they all live unglued from the rest of the city, neighbourhood, and area inhabited. Thus, they are disconnected from global and urban fluctuations, spatially alienated, and often involved in criminal or illegal businesses. Moreover, the places they squat are often labelled as insecure, deviant, and unsafe. The media and political discourses produce these images and representations. On the one hand, the former often reported a unique and unidirectional view of these areas without questioning why people live in these conditions. On the other, the political debate blamed them for their living situations and responded by requesting their expulsion from the buildings occupied. In doing so, these people are forced to move out without a solution. Thus, they often ended up in streets or other squatted places.

On the other hand, the squatters face abyssal exclusion as ignored and neglected. These processes of invisibilization, dehumanization,and inferiorization are already visible in the expulsion and laws. The public institutions treat them as and make them invisible through the evacuations. Indeed, according to the interviewees, the municipality and authorities consider them a "problem" to solve rather than a group of people to help. Thus, instead of proposing long-term solutions and proposals, the only response they put in action is to

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[270] Translation: *"It is a political game to put fifty Roma in an already degraded and abandoned context is a fuse and it is clear that it creates ghettos, ghettos within ghettos. Why aren't those Roma placed in Parioli? [..] it is clear that this is a political game that the institutions play to create a war between the poor"*.
[271] E.g., the former building of Penicillina.
[272] E.g., the fourth floor of Corviale.

expel them and force them to move somewhere else. Thus, in doing so, these actions make these people even more invisible and difficult to find and help. On the other hand, the law plays a role in the invisibilization of squatters. Indeed, according to Article 5 of the Renzi-Lupi law, those who live abusively are not allowed to ask for and obtain a residence. It means that this group cannot access socio-economic, sanitarian, and assistance services and cannot participate in political life.

> "*Riguarda l'articolo 5 del decreto Lupi, quello che riguarda le persone, le famiglie che hanno occupato, che hanno gli stabili occupati non possono avere accesso al codice fiscale, all'avere residenza, eccetera eccetera. E noi per poter aiutare queste famiglie, noi l'abbiamo fatto lo stesso, però, per esempio, dobbiamo ringraziare anche il Santo Padre perché nel Colonnato siamo riusciti, grazie a medicina solidale, ad una rete di nostre associazioni con medici volontari, a vaccinare e anche i bambini, famiglie intere che provengono dai palazzi occupati*"[273] (Interviewee ASS38_IT).

Nevertheless, the interviewees pointed out the existence of situations where abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality do not converge. Indeed, they spotlighted some groups experiencing only the former. They are the homeless, undocumented, the elderly or disabled, and the addicted people.

Being homeless is one of the most visible victims of invisibization and inferiorization. "*Sulla questione senza fissa dimora a Roma ne abbiamo 17.000, non sono gli 8000 fatti da una ricerca che è stata fatta nel 2014, sono molti, molti. E fra questi noi troviamo anche le donne che sono un aumento delle donne*"[274] (Interviewee ASS38_IT). The drivers that lead these people to this situation are several, e.g., the loss of a job, the end of a marriage, the mismanagement of migrations, etc. Nevertheless, they all might suffer from bad socio-sanitarian conditions, isolation, mistrust, mental issues, or addictions. Thus, according to the interviewees, the homeless experience abyssal exclusion as the institutions kept tackling this issue as a temporary

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[273] Translation: "*It concerns article 5 of the Lupi decree, the one that concerns people, families who have occupied, who have occupied buildings, cannot have access to the tax code, to have residence, etc. etc. And we, in order to be able to help these families, we did it anyway, however, for example, we must also thank the Holy Father because in the Colonnade we were able, thanks to solidarity medicine, to a network of our associations with volunteer doctors, to vaccinate and also the children, whole families who come from the occupied buildings*".

[274] Translation: "*On the issue of homeless people in Rome we have 17,000, they are not the 8000 made by a research carried out in 2014, they are many, many. And among these we also find women who are an increase of women*".

problem or with spot solutions rather than providing a holistic and long-term proposal. Moreover, people increasingly blame them for their conditions, and media and politicians criminalize and label them as deviant and problematic. Thus, the interviewees pointed out that this group of people is constantly neglected, criminalized, and blamed for its conditions. Their exclusion is total as they do not have the dignity and possibility to speak up. On the other hand, they stated that the homeless do not face advanced marginality as they do not have specific neighbourhoods or districts where to live. Indeed, they tend to stay in the central stations or help centres because of safety and assistance, but sometimes they move.

Regarding the undocumented people, they face abyssal exclusion as they are invisible and cannot claim any rights. "*Viviamo in un mondo in cui non basta essere nati arendtianamente, non basta essere nati, ma ci vuole un documento che lo provi*"[275] (Interviewee ASS33_IT). They might become undocumented for different reasons. Regardless, they are not citizens and, consequentially, cannot enjoy services, rights, and political voice. Thus, they often end up squatting buildings to find a place to live or working for underpaid and unequal salaries. In extremer cases, they work for criminality as the lowest level of the hierarchy. "*Il migrante costa di meno, perché se l'arrestano, sti cavoli. Tanto sono magari senza permessi, è proprio una schiavitù*"[276] (Interviewee ASS15_IT). Within this perspective, the interviewees denounced how the undocumented people are more likely to be victims of exploitation. As Rome has agricultural, industrial, and service sectors, this group of people is broad and encompasses different work and contexts. Hence, the concept of exploitation embraces traditional and new types of occupations. Thus, it could refer to the seasonal day labourers who live in inhuman conditions.

> "*Guardiamo i braccianti che li fanno lavorare in condizione. Oggi, anzi ieri ne è morto, ulteriormente un'altra persona, perché poi se ne vanno al lavoro, si alzano la mattina alle quattro per lavorare, lavorano tutto il giorno, però li fanno vivere in baracche, in condizioni*

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[275] Translation: "*We live in a world in which it is not enough to be born in an Arendtian way, it is not enough to be born, but you need documents to prove it*".

[276] Translation: "*The migrant costs less because they arrest him, it does not matter. They are perhaps without permits anyway, it is really a slavery*".

assurde e che, nonostante che loro creano ricchezza, poi nessuno se ne frega della loro vita"[277] (Interviewee ASS13_IT).

In addition to the agricultural exploitation, the interviewees spotlighted other types of exploited workers, e.g., the underpaid and without contracts caregivers, delivery riders, and workers in construction.

> *"Considera che la maggior parte di queste persone* [braccianti] *arrivano qui, dormono per esempio per strada per un mese, oppure alla Caritas, all'ostello della Caritas per un mese, poi vanno via. Non ci sono delle forme, come dire di accoglienza specifica per questo. E come se questa cosa non ci fosse. Quindi dove finisce quella persona quando arriva a Roma? Dove va? Va a finire nell'insediamento informale intorno alla stazione Termini e a Tiburtina, dove trova comunque delle forme di sopravvivenza. E però non c'è un, cioè nessuna istituzione si fa carico di questa cosa. Cioè tutto rimane nel volontariato, chi aiuta, forme di sopravvivenza varie ed eventuali e basta. Cioè non c'è una risposta istituzionale a questo. Nonostante si tratti comunque di settori, cioè il settore agricolo, come anche poi lo sfruttamento avviene anche in altri settori, quello edilizio, insomma, ce ne sono diversi, per non parlare delle badanti e tutto il resto. Però, insomma, un fenomeno diverso, comunque sono come dire pezzi di economia, cioè nel senso è gradino che genera ricchezza"*[278] (Interviewee ASS36_IT).

According to the interviewees, they face abyssal exclusion as they are often overseen and neglected in the public discourse. They often do not have a voice because they fear losing their occupations or having problems with authorities. On the other hand, they do not experience advanced marginality as they do not concentrate in specific neighbourhoods.

Regarding the elderly and disabled people, the interviewees pointed out that they suffer abyssal exclusion as they are often neglected and invisible in the public agenda. They live walled up in their houses or cannot access services because of the lack of infrastructures.

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[277] Translation: "*We look at the laborers who make them work in condition. Today, or rather yesterday, another person died of it, because then they go to work, they get up at four in the morning to work, they work all day, but they make them live in barracks, in absurd conditions and which, despite that they create wealth, then nobody cares about their life*".

[278] Translation: "*Consider that most of these people [farm workers] arrive here, they sleep for example on the street for a month, or at Caritas, at the Caritas hostel for a month, then they leave. There are no forms, how to say, of specific reception for this. And as if this thing did not exist. So where does that person end up when she arrives in Rome? Where does she go? He ends up in the informal settlement around Termini station and Tiburtina, where he still finds some forms of survival. And yet there is no one, that is, no institution takes charge of this thing. That is, everything remains in the voluntary sector, who helps, various and possible forms of survival and that's it. That is, there is no institutional response to this. Although these are sectors, that is, the agricultural sector, as well as then exploitation also takes place in other sectors, the building sector, in short, there are several, not to mention carers and all the rest. However, in short, a different phenomenon, in any case they are like saying pieces of the economy, that is, in the sense it is a step that generates wealth*".

"Abbiamo avuto per un mese gente in carrozzina che non usciva di casa, allora questa è invisibile, si, esiste sì, ma di fatto è invisibile"[279] (Interviewee ASS27b_IT). Concerning the quality of their housing, it is even more visible in the case of public estates. Several interviewees reported that the elderly or disabled were forced to stay in their apartments because of non-working lifts. Notwithstanding the several requests for interventions, the administration did not act. In doing so, they completely made these people invisible and dismissed their needs and dignity. On the other hand, in terms of services, the interviewees pointed out how the lack of structures makes the elderly and disabled unable to enjoy social, cultural, and political life.

Lastly, regarding addicted people, they experience abyssal exclusion as they are completely invisible and stigmatized. There is a tendency to hide the problem rather than solve it and provide structures and assistance. An example is the walled-up of the so-called "hole cave" in Tor Bella Monaca. This action did not solve the issue of dealing with and consuming drugs (mainly, heroin) but worsened it. Indeed, addicted people are spread out all over the neighbourhood, and the associations that deal with them could not assist them. Thus, the interviewees underlined how addicted people keep being obscured in political discourse and actions. Hence, instead of promoting policies and structures to help them, the only answer is repression and hiding.

6.2 Brussels

As mentioned in the paragraph 5.2.1, Brussels has a unique conformation with the city centre inhabited by the most disadvantaged communities and the suburbs by the wealthiest[280]. Hence, compared to other cities (the interviewees often mentioned Paris) where the marginalized are relegated and forgotten in the outskirt, poverty in Brussels is visible and unavoidable. Thus, due to the socio-economic fabric and spatial division of

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[279] Translation: *"For a month we had people in wheelchairs who didn't leave the house, so they are invisible, yes, they exist yes, but in fact they are invisible"*.
[280] Within this perspective, the interviewees pointed out that wealthy neighbourhoods are equally divided and segregated from the rest of the city.

Brussels, the interviewees often stated that it is difficult to talk about "marginalization", "isolation", and "segregation" as the most deprived areas are in the inner and most central parts of the city. Nevertheless, they stated that there is also a tendency to misuse or abuse the concept of "ghetto" in describing these neighbourhoods[281].

Hence, according to the interviewees, the so-called "*croissant pauvre*" experience some features of advanced marginality. By "*croissant pauvre*", scholars and interviewees refer to the North-West part of the city, close to the centre and the channel, such as the communes of Anderlecht, Schaerbeek, St-Josse, Molenbeek, Bruxelles-ville, Saint-Gilles, Forest. To begin with, these neighbourhoods face advanced marginality as the passage to the post-industrial economy and fragmentation of wage labour impacted their composition. In the past, the residents of these areas were workers in the adjacent factories.

> "*A l'ouest les quartiers précarisés sont le plus souvent les anciens quartiers industriels, florissant au 19ème siècle et qui ont été vidés de leurs populations ouvrières après-guerre, pour voir petit à petit s'installer des populations plus pauvres. A Bruxelles il est de coutume de parler du Croissant pauvre (il s'agit des quartiers situés autour de la zone du canal en majorité) pour localiser les quartiers qui concentrent les difficultés socioéconomiques. Ces quartiers concentrent aussi les populations issues de l'immigration*"[282] (Interviewee ASS27_BE).

Nowadays, the segmentation and precarization of the labour market made these people poor, part-time workers. Thus, due to their precarious occupations, they are disconnected from the macroeconomic fluctuations that positively impact the economic and financial sectors. Paradoxically, though, as they are already in uncertain conditions, they are the areas with the communities more negatively affected by crises and recessions. Secondly, these

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[281] This argumentation regarding the misuse of the term "ghetto" is interesting as one of Wacquant's theses is about the abuse of this concept (Wacquant, 2008). Indeed, he denounced this tendency to label the clustering of deprived communities in marginalized areas as "ghettoization" and connect the experiences of urban exclusion and inequality of American ghettos with the European suburban neighbourhoods. However, as Wacquant argued, this transatlantic convergence did not happen as they differ in structure, function, scale, and the divergent political treatments they receive (Wacquant, 2008, 2013).

[282] Translation: "*In the west, the precarious neighborhoods are most often the old industrial neighborhoods, which flourished in the 19th century and which were emptied of their working-class populations after the war, to see poorer populations gradually settle. In Brussels it is customary to speak of the Croissant Pauvre (these are the neighborhoods located around the canal zone in the majority) to locate the neighborhoods that concentrate socio-economic difficulties. These neighborhoods also concentrate populations from immigrant backgrounds*".

areas experience advanced marginality through territorial fixation and stigmatization. *"People will look at you twice and it's quite strong actually this effect"* (Interviewee ASS19_BE). This stigma refers to the individual and territorial features of the residents. On the other hand, as these neighbourhoods have low mixite and are predominantly non-European migrants, there is a discriminatory attitude towards them. The interviewees often reported that, as many have an Arabic name, they often change it to avoid discrimination in the labour and housing market. On the other, the stigma refers directly to these areas as they are described and perceived as dangerous. For instance, some interviewees reported that a Flemish bus company stopped stopping around the *Gare du Nord* station because they believed it was unsafe and dirty. In addition, these labels worsened after the terrorist attacks in 2016. As some terrorists came from (and hid in) Molenbeek and were Muslim, the entire Muslim community, this commune, and the adjacent ones were labelled and associated with these events. The answer and intervention of the police and media showed how all the residents were considered responsible and blamed for what happened.

> *"When you had the terrorist attack in Paris in the pub, everybody was stuck here for four days. We had no metro. We had nothing, was working for four days. We had a high emergency because the guy was from Molenbeek. Everybody knows Molenbeek, even the guys living in, I do not know, very far in the US knows Molenbeek. It was just a mess for one week here. We've got journalists in the street, in front of our organisation trying to go inside to have interviews, asking people in the streets, harassing young. [..] And all the propaganda that has been made about Molenbeek after the terrorist attack was so shocking. And people were scared here. Most of the people, people living in Molenbeek, they didn't dare to go out of their place because they were scared. [..] From the beginning we've got this particular attention saying that Molenbeek is the place where terrorists are from"* (Interviewee ASS4_BE).

Thus, this stigma impacts the access to possibilities, services, employment, and types of education of residents. Moreover, living in a bubble impact also the number of models that people have. Thus, mixing and improving social capital is essential. In addition, these stigma and images impact how residents live and enjoy the city. For instance, several interviewees reported that most of them, especially youth, do not go out of these neighbourhoods. They do not cross the "border" signed by the channel and remain closed in their communities. Within this perspective, some interviewees reported a study showing

that children from the "*croissant pauvre*" do not move from their areas and do not mix with others. According to them, it is problematic and limiting. Lastly, regardless of their nationality, the interviewees pointed out the communities living in the areas of the "*croissant pauvre*" experience advanced marginality through social fragmentation and spatial alienation.

> "*C'est la peur de l'autre et la peur de l'autre dès qu'il est un peu différent de moi. Ce qui veut dire qu'ici, dans le quartier, dans ces maisons qui sont hyper peuplées, sur un même palier, il y a très souvent un musulman, un évangéliste, une famille rom, mais qui sont toutes dans la même précarité sociale, qui vivent les mêmes galères, mais qui se regardent en chiens de faïence, qui ne se parlent pas*"[283] (Interviewee ASS1_BE).

Thus, to some extent, the communities in these neighbourhoods tend to stay closed within themselves and exclude other groups living in the same areas.

Nevertheless, according to the interviewees, the neighbourhoods of the "*croissant pauvre*" are not the only areas experiencing advanced marginality and stigmatization. Indeed, they stated that, in each commune, there are wealthier and poorer areas (e.g., North vs South Koekelberg, the Marolles in Bruxelles commune, Matonge in Ixelles, etc). Within this perspective, there zones where there is a concentration of social housing tend to be the ones more likely to be at risk of these dynamics.

> "*The blocks where there are only social apartments. And so, like that, we have some neighbourhoods, that are exclusively only them. There you see, they are segregated and lives quite all the way. Because what we see with some neighbourhoods constructed in the 60s it's quite, quite beautiful because you have the towers in a green space where the cars can only park underneath. So, we have all this green, quiet. That's very nice. But it's only a lodgement social. So, you can only rent and you depend on the government to keep the apartments in in order, but they are not in order. You have the social exclusion. There are no shops. Often, it's only living. There, there is nothing from Interactions, socially, there is nothing else from offer. And that means also that those are neighbourhoods where often people don't have money, so they're looking for money. They're really isolated*" (Interviewee ASS20_BE).

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[283] Translation: "*It is the fear of the other and the fear of the other as soon as he is a little different from me. Which means that here, in the neighbourhood, in these houses that are overcrowded, on the same landing, there is very often a Muslim, an evangelist, a Roma family, but who are all in the same social precariousness, who live the same galleys, but who look at each other like earthenware dogs, who do not speak to each other*".

Although social estates are present in each commune, the ones located in the "*croissant pauvre*" have an added layer of stigma related to the migration background. Thus, instead of representing a solution to tackle exclusion and inequality, they often are a cause of these phenomena. In addition, the interviewees stated that an increasing number of households would have the economic requirements to request social or public accommodation. "*In Brussels, I think like 1/5 of the families in Brussels, they should have, with their income, they should have access to social housing. It's something like 250,000 families, normally based on their income, should have access to social housing*" (Interviewee ASS15_BE). On the other hand, though, as there are not enough estates and apartments, the waiting list to access this programme is endless. So, it became an increasingly exclusive and mediocre solution. "*Ad oggi ci sono file, liste d'attesa di 10 anni per poter avere per accedere alla casa popolare. E il paradosso è che ci sono sempre più richieste, sempre meno appartamenti disponibili. Perché, ad esempio, ci sono dei lavori di rinnovamento di immobili molto anziani che ad oggi sono insalubri*"[284] (Interviewee ASS6_BE).

Furthermore, as there is a tendency to cluster vulnerable groups in deprived areas, some communities living in these neighbourhoods also experience abyssal exclusion. Specifically, the interviewees reported the example of undocumented people and female non-European migrants. Indeed, the communes of "*croissant pauvre*" are often the first places for newcomers and migrants from non-European countries. Thus, these groups face advanced marginality and simultaneously experience abyssal exclusion as they are invisibilized, dehumanized, and inferiorized. Indeed, they often do not know their rights, how to reclaim them, and whom to ask for help.

Regarding undocumented people (or *sans-papiers*), this label covers several diverse personalities and communities. Some decided to migrate following the so-called "European dream" but, as soon as they arrived, they faced struggles, discrimination, and racism. Thus, their dreams turned quickly into nightmares. Nonetheless, some interviewees pointed out that, as "*Brussels is the capital of Europe and it is the first door to come to Europe and because there*

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[284] Translation: "*To date there are queues, waiting lists of 10 years to be able to access public housing. And the paradox is that there are more and more requests, fewer and fewer apartments available. Because, for example, there are renovation works on very old buildings which are currently unhealthy*".

are a lot of organisations, you can have a lot of help. So, I don't think that a lot of people die from hunger here because you can go to social shops and all kind of things" (Interviewee ASS14_BE). Others are refugees or asylum seekers in a limbo due to bureaucracy. Even though they are safeguarded, they cannot work or participate in the economic, social, and cultural life. It happens notwithstanding their titles or working experiences. It also impacts their children, as they can go to school, but their future is uncertain. However, regardless of their peculiarities and reasons for lacking documents, they experience invisibilization and inferiorization because they cannot access the rights, security, voice, and services. They are not in the radar and, according to some interviewees, between eight and fourteen thousand of people live undocumented in Brussels. As some interviewees pointed out, it seems a sort of "legalized exclusion", meaning that the law draws a line and, if you are on the wrong side of it, you are an outsider. Within this perspective, they are also more likely to be exploited or paid less than other workers. They tend to perform stressful, heavy, and physically unhealthy jobs or employments that Belgians prefer not to do anymore. For instance, they work in the building, cleaning, or sex market. In addition, even if they are invisible to authorities and the government, they are visible to the illegal market or drug dealers, who give them an alternative or simply a way to make ends meet. Moreover, as they do not have a regular contract, they do not have any job security, assurance, or protection. The interviewees reported three extreme examples of workers who died because of this lack of guarantees: two men dead in constructions in Ghent and Brussels, and a woman dead in sex work.

> "*I remember a few years ago, and it was quite shocking because I'm Portuguese, I heard that one Portuguese man died in the park, in one of the parks. And he died in the park because, it's so unbelievable, because at the time he was working for a Portuguese company, let's say here, of construction but he was not declared. And it has a heart attack during the work and instead to bring him to the hospital they left him in the park dying. [..] So, I don't know if we can take this particular case, as is just to say that there is no work in official work in several domains. But I think it is less visible that in other countries*" (Interviewee ASS16_BE).

> "*A guy was killed in a construction, in a building where he was working in Ghent. It's like maybe one year already. So why he was in this situation? Because he didn't have the security package, or the security aims to. And lastly, he lost his life. He has his family like his wife and*

daughter who are living just in Anderlecht, and somehow, they have not been help by City Hall or by the associations or by the politicians only because that the guy was working in black" (Interviewee ASS26_BE).

"L'anno scorso, o un paio di anni fa mi sembra, è stata uccisa una prostituta da un ragazzo, un pazzo, però per la prima volta il commune di Schaerbeek, quindi il commune dove lei abitava, si è costituito parte civile e sono stati condannati non solo il ragazzo che l'ha uccisa ma anche l'organizzazione criminale che la sfruttava"[285] (Interviewee ASS21_BE).

Furthermore, according to the interviewees, undocumented people face abyssal exclusion in the impossibility of speaking up and declaring their needs and rights. Due to the lack of citizenship and the fear to be reported, they prefer to live like that instead of being caught or sent back to their country, as there they might find war, poverty, political issues, etc. In addition, some interviewees criticized the absurdity of expelling people and sending them back to "their own countries". According to them, they have often lived for years in Belgium illegally and, thus, they do not have any family or relations in their country of origin. Lastly, the interviewees stated that undocumented people face abyssal exclusion as they are dehumanised and treated with violence throughout the whole experience of migration. Indeed, several reported that these people were traumatized and re-traumatized during their travel and settlement in Brussels. Thus, they might result in addictions, psychological trauma, or physical abuse.

On the other hand, female non-European migrants experience abyssal exclusion in their relationships within their households and society. These women do not often have any qualifications or are not fluent in the language. Consequentially, they cannot participate in society or the labour market. Thus, they are economically dependent on their husbands and incapable of speaking up and denouncing any possible abuse because they fear financial, emotive, and psychological repercussions. Hence, they are inferiorized within their households' walls and invisible within society. It is particularly evident in the North African or Arabic communities, where culture and religion play a role in reinforcing and justifying

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[285] Translation: *"Last year, or a couple of years ago I think, a prostitute was killed by a boy, a madman, but for the first time the municipality of Schaerbeek, therefore the municipality where she lived, has filed a civil action and I am not only the boy who killed her but also the criminal organization that exploited her were convicted"*.

these dynamics. Moreover, as they are often migrants, these women tend to come to Brussels through "family reunification".

> *"It's basically saying to women that they're well, they're not human, they're just the wife of someone and they exist here and they have the right to be here for five years, actually, they have to stay and to remain with their husband for five years. And they are allowed to be here just because they are the wife of him. There is no individual status in this family reunification. That's something we fight as feminist. Because it's like she's not a human. She's just the wife of someone, you know. And if she decided to leave home, to leave her husband, then she will be in a illegal situation. She will have to leave the country. She will have to go back in her country. And so, for me, it was like saying that she's not a human like the other human. And it's just reducing a person, especially a woman, to the fact that she's a wife. And if she's not married here, she doesn't belong to here"* (Interviewee ASS17_BE).

Due to this situation, these women do not have individual status and rights. In extremer cases, if they are victims of violence or abuse, they often do not denounce it because they fear becoming illegal or being sent back to their countries. Legally, they could if they have evidence of it, but these women often do not know the laws or do not have proof to testify against their husbands. Moreover, the interviewees reported that men often use this strategy to threaten these women to act and behave as they want to.

Nevertheless, abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality can manifest separately. Indeed, the interviewees spotlighted some groups experiencing only the former. They are the homeless, the Rom community, the Dom community, and the poor.

Concerning the homeless, they are often described as the invisible for excellence. Even if they live among us, in the train stations (especially, in *Gare du Midi*), and the city centre's streets, they experience invisibilization and full exclusion from all the life domains. According to the interviewees, people increasingly blame them for their conditions, and media and politicians criminalize and label them as deviant and problematic. Homeless are perceived as such because they "ruin" the image of Brussels as a wealthy and attractive city. Nevertheless, they do not face advanced marginality as the homeless do not have specific neighbourhoods or districts where to live.

The Roma community[286] experiences abyssal exclusion as they are neglected and dehumanized. According to the interviewees, they do not have a specific area where they live. Thus, they do not experience advanced marginality. Indeed, the interviewees denounced that they often live in streets and stations like homeless or squat old buildings. It is particularly concerning as the entire family, including the children, lives in these unsafe and unpleasant conditions. Living in the streets or squatted buildings influences their health, social relationships, attendance at school, and the possibility to participate in social and political life. Hence, the interviewees often mentioned this community as invisible, dehumanized, and inferior because their conditions are often overlooked or not considered. In addition, some interviewees described the management of the Roma community in Brussels as a paradox and incongruity. Indeed, the European Union keeps promoting strategies, projects, and research on this community to facilitate their integration. Notwithstanding that, in its symbolic heart, they still live in the streets with children and are more likely to be discriminated against in the labour and housing market. Within this perspective, the tendency of the Roma community to replicate and reproduce their customs does not help. Indeed, the interviewees denounced how some of their habits impede the development and integration of their children and do not converge with the Belgian system. A typical example is underaged marriage. Some interviewees denounced that they are used to marrying or having children before the age of majority. On the other hand, though, Belgium[287] does not allow marriage before having come of age. Moreover, these choices impact the working and educative possibilities of these teenagers, increasing the gender gap and the risk of not having the possibility to speak up.

Similarly, the Dom community faces abyssal exclusion because it is hidden and invisible. It is a Syrian group which is even discriminated against and segregated in Syria. "*Pour un*

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[286] They are from different Eastern European countries (the interviewees mainly quoted Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Bulgaria).

[287] Belgium requires children to obtain both parental and judicial approval if they want to get married before the age of 18 years. However, in some cases, the court can authorise the marriage if it considers the parental refusal to have been unfounded or abusive. (http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/mapping-minimum-age-requirements/marriage-consent-public-authority-andor-public-figure#:~:text=Seven%20Member%20States%20(Austria%2C%20Belgium,the%20age%20of%2018%20years.).

Syrien qui se considère comme syrien noble, entre guillemets, le DOM est un sous-homme"[288] (Interviewee ASS1_BE). However, in Brussels, they reproduce their customs and do not engage with the rest of society. "*They rebuild their society here. So, we see so many families renting full host for the cousins living in each stage of the of the building, and so that in this situation it is normal that cousins get married together and their father they are brother choose who marry who*" (Interviewee ASS4_BE). Some interviewees denounced their conditions as they are completely invisible in the public and political debates. Moreover, similarly to the Roma community and female non-European migrants, the women of the Dom community face an added layer of their exclusion. Indeed, they are more likely to be victims of violence and abuse, and they often do not have the educative, legal, and economic resources to speak up, exit these situations, and become independent.

Lastly, some interviewees stated that these processes of invisibilization and inferiorization happen towards the poor. Indeed, they denounced how their voices and needs are often neglected, silenced, or unheard. Moreover, these situations seem to worsen when the poor are migrants or undocumented people.

> "*The first thing what you said on people not being visible being treated inferior, I would definitely say, I would even say that in general this is applicable on people in poverty in general, that if you, if you are poor, your rights count less, because of various reasons, than the rights of other people. Because, yeah, I would say the reason would be that those people are as voters, not as important as people with money and, of course, they have us as an organisation to represent their rights, but we are not as powerful as other lobby groups as lawyers or big companies or entrepreneurs, and so on. And yeah, if there is one group or two groups, maybe, in particular, I would say migrant people, people without papers, that the situation is very dire for them and. Yeah, before COVID, they could still make a living in the black markets doing jobs no one else wants to, but then during COVID it was not possible and there is absolutely no support for this people*" (Interviewee ASS22_BE).

To sum up, in Brussels, abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality can either converge or appear separately. Table 6.2 summarizes the groups and type of disparities they face.

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[288] Translation: "*For a Syrian who considers himself a noble Syrian, in quotes, the DOM is a subhuman*".

Table 6.2 – Groups facing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in Brussels

	Abyssal exclusion	Advanced marginality
Living in the "croissant pauvre"	/	• Wage work as driver • Territorial stigmatization • Social fragmentation • Spatial alienation
People living in public housing	/	• Wage work as driver • Territorial stigmatization • Spatial alienation
Undocumented (Victims of exploitation)	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization • Disinterest of political discourse	• Croissant pauvre
Female non-European migrants	• Process of invisibilization • No individual status and rights	• Croissant pauvre
Homeless	• Processes of invisibilization and inferiorization • Criminalization	/
Roma community	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization • Gender gap	/
Dom community	• Process of invisibilization • Gender gap	
Poor	• Process of invisibilization	

6.3 Stockholm

According to the interviewees, advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion exist and are present in Stockholm. They can converge or manifest separately. Table 6.3 summarizes the groups and type of disparities they face.

Table 6.3 – Groups facing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in Stockholm

	Abyssal exclusion	Advanced marginality
Living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods	/	• Wage work as driver • Disconnection from global fluctuations • Territorial stigmatization • Spatial alienation

Migrants and refugees	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization • Unable to claim their rights • Public discourse	• Living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods • Stigma
Undocumented (Victims of exploitations)	• Process of invisibilization and dehumanization • No individual status and rights	/
Roma community	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization • Not coved in public or political debate	/
Homeless	• Processes of invisibilization and inferiorization • Not coved in public or political debate	/

As mentioned in the paragraph 5.3.1, Stockholm presents a socioeconomic and ethnic stratification of the city. Thus, in discussing advanced marginality, the interviewees referred to this socio-spatial distribution as a manifestation of it and stated that this sorting has a double direction. On the one hand, it concentrates lower socioeconomic groups (often with migrant backgrounds) in disadvantaged suburbs. On the other, it clusters socioeconomic privileged groups in the city centre. The interviewees agreed that this double segregation is due to economic reasons (e.g., cheaper apartments, a higher number of flats to rent, gentrification, etc.), the structure of the city, community and social preferences[289], and the flyout of white Swedes from the outskirt of Stockholm. Indeed, in the 1970s, migrants and Swedish-born people were used to residing in the same neighbourhoods. In the last decades, though, this tendency changed, and wealthy people (usually white Swedes) started to concentrate in central areas and isolate themselves as well. "*Neighbourhood segregation,*

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[289] "*There seems to be a preference among refugees to live in the big cities, in Stockholm in particular. [..] those who arranged their own accommodation, settled most often in Stockholm and the other two big cities, Gothenburg, and Malmo, and we also know that it's often the case that they went to relatives and moved in with others [..] still people do choose to move there, but I think for social reasons. I cannot really tell so much because I haven't myself interviewed people and asked about the motives, but I think it must be something that is mixed to a big city, for Stockholm both maybe for employment reasons and perhaps for social connexions. And in that sense that there might be a preference for more perhaps less desirable neighbourhood or housing conditions, but still being in the big city as in to be stand somewhere else in Sweden, maybe in the north, maybe in a small place city. But it is complex*" (Interviewee ASS8_SE).
"*I think there is a, there is definitely a preference. Some immigrant groups to live where there are people who are like them. And I think that's totally reasonable, right?*" (Interviewee ASS12_SE).

which is a big problem in Stockholm, neighbourhood segregation happens because Swedish people move away from or don't want to move near particular types of immigrants, right? So, it's not that immigrants are choosing to be away from Swedish people. It's actually the Swedish people who take themselves away" (Interviewee EXP5_SE). Thus, according to the interviewees, the wealthiest parts of Stockholm are as segregated as the most vulnerable areas. Within this perspective, they underlined how the discourse over marginalization and integration is tendentially oriented in one direction, i.e., the side of the disadvantaged people or migrants rather than having a holistic perspective of all the parts.

> *"If we're talking about integration, it has to go both ways. You know, integration is a two-way process. It's not assimilation like. And in the European debate, it's quite interesting because, like, I think European academics are very reluctant to say the word assimilation or really reluctant to use the term assimilation. And more, you know, comfortable with this idea of integration, but we don't have, we don't critically discuss what that entails because most of our research focuses just on the immigrant side. You know. For a multicultural society to exist, there needs to be shifts from both ends. And the political discourse needs to reflect this as well, which the political discourse doesn't at all. Integration is synonymous with the assimilation in the political discourse"* (Interviewee EXP2_SE).

However, the interviewees differed in the description of this socio-spatial segregation. Part of them affirmed that it represents the beginning of a process of ghettoization.

> *"We're seeing quite clearly in in the Swedish context is that there's become, there's a process of ghettoization, like a ghettoization process taking place. That is linking certain groups to social disadvantage. These groups are also phenotypically different than the Swedish population. So, what you get then, you get a community whose skin colours are then attached to social disadvantage, regardless of whether they actually reflect that social disadvantage. But, you know, you get, you get what I mean, it's sort of like a a statistical discrimination process or whatever that's taking place. So, I think that's we're starting to see in the Swedish case now. And this is largely attached to neighbourhoods and, you know, preconceptions of what these neighbourhoods mean, plus the social disadvantages of those communities in the past. Which then affect their children and perpetuate itself overtime"* (Interviewee EXP2_SE).

Thus, within this perspective, Stockholm is becoming a ghettoized city. According to this group of thought, Swedes are uncomfortable admitting it due to Swedish exceptionalism[290]. Thus, they prefer to call it a "failure of integration" rather than ghettoization. Differently, others affirmed that the concept of "ghetto" is too strong for what is happening in the Swedish capital[291]. They believe that, even if there is a tendency to cluster similar groups of people in a specific area, it cannot be defined as ghettoization. Those who support this thesis pointed out that even the most marginalized and disadvantaged neighbourhoods have similarly good services, transportation, and infrastructures as other wealthier areas. Thus, they are not as problematic or closed as the ghettos in the United States. They see the biggest problem in the stigmatization or images associated with these areas rather than their structure and composition.

However, regardless of their explanations, the interviewees agreed that the suburbs of Stockholm – especially the former Million Programme buildings – face advanced marginality. They are Husby, Tensta, Rinkeby, Akalla, Järva, and Kista (even if it is experiencing a process of gentrification) in the Northern part; and, Skärholmen, Liljeholmen, Vårberg, in the southern parts of Stockholm municipality. Also included are the northern parts of Botkyrka municipality[292], and Alby and Hallunda, south of Stockholm. These neighbourhoods have some common characteristics. Indeed, to begin with, these areas host housing from the Million Programme. Even if they were well planned and developed, in Stockholm, these constructions were less liveable because they were blocks of eight or nine floors instead of buildings of three floors as in some other Swedish cities. The idea behind this project was urban planning called "the ABC city" (*ABC-stad, Arbete, Bostad och Centrum*), where "A" stands for work, "B" for housing, and "C" for centrum. According to that, these new collective housings should have been areas where people could reach

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[290] Swedish exceptionalism is the idea of Sweden having a self-image of being superior to others, mainly based on the country's understanding of itself as being a "moral superpower".

[291] Like Wacquant's argumentations over the abuse of this concept (Wacquant, 2008), they believe that, even if there is a tendency to cluster similar groups of people in a specific area, it cannot be defined as ghettoization. (Look at note 281).

[292] The interviewees underlined the socio-economic and ethnic differences between the northern and southern parts of the Botkyrka municipality.

their work, shops, and community services within a short distance. In the beginning, working-class people moved into these neighbourhoods, leaving the city centre where they used to live in older and low-quality apartments. They were mainly families with individuals with low educational achievement and/or low household income. Then, with the waves of migration, these areas became the first arrival for newcomers. Indeed, as these buildings more often had vacancies, the administration and municipality collocated these migrants in these areas. In addition, the changes in the housing market made the apartments in these neighbourhoods cheaper or easier to rent than in other parts of the city, attracting disadvantaged households. Secondly, these neighbourhoods have a homogenous socio-economic and a multi-ethnic composition, which causes and reinforces segregation. Indeed, due to the concentration of families with migrant backgrounds and low-income households, these neighbourhoods share similar features. In addition, the tendency of white Swedes to move out of these areas and buildings and of newcomers to go in intensified this filtering. Thirdly, these neighbourhoods have a strong sense of community making them feel more included in their area rather than in society or the city. Indeed, even if they are heterogeneous as several communities from different countries live there, they share a strong feeling of belonging. It is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, having a strong community can help and sustain the neighbourhood. On the hand, if people remain close to their bubbles, they remain confined in their neighbourhoods without getting in touch with Swedish society and risk to create a distorted image of Sweden.

Therefore, according to the interviewees, these neighbourhoods experience advanced marginality as they are fuelled by labour and social fragmentation, disconnected from global fluctuations, have a strong place-based stigma, and face spatial alienation.

To begin with, these neighbourhoods host low-skilled, precarious, and underpaid workers. They often are migrants and have fewer socioeconomic resources compared to Swedes. Within this perspective, wage labour is a driver of advanced marginality as it clusters and confines together people with lower socioeconomic and migrant backgrounds in specific areas of the city. Secondly, these outskirt suburbs face advanced marginality as they relatively enjoy the benefits and improvements of the global dynamics. Indeed, these

communities often are extraneous to the positive consequences of these processes. However, in case of crises or adverse worldwide events, they negatively and disproportionally impacted these communities. For instance, the Covid-19 pandemic showed how these deprived areas were the ones most exposed to the socioeconomic and sanitarian consequences. Within this perspective, specific groups were more exposed, e.g., the Somali community. Thirdly, these suburbs face territorial fixation and stigmatization which is one of the most visible features of advanced marginality. Indeed, these outskirt neighbourhoods have a strong area-based stigma reinforced and fed with the stereotypes and images of migrants and Muslims. Some interviewees affirmed that it was already present since the development of the Million Programme housings. Others suggested that it is mainly related to the new waves of migrants. According to the former, since their construction, there has been a stigma attached to these areas. These buildings were called the "Soviet" due to their appearance.

> *"They already have some stigma to them while they were building. There are some people saying that the house weren't very, very good looking. A lot of the houses that are the most famous for this programme are like big apartment blocks, so people used to call them like Soviet houses. You're moving out to the Soviets"* (Interviewee ASS5_SE).

So, the bad reputations and images derived from the type of estates and the working-class people living there. Differently, other interviewees suggested that this bad reputation is mainly related to the new waves of migrants. Hence, the principal stigma relates to the fact that the people who live in these neighbourhoods are tendentially migrants or have a migrant background. At the individual level, the principal stigmas attached to these people are: being poor or vulnerable; being a criminal; being lazy, absent, and unengaged parents[293]; being extremists, because they are mainly Muslims; and so on. Within this

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[293] This image comes from the fact that, as the parents of these areas are often low-educated or they do low-qualified jobs, they are often unable to follow and assist their children. For instance, they might not be able to help them with homework or with choosing the best schools or academic paths. Furthermore, as they work several hours in uncommon shifts, they might be unable to be present when their children come back to school for assisting or supporting them.

> *"While in the Rinkeby-Kista we have a problem with the language background, and we don't always have parents who have the timely resources because they have to make their money themselves and work 50 hours a week, for instance. [..] And then also the area that you grew up in and how much criminality is happening around you, how are you impacted by that? But also, like, can your parents pay for private tutoring, or can they*

perspective, they are not considered enough Swedish because of their origins or the language/accent they speak. Several interviewees have pointed out that people in these areas (especially in the Northern part) have a specific way to talk that is called "*Rinkebysvenska*".

> "*Perché questo coacervo di nazionalità diverse ha creato questo svedese particolare, con un accento particolare che si parla solo lì. E quindi ci sono addirittura persone che tentano di levarselo questo accento per parlare lo svedese puro, esatto. E quindi anche questo è un elemento che a volte può influire*"[294] (Interviewee ASS11_SE).

Thus, these neighbourhoods become the place of "otherness" and, as some interviewees reported, Swedes do not recognize them as part of Sweden. These stigmas at individual and residential levels reinforce each other.

Moreover, these distorted portrayals are unidirectional, meaning that outsiders, such as the media, institutions, or politics, produced them, while the residents did not have a voice in the discussion.

> "*They are pretty portrayed; I would say by she could say by outsiders. So people, they're not from the areas generally like the voices of the people that living there are normally not heard. So, I think when these areas are talked about, it's generally when if there's been a shooting or if there's been, you know, something I don't know, like "oh, this integration project is happening". You know, it's something. Not really the voices of the people living there. Always*" (Interviewee ASS7_SE).

Indeed, the media and politics exacerbated and strengthened these divisive images by stereotypically representing these neighbourhoods and their inhabitants. For instance, the

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> *not do that? How much time can your parents give you during the day to help you with homework? How high are your parents language skills? Can they help you with your schoolwork, or can they not help you?"* (Interviewee ASS13_SE).

Moreover, as these parents often fear the authorities and do not trust them, they do not ask for information and help.

> "*Föräldrar är oroliga att deras barn ska omhändertas man litar inte på att systemet skulle fungera. Man är rädd för systemet man rädd med enda grunden att man är invandrare man har kommit från andra länder. Man har med sig upplevelser som inte är så roliga att*" (Interviewee ASS4_SE).

Translation: "*Parents are worried that their children will be taken care of, there is no trust that the system would work. You are afraid of the system, you are afraid with the sole reason that you are an immigrant, you have come from other countries. You bring with you experiences that are not so fun*".

[294] Translation: "*Because this mass of different nationalities has created this particular Swedish, with a particular accent that is only spoken there. And so there are even people who try to get rid of this accent to speak pure Swedish, exactly. And so this is also an element that can sometimes have an influence*".

institutions officially defined these neighbourhoods as *"utsatta områden"*[295], which means vulnerable areas. Among the criteria that determined this label, there is also the presence of parallel social structures, which can refer to any social organizations (e.g., religious centre, immigration aids, etc.).

> *"One of the thing that I think it is a little bit interesting about this, it has to do with income and unemployment and other things, but it also has to do with if a lot of people in that area don't speak Swedish. It has to do with if there are a lot of alternative social structures and what they mean by that is like immigrant aid organisations. So, to me that's always a bit strange because as a sociologist of immigration and immigrant inclusion, you would think, you usually think about those types of organisations like a Somali community services or particular immigrant groups from different national areas setting up self-help agencies. You usually actually see that as an important part of immigrant inclusion as a step. But here it's seen as a problem. And, so, that is actually part of what gets his neighbourhood labelled as this risk, high risk neighbourhood. And once you get that reputation, it's published. And it's, this thing where it goes out in the community and someone says, "oh, we don't want to go there". "That's a no-go area". And the way that it's defined is defined in a way that an immigrant neighbourhood is more likely to get that label"* (Interviewee EXP5_SE).

Consequentially, in describing these areas as "vulnerable", they became known as "no-go zone" neighbourhoods. For this reason, they are often considered unsafe and insecure, and people fear going there. In addition to this institutional labelling provided by the police, the media and public discourse[296] spread the image and rhetoric that these areas are violent, criminal, and dangerous. Indeed, even if some episodes of shooting or violence occurred in these neighbourhoods, the way they got reported and the narrative around these episodes is excessive and derogatory.

> *"I think it is a hard, hard issue because, on one hand, you also need to kind of tell how things are, and the truth is that it is shootings out here and everything, you know, there are also a lot of, you know, we do talked a little bit, you know, what is the narrative about Rinkeby and Husby? And how do we also live, what is good? And, of course, media and politicians has, they have space in society. So, they have responsibility to lift both, and that's not always what*

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[295] https://polisen.se/om-polisen/polisens-arbete/utsatta-omraden/. NOA, Nationella operative avdelningen., Underrättelseenheten. (2021). Lägesbild över utsatta områden Regeringsuppdrag 2021.
[296] *"They get judged every day on the media"* (Interviewee ASS16_SE).

we see. But it is also hard, because you also need to say how seriously things are" (Interviewee ASS6_SE).

Consequently, these stigmas reinforce the exclusion and segregation of these areas and communities and, simultaneously, impact children, the residents' lifepath, and their relationship with the authorities. To begin with, growing up in these areas might influence the opportunities to achieve goals and the expectations and beliefs people have on who and what they can become. It is due to the types, quality, and quantity of resources available and the models to look up to.

> *"It's different opportunities. Like I said, we don't start at the same start line like to run this marathon as like somewhere starting at the finish line. So how am I gonna compete with them?"* (Interviewee ASS9_SE).

> *"When you come to a place, when your parents feel ashamed, feel out, feel left alone, you automatically get angry against society. You think that they did to my parents, they could do the same thing to me. So, I am also left out"* (Interviewee ASS16_SE).

Secondly, the interviewees often pointed out how these images associated with these neighbourhoods could influence their interactions with people and the access to the labour market.

> *"If we, for instance, look at recruitment processes in the labour market, for instance, and you have to write your address on your CV and somebody sees you live in Rinkeby and that area is stigmatised and branded as a bad neighbourhood, as a criminal neighbourhood, there's a lot in the media about this. And it's like very, very pushed in the media and it might not even be your feeling when you live in this part. But other people have a different image of this. Then, it might lower your chances in getting hired"* (Interviewee ASS13_SE).

> *"They really are reluctant to say that you are from Rinkeby because you. In two ways, because in one way people will look at you kind of that you could be a criminal or someone or they could look you and feel sorry for you, and you do not want that either"* (Interviewee ASS6_SE).

Consequentially, as a counterreaction *"they don't get to know the Swedish society"* (Interviewee ASS3_SE). Hence, there is a tendency to self-exclusion and closeness towards the rest of society. Lastly, these images and perceptions of these areas justify the presence and attitude of the police in these areas and impact the relationship between them and the residents. The interviewees denounced the interventions of the officers. On the one hand, they stated that

the police – especially when there is a crime – tend to consider the entire population involved. According to the interviewees, the number of residents (especially young males) stopped and questioned by them in these areas is alarming. Thus, the interviewees denounced this racial profiling of the police.

> *"So, when they take action based on people's skin colour or ethnicity. And when we talk to people living in in these areas, they say, "Well, the police is always here and they surveil us and what we do. But then when we move and go into the city centre, we are surveilled as well because we don't look as we belong there. So we are controlled when we are where we belong, but when we move out of that area, we're also controlled". It's very sad. But it's interesting because the argument from the side of the police is "well, we need to be in these areas because that's where crime is committed and also violent crime. So, we need to be there. But when they then move out, they're still controlled". So it's not only the, it's not only the place, it's the individuals or the people or the types of people"* (Interviewee ASS15_SE).

On the other hand, the interviewees denounced the way the polices arranges the management of interventions in these areas. An example reported is the "Eastern riot"[297].

> *"I mean, it's interesting to reflect on that. I think Why did that happen? With the Quran burnings as a trigger. This is something that we think is, that we are looking at now. The problem that we've seen is that what followed the protests was a debate related to the freedom of expression and the lack of resources to the police. But not really much else was debated. And maybe what was debated was also who were these people committing these acts and was said that it was infringed, influenced from abroad or it was criminals. But, then that's of course only part of the truth. So, but very little was said about the conditions in these areas where this happened and there is a deep-rooted exclusion that these people experience on a day-to-day basis. [..] If the people living there had another relationship with the police and that they felt that the police is on our side, they protect us from the criminals, they want our best, then this would not have happened in the same way, but so I think there is really a need to look at the causes of this exclusion and not least the role of the police. Because it is a reaction specifically targeting the police, but it's underlying is, I think, a sense of being excluded from society in general"* (Interviewee ASS15_SE).

As mentioned, these episodes reduce the residents' trust in the police and, in general, in institutions.

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[297] Riots occurred in several Swedish cities in April 2022, primarily against police who were stationed to protect events planned by Danish-Swedish politician Rasmus Paludan. The motivation for the violence was ostensibly Paludan's plan to burn a Quran (Wikipedia).

Furthermore, these suburbs face advanced marginality as they experience spatial alienation. Indeed, they increasingly live and perceive their neighbourhoods and estates as insecure due to the loss and dissolution of places.

As mentioned, the interviewees pointed out that some communities are more likely to experience advanced marginality jointly with abyssal exclusion because, to some extent, there is a tendency to cluster disadvantaged groups in marginalized areas.

> *"Then, because we cluster these individuals from this group that I just talked about into certain areas in the city, so we spatially cluster the people who are not heard, who don't have power into areas, we have more and more people who are not heard in the same area. I would say so, for instance, like if there are jobs that are need like lower qualifications. I'm just like thinking out loud here. It might be easier to like find those jobs further out of the city because you have higher chances of getting the job because nobody from the inner city wants to commute, so somebody else has to do it and commute. So, it might actually already also be nicer to live closer to your workplace, but you also cannot afford an apartment in the city, which is why you are forced to live in another area. And then you get to know many people who come from the same, like or a similar social background, so you don't have the access to the network that maybe somebody has who lives in the inner city, which causes segregation and like too not too different groups, but many different groups in societies start to form and don't mingle and don't mix"* (Interviewee ASS13_SE).

Within this perspective, the interviewees affirmed that the groups experiencing advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion simultaneously are the migrants and refugees. Indeed, they tend to live in the mentioned disadvantaged suburbs and struggle in claiming their rights. Migrants and refugees (especially those from the Middle East and Africa) face abyssal exclusion as they are unaware of their rights and dehumanised in the public discourse. Migrants and refugees often do not know how to claim their needs and whom to ask in case of necessity. Sometimes they live in precarity due to working conditions[298].

> *"Lo sfruttamento lavorativo nel 90% dei casi, cifre un pò a naso chiaramente, però, per quanto è la mia esperienza qui e comunque diversi anni, avviene, è fatta su immigrati da altri immigrati. Raramente lo svedese, lo svedese quando assume un immigrato lo mette in regola,*

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[298] They are often precarious workers who are unable to organize themselves and make their rights respected. For instance, they work in the GIG economy, the delivery food riders, or taxi drivers, who are underpaid and have unhealthy working conditions. They have fewer opportunities to speak up against their employers or to improve their labour situation.

gli da il contratto, lo paga, secondo i canoni, i crismi svedesi. Questa è una cosa molto triste perché nella maggior parte dei casi sono immigrati che hanno vissuto quella situazione di vulnerabilità prima, vent'anni fa o trent'anni fa, e la stanno replicando sui connazionali. La maggior parte delle volte sono su connazionali. Pakistani su Pakistani, nigeriani su nigeriani, latino americani su latino americani. 90% dei casi è così. E soprattutto in alcune aree poi lavorative, chiaramente non l'ingegnere elettronico. Ed è una cosa ed è una cosa molto triste. Quindi se mi dici c'è sfruttamento, c'è discriminazione, c'è questo fenomeno di far passare l'immigrato un po'come serie B della società, c'è. Ma è fatta da altri immigrati, per la maggior parte non sempre, ma per la maggior parte dei casi"[299] (Interviewee ASS11_SE).

In other cases, the process for verifying and stating the status of refugees might be long and uncertain.

"The refugees prior to receiving their residence permit. So, they seek asylum and then there's this period of time where they're living in these asylum communities waiting for their papers to be processed. And this can be sometimes a year of time. They're provided with, you know, basic necessities and basic money from the, from the government, but they are unable to participate during that time period more or less in anything. And oftentimes the finances that they're provided is contingent on them staying where they are, where they've been assigned. So, they don't even have the ability to choose where they're living, right?" (Interviewee EXP2_SE).

Moreover, the attitude towards migrants and refugees changed. Politicians (especially the Swedish Democrats) and the media started describing and considering them as dangerous, unable to fit in, and inferior.

"And for example, something, expressions that sometimes is been used is "potential to integrate". And that's kind of this cultural racist argument that there are some people from some cultures when they come here, they don't have enough potential to become part, "become part of our rational, reasonable, great humanitarian society". Right? So, again, this is all in quotes, right? And but so there's definitely that kind of cultural racism and cultural essentialism and feeling of cultural superiority happening" (Interviewee EXP5_SE).

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[299] Translation: *"Labor exploitation in 90% of cases, figures a little by nose clearly, however, as far as my experience is here and in any case several years, it happens, it is done on immigrants by other immigrants. Rarely is the Swede, the Swede when he hires an immigrant he puts him in order, gives him the contract, pays him, according to the canons, the Swedish trappings. This is a very sad thing because in most cases they are immigrants who have experienced that situation of vulnerability before, twenty or thirty years ago, and they are replicating it on their compatriots. Most of the time they are about compatriots. Pakistani on Pakistani, Nigerian on Nigerian, Latino on Latino. 90% of the cases it is like this. And especially in some areas then work, clearly not the electronic engineer. And it's one thing and it's a very sad thing. So if you tell me there is exploitation, there is discrimination, there is this phenomenon of making the immigrant look a bit like second-class society, there is. But it's done by other immigrants, mostly not always, but most of the time".*

They are discriminated against because of their nationality, skin, and religion. In doing so, they dehumanised and made these groups feel inferior. In addition, with the situation in Ukraine, some politicians have affirmed that the latter are the "real refugees", insinuating that all the other ones (especially from Arab countries) have no real reasons to be and remain in Sweden.

> "*Now, during the recent refugee wave, I mean, before Ukraine, they were from Syria, Afghanistan, and stuff like that, and they have just been like a burden. People see them as a burden. They as come here even now when Ukrainian refugees come, some politicians have gone out in the papers and saying that these are real refugees*" (Interviewee ASS9_SE).

Nevertheless, according to the interviewees, some groups experience solely abyssal exclusion, because they do not have a specific area where to settle. They are the undocumented people, the Roma community, and the homeless.

Concerning undocumented people, they face abyssal exclusion as they are outside the system and cannot enjoy the same rights and services as others. According to some of the interviews, the estimations report between 50 and 100 thousand people are in this situation. Due to their condition, they are more likely to be exploited or underpaid in the labour market and live in unsafe and unhealthy environments. They cannot speak up or claim their rights as they are invisible and not present in the system. Moreover, they are often unaware of the rights or help they can get. They are also afraid to be caught or reported and, thus, they tend to avoid contacting authorities or social services, even when they need help. Within this perspective, the social services struggle in reaching and helping them as there is no way to estimate how many they are, and in which condition they live. On the other hand, social organizations and associations have better chances of getting in touch with these people because they are not obliged to report them to the authorities. It is a vulnerable group because they are completely hidden, and few people or organizations speak up for them.

Concerning the Roma community[300], they face abyssal exclusion as they experience invisibility, inferiorization, and dehumanization. They mainly come from Romania and Bulgaria either to work or to beg. They live in extreme conditions of vulnerability. The Roma community has not a specific spatial collocation; thus, they do not experience advanced marginality. They often sleep in the streets or some night shelters (without children because it is illegal and, in this case, social services intervene) or live in tents in the forests outside the inner city of Stockholm. When signalized or denounced, police or authorities force them to move from one place to another. However, the interviewees pointed out the risk of living in these unhealthy and unsafe conditions, increasing the likelihood of facing problems with drugs, or physical and mental health issues.

Legally speaking, the Roma communities live as undocumented people as they do not have permanent residency or a registration in a municipality. Thus, they are basically outside of the legal welfare system, and they cannot enjoy and benefit from social services. So, their exclusion derives from the lack of citizenship, documents, rights, and knowledge on how to access or request them. Hence, they belong to the category of "EU-vulnerable" people. In addition, they are not organized and able to speak up for themselves.

Within this perspective, the interviewees denounced the risks of living in this invisibility and episodes of dehumanization and inferiorization of this community. Indeed, they stated that younger Roma members, women, or children are more likely to end up in human trafficking, forced marriages, or exploitation. In addition, they affirmed that sometimes the social services do not care for these people as much as they do for other groups.

> *"I've dealt with cases where an adult sibling brings the younger siblings to Sweden o work or to beg or something, and they have a power of attorney to act as a guardian for the minor because that's not a valid thing. And then if the government suspects human trafficking, that would put the adult sibling as a suspect for human trafficking, but that's not how social services handle the cases, but they just kind of go with it and say that "Oh yeah, it's a, it's just that". They have a power of attorney, and they validate a Romanian or Bulgarian power*

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[300] By Roma community, I mainly refer to those coming to work or beg for a period (it might last months or years) and not having or requesting the Swedish person's number. They often come from Romania and Bulgaria. It is necessary to distinguish this group from the rest of the Roma community, which settled over time in Sweden and obtained the person number. Indeed, they are Swedish and not EU-vulnerable citizens.

of attorney over a child. And like when it's crazy. Like that's they would never, they would never agree with that if it was Sweden children" (Interviewee ASS8_SE).

Moreover, concerning discrimination, the interviewees reported that the Roma community often does not realize or define the episodes of violence or mistreatment that they face as such. It might be due to previous experiences in their countries of origin. However, it is concerning as they often do not denounce these situations.

A last issue concerning the Roma community is the relationship between visibility and invisibility. Indeed, although they do not legally exist for welfare, they are physically present in the streets. According to the interviewees, seeing these people in the cities made the Swedes more aware of the different socioeconomic situations in Europe. Nevertheless, the media and politics do not mention the Roma people in the debates. Thus, they are completely ignored, and their situations are not acknowledged or discussed in the media or political debate.

> *"Basically, before Romania joined the EU, I think Swedish people weren't maybe even aware that there are poor people in Europe, like because Sweden has quite high standards. But then, when Romania joined the EU, like all of a sudden, a lot of people from Romania came to Sweden, like Roma especially, and now all of a sudden there are all these Roma people sitting in front of the stores, begging. So, then I think Swedish people were like "oh like, what is this now?", you know, like. So, in a way, I think it's more visible now but also, if I think about my Swedish friends, like people don't really know about that, they don't get a lot of help from the states. If you don't have a Swedish personal number like, I wasn't even aware of this before I started working here, so I think they see in a way, poverty, but it's also a bit like. Because, I mean, Sweden is known for, you know, having a safety net. So, people just assume, yeah, everybody who lives in Sweden is like able to survive. But when I tell my friends, like some of them, don't even have access to. Medical help, I mean, it's they've never even heard about this"* (Interviewee ASS12_SE).

Lastly, homeless people are the invisible for excellence. They face abyssal exclusion as they are neglected and dehumanized in the public and political discourse. According to the interviewees, the policies towards them do not properly cover and tackle their issues and struggles. On the other hand, the newspapers and media do not mention them in the debate. Thus, by ignoring the homeless, the media and politics make them invisible in the policies and public debates.

6.4 Bucharest

In Bucharest, the interviewees stated that advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion exist and tend to coexist. *"Nella pratica, le due categorie si intersecano"*[301] (Interviewee ASS9_RO). *"Diciamo che all'interno della marginalizzazione avanzata si trova anche l'esclusione abissale"*[302] (Interviewee ASS6_RO). Thus, they overlap and feed each other, clustering disadvantaged groups in deprived areas. Indeed, although the interviewees pointed out that each sector has worse areas, they affirmed that some neighbourhoods in the outskirt and some buildings in downtown Bucharest experience advanced marginality. On the other hand, they stated that the groups facing abyssal exclusion are the homeless or squatters, the Roma community, and the undocumented people. Thus, as these groups tend to live in the most deprived areas, these extremer phenomena of exclusion converge. The interviewees denounced how these phenomena intersect and exacerbate people's living conditions.

In addition, some interviewees pointed out that elderly and disabled people sometimes face abyssal exclusion but, as they do not have a specific spatial dimension, they do not experience advanced marginality. Table 6.4 summarizes the groups and type of disparities they face.

Table 6.4 – Groups facing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in Bucharest

	Abyssal exclusion	Advanced marginality
Living in the outskirt	• Invisibilization • Dehumanization	• Disconnection from global fluctuations • Territorial stigmatization • Erosion of the hinterland • Spatial alienation
Living in the downtown	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization •	• Disconnection from global fluctuations • Territorial stigmatization • Spatial alienation • Erosion of the hinterland
Elderly, disabled people	• Process of invisibilization and dehumanization	/
Roma community	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization • Violence, discrimiantion	• Living in the outskirt or in the downtown • Stigma

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[301] Translation: "*In practice, the two categories intersect*".

[302] Translation: "*Let's say that within advanced marginalization there is also abyssal exclusion*".

Homeless	• Processes of invisibilization and inferiorization • Violence • No political intervention	• Living in the downtown • Stigma
Undocumented (often Roma or homeless)	• Processes of invisibilization and inferiorization	• Living in the outskirt or in the downtown

Therefore, concerning advanced marginality, the interviewees individuated two main areas of Bucharest experiencing this exclusion: some neighbourhoods in the outskirt and some buildings in the downtown. These zones share features of advanced marginality as global dynamics do not involve these areas, they experience territorial fixation and stigmatization, and they face spatial alienation and erosion of the hinterland.

Regarding the outskirts of Bucharest, the interviewees mentioned disadvantaged and segregated neighbourhoods and some zones recognized as ghettos by Swinkels et al. (2014). According to the interviewees, they are:

1. Chitila - Triaj (close to Gara de Nord) in sector 1.

2. Petricani, Lacul Tei, and Colentina in sector 2.

3. The area nearby Faur (former factory) in sector 3.

4. Apărătorii Patriei (even if it is starting to be gentrified) in sector 4.

5. Ferentari, Rahova in sector 5.

6. Giuleşti Sârbi, Giuleşti, and Drumul Taberei in sector 6.

7. Outside Bucharest's borders, there are also Pantelimon and Dobroeşti.

According to the interviewees, notwithstanding their singularities, these neighbourhoods share some common features. To begin with, they were working-class neighbourhoods built by the communist regime in the 1950s and 1960s for workers coming from all over Romania[303]. The flats they lived in were often suited for one person, while now families live

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[303] As previously mentioned, the communist regime and its urban policies revolutionized and shaped Bucharest's composition. During this period, the nationalization, collectivization, and management of housing and industries shaped the city of Bucharest and its composition. Several blocks of inadequate flats appeared close to factories. Although the aim was to create neighbourhoods with different socioeconomic backgrounds, it happened everywhere except in Cotroceni and Primăverii – and later in Piata Unirii – where high-rank people lived. This planning and structure of the city had an impact on the transformations that happened after

there. Thus, these households are overcrowded, unhealthy, precarious, and with low standards of living conditions. In addition to these blocks, these neighbourhoods often host improvised shelters, slums, barracks, or abandoned buildings with uncertain legal status. The people squatting and living in these estates lack basic needs, e.g., electricity, gas, sewers, etc. Hence, they often steal them or live without them. Secondly, these neighbourhoods have fewer, low-quality, and worse services (such as schools, healthcare, public transportation, etc.). In addition, they often lack cultural, sports, educative, and recreational activities within their borders. Thirdly, these neighbourhoods and their residents have a bad reputation as they are considered dangerous and unsafe. Thus, some Romanians – especially, the wealthy or middle classes – decided to move far away[304] and avoid going or looking for housing there. Lastly, these neighbourhoods have a higher concentration of destitute people and the Roma community.

> *"For historical reason, there are areas of the in the city where are living Romas mainly as I mentioned Ferentari. But there are areas of the city which were created in the communist regime, as for workers for different industries, and they were brought here from other part of the countries because it was mandatory for them to come in Bucharest. And most of them are funded families here and they stay here. And then there are areas that known as lieved by the poor people, and that's for sure that this kind of social segregation. If I can call like this. But based on the economic ground and resources not necessary an ethnic ground. [..] There are areas with Roma. It's multiple, let's say, discrimination, grounded ethnic, and then you have social, then you have, also, this economic ground present"* (Interviewee ASS12_RO).

Therefore, according to the interviewees, growing up in these neighbourhoods increase the likelihood of ending up in a vicious circle of deprivation and disparities that is difficult to break.

> *"Because this is the model, they the children are seeing. There is an intergenerational transmission of poverty, and those are circles which are very difficult to break, unless there is a community intervention. But this is again quite unlikely because they are mobile and they're, I mean, whoever would intervene in those cases or those communities has to be very*

1989. In correspondence to these wealthier areas, some gated communities appeared. While in the areas of working-class deprived blocks, there has been a concentration of poor or elder people.

[304] Some interviewees spotlighted the new tendency of wealthy people to move out of the city centre. Indeed, they stated that this phenomenon of moving toward the outskirts or nearby villages happened in Bucharest. According to the interviewees, the principal reasons to move out from the inner parts of the city are the will for bigger houses and gardens and a healthier environment.

flexible and mobile. And I think it's a very particular type of intervention needed, which means to stay there, it's outreach, it's community outreach. It doesn't work with the offices and, you know, daycare centres and all sorts of that, because it's very difficult to take them out from that area or at least that's our experience, has been our experience until now. So, in order to, to motivate them to get out of that situation or to do something to change it in, you need to spend time with them and to understand their way of living and their values because that's the main difference" (Interviewee ASS1_RO).

Within this perspective, the most quoted and famous neighbourhood is Ferentari and, even more precisely, the street of Alea Livezilor. The interviewees pointed out that it is the most stigmatized area of Bucharest[305]. It is due to a combination of two principal reasons. On the one hand, the bad reputation and low-quality standards are due to structural and construction development. Indeed, during the communist regime, this neighbourhood hosted factories and blocks that should have been temporary for the workers. The former closed or declined, while the latter remained over time, and their conditions worsened. Thus, the pumps and pipes of these factories lasted and signed the borders of this neighbourhood. People kept living in inadequate, crumbling, and unhealthy housing and buildings. Moreover, as some workers moved out from Ferentari after 1989, some of these flats remained vacant, and people started moving in illegally. On the other side, Ferentari has a bad reputation due to its socioeconomic composition. *"So, since the communist area, it was a Roma neighbourhood"* (Interviewee EXP4_RO). It mainly hosts the Roma community, the destitute, the unemployed, and the undocumented people. Tendentially, these groups live in a survival mood. So, they struggle to keep up with the dynamism of Bucharest. In addition, they face discrimination, and the rest of the population and institutions blame

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[305] Some of interviewees exemplified this sense of stigma and closure of this area stating that *"Taxi do not go there. [..] And these people, they never go out of it, you know, all their life is there"* (Interviewee 24R). On the other hand, they also pointed out that this type of territorial and social division exists all over Romania.

"This is Bucharest. But there are in Romania, and I know in Maramureș there was a big case. Same kind of neighbourhood let's say, the mayor decided to build a wall around it. And his official reason for doing that was that the neighbourhood is surrounded by boulevards, whatever, and children were playing, and they're going in the street and for their own safety not to go in the street and be run by cars. This was his speech. Of course, they're not all. There's, these invisible walls, you know, like there is this segregation, like everybody knows this. Now it's concrete. Now it's real and they build these huge walls. It's incredible. [..] Let them be there it's not the best solution. It's not the best situation because you will confront with them at some point, you know, like not only that, they will rob you at some point and they will do something there, but still they are costing money" (Interviewee ASS10_RO).

them for their deprived living conditions. Consequentially, many tend to self-exclude themselves and avoid mixing up with others because they fear their judgment.

> *"When you are exposed to the stigma, you interiorize the stigma"* (Interviewee EXP6_RO).

> *"It's impacting very, very much. The influence is not only of the family but also the community. Most of them are not going outside of the community or are going outside once or twice per year. "We are going to the city, to city Centre" which is something very different. Going out from Ferentari to city centre to go to Dorobanți area, which is a very famous and rich area. What to do over there? You know, they are living in their own small world. Yeah. It's a small prison and, of course, that it's influencing the way of life, the way of defining your values, your dreams and so on"* (Interviewee EXP1_RO).

Moreover, some Romanians decided to move out of this neighbourhood because they complained about living close to poverty and the Roma community. Simultaneously, the poorest ones started to move in because the houses and apartments were cheaper. In doing so, this area became economically and ethnically segregated.

Therefore, for these reasons, the neighbourhood of Ferentari and, especially, the street of Alea Livezilor – where most Roma live – were associated with this image of poverty, precarious workers, unemployment, and squatting. "*You get a label "Ah, you are living in Ferentari". The nickname is "Ferentexas""* (Interviewee EXP1_RO). Nevertheless, some interviewees - mainly those who had the opportunity to work in Ferentari and elsewhere - affirmed that this neighbourhood represents a symbol of marginalization and scapegoat. "*Ferentari is invisible for many, you know, because nobody goes there, very few real knows what Ferentari means*" (Interviewee EXP6_RO). According to them, you might find the same living conditions in other parts of Bucharest, even in its city centre. Thus, quoting Ferentari as the principal example of inequality, exclusion, and segregation is more often related to the image that people have of this neighbourhood rather than the reality of the situation. "*Ferentari is a symbol. It is known in Bucharest and all Romania*" (Interviewee EXP7_RO). Said so, this area is indeed poor and has structural and socioeconomic issues. In addition, its population is tired of being studied and mentioned without seeing any improvements. "*Those people are really tired, are exhausted about being studied. Everybody comes there to study them and nothing changed*" (Interviewee EXP5_RO).

Thus, according to the interviewees, specific neighbourhoods of the outskirt of Bucharest face advanced marginality. Indeed, they do not have any connections with the global dynamics as they often work in informal positions or are unemployed and undocumented. Consequentially, they are constantly left out of the socioeconomic and financial dynamics that pass-through Bucharest. For instance, the interviewees often pointed out that the Romanian capital is growing and increasingly becoming wealthy and developed. However, these districts keep being behind and not involved. "*Bucharest has this because it changed quickly, like the sightings changed quickly. It got, in my opinion, it got very rich, very quickly. But only for a few people*" (Interviewee ASS7_RO). Secondly, these neighbourhoods experience territorial fixation and stigmatization. It relates to the quality of these areas and the communities that inhabit them. On the one hand, these neighbourhoods lack services, public transportation, and infrastructures. The accommodations are cheaper and crumbling. Consequentially, they attract poor and desperate people. On the other, the prejudice against its residents is that they are untrustful or might have family issues, problems with drugs or criminality, etc.

> "*Most probably, instinctually I'd not trust this person. Not that they would do something, but I will not trust that they will come tomorrow again, you know. I will say, I will think, problems with the family drugs probably, you know, like alcohol abuse, criminality. So, first of all, there is this lack of trust, instinctually, you know, like even if you want to overcome them. But generally there is a high level of stigma*" (Interviewee ASS10_RO).

These two stigmas reinforce and feed each other. They impact and influence residents' lives since their childhood. Indeed, several interviewees exemplified some episodes where teenagers from other parts of Bucharest bullied those coming from Ferentari.

> "*I was working in 2008, in a school from Ferentari and we went with the teenagers there we went to perform a theatre play in Elite High School. We had partnerships between different high schools and we went with the kids there. The kids in the elite high school really bullied the kids from Ferentari saying "ah, you are stupid. You come from this neighbourhood, you listen to a certain type of music that we think it's stupid" and, you know, and the kids, the kids from Ferentari were so, were really affected by this because they didn't, they were saying "we listen to all kinds of music. Why do they treat us like this? And we come from our neighbourhood. Our neighbourhood is also OK. I mean, it has some park. We have fun there. Why do they treat us like this?" And it was really, really, you could see how it begins since*

268

early teenagerhood. That you start to, you go outside of your small neighbourhood and you start to face these huge problems" (Interviewee ASS3_RO).

In addition, according to the interviewees, the media, families, and politics play a significant role in developing and spreading these images.

> "*I think just to say that it's from parents and from the mass media, I mean, in early teenagerhood, you repeat what your parents tell you and what you see on TV and if that's the dominant discourse and you have access to it and then you repeat it*" (Interviewee ASS3_RO).

Thirdly, these neighbourhoods face spatial alienation as they are considered "no-go areas". As such, the rest of the population avoids going there because they see and represent these districts as dangerous, violent, and unsafe. Lastly, these neighbourhoods experience advanced marginality as they face the erosion of the hinterland and social and working fragmentation.

On the other hand, the interviewees stated that also downtown Bucharest[306] experienced advanced marginality. More precisely, they refer to abandoned and former nationalized buildings. Indeed, during the communist regime, the nationalization of housing and blocks also involved the inter-war palaces of the city centre. The state evicted the owners of these estates. As a result, when communism fell, a series of uncertain legal situations started. Indeed, all over Bucharest, the at-the-time tenants bought their accommodations, but the entitlement of these inter-war palaces remained dubious. Thus, in some cases, a series of legal discussions over who was the legitimate owner occurred. In the meantime, the homeless often occupied these vacant estates. In other cases, the possessor of these buildings saw the profit of their lands. Within this perspective, several of them wanted to rebuild these estates. However, according to the law, they could not demolish them because of their historical value but could only requalify them using the original products. So, to avoid these expensive restructurings, these owners pursued the strategy to make these estates

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[306] "*Il centro storico di Bucarest, dove adesso ci sono tutti i locali, il centro del cuore della movida, fino a 10 anni fa era un'enclave di sottosviluppo, erano tutte case diroccate con grosse comunità zingare, un po' tossici eccetera eccetera eccetera*" (Interviewee ASS9_RO).
Translation: "*The historic center of Bucharest, where all the clubs are now, the center of the heart of the nightlife, until 10 years ago it was an underdeveloped enclave, they were all dilapidated houses with large gypsy communities, some drug addicts etc etc etc*".

irreparable to have the authorization to dismantle them. Thus, these owners often allow people living illegally and informally there to damage the buildings and make them collapse. In this way, they could rebuild and earn as much as they want.

> "There is a new phenomenon, squatting, which is done with the direct sometimes or non-participation from the owners. Because what they want is to have that building completely destroyed. Because once it's completely destroyed, burnt, demolished, because sometimes they go to steel, iron, bricks and so on. So, once it's fall down, they just clean up and sell the land or build big, huge buildings, which are providing a good value in terms of renting or selling. So, in downtown, we have these kind of situations" (Interviewee EXP3_RO).

So, several homeless, Roma, or destitute people – who have not elsewhere to go - started living in these buildings in the city centre without running water, electricity, gas, furniture, school, etc. The paradox is that they live in the city centre of Bucharest, but they are at the margins of society. Moreover, some interviewees pointed out that, in the last decade, there has been a campaign of beautification, renovation, and requalification of the downtown. It resulted in increasing evictions without a proper solution for these people.

> "La cosa che è interessante è che ancora all'interno del centro di Bucarest resistono ancora, ancora per poco resisteranno, queste piccole enclave. Così come è successo con il centro storico, molto probabilmente negli anni, la pressione immobili, farà in modo che anche in quelle piccole enclavi che resistono nel centro vengano poi spostati verso la periferia, senza processi violenti come sai, insomma, sono processi. Bisogna anche riconoscere che una grossa mano a questo tipo di fenomeni l'ha dato il Comune di Bucarest, Eh, con tutte le politiche di espulsione degli ultimi anni. In questi mesi, in questi anni, noi come tante associazioni stiamo denunciando questo fenomeno degli sgomberi più o meno abusivi delle città. È vero che appunto tu dici quella famiglia con 5 bambini sciancati di cui sono amici tossici eccetera eccetera, sta occupando uno stabile illegale, però intanto magari un tetto c'è l'hanno. E tu gli butti fuori senza offrirgli un'alternativa?"[307] (Interviewee ASS9_RO).

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[307] Translation: "*The thing that is interesting is that still within the center of Bucharest these small enclaves still resist, for a little while longer. As has happened with the historic center, most likely over the years, the real estate pressure will ensure that even those small enclaves that resist in the center are then moved to the periphery, without violent processes as you know, in short, they are processes. We must also recognize that the Municipality of Bucharest has given a big hand to this type of phenomena, Eh, with all the expulsion policies of recent years. In recent months, in recent years, we, like many associations, have been denouncing this phenomenon of more or less abusive evictions of cities. It's true that you say that family with 5 lame children whose friends are drug addicts and so on, is occupying an illegal building, but in the meantime maybe they have a roof. And you throw them out without offering them an alternative?*".

Moreover, due to the pandemic, these buildings started to be populated again, especially by poor and drug-addicted people. "*Ma anche se negli ultimi anni stanno riesplodendo soprattutto legato alla pandemia e alle nuove droghe sintetiche, la strada si sta riempiendo di nuovo anche nel centro della città*"[308] (Interviewee ASS9_RO). Thus, these buildings of the downtown of Bucharest experience advanced marginality as they are disconnected from cyclical economic fluctuations, stigmatized, spatially alienated, a result of labour fragmentation, and face the erosion of the hinterland.

Within these contexts, the interviewees pointed out that the communities living there also face abyssal exclusion. They are the homeless or squatters, the Roma community, and the undocumented people. Thus, as these groups tend to live in the most deprived areas, they simultaneously experience advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion.

To begin with, the Roma community experiences advanced marginality as it resides either on the outskirts of Bucharest or in the abandoned estates downtown. Within this perspective, some interviewees stated the existence of socioeconomic and ethnic segregation. Simultaneously, it faces abyssal exclusion as it constantly encounters dehumanization, invisiblization, and inferiorization. The Roma community has an entrenched and complicated history and relationship with Romanians. Enslaved until 1864, they became citizens of Romania in 1918. Hence, this imbalanced position of subordination is rooted in the discrimination against them, their oppression, and their marginalization. Within this perspective, Romanians tended to undervalue them, describe them as uncivilized, and consider them inferior. Nowadays, these images, perceptions, and attitudes persist. "*We don't know how many, but it's estimated around one point five or two million in Romania, which is a big number for the population. [..] If we don't see them, they don't exist. They don't exist until they do, until you face them*"[309] (Interviewee ASS10_RO). The Roma

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[308] Translation: "*But even if they are exploding in recent years mainly due to the pandemic and new synthetic drugs, the street is also filling up again in the city center*".

[309] Paradoxically, these same images and perceptions are now applied to Romanians living in other European countries.

community is still disproportionally more likely to experience destitution, segregation, violence, and discrimination. Within this perspective, they experience dehumanization and inferiorization in the prejudice, judgment, and treatments. "*So, this is a big problem because it's about dehumanisation*" (Interviewee EXP3_RO). Thus, they often self-exclude themselves as protection. In doing so, they make themselves invisible to the society and politics. For instance, some interviewees pointed out their disinterest in participating in the political debate and making their voices heard. Indeed, some Roma does not have IDs, and others sometimes could sell their votes for money or immediate benefits. Nonetheless, though, some interviewees also pointed out the struggles in integrating this community.

> "*Se vogliamo vantarci c'è ne sono migliaia di libri, migliaia di studi, migliaia di programmi, ma è soltanto teoria, è soltanto teoria. Questo lo dico, insomma, non ho paura tra virgolette e questa è la cosa un po' più difficile da spiegare un po' all'Europa. Perché l'Europa ci bastona molto, perché noi non ci occupiamo. [..] Quando la Romania è stata ricevuta nell'Unione Europa tanti zingari, tanti rom, sono arrivati in, all'Occidente e qualcosina anche in Italia, ma tanto in Francia e in Inghilterra. Perché adesso fanno fatica? Perché ci sono i campi rom? Perché? Perché noi eravamo gli imbecilli, che non sapevamo gestirli?*"[310] (Interviewee ASS6_RO).

On the other hand, it is central to remind that integration is a two-direction process. Thus, both the Roma community and Romanians should pursue it. In addition, the interviewees stated that they face invisibilization in politics. Even if there is a Roma party in the parliament, they do not feel to be represented, and there is a lack of self-awareness. In the last decades, some NGOs started improving, advocating, and getting Roma people involved in the dialogue.

"Even in Europe and we don't like being called Roma. We don't like being called thieves and all these stereotypes about Romanian people. But we created these, you know, through the policies through the discrimination, lack of interest and this ignorance, everything. It comes back to us is like. It's a frisbee" (Interviewee ASS10_RO).
[310] Translation: "*If we want to boast there are thousands of books, thousands of studies, thousands of programs, but it's only theory, it's only theory. I say this, in short, I'm not afraid in quotation marks and this is the slightly more difficult thing to explain to Europe at all. Because Europe beats us a lot, because we don't take care of ourselves. [..] When Romania was received into the European Union, many gypsies, many Roma, arrived in the West and a little bit also in Italy, but a lot in France and England. Why are they struggling now? Why are there Roma camps? Why? Why were we the imbeciles, who didn't know how to handle them?*".

Regarding homelessness and squatting[311], I grouped them as they often coincide with each other. Indeed, the homeless in Bucharest tend to be the main groups of squatters together with the Roma community.

The problem of homelessness and squatting began after the fall of communism. The dramatic and shocking economic shift, the mismanagement of orphanages, and the changes in family structures resulted in an increasing number of people living on the streets or informally. In the 1990s, Bucharest became notorious for the huge number of street children and teenagers fleeing from orphanages and tragic situations. They lived in the underground of Bucharest (e.g., in the sewer or heating systems close to pipes) in terrible sanitarian conditions and survived by begging or robbing. Some of these children kept inhabiting the streets and started their families there. So, there has been an intergenerational transmission of disadvantages and disparities. However, in the streets or the abandoned buildings, there are also the Roma community and people who cannot afford any other types of accommodation or lost their occupations.

Therefore, even if there are different ways of living informally, all these people are more likely to be exposed to sanitarian, social, political, and environmental risks. Indeed, being homeless means not having a residence and, thus, a document[312]. Consequentially, they do not have access to services, protections, and safety. Thus, they might face abuse, human trafficking, drug and alcohol addictions, sex work, etc. On the other, they might not know their rights or struggle to claim them and to be treated equally in front of the institutions.

> *"We don't know exactly the number of homeless in Bucharest. We are working in the last 20 years with a figure of around 5000 homeless, which is less methodologically fundamental. But let's say like this. But the homeless people, you can imagine, they have no paper identities. And so on. They are not voting, they are not so many to represent mass to move around in order to manipulate in the election periods. So, who cares about couple of hundreds of people? So, time to time, the local authorities are paying attention. So we have some shelters for them some marginal and basical services. But if you recognise this group, then you have to find*

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[311] The squatting does not relate to "right to the city" movements.

[312] They can have a temporary paper document. In Romania, the official ID is in plastic; thus, when someone has a paper document, it is clear that s/he is homeless. However, when you have one of these, you might have problems getting a job. Indeed, sometimes some employers prefer not to have a homeless person as an employee.

solution and allocate resources which is lack of willingness of actual administration" (Interviewee EXP1_RO).

Hence, within this perspective, these people experience dehumanization, invisibilization, and inferiorization.

In addition, the media and politics blame them for their living conditions. They often call them in a stigmatized and dehumanised manner. For instance, they were nicknamed *"boschetari"*, alluding to the fact they live under the bushes in the streets and were considered humans of "series b". Some interviewees pointed out that there has been – and still is – a lack of interest and willingness in helping and hearing these people. Moreover, among the population, there is a lack of empathy and a tendency to blame them for their conditions. So, they are completely invisible.

> *"There's a lot of discrimination towards poor people. Ordinary people will blame poor people for being poor and the same thing, I think, in my opinion, at some point the authorities do the same. And they put the blame of being poor or on them. You know, it's they choose this if they would want to go to school and have good jobs, they can do that. But so that's the superficial view, and I think it's like easy. It's an easy view. It's an easy view to sell"* (Interviewee ASS5_RO).

Lastly, the interviewees stated that undocumented people simultaneously experience advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion. As mentioned, the unicity of this group in Bucharest is that most of them are Romanians without a legal document[313]. Indeed, compared to the other countries considered where the undocumented are migrants without legal status, they are mainly Romanians. According to the interviewees, it might be possible that some migrants live undocumented in Romania, but the studies and data on them are few. However, not having a document is a legal exclusion and raises several problems. To begin with, undocumented people cannot benefit from and access social, health, and institutional services. Secondly, they cannot vote and, consequentially, claim rights. It is a problem of self-representation. However, as the undocumented are often homeless, Roma,

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[313] As mentioned, obtaining it in Romania is connected to ownership: only those who own or can legally prove to live in an apartment can have a document.

or destitute people, I already explained how and why they experience abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality.

Nevertheless, abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality can manifest separately. Indeed, the interviewees spotlighted that the elderly and disabled people experience only the former. They stated that these groups are often neglected and ignored. On the one hand, people with diseases or a disability still have issues with being considered part of society and accessing the city. Indeed, there is still a stigma and prejudice over sickness and health problems, such as mental and physical issues, HIV, AIDS, etc. Hence, they have been often hidden and unheard. In addition, the city of Bucharest has no infrastructure for them. On the other side, the elderly are a group that increasingly experiences precarity and vulnerability. They barely make ends meet. They struggle to access services and have a decedent life. Moreover, the developments and changes in Bucharest made it more of a city for younger rather than older people. Hence, they are constantly pushed and ignored. Within this perspective, they feel to be considered only in concomitance with the elections. For instance, the interviewees pointed out that they are seen as voters rather than citizens. So, their needs and request often remain unheard of and unmet.

6.5 London

According to the interviewees, abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality exist in London. However, they tended to differentiate them and spotlighted the former the most. Indeed, they often reported that abyssal exclusion is more evident and entrenched in London. Differently, advanced marginality is hard to grasp due to the city structure. Specifically, the interviewees struggle in drawing specific lines as the London boroughs tend to be socio-economically mixed. Indeed, London has no entirely deprived neighbourhoods or boroughs but rather areas with wealthy households living alongside low-income ones. Thus, the borders between marginalized and wealthy districts are blurred. Nevertheless, the interviewees described abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality as processes and techniques to create the othering.

"They're techniques used to produce the othering. They're fundamental competitive techniques. Why are we better than you? You know? We're better than you because we got more money than you. We're better than you cause we've been here longer. We're better than you because we're white and you're black. We're better than you because we're tall and you're short. We're better than you because you know whatever" (Interviewee ASS12_UK).

Within this perspective, they also underlined how London's magnitude, scale, and structure play a role. Indeed, the more complex society – and city – are the more these processes tend to happen quicker and involve larger proportions of the population. Table 6.5 summarises what emerged.

Table 6.5 – Groups facing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in London

	Abyssal exclusion	Advanced marginality
Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Travellers community	• Processes of invisibilization and dehumanization • Violence, discrimination • Stigma	/
Migrants (asylum seekers, refugees, NRPF people)	• Legally inferiorized • Invisibilization • Dehumanization • Undenounced violence	/
Homeless	• Processes of invisibilization (even if they are visible) • No political intervention	/
Undocumented	• Processes of invisibilization and inferiorization	/
Living in the Council estates and/or gentrified areas	• Unheard residents	• Territorial stigmatization

Concerning abyssal exclusion, the interviewees affirmed that the groups facing it are the Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Travellers community, migrants (i.e., the refugees, asylum seekers, and people with No Recourse to Public Funds), the homeless, and the undocumented.

To begin with, the interviewees mentioned the Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Travellers communities. The United Kingdom grouped all these communities under the same umbrella category and acronym GRT. Thus, when they promulgate policies for the GRT, they refer to all these communities.

"They're often treated jointly in policy discussions and policy documents. One exception is in the education literature, where they are more differentiated against not, not really my area, but. Different strategies, partly because they have slightly different kind of levels of outcome, although they're both very much at the bottom of the league table" (Interviewee EXP2_UK).

Regardless of this common category, the interviewees pointed out that they have different histories and features (e.g., concerning the culture, lifestyle, housing arrangement, country of origins, etc.). Within this perspective, the interviewees also stressed the differences in their awareness and willingness in engaging in social organization or politics to improve their living and working conditions. In this specific differentiation, the interviewees underlined how the involvement and recognition of the Roma community differ from the Gypsies and Irish Travellers. Indeed, the latter raised their issues and needs over time, while the Roma seems less able to express their will. According to the interviewees, it might be because the members of this community come from abroad (mainly Central and Easter European countries). Indeed, before the expansion of the European Union towards Easter countries, few people identified themselves as Roma.

"The current definition of Roma community in the UK is very much linked to that migrant Roma community from Central Eastern Europe, who are predominantly coming to the UK us EU migrants. Obviously, there is a small pocket of community who came to the UK prior to the EU expansion as asylum seekers and refugees and they actually mainly settled in London" (Interviewee ASS10_UK).

Thus, it has a twofold impact on their social and political participation and integration. Firstly, they are not British citizens. Thus, as subjected to migration legislation, they struggle with the demand for rights and the reception of benefits. Moreover, as they are not British, they experience difficulties in learning a new language and system. Within this perspective, the Gipsies and Irish Traveller communities are advantaged as they are recognized as citizens (and, thus, access the welfare), speak the language, and know how to claim their rights. Secondly, as the Roma community comes from abroad, they might encounter even more barriers and discrimination than Gipsies and Irish travellers because of their appearance and traditions. Indeed, even if the members of the Roma community are better

treated and accepted compared to their countries of origin, they still face levels of prejudice and stereotypes in the government, local, and working environment.

> *"You know, as I said, although things are better for Roma in London, there are still high levels, you know, there are still levels of prejudice, of stereotypes, you know, against us. And also the, you know, this is matter, you know, at political level, you know, at local level we see with so you know staff working for local Council having this you know negative opinions and so on. And therefore, we see, for example, councils, local councils in London which are, you know more open which make efforts to make sure that marginalised communities are represented. But equally we see local Councils who make absolutely no extra efforts around that and more than that, who don't see who, you know, Had views which expressed that well, things like "You can't really work with these people, so why should we make efforts and so on", you know, so even like, you know, negative attitude, not just ignorance, not just ignorance, but negative, you like, you know, so so. Yeah, it it. You know that that sort of abyssal thing, which of it is happening in in regard to us. As I said, it's not a general thing, but it happens"* (Interviewee ASS9_UK).

However, as many Roma arrived in the UK to escape situations of violence and discrimination, they struggle to trust the British authorities and ask for help.

> *"The European Roma were very much marginalised back in their countries of origin and sort of they were coming to the UK with those experiences of racism, exclusion, you know, and that distrust to police to service. They didn't directly seek support from services at the start because they didn't, they didn't know that they can trust them"* (Interviewee ASS10_UK).

Regardless of these differences, the Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Travellers community is still highly marginalized, excluded, and discriminated against in education, employment, health, and the criminal justice system. Indeed, several interviewees denounced how they often lack services, benefits, and facilities. For instance, they often live in unsafe and appalling housing conditions. Technically, each council should provide safe sides and caravans for Gypsies and Travelers, but, in practice, it is not always guaranteed, and what constitutes a secure area is questionable. Other interviewees stressed the issues related to the gender gap, health, and education. For instance, as the Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Travellers communities have a patriarchal tradition, they often marry or have children young. It impacts the possibility of women pursuing studies or finding an occupation. In addition to these cultural reasons, it is not unusual for youth members of this community

to drop out of education at the beginning of secondary school because of discrimination and bullying. Hence, it also has repercussions concerning mental health and social interactions[314]. However, although these situations are well-known, the policies to fill these gaps are still few and incomplete. Thus, the interviewees affirmed that this community faces abyssal exclusion as it is often neglected and unheard.

> *"The Roma community wasn't part of the discussions at, you know, none of the points really, even when you know, let's say the community, there were, you know, complaints about the community in certain local authorities or in terms of how to best engage with them in relation to their schools and how to support them. You know, they may have been consulted at the very, you know, local scale, but obviously that would have been mostly through interpreters and stuff like that, but I think you know the UK got better at including, you know, the voices of the people in within the policies"* (Interviewee ASS10_UK).

Within this perspective, the interviewees often mentioned the relevance of the presence of organizations that work with and help this community to raise awareness and claim their rights.

Moreover, they are highly stigmatized and treated with suspect by the authorities.

> *"There was a traveller funeral in the borough and the local police went around all the shops in the area and they said that, they told shopkeepers to not sell alcohol to anyone that they believe to be part of this community. Which is illegal. I mean, they got found to be illegal. It's out and out illegal discrimination. But again, nothing happened. There was no accountability and there was none to speak up"* (Interviewee ASS7_UK).

Nonetheless, the interviewees stated that the Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Travellers communities do not have a specific area where they live.

> *"There is no specific area, for example, where Roma lives in London. But Roma will tend to live in the most, sort of in the poorest places in London, for example. And at the same time, in those places you will also see lots of other like Eastern European migrants, for example. Yeah. And they will be, those people will live there mostly because of the low, lower rents, you know, so the cost of the rent is a bit lower and also because of them the commuting infrastructure. Yeah. So, for example, if there is a, you knon, a metro line, a tube line, which sort of travels to, through places where there are loads of jobs available for low skilled migrants, for example, then you will see. So, this is for example if you look at the Central line metro line which goes through sort of East of London where there is a high concentration of Eastern European*

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[314] https://travellermovement.org.uk/policy-and-publications.

communities, but also other migrant communities, you will see that travels across central London and especially across, through different areas with a lot of where a lot of construction works is happening. So then. Then you will see that lots of you know the communities have naturally, you know, looked to find rent around, you know, that this line around the line, so they can go to work. And also you know that you know it match also the prices as well. Now the prices obviously in East London went up quite a lot but, you know, then then we've seen a migration of, of people moving, for example, to other parts of London where the rent was cheaper" (Interviewee ASS9_UK).

Secondly, according to the interviewees, migrants experience abyssal exclusion. By "migrant", I grouped the refugees or asylum seekers and the people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) because they have a parallel or different support system compared to British citizens. Within this perspective, they all face abyssal exclusion as they are considered inferior in legal and welfare terms, and struggle to demand their needs and claim their rights. "*I say those groups potentially feel like silenced, don't have much of a voice*" (Interviewee EXP5_UK). Nevertheless, they experience these dynamics differently and with specific peculiarities. Indeed, the refugees or asylum seekers have a parallel support system, which has fewer funds and levels of help than the rest of the population. Thus, it is often not enough to live with dignity. Moreover, whilst the government processes their claim, refugees or asylum seekers cannot work. Thus, they live in conditions of precarity for all the time of the checking, which often takes more than one year. In addition, the immigration asylum process has become more complex and restricted. Thus, as they often do not know their rights and who to ask for information, they tend to be cautious and circumspect in their choices. For instance, they might avoid applying for benefits or denouncing any violence because they fear their application will be stopped or withdrawn. Of course, these dynamics reinforce a sense of invisibility, which results in even extremer forms of exclusion and dehumanisation. On the other hand, the people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) similarly face abyssal exclusion as they do not have access the welfare and do not have a voice. As defined in section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, person subject to immigration control cannot claim public funds (benefits and housing assistance) unless an exception applies. Thus, people with No Recourse to Public Funds encounter and

face more barriers to having a voice and being heard. This policy mostly affects children within these families, as they are more likely to grow up in poverty.

> "Although it's a kind of blanket ban that applies to all migrants, what we've seen, I think what we see through the sort of particularly through the qualitative work, but also relating to some of some other researchers, is that those who are most likely to be affected are families with children. Because obviously, children more generally are more likely to be in poverty than, say, working adults and pensioners. And some of that is to do with, I mean for pensioners, some of that is the protection comes from obviously the kind of benefits yeah but but anyway, yeah, I think I think there's enough other evidence to show that that particularly families with children are at risk, but also families where you know single parent households and ethnic minorities, those who and those with the disability, who face kind of who would already, who would already face kind of inequality" (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

Moreover, due to this policy, the interviewees denounced the risk of ending up undocumented. Within this framework, the councils and social organization play a role to fill the gaps produced by the legislation.

> "In London, there are high levels of migrant communities, obviously. So there that is quite those, some of those sorts of issues are quite noticeable. As a result, I suppose that this infrastructure of support mechanisms has developed a bit more to kind of both in terms of local government actors to sort of compensate for the fact that some families don't have access to Social Security benefits. But also from the perspective of NGOs that have kind of developed to fill that gap and address some of those differences" (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

Furthermore, within the discourse over immigrants, some of the participants denounced how different has been the treatments and attitudes towards Ukrainian migrants. In this regard, they spotlighted some elements of racism when it comes to championing some white cause. "If I compare to, for example, the huge influx of donations towards Ukrainian migrants coming to the UK, obviously the causes are different. They were invaded. But I do think there are limits of racism when it comes to championing some white cause compared to another one" (Interviewee ASS2_UK).

Thirdly, the interviewees described the homeless as the "invisible" for excellence. However, they also denounced how their invisibility is visible around London.

> "I would question what we mean by invisible. To me, it's someone's, if I'm walking through this park and I see people sleeping on a bench, sleeping rough to me, that's quite visible.

Whether anyone's doing anything about it, it's another matter. But to me, that's not invisible. That's really visible" (Interviewee ASS8_UK).

They experience abyssal exclusion as they are neglected, unheard, and ignored. They often do not have choice or control over their lives. Within this perspective, the interviewees stressed the lack of engagement of this group in social and political issues. For instance, even in the development of solutions to improve their lives, they are often overlooked or not considered. Thus, the delivered and existing pathways are often too generic. Hence, for this reason, homeless people are more likely to fail in pursuing them as these pathways are not tailored and co-produced. Therefore, some interviewees denounced the lack of interest of the institutions in involving this group in these debates as problematic. Within this perspective, they also showed that homelessness is a matter of political will by reporting how the government managed it during the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, during this period, the British government promoted a policy, called "Everyone in", that housed all the rough sleepers in London. It allows getting accurate numbers of this phenomenon and contacting the unrepresented and hidden homeless (for instance, women).

> *"That it is actually a matter of political will, it isn't about these being impossible or intractable social problems, it is just about political will. And then sadly, you know the post, the end of the COVID restrictions, they are emerging again, which is, I mean, in in some cases it's because people weren't. The follow through in terms of the other support that people need was not provided. So, you know if perhaps part of the either that they had acquired whilst on the streets or perhaps part of the reason for them being on the streets was a mental health or drug or alcohol problem, of course, if that isn't actually effectively treated and addressed then they're going to end up back on the streets in a fairly short period of time. Some of it was that. Some of it is just that there's always a flow of people onto the streets and unless you've got very effective systems for meeting those people's needs, who you will kind of quickly repopulate the streets, sadly"* (Interviewee EXP2_UK).

Nevertheless, this scheme did not provide any specific pathway or other services to integrate this group of people. Thus, as soon as this policy terminated – in concomitance with the end of the pandemic emergency – homelessness appeared again.

Lastly, the interviewees affirmed that the undocumented people face abyssal exclusion.

"They published it in January 2020, which tried to estimate the number of undocumented migrants living in the UK, so they estimated it was around, I think 600, between 600 and 700,000 undocumented migrants at the end of 2017. OK, there was. And that includes about 215,000 children born to undocumented migrants" (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

They are invisible as they are hidden and scared to be found and deported. Thus, they avoid contacting authorities or social services, even when they need help. It led to the risk of being exploited, abused, and victimized. Consequentially, they experience abyssal exclusion as they are invisible and dehumanized. In addition, they are more likely to be underpaid in the labour market and live in unsafe and unhealthy environments.

"If you're undocumented, obviously you can't work lawfully, and they're a lot of criminal or quite heavy criminal sanctions, both for employers and employees. But also, you have restrictions on access to health services. So, you're subject to the NHS charging regime for hospital care. So there's a huge problem with, for example, women who are undocumented not being able to being charged for maternity care, for example. You know, going into hospital having a birth and then having been sent with a massive bill" (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

Moreover, some interviewees reported that several qualitative studies described their experiences and denounced the role of policies in creating these conditions. Indeed, over time, more and more economic and legislative barriers to regularisation have been put into place.

"A lot of I think a lot of research also shows how policy decisions create undocumented and you know and so we've I've talked about some of that in terms of creating barriers to regularisation. I think the best example, the most recent example of that is, is Brexit, because here you have, you know, millions of people who've been living legally in the UK who suddenly have had to register their status. We don't know how many of them have been left undocumented, but it's probably going to be quite a sizable population. o the Migration Observatory did various papers in the run up to Brexit sort of saying that, you know, even with the best system in the world, even if you get 10% of people who don't apply, there's still hundreds of thousands" (Interviewee EXP7_UK).

In addition, some interviewees provocatively affirmed that, concerning political participation, most people face barriers in claiming their needs and preferences. For instance, in urban planning or decision-making, the voices that matter are not always the ones of residents but rather the ones of developers or councils.

"I would say the majority of the population are invisible, if the if that is your definition around what it what is accepted politically. I would say that most of us are not accepted politically whatsoever because if we were then we would be able to participate within the society in which we are living. To have all if, if. If one experience has multiple barriers to being able to participate and clearly does not have a voice in most situations and that applies, I would say that applies to the majority. So, I mentioned community groups earlier and how that can affect us, that is community groups, whether they are any of these or whether they are none of those, you know,. The white men will do not fall into any of these categories but still feel strongly that sense of exclusion because the political system doesn't want to hear their voice. So generally within the UK, one can go to meetings like that, the local authority might have to hear from people or the Mayor of London has to hear from people. And still we live in a situation where a very small number of white men, not white men. Yes, it is. A white men gets invited to those situations" (Interviewee ASS8_UK).

Within this perspective, the interviewees also remarked that the Black, Asian, and minority ethnic groups (BAME) face an adding layer. Indeed, even if they are not invisible at the state level and framed within the Equality Act (2010), they still are overrepresented in the contexts of deprivation and unseen in certain situations. According to the interviewees, in some contexts, there is still the tendency to consider them inferior and relegate them to lower and unsafe jobs. The interviewees exemplified this feeling of inferiority by reporting the death rate of this group within the NHS during the Covid pandemic. Other examples are that BAME people are less likely to get a promotion than white people and still experience episodes of racism and discrimination. Within this perspective, some interviewees pointed out how this group is still considered subhuman and inferior.

On the other hand, as mentioned, advanced marginality is hard to grasp in London. The interviewees stated the presence of economic divisions within the city but underlined that the boundaries are blurred. Indeed, they affirmed that, in each borough, there are areas with more deprivation and fewer services than others. Nevertheless, there are no ghettos in the American sense. Within this perspective, the interviewees often affirmed that it is possible to find wealthy and low-income families coexisting in the same neighbourhood or even on the same street. Hence, the interviewees stated that London is a varied city where each neighbourhood has a microenvironment with good and bad areas, which might be on the

same street. Regardless of this closeness, they might have different living and working conditions but still reside in the same area.

> *"It's particularly acute in London because there is so much wealth in London and yet in Hackney, 48% of children are growing up in poverty after housing costs, in Tower Hamlets is about 52%. So, the extent of poverty in London, despite the enormous wealth in the city, is obviously, completely disgraceful and morally appalling, but it's direct. But in a in a. In a causal sense, it's tied to London's role within the global economy, but then also how the government responds to that basically"* (Interviewee EXP5_UK).

> *"Then within each borough, all of those ones that I mentioned, the richer ones as well as the poorer ones within each of those boroughs, there's pockets of massive wealth and there's pockets of massive poverty [..] I think there's, I think there's massive, massive differences. Even if you live in the same borough, I think your life will look fundamentally different depending on, depending on wealth, income, intergenerational family status, depending on whether you're white or you're black or brown or what whatever your ethnic heritage might be"* (Interviewee ASS3_UK).

Hence, the interviewees often reported the example of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to explain the coexistence of different socio-economic households in the same district. As the adjective "Royal" spoilers, it has always been one of the wealthiest areas in London (but even in the whole United Kingdom). However, it also hosts social housing and poorer accommodation where low-income households live. Indeed, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea hosted the Grenfell Tower, the council block burnt in 2017. Thus, the interviewees mentioned this specific borough because it is a perfect example of the coexistence of different socio-economic households.

According to the interviewees, this mixture might be due to the historical division of the city and the development of social estates. Indeed, historically, London has had boroughs for wealthy households - and their servants - and others related to the factories and docks where the working class lived. For instance, the boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond, Hammersmith and Fulham, or Westminster have always been areas for wealthy households. However, as they employed several people to manage these estates and serve their families, the lower classes working there used to live in the same areas. Thus, regardless of the extreme diversity of their living conditions, they cohabited in the same

borough. On the other hand, the areas closer to the docks – namely Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney, and Waltham Forest – or Southern of Thames – namely Lambeth, Southwark, and Lewisham – were more low-income or working-class neighbourhoods. They used to be known for the slums and host multi-ethnic and migrant communities, especially from Asia. Now, due to gentrification, they are changing.

Moreover, the interviewees spotlighted how council estates might have been a mechanism to avoid segregation and consent mixture. Historically built after the II World War, they used to house most of the population. Indeed, in the beginning, they represented a qualitatively good solution to the need for housing, combined with the slum clearance programmes. Each borough has developed its council estates; thus, they were all over London indistinctly.

However, since the 1970s and 1980s, some changes occurred with the Thatcher government. She introduced the so-called "right to buy" policy, which allowed people living in social housing to buy their houses through a discount. However, even if it gave them ownership, this legislation has some flipsides. To begin with, it became harder to manage social estates. Secondly, in concomitance with selling these housings, no other new ones were built or planned. Thus, it resulted in a shortage of social housing. Consequentially, accessing these arrangements became harder, restricting people's possibility of having good-quality housing. Thirdly, some people who bought their houses moved out and started renting these apartments to a higher race. Hence, rather than having a mixture, it created an increasing number of marginalized and vulnerable tenants and areas. In addition, during the Thatcher government, some councils transferred their ownership to Private Housing Associations. They engaged in renovation projects on these social estates by knocking them down or replacing them with other buildings.

Later, another phenomenon that is changing and shaping London is gentrification. As mentioned previously, the British capital is an alpha city and a centre of finance which attracts investments and people worldwide. Consequentially, the construction and development of financial and business areas in the city centre made more appealing the nearby areas, which used to house working-class or low-income residents.

"But I think there's almost the kind of diaspora of poorer people to an extent, because in inner city London is getting to the point where it's massive, going through massive gentrification and regeneration and change. [..] I think the kind of fragmentation is likely to have deepened and maybe, gradually, London's shifting more towards being a bit more like cities like Paris, where the poor, poorer pushed out to the boundaries, but I think we're at the early stages of that and it's complex" (Interviewee ASS3_UK).

Thus, several households started to struggle to make ends meet in these neighbourhoods and decided to move further out to find more affordable housing and areas. The interviewees pointed out that this process of gentrification is happening in each borough of London, but it is more visible in Hackney, Newham, Southwark, Camden, and Lambeth. Indeed, some neighbourhoods in these areas are becoming more expensive and attractive due to their closeness to the city centre or the tube. Within this framework, some interviewees also reported how some of these districts described as "bad areas" (e.g., Hackney, Brixton, Peckham, etc.) in the past are now frequented and inhabited by wealthy people.

"So, where previously you would have a real clustering of poorer people in places like Hackney, which is still the case to an extent. There's to an extent a kind of a social, yeah, kind of social cleansing. And so there, there is certainly still massive inequality, there's certainly still massive a, a large number of poorer people. And there is still, you know, to the credit of the local authorities in these places There's still a lot of social Housing. So there's a lot of provision for those who need housing and who are poorer. But there's more demand than there is supply, and so a lot of people are being pushed out of London basically. [..] It's an interesting question I would. Say like. Young people that are work within Hackney still refers to Hackney as the ghetto due to certain kinds of characteristics. They're still entrenched poverty. There's still kind of territorialism that's associated with those kinds of places, there's still higher than average rates of violence and so on and so on. But it's a weird situation of parallel lives to an extent where there's there'll be a square mile of Hackney that a young person might refer to as a ghetto, but within which, like rich white people, also live and there might be a couple of expensive cafes in that same place" (Interviewee ASS3_UK).

In addition, some interviewees denounced how this process of gentrification happens as soon as a community reshapes an area known for being deprived. For instance, it happened in Notting Hill, Brixton, Hackney, Peckham, or Stratford, where developers or wealthier households start to move in and push further out the residents.

Therefore, due to the regeneration, demolition, and rebuilding of the council estates and gentrification, several families and communities moved across and outside London. Indeed, as these procedures of regeneration often took decades to be completed, communities are spread out and lose their bonds and networks. Moreover, as these developments should house people from different economic backgrounds, they often change the socio-economic and community fabric of the neighbourhood. In addition, as they are new and expensive, they often tend to house more wealthy people rather than vulnerable ones.

Hence, these changes have a twofold consequence. On the one hand, since the decline of social housing, their perception and image worsened. They became stigmatized because of their conditions and the communities living there. Often described as areas of violence, deviance, and criminality, this narrative supported and pushed their dismantlement and their residents' relocation. Notorious examples are the area of Elephant and Castle, the Aylesbury, and Heygate estates.

> "I would say some like social housing estates would have, like quite a bad reputation and they might feel like stigma, like a lot of stigmas towards saying like "I live in this area with a bad reputation". I think a bit, but I don't think this necessarily like policies that like target these areas now, but I think there might be a perception of like "I live in one of these states with the bad reputation". It's not like that clearly defined, like the Council estate or social housing estates, which I could show you someone, and I suppose a little bit, but it's not like in America, where it's the whole area. It is not that divided" (Interviewee EXP5_UK).

Indeed, they are often seen and described as pockets of deprivation and deviance. These images and reputations might be due to the socio-economic conditions of these districts or the communities because they are often migrants or BAME groups. For instance, some interviewees affirmed that they might have issues finding a job or sending their CVs because of their postcodes or surnames. On the other hand, if they live in council estates or are on benefits, they are described as lazy and blamed for living in these conditions. For this reason, sometimes people avoid complaining because they fear facing an eviction. Thus, they keep living in unsafe and unhealthy housing situations because of fear.

On the other hand, a second consequence is the concentration of low-income households and communities. Indeed, the interviewees spotlighted that the relocation of social estates

and the increasing costs in London are pushing further out these poorer families. They often move towards cheaper and with fewer public transportations districts. However, according to the interviewees, these zones cannot be defined or labelled as ghettos in the American or French sense. Moreover, even compared to other English cities like Liverpool or Manchester, London has no division by community or ethnic neighbourhoods.

Hence, in certain circumstances and contexts, there is a tendency to cluster certain groups in specific areas. Within this perspective, according to the interviewees, abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality tend to converge in the council estates.

> "*There is a connexion between people who are being othered and then sort of, this gentrification of London and driving people out and just not caring for their lives. It's just not, you know, even when there's petitions and there's protests.* [..] *So all the, all the people that were living in it that were that were from underprivileged backgrounds, they had collectively they tried to make their voice known about the fact that this building was not secure, that there was these massive sort of safety hazards because of the cladding. So, they tried to do that and all there's all these petitions and all these letters that went in, they were completely ignored, and the cladding was there simply to prettify the building, the apartments so that it would be, it would look glamorous*" (Interviewee ASS5_UK).

6.6 Comparison and differences

Summing up, the question that started this chapter was whether and who is experiencing "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality" in European cities. According to the interviewees, these phenomena exist in the capital cities analysed, and different communities experience them. Table 6.6 attempts to summarise it.

According to the interviewees, sometimes abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality converge and embed with each other while, in other cases, they manifest separately. It mainly depends on the urban policies, structure, and socio-economic fabric of each city.

Within this perspective, some areas are tendentially more exposed to advanced marginality than others. For example, the neighbourhoods with higher rates of social/public housing, lower socio-economic households or a migrant/minority background are more likely to be quoted as an example of marginality. Nonetheless, it does not necessarily lead to the

invisibilization or inferiorization of the residents. On the other hand, though, some groups or communities are more recurrently described as abyssally excluded. They are the homeless, elderly, disabled people and women who migrated from a non-European country. As they do not live in specific areas, they do not reinforce spatial marginalization.

On the other side, the communities and contexts experiencing simultaneously abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality be the same or different groups and areas based on the city analysed and the type of exclusion faced. Indeed, there are some groups and contexts, which are specific to a singular city, and others that are more recurrent. Concerning the latter groups, the interviewees individuated common communities and areas experiencing advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion. For instance, they mentioned the Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller community, the homeless, the undocumented, and people living in social estates or deprived neighbourhoods. However, the interviewees described their experiences differently. Thus, for instance, the Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller community face simultaneously abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in Rome and Bucharest. However, the dynamics and mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization they face differs because of legal, social, and historical reasons.

Table 6.6 – Groups facing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality in Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London

Groups	IT		BE		SE		RO		UK	
	AE	AM	AE	AM	AE	AM	AE	AM	AE	AM
Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller community	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Squatters	X	X					X	X		
People living in public housing	X	X		X		X			X	X
Homeless	X		X		X		X	X	X	
Undocumented (Victims of exploitation)	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Elderly and disabled people	X						X			
Addicted people	X						X			
People living in specific neighbourhoods		X		X		X		X		
Female non-European migrants	X		X	X	X				X	

Dom community			X						
Migrants and refugees					X	X			X	
Poor			X				X			

In addition, besides the peculiarities of each city and context, the interviewees spotlighted some recurrent mechanisms that impact and increase the likelihood of experiencing advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion.

To begin with, the interviewees pointed out the central role of policies, media, and politicians in drawing lines between who is in and who is out and spreading negative narratives on the latter. For instance, the interviewees reported the example of laws or regulations that push people into precarious – or even undocumented – situations (e.g., the Decreto Renzi-Lupi in Italy, the documentation process in Romania, the NRPF regulation in the United Kingdom, etc.). On the other hand, the interviewees also underlined the role of media and the political rhetoric behind the discourses on marginalized communities and areas. For instance, they stated that the media report only the bad aspects of a group or events that happened in specific areas or estates rather than giving a more comprehensive picture. In doing so, they aliment a distortive perception of these zones and communities. Related to that, the processes of stigmatization and discrimination play a nodal role in reinforcing and justifying exclusion and marginalization.

Moreover, the interviewees spotlighted the increasing relevance of having a voice regarding urban decision-making processes. Indeed, they pointed out that residents are often neglected in these discussions, while the power of constructors is predominant. It is concerning as residents struggle to claim their needs and promote their territories. In addition, the urban changes happening due to processes of beautification and gentrification seem to play a role in silencing the residents and pushing them further out. Within this perspective, some interviewees pointed out that these dynamics might not have yet created enclaves of poverty and marginalization. However, if they keep shaping the cities, they might lead to situations that can be interpreted as advanced marginality on a spatial level and abyssal exclusion in terms of invisibilization of the residents.

Chapter 7 – Can European statistical tools capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion? If not, what is missing?

This chapter attempts to answer the third question of the research, i.e., whether the European statistical tools (AROPE and the EU-SILC database) can capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion and, if not, what is missing. Within this perspective, the chapter is divided into three paragraphs. The first one compares the statistical analyses conducted for the first question (Chapter 3) with the insights and considerations of the interviews for the second one (Chapters 5 and 6). The second paragraph reports how the interviewees would improve AROPE by adding some dimensions. In addition, they also suggested adding more specific variables in the EU-SILC database to enhance the comprehension of the dynamics and processes embedded with social exclusion and inequality. The last paragraph proposes new indicators, variables, and data collection to achieve this purpose.

7.1 What can AROPE and EU-SILC grasp?

In Chapter 3, I described the European indicator AROPE and the dataset EU-SILC. In addition to their features, advantages, and disadvantages, I stated how the literature review already spotlighted room for improvement of these statistical tools. Indeed, to begin with, the EU-SILC database should better standardize the gathering and sampling of the involved interviewees. Secondly, the EU-SILC database should improve the data at regional and urban levels to guarantee and allow deeper analyses. Thirdly, the variables offered by EU-SILC are insufficient to comprehend the collateral phenomena of exclusion. In addition to the several variables on living conditions, it should include more specific questions such as the exposure to organized crime, addictions, segregation, or discrimination. Fourth, notwithstanding the already advanced composition, the AROPE indicator could be enriched with political, services, and social aspects of social exclusion and inequality.

Fifthly, the deprivation index and the criterion for jobless households should be reconsidered and adjusted to the societal differences among European countries. Currently, the political assumption that promoting economic growth and labour market participation is sufficient to reduce material deprivation or the number of jobless households might be incomplete. It might omit or underestimate other aspects of social exclusion and inequality. Lastly, the AROPE indicator cannot define the degree of exclusion that individuals are experiencing, as everyone who falls in one of its components is considered excluded. Thus, it might be advantageous to differentiate the degree of exclusion to grasp the different types and levels of disparities among and within European countries.

Moreover, in the same chapter, I reported the share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the European Union and their socio-demographic characteristics. According to the data, in 2020, 22% of Europeans faced AROPE. Women tended to be slightly more likely than men to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion (22% vs 21%). The categories most exposed to these dynamics were people under 18 (especially, when their parents have primary education attainment), unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially, those not coming from the European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels.

In addition, the EU-SILC database provides some variables that allowed us to deepen the struggles that people at risk of poverty or social exclusion might experience. According to these data, they were more likely to face economic difficulties, have health issues, and have less social life than Europeans not experiencing AROPE. On the other hand, looking at the housing and neighbourhood conditions, the differences between those experiencing AROPE and those not at risk were less evident. Nevertheless, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion were more likely to live in overcrowded households.

Differently, in Chapters 5 and 6, I reported the perspectives of the organizations and experts that participated in the interviews conducted in five European cities (i.e., Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London) on social exclusion and inequality and their severer shades. Regardless of the differences and peculiarities of each city and context, the

interviewees tended to define six dimensions through which these dynamics manifest, perdure, and reinforce each other. They are economic and resources; education; environment and housing-related; political voice and bureaucracy; information and access to services; and health. In addition, concerning the people and communities involved, the considered European cities have similarities as well as differences. To begin with, in all the involved capitals, the interviewees mentioned the minorities (e.g., the Roma, Gypsy, and Travellers communities, migrants, or the Black, Asian, and Minorities Ethnicity), the elderly, and the homeless as the ones more at risk and disproportionally overrepresented in exclusion and unequal conditions. A second similarity among the cities analysed is that the interviewees pointed out a "gender gap" in being more likely to experience and face these situations. They often underlined that this "gender bias" is mainly due to the community or family of origin rather than a structural issue. On the other hand, the cities analysed presented some differences concerning the groups exposed to poverty and exclusion. For instance, in Rome and Bucharest, children were (and increasingly became) at risk of exclusion, inequality, and disadvantage. It is particularly concerning due to the possibility of intergenerational passage of vulnerabilities over time and in adulthood.

Moreover, the interviewees reported the socio-economic and individual characteristics that make people or communities more likely to be at risk of exclusion and inequality. They are: having a low socio-economic background; living in a disadvantaged area; having low education; working in a low-skilled position; not owing an accommodation; having a migrant background; not speaking the language; facing bureaucratic barriers; being single parents or large families (often overcrowded); being unemployed or on welfare; and having specific individual characteristics (health, sexual orientation, religion, etc.).

Furthermore, in Chapter 6, I described the communities and areas that, according to the interviewees, experience severer shades of inequality and exclusion, i.e., abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality. Some groups and contexts are specific to a singular city (e.g., the elderly, disabled, or addicted people), while others are more recurrent. Concerning the latter groups, the interviewees individuated common communities and areas experiencing advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion in all the cities studied. For instance, they

mentioned the Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller communities, the homeless, the undocumented, and people living in social estates or deprived neighbourhoods. Indeed, these communities experience abyssal exclusion as they are often dehumanized and inferiorized in the public discourse. The interviewees stated that these groups are often considered and treated as sub-humans to whom only some rights and services are guaranteed. Moreover, they face discrimination at several levels (e.g., at individual, social, and institutional levels) and, thus, are more likely to experience violence. In addition, they are often invisible in legal terms and, thus, their voices remained unheard and ignored. On the other hand, these communities experience advanced marginality as they often live at the edge of society. They fit in the characterization described by Wacquant (2008). The neighbourhoods they inhabit are often stigmatized, degraded, alienated, and disconnected from the rest of the city.

Therefore, comparing the quantitative and qualitative analyses, it emerged that AROPE lacks some central dimensions, and that EU-SILC should provide more specific variables and improve the gathering and sampling of the involved interviewees. Indeed, AROPE can capture only the economic and working conditions, while cannot grasp those exclusions based on individual, contextual, educational, political, and social aspects. Table 7.1 attempts to summarize it.

Table 7.1 – Comparison between the dimensions of exclusion and inequality mentioned by the interviewees and what AROPE can captures

Dimensions of social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees	What AROPE captures
Economic and resources (e.g., wealth, income, social networks, job position, status, etc.)	At the risk of poverty after social transfer Severely materially deprived Living in a household with a very low work intensity
Education (e.g., level of attainment, quantity and quality of schools, dropouts, etc.)	/
Environment and housing-related (e.g., overcrowded households, quality and quality of public housing, etc.)	/
Political voice and bureaucracy (e.g., discrimination, not having a voice, not engagement, not clarity of the system)	/
Information and access to services (e.g., digital gap, quality and quantity of services, geographical isolation, etc.)	/

Health (e.g., psycho-physical wellness, having interactions, individual conditions, access to sanity, etc.)	Partially covered by "severely materially and socially deprived"

Although AROPE does not include all the dimensions mentioned by the interviewees, EU-SILC has the variables to cover some of these aspects. Indeed, within the economic and resources dimension, it encompasses information related to the job position, unemployment, and income but cannot provide data on wealth, social network, status, etc. Regarding education, EU-SILC has variables on the educational attainment level and school participation but does not have information concerning the quality and quantity of schools available. Regarding the environmental and housing-related dimension, EU-SILC provides some data concerning the household type and size, the overcrowded situations, the arrears, and bills related to the accommodation. On the other hand, it does not have the variables related to the environment and areas where they live. Concerning the dimension of political voice and bureaucracy, EU-SILC does not provide any information. Regarding access to information and services, it has variables related to the type of benefits, childcare, and allowance received but does not include data concerning their quality and ease of access. Lastly, concerning the dimension of health, EU-SILC has some variables related to life satisfaction, general health, reasons not to access sanitarian services, social participation, and chronic illness.

Furthermore, comparing the quantitative and qualitative analyses, it emerged that EU-SILC should enhance and enlarge its sample. Indeed, according to the interviewees, it does not mention and consider all the categories exposed to exclusion and inequality. Table 7.2 attempts to summarize it.

Table 7.2 – Comparison between groups experiencing social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees and what EU-SILC can captures

Groups experiencing social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees	What EU-SILC captures
Roma, Gyspy, and Travellers	/
Migrants	Partially (it does not capture refugees)
Locals	✓
Elderly	✓
Black, Asian, and Minorities Ethnicity	/

Children	✓
Homeless	/
Women	✓
LGBTQIA+[315]	/

In addition, the interviewees described the characteristics and processes that make a people or community more likely to be at risk of exclusion and inequality. Hence, table 7.3 attempts to report which of them EU-SILC can grasp and capture with its variables.

Table 7.3 – Comparison between the characteristics and processes that make a people or community more likely to be at risk of exclusion and inequality and what EU-SILC can captures

Characteristics that make people or communities more likely to be at risk of exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees	What EU-SILC captures
Low socio-economic background	✓
Disadvantaged area	/
Low education	✓
Low-skilled jobs	✓
Not owing an accommodation	✓
Migrant background	✓
Language	/
Facing bureaucratic barriers	/
Single parents or large families (often overcrowded)	✓
Being unemployed, on welfare, etc	✓
Individual characteristics (health, sexual orientation, religion, etc.)	Partially
Being exposed to criminality, violence, etc.	/

Furthermore, the interviewees mentioned some specific communities and areas experiencing severer shades of inequality and exclusion, i.e., abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality. Although they manifest and include different groups and contexts in each city, I summarized what emerged in Table 6.6 of Chapter 6. Here, table 7.4 attempts to report what EU-SILC can grasp and capture with its variables.

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[315] Even if it might be a too personal aspect to request in a survey, it is essential to understand how and if this community still experience exclusion and discrimination.

Table 7.4 – Comparison between groups experiencing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality according to the interviewees and what EU-SILC can captures

Groups experiencing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality according to the interviewees	What EU-SILC captures
Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller community	/
Squatters	/
People living in public housing	Partially
Homeless	/
Undocumented (Victims of exploitation)	/
Elderly and disabled people	✓
Addicted people	/
People living in specific neighbourhoods	/
Female non-European migrants	Partially
Dom community	/
Migrants and refugees	Partially

Thus, within this perspective, AROPE and EU-SILC cannot capture the severer forms of social exclusion and inequality, such as advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion. Concerning the former, the literature review and discussion over this indicator and dataset already mentioned and spotlighted the lack of information at the urban level (e.g., Ballas et al., 2017; Diaz Dapena et al., 2021). Thus, advanced marginality is hard to grasp as EU-SILC does not provide variables related to socio-spatial division, territorial stigmatization, and cohesion within a neighbourhood or community. On the other hand, regarding abyssal exclusion, it appears that AROPE and EU-SILC can capture the forms of exclusion and inequality embedded in metropolitan sociability (Santos, 2014). Differently, those types of disparity that are beyond the abyssal line and belong to colonial sociability are not grasped and reported (Santos, 2014). Therefore, this comparison remarks the deficiencies of AROPE and the EU-SILC database and spotlights the need for gathering more and better information regarding new vulnerable categories, groups, and communities.

7.2 How to improve AROPE and EU-SILC according to the interviewees?

During the interviews, I asked the participants whether AROPE can photograph social exclusion and inequality or whether it misses some dimensions[316]. Based on their experiences and opinions, the interviewees stated that it can capture only some aspects of these dynamics. Indeed, they underlined that it considers social exclusion and inequality only from an economic perspective. Thus, within this perspective, AROPE represents a "start" as, at least, it can report some dimensions and has the strength to allow the comparison among European countries. On the other hand, the interviewees spotlighted some limits and disadvantages of this indicator.

To begin with, each of the indicators that compose AROPE has some limitations. Firstly, being "at risk of poverty after social transfer" depends on the type and quality of the social protections of a country and where people live. Within this perspective, it is necessary to acknowledge what they provide and the costs of living in a place. Over time – and especially with inflation – the welfare measures do not often match the situations and needs of vulnerable people. Moreover, in the last decades, there has been a rise in groups that ended up in these conditions, a worsening of their deprived situations, and a diversification of the circumstances they experience. Thus, it became harder and harder to frame and catch all the people who fell out. Secondly, some interviewees argued that the items which define a person as "severely materially deprived" are questionable. Indeed, the list is reductive and subjective and might not be aligned or shared by most. Thus, they spotlighted the difference between people not having the resources to make ends meet and those deciding not to pay for services. For instance, some people might not own a car, a washing machine, or a telephone because they do not want to or prioritize other things. Thirdly, the indicator "living in a household with a very low work intensity rate" might be problematic. It risks blaming these low-intensity workers for their conditions. Indeed, AROPE does not question why people work only 20% of their hours. It might be due to several reasons. It might be

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[316] When I asked this question, I described the AROPE indicator and its components.

due to a specific job (e.g., those working in violence centres), a vulnerable position (e.g., being a part-time or rental worker), physical or family/care reasons, etc. In addition, work is not only an economic aspect of people's lives but also a social one. Thus, depending on the type of occupation, it is possible or not to create these social networks or relations. For instance, those working for food delivery platforms can hardly work in a bonding environment. This social aspect of work is relevant in terms of exclusion and, thus, needs to be acknowledged and considered.

Secondly, AROPE and EU-SILC cannot cover all the vulnerable communities and areas affected by social exclusion and inequality. Indeed, the collection and gathering of data do not deepen into specific categories. For instance, EU-SILC does not have information regarding groups like undocumented, minorities, and homeless people. Thus, their experiences and struggles are not covered and considered. Therefore, the lack of these specifics in the EU-SILC dataset makes it impossible to study and report the cases of deep exclusion and inequality that the most marginalized groups face. Due to AROPE composition and EU-SILC data collection, some interviewees affirmed that AROPE might be a valid indicator if applied to the middle class or the typical occidental citizen. In other contexts, it cannot capture and comprehend the complexity of exclusion and inequality.

Thirdly, the interviewees also spotlighted that, even if AROPE focuses only on the economic and working dimension of exclusion and inequality, it still lacks considering the wealth, the precarity, and the incomes related to informal work. Firstly, wealth is essential to comprehend and capture social exclusion and inequality. Within this perspective, being an unemployed or low-intensity worker with economic and financial capital completely differs from being in the same situation but without resources. Secondly, precarity became more evident and present in several job positions. Within this perspective, an increasing number of workers are living in poverty. Lastly, even if it is hard – and almost impossible – to calculate, the incomes related to informal work is relevant because several people – especially the undocumented and marginalized ones – work in these markets or day-by-day jobs.

Fourthly, according to the interviewees, AROPE does not allow to study the processes that lead to exclusion and inequality.

Lastly, the collateral questions related to the environment are incapable to capture the spatial component of exclusion and inequality. For instance, questions like "Do you feel secure walking in the dark in your neighbourhood?" do not catch the complexity of living in disadvantaged or degraded contexts. Contrarily, they might capture the stereotypical imaginaries of these realities.

Therefore, the interviewees spotlighted the necessity of a better and more comprehensive tool to grasp and capture social exclusion and inequality. Thus, they proposed specific dimensions and aspects to add to the ones already present in AROPE. Based on the division previously presented, I schematized these elements in Table 7.5. Moreover, the interviewees underlined that AROPE should be controlled by gender, parents' background and education, and ethnic/migrant background for a more comprehensive image of the communities and processes involved.

Table 7.5 – Dimensions and indicators to add to AROPE according to the interviewees based on the aspects of social exclusion and inequality

Dimensions of social exclusion and inequality according to the interviewees	Indicators to add to AROPE according to the interviewees
Economic and resources	Wealth & assets (e.g., estates, financial, etc.) Items of deprivation based on affordability and not ownership Social aspect of work Energetic poverty Impact of living costs Informal work In-work poverty
Education	Level of attainment Educational poverty Knowing and speaking the language
Environment and housing-related	Housing conditions and composition Living in an owned, rented, or public housing Quality of the neighbourhood Environmental conditions (e.g., air, green areas, etc.)
Political voice and bureaucracy	Having a political voice (and being heard) Experiencing discrimination

	Clarity of the bureaucratic system (having the knowledge and information) Trust in institutions Legal status
Information and access to services	Digital gap Access, quality, quantity, and performance of services Access to green, recreational, cultural, social, sportive spaces Capacity of the welfare
Health	Psycho and physical wellness Social interactions Life satisfaction Chronic illness or disability

In addition, the interviewees stated the relevance of having collateral variables that can describe and picture the related phenomena, such as addictions, criminality, abuse, etc.

Nevertheless, some interviewees spotlighted and reminded the limits of data and mapping. Indeed, as much as they are valuable and practical, numbers and statics cannot deepen and capture all shades of human dynamics. Thus, the interviewees often underlined the need to be careful in using them and explaining phenomena through them. Indeed, data and statistics can be easily manipulated and misread without a contextual and theoretical framework. On the other hand, what is captured might not coincide with the reality. For instance, what is operationalized as "exclusion" or "inequality" might not correspond to what excluded and unequal people experience or define as such. Within this perspective, it is central and fundamental to mingle and deepen these data analyses and indicator construction with qualitative studies.

7.3 Proposals

All these considerations lead us to a question: how could we operationalize these insights? Here, I attempted to propose new variables, indicators, and data collection to photograph and capture social exclusion and inequality in urban contexts. To begin with, through the suggestions offered by the interviewees, I recommend some adjustments to the AROPE indicator and EU-SILC dataset. Secondly, due to the role of space and context in causing and exacerbating social exclusion and inequality, I propose a new indicator specific to the

study of urban disparity. Lastly, I suggest involving local organizations in the data collection.

7.3.1 Adjustments to the AROPE indicator and EU-SILC dataset

Regarding the AROPE and EU-SILC database's adjustments, the literature (e.g., Arora et al., 2015; Peña-Casas, 2011; Ballas et al., 2017; Diaz Dapena et al., 2021; Nolan, Whelan, 2011) and interviewees spotlighted the need for a more comprehensive and multidimensional indicator to better frame these situations. Hence, their improvements concern four aspects: adding specific dimensions to AROPE; making AROPE a scalar index; proposing new variables to the EU-SILC database for the collateral and embedded dynamics (e.g., criminality, addiction, etc.); and including variables related to individual characteristics in the EU-SILC database.

To begin with, as reported by the interviewees, AROPE can only partially capture inequality and social exclusion. Thus, it overlooks some dimensions and shades. As some experts and scholars mentioned (Peña-Casas, 2011), AROPE is a political rather than a statistical measure. However, based on what emerged from the interviewees and study, I suggest adding four dimensions to the ones already existing. Indeed, currently, the AROPE indicator captures the economic aspect of inequality and exclusion and partially the social aspect. I would recommend implementing these two dimensions by inserting a variable related to wealth in the economic one and questions related to psycho-physical health in the social one. In addition, I would suggest incorporating other four dimensions: education, housing conditions, politics, and access to services. Regarding the educational aspect, the interviewees and experts underlined the impact of having at least a secondary level, dropping out of school, and speaking the language of the country of residence. Secondly, housing conditions and environmental aspects increasingly became central issues in experiencing and exacerbating exclusion and inequality. Thus, having good quality accommodation is essential to avoiding facing and reproducing these phenomena. Thirdly, a nodal dimension of social exclusion and inequality is having a political voice. Thus, the interviewees underlined the importance of being able to speak up and not being

discriminated against. Lastly, access to services is another central aspect of experiencing social exclusion and inequality. Indeed, knowing how welfare works and who (and how) to ask for help or information is nodal to tackling and avoiding these phenomena. Otherwise, when people are not familiar with the system and how to reach what they need, they often end up in precarious conditions.

Table 7.6 – Summary of the proposed dimensions and potential indicators (the ones highlighted in green are already present in EU-SILC database, while the ones in red are not and the ones in yellow are from other datasets[317])

Dimensions	Indicators	Questions and answers	Recoding of the single variables	Recoding of the single dimension
Economic and resources	At the risk of poverty after social transfer	At risk of poverty rate: /monetary poverty (AROP); people at risk of poverty, who have an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers). Reference period: income reference period *add wealth		If the sum of these five indicators is equal or higher than 3, the person experiences inequality and exclusion in economic terms.
	Severely materially deprived	HS060: CAPACITY TO FACE UNEXPECTED FINANCIAL EXPENSES Can your household afford an unexpected, required expense (amount to be filled) and pay through its own resources? 1 Yes 2 No HS040: CAPACITY TO AFFORD PAYING FOR ONE WEEK ANNUAL HOLIDAY AWAY FROM HOME Can your entire household afford to go for a week's annual holiday,	1 = 1 (Yes) 2 = 0 (No) If the sum of these questions is equal or higher than 4, s/he experiences severe material deprivation. Thus, 0 - 3 = 0 4 - 9 = 1	Thus, 0 – 2 = 0 3 – 5 = 1

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[317] The variables and questions come from the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS 2016 - https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-quality-of-life-surveys/european-quality-of-life-survey-2016/questionnaire) and the European Social Survey (ESS 9 – 2018 - https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire/).

| | | away from home, including stays in a second dwelling or with friends/relatives?
1 Yes
2 No

HS050: CAPACITY TO AFFORD A MEAL WITH MEAT, CHICKEN, FISH OR VEGETARIAN EQUIVALENT EVERY SECOND DAY
Can your household afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day?
1 Yes
2 No

HH050: ABILITY TO KEEP HOME ADEQUATELY WARM
Is your household able to keep the dwelling comfortably warm during winter, taking into account the insulation of the dwelling and the heating system you have in place?
1 Yes
2 No

HS110: DO YOU HAVE A CAR
Does your household have a car/van for private use?
1 Yes
2 No, cannot afford
3 No, other reason

HD080: REPLACING WORN-OUT FURNITURE
Could you tell me if your household replaces furniture (bed, sofa/dresser, cupboard) when worn out or damaged?
1 Yes
2 No, cannot afford
3 No, other reason | | |
| | Living in a household with a very | People from 0-59 years living in households where the adults (those aged 18-59, but excluding students aged 18-24) worked a | | |

	low work intensity	working time equal or less than 20% of their total combined work-time potential during the previous year *Add specifics on why they work only 20% Does your job allow you to interact and bond with your colleagues? 1 Yes, I can afford it if I want 2 No		
	Impact of living costs/energy poverty	Do you struggle with the increasing living and energy costs? 1 Yes 2 No	1 = 1 (Yes) 2 = 0 (No)	
Education	Level of attainment	PE041: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVEL 000 Less than primary education 100 Primary education 200 Lower secondary education 300 Upper secondary education (not further specified) 400 Post-secondary non tertiary education (not further specified) Only for people 16-34: 440 General education 450 Vocational education 500 Short cycle tertiary 600 Bachelor or equivalent 700 Master or equivalent 800 Doctorate or equivalent	000 – 200 = 1 (Low education) 300 – 800 = 0 (Medium – high education)	If the person has one of them, s/he experiences exclusion and inequality in educational terms.
	Dropouts	PE050: EDUCATION INTERRUPTED OR ABANDONED 1 Yes, one 2 Yes, several 3 No	1 – 2 = 1 (Yes) 3 = 0 (No)	
	Knowing and speaking the language	Do you speak and understand fluently the language of the country where you reside? 1 Yes, I am a native speaker. 2 Yes, I know the language. 3 No.	1 – 2 = 0 (Yes) 3 = 1 (No)	
	Recognition of titles	When you moved to this country, have your education titles been recognized? 1 Yes 2 Yes, but partially 3 No	If they replied 2 -3 to the first question & 1 to the second one, then it is 1.	

Environment	Housing	Otherwise = 0		
		Did it impact negatively your job opportunities? 1 Yes 2 No		
Environment and housing-related	Housing conditions	HH040: LEAKING ROOF, DAMP WALLS/FLOORS/FOUNDATION, OR ROT IN WINDOW FRAMES OR FLOOR Do you have any of the following problems with your dwelling/accommodation? A leaking roof Damp walls/floors/foundation or rot in window frames or floor 1 Yes 2 No *Add: Litter or rubbish on the street Mould Lifts not working Lack of structures for disabled or elderly HS160: PROBLEMS WITH THE DWELLING: TOO DARK, NOT ENOUGH LIGHT Is your dwelling too dark, meaning is there not enough day-light coming through the windows? 1 Yes 2 No	1 = 1 (Yes) 2 = 0 (No) If the sum of these two questions is equal or higher than 1, the housing conditions are bad. Thus, 0 = 0 1 – 2 = 1	If the sum of these five indicators is equal or higher than 3, the person experiences inequality and exclusion in environmental and housing terms. Thus, 0 – 2 = 0 3 – 5 = 1
	Housing composition	HH030: NUMBER OF ROOMS AVAILABLE TO THE HOUSEHOLD HC020: SIZE OF THE DWELLING IN SQUARE METERS What is the size of your dwelling, in square meters? If you do not know please give an approximate number. Including yourself, can you please tell me how many people usually	Less than [318] = 1 Rest = 0	

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[318] Each country has its regulation (Appolloni, D'Alessandro, 2021; https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/digpub/housing/bloc-1b.html).

		live in this household? [HH1 EQLS]	
	Living in an owned, rented, or public housing	HH021: TENURE STATUS 1 Owner without outstanding mortgage 2 Owner with outstanding mortgage 3 Tenant, rent at market price 4 Tenant, rent at reduced price 5 Tenant, rent free	1 = 0 (owner) 2 – 5 = 1 (not own, potentially at risk)

	Quality of the neighbourhood	HS170: NOISE FROM NEIGHBOURS OR FROM THE STREET
		Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: too much noise in your dwelling from neighbours or from outside (traffic, business, factory, etc.)?
		1 Yes
		2 No
		
		HS190: CRIME, VIOLENCE OR VANDALISM IN THE AREA
		Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: crime, violence and vandalism in the local area?
		1 Yes
		2 No
		
		Thinking of physical access, distance, opening hours and the like, how easy or difficult
		is your access to services the following services? [Q56 EQLS]
		   a. Banking facilities (e.g bank branch, ATM)
		   b. Public transport facilities (bus, metro, tram, train etc.)
		   c. Cinema, theatre or cultural centre
		   d. Recreational or green areas
		   e. Grocery shop or supermarket
		   f. Recycling services including collection of recyclables
			1 = 1 (Yes)
			2 = 0 (No)
			
			1 – 2 = 1 (Bad)
			3 – 4 = 0 (Good)
			
			If the sum of these questions is equal or higher than 3, then the quality of the neighbourhood is bad.
			Thus,
			0 – 2 = 0
			3 – 4 = 1

		1 Very difficult
		2 Rather difficult
		3 Rather easy
		4 Very easy
		
		How do you evaluate the quality of the following services in your neighbourhood?
		  a. Banking facilities (e.g bank branch, ATM)
		  b. Public transport facilities (bus, metro, tram, train etc.)
		  c. Cinema, theatre or cultural centre
		  d. Recreational or green areas
		  e. Grocery shop or supermarket
		  f. Recycling services including collection of recyclables
		1 Very bad
		2 Bad
		3 Good
		4 Very good		

	Environmental conditions (e.g., air, green areas, etc.)	HS180: POLLUTION, GRIME OR OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as: smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or polluted water? 1 Yes 2 No	1 = 1 (Yes) 2 = 0 (No)	
Political voice and bureaucracy	Having a political voice (and being heard)	Do you feel your political vote, voice, and choice matter? 1 Yes 2 No	1 = 0 (Yes) 2 = 1 (No)	If the sum of these four indicators is higher or equal 3, the person experiences exclusion and inequality in
	Experiencing discrimination	Have you ever experienced discrimination in your daily life or institutional places? 1 Yes, in daily life 2 Yes, in institutional places 3 No	1 – 2 = 1 (Yes) 3 = 0 (No)	

	Clarity of the bureaucratic system (having the knowledge and information)	Do you know how the bureaucratic and social protection system works in your country? 1 Yes 2 No	1 = 0 (Yes) 2 = 0 (No)	political terms. Thus, 0 – 2 = 0 3 – 4 = 1
	Trust in institutions	Please tell me how much you personally trust institutions (i.e., the government, parliament, legal system, police, and local authorities). Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that you do not trust at all, and 10 means that you trust completely. [Partially taken from Q35 EQLS]	1 – 5 = 1 (Not trusted) 6 – 10 = 0 (Trusted)	

Information and access to services	Digital gap	HS090: DO YOU HAVE A COMPUTER
		 1 Yes
		 2 No, cannot afford
		 3 No, other reason
		
		 PD080: INTERNET CONNECTION FOR PERSONAL USE AT HOME
		 1 Yes
		 2 No, cannot afford
		 3 No, other reason
		
		 How confident are you with the following computer and Internet-related items?
		    a. Windows package
		    b. Preference settings
		    c. Advanced search
		    d. PDF
		    e. Institutional website and requests
		 1 Not at all familiar
		 2 Not very familiar
		 3 Some-what familiar
		 4 Very familiar
		 5 Completely familiar
			1 = 0 (Yes)
			 2 – 3 = 1 (No)
			
			 1-2 =1 (Bad)
			 3-5= 0 (Good)
			
			 If the sum of these two questions is equal or higher than 1, there is a digital gap. Thus,
			 0 - 1 = 0
			 2 -3 = 1
				If the sum of these three indicators is equal or higher than 2, then the quality of the services is bad. Thus,
				 0 – 1 = 0
				 2 - 3 = 1

	Access, quality, quantity, and performance of services	Thinking of physical access, distance, opening hours and the like, how easy or difficult is your access to local and/or municipal services (e.g., schools, help desk, social services, etc)? 1 Very difficult	1 – 2 = 1 (Bad) 3 – 4 = 0 (Good) If the sum of these three questions is	

		2 Rather difficult 3 Rather easy 4 Very easy How do you evaluate the quality and performance of the services the local and/or municipal services (e.g., schools, help desk, social services, etc)? 1 Very bad 2 Bad 3 Good 4 Very good How do you evaluate the clarity of the services (e.g., simplicity of the system, clearness of the information, clarity of who is the department in charge of delivering the info/services requested, etc)? 1 Very bad 2 Bad 3 Good 4 Very good	equal or higher than 2, then the quality of the neighbourhood is bad. Thus, 0 – 1 = 0 2 - 3 = 1	
Health and social	Psycho and physical wellness	PH010: SELF-PERCEIVED GENERAL HEALTH How is your health in general? 1 Very good 2 Good 3 Fair (neither good nor bad) 4 Bad 5 Very bad	1-3 = 0 (Good health) 4-5 = 1 (Bad health)	If the sum of these four indicators is higher or equal 3, the person experiences exclusion and inequality in health and social terms. Thus, 0 – 2 = 0 3 – 4 = 1
	Social interactions	PD050: GET-TOGETHER WITH FRIENDS/FAMILY [RELATIVES] FOR A DRINK/MEAL AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH Do you get-together with friends/family (relatives) for a drink/meal at least once a month? 1 Yes 2 No, cannot afford 3 No, other reason Compared to other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities? [C4 ESS 9] 1 Much less than most 2 Less than most	1 = 0 (Yes) 2 – 3 = 1 (No)	

		3 About the same 4 More than most 5 Much more than most	
	Life satisfaction	PW010: OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION Overall, how satisfied are you with your life these days? Please answer (circle) on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means not at all satisfied and 10 means completely satisfied.	0 – 5 = 1 (not satisfied) 6 – 10 = 0 (satisfied)
	Chronic illness or disability and limitations	PH020: SUFFER FROM ANY CHRONIC [LONG-STANDING] ILLNESS OR CONDITION Are you limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do? 1 Yes 2 No If they reply YES: PH030: LIMITATION IN ACTIVITIES BECAUSE OF HEALTH PROBLEMS Are you limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do? Would you say you are… 1 Severely limited 2 Limited but not severely 3 Not limited at all	PH020 1 = 1 (Yes) 2 = 0 (No) Among the YES (1): 1 = 1 (Severely limited) 2 – 3 = 0 (Not limited)

In addition, I suggest making the AROPE indicator a scalar measure. Thus, instead of drawing a line between who is at risk and who is not, it would describe different levels of exclusion and inequality experienced. Also, as several interviewees stated, reporting simultaneously some of the indicators above does not mean that people are at risk of exclusion and inequality but that they already face them. Within this perspective, each dimension proposed above represents an aspect of these phenomena. Hence, based on how many aspects of exclusion and inequality people experience, their level of disadvantage change and, thus, the policies deliver. Through this division, policymakers might have more information and knowledge to promote targeted and tailored solutions and projects.

Otherwise, another way to make the AROPE indicator a more precise measure instead of a line is by differently weighting its dimensions. Indeed, it is evident that some aspects of exclusion and inequality are more impacting than others (e.g., economic resources, health and how it impacts the possibility to work and interact, etc.). An example of this practice is the Index of Multiple Deprivation[319] adopted in the United Kingdom.

Regarding the EU-SILC database, the literature (e.g., Ballas et al., 2017; Diaz Dapena et al., 2021) and interviewees spotlighted the lack of information concerning individual aspects and collateral phenomena embedded with social exclusion and inequality. On the one hand, this database does not gather information regarding race, community of belonging, religion, sexuality, etc. which might impact the exposure to exclusion and inequality. On the other, it overlooks or simplifies secondary elements and dynamics, such as criminality, additions, interactions with authorities, etc. Thus, the table below (Table 7.7) reports some proposed variables and the current ones adopted in the EU-SILC dataset.

Table 7.7 – Proposals of adding variables to better comprehend who is experiencing social exclusion and inequality and what are the related phenomena (the ones highlighted in green are already present in EU-SILC database, while the ones in red are not and the ones in yellow are from other datasets[320])

Aspects	Indicators	Questions and answers
Individual	Gender	RB090: SEX What is your sex? 1 Male 2 Female

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[319] The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). Currently, it comprehends seven domains of deprivation weighted as follows: Income (22.5%); Employment (22.5%); Education (13.5%); Health (13.5%); Crime (9.3%); Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%); and Living Environment (9.3%). (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf)

[320] The variables and questions come from the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS 2016 - https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-quality-of-life-surveys/european-quality-of-life-survey-2016/questionnaire), the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS 2020 - https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/7th_ewcs_ewcs7_2020_capi_final_source_master_english_questionnaire.pdf), the European Social Survey (ESS 9, 2018 and ESS 10, 2020 - https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire/), and the International Social Survey Programme (https://www.gesis.org/en/issp/modules/issp-modules-by-topic/environment/2020).

		*adding "Other", "Prefer not to say", "Transgender", "Non-binary/non-conforming"
	Age	RB080: YEAR OF BIRTH What is your date of birth?
	Sexual orientation	Do you identify as: 1 Bisexual 2 Gay/lesbian 3 Heterosexual/straight 4 Don't know 5 Prefer not to say 6 Other
	Household composition	HB110: HOUSEHOLD TYPE 1 One-person household 2 Lone parent with at least one child aged less than 25 3 Lone parent with all children aged 25 or more 4 Couple without any child(ren) 5 Couple with at least one child aged less than 25 6 Couple with all children aged 25 or more 7 Other type of household HB120: HOUSEHOLD SIZE How many people usually live in your household? Please include yourself. 1-99 Total number of members of the household
Religion	Religion	Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination? [C11 ESS 9] 1 Yes 2 No Which one? [C12 ESS 9] 1 Roman Catholic 2 Protestant 3 Eastern Orthodox 4 Jewish 5 Islamic 6 Eastern religions 7 Other non-Christian religions 8 Other
Context	Urban area	DB100: DEGREE OF URBANISATION 1 Cities 2 Towns and suburbs 3 Rural areas *adding some geo-localization[321]

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[321] The geo-localization of the respondents is relevant to map social exclusion and inequality in a context, but also living conditions in general. Moreover, asking people how they would define the areas where they live risks being too subjective and debatable. The question is still interesting to comprehend the perception of

Background	Ethnicity	Do you belong to a minority ethnic group? [C26 ESS 9] 1 Yes 2 No
		Which group describes better your ethnic group of belonging? 1 Black 2 Latinx 3 Asian 4 Gyspy/Traveller 5 Roma 6 Eastern Europe 7 White 8 Mixed 9 Other (TYPE IN): _____
	Migrant	RB280: COUNTRY OF BIRTH In which country were you born?
	Language spoken at home	What language or languages do you speak most often at home? [ESS 10 C24]
	Parents' background	PB230: COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF FATHER "In which country was your father born?" PB240: COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF MOTHER "In which country was your mother born?"
Criminality	Experience	Have you or a member of your household been the victim of a burglary or assault in the last 5 years? [C5 ESS 9] 1 Yes 2 No Have you or a member of your household been incriminated or had problems with justice? 1 Yes 2 No
	Exposure	Do you know someone in the neighbourhood who has lost their life or gets wounded through fatal violence? 1 Yes 2 No Have you been subjected to physical violence or threats in the past twelve months? 1 Yes 2 No
	Presence in your area	To your knowledge, do you think there is criminality in your neighbourhood? 1 Yes 2 No

respondents on the urban degree of their context, but it is questionable as an exact way to determine geographical location.

		To your knowledge, do you think there is organized crime in your neighbourhood? 1 Yes 2 No
Injustice	Relationship with the police	Have you been stopped and checked by the police in the last twelve months? 1 Yes 2 No Have you experienced an abusive treatment or used disproportionate force from the police? 1 Yes 2 No On a scale from 0 to 10 how much do you personally trust the police? 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust.
	Fairness	Overall, do you think all people are treated equally? Please, answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means not at all satisfied and 10 means completely satisfied.
	Discrimination	Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against? [C18 ESS 9] 1 Yes 2 No On what grounds is your group discriminated against? [C19 ESS 9] 1 Colour or race 2 Nationality 3 Religion 4 Language 5 Ethnic group 6 Age 7 Gender 8 Sexuality 9 Disability 10 Other (TYPE IN) _____
	Stigma	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? [Q36d EQLS] Some people look down on me because of my job situation or income 1 Strongly agree 2 Agree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Disagree 5 Strongly disagree Do you think the media critically report your residential area? 1 Yes 2 No

		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
		
		    a. My neighbourhood is properly represented in the public and political debate
		    b. In my neighbourhood, there is a strong sense of community
		    c. My neighbourhood is well-known as a good area
		    d. I feel I have been judged for coming from my neighbourhood
		
		1 Strongly agree
		2 Agree
		3 Neither agree nor disagree
		4 Disagree
		5 Strongly disagree

Addictions	Alcohol (experience and exposure)	Have you received any information about alcohol consumption? 1 Yes 2 No Have you ever had a drink containing alcohol? 1 Yes 2 No At what age have you start drinking alcohol? How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? 1 Never 2 Monthly or less 3 2 to 4 times a month 4 2 to 3 times a week 5 4 or more times a week Do you have a component of your household or family who has or had been an alcoholic? 1 Yes, I have 2 Yes, I had 3 No Do you have a friend who has or had been an alcoholic? 1 Yes, I have 2 Yes, I had 3 No
	Drugs (experience and exposure)	Have you received any information about drug use? 1 Yes 2 No Have you ever used drugs? 1 Yes 2 No At what age you used drugs for the 1st time? How often do you use drugs? 1 Once a day

		2 Once a week 3 More than once a day 4 Several times a week Do you have a component of your household or family who has or had been a drug user? 1 Yes, I have 2 Yes, I had 3 No Do you have a friend who uses drugs or substances of abuse? 1 Yes 2 No Do you experience situations of drugs or substances of abuse in your neighbourhood? 1 Yes 2 No
	Gambling (experience and exposure)	Have you received any information about gambling addiction? 1 Yes 2 No Have you ever gambled? 1 Yes 2 No At what age you gambled for the 1st time? How often do you gamble? 1 Once a day 2 Once a week 3 More than once a day 4 Several times a week Do you have a component of your household or family who has or had been a gambling addict? 1 Yes, I have 2 Yes, I had 3 No Do you have a friend who has or had been a gambling addict? 1 Yes 2 No
Elements of risk	Long-term unemployment	PL080: NUMBER OF MONTHS SPENT IN UNEMPLOYMENT Number of months PL086: NUMBER OF MONTHS UNABLE TO WORK DUE TO LONG-STANDING HEALTH PROBLEMS Number of months

	Mental health	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Q7 EQLS]
		a. I am optimistic about my future
		b. I am optimistic about my children's or grandchildren's future
		c. c. I generally feel that what I do in life is worthwhile
		d. d. I feel I am free to decide how to live my life
		e. e. In my daily life, I seldom have time to do the things I really enjoy
		f. f. I find it difficult to deal with important problems that come up in my life.
		g. g. When things go wrong in my life, it generally takes me a long time to get back to normal
		1 Strongly agree
		2 Agree
		3 Neither agree nor disagree
		4 Disagree
		5 Strongly disagree
		Have you felt downhearted and depressed over the last two weeks? [Q52 EQLS]
		1 All of the time
		2 Most of the time
		3 More than half of the time
		4 Less than half of the time
		5 Some of the time
		6 At no time
		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Q36 EQLS]
		a. I feel left out of society.
		b. Life has become so complicated today that I almost can't find my way
		c. I feel that the value of what I do is not recognised by others
		d. Some people look down on me because of my job situation or income
		e. I feel close to people in the area where I live.
		1 Strongly agree
		2 Agree
		3 Neither agree nor disagree
		4 Disagree
		5 Strongly disagree
		Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks [Q51 EQLS]
		a. I have felt cheerful and in good spirits
		b. I have felt calm and relaxed
		c. I have felt active and vigorous
		d. I woke up feeling fresh and rested
		e. My daily life has been filled with things that interest me
		1 All of the time

		2 Most of the time
		3 More than half of the time
		4 Less than half of the time
		5 Some of the time
		Please indicate for each of the statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks. [Q52 EQLS]
		a. I have felt particularly tense
		b. I have felt lonely
		c. I have felt downhearted and depressed
		1 All of the time
		2 Most of the time
		3 More than half of the time
		4 Less than half of the time
		5 Some of the time
	Job insecurity	Using this scale, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that you might lose your job in the next 6 months? [Q21 EQLS]
		1 Very likely
		2 Rather likely
		3 Neither likely nor unlikely
		4 Rather unlikely
		5 Very unlikely
		If you were to lose or had to quit your job, how likely or unlikely is it that you will find a job of similar salary? [Q22 EQLS]
		1 Very likely
		2 Rather likely
		3 Neither likely nor unlikely
		4 Rather unlikely
		5 Very unlikely
		PL051A: OCCUPATION IN MAIN JOB
		What is your main occupation in your last job?
	Financial insecurity	HS011: ARREARS ON MORTGAGE OR RENTAL PAYMENTS
		In the past twelve months, has the household been in arrears, i.e. has been unable to pay on time due to financial difficulties for:
		(a) rent
		(b) mortgage repayment for the main dwelling?
		1 Yes, once
		2 Yes, twice or more
		3 No
		HS021: ARREARS ON UTILITY BILLS
		In the past twelve months, has the household been in arrears, i.e. has been unable to pay the utility bills (e.g.
		heating, electricity, gas, water, waste disposal etc.) of the main dwelling on time due to financial difficulties?
		1 Yes, once
		2 Yes, twice or more

		3 No
		HS031: ARREARS ON HIRE PURCHASE INSTALMENTS OR OTHER LOAN PAYMENTS In the past twelve months, has the household been in arrears on hire purchase instalments or other loan payments (for example, a car loan, consumer bills, bills from day-care, school, health…), i.e. has been unable to pay these on time due to financial difficulties? 1 Yes, once 2 Yes, twice or more 3 No
		HS120: ABILITY TO MAKE ENDS MEET A household may have different sources of income and more than one household member may contribute to it. Thinking of your household's total income, is your household able to make ends meet, namely, to pay for its usual necessary expenses? 1 With great difficulty 2 With difficulty 3 With some difficulty 4 Fairly easily 5 Easily 6 Very easily
		HI010: CHANGE IN THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEAR In the past 12 months, how has your total household income changed? 1 Increased 2 Remained more or less the same 3 Decreased
		HI030: REASON FOR DECREASE IN INCOME What was the reason your income decreased? If there is more than one reason, please choose the most important one: 1 Reduced working time, wage or salary (same job), including self-employment (involuntary) 2 Parenthood/ parental leave /child care/ to take care of a person with illness or disability 3 Changed job 4 Lost job/unemployment/ bankruptcy of (own) enterprise 5 Became unable to work because of illness or disability 6 Divorce / partnership ended / other change in household composition 7 Retirement 8 Cut in social benefits 9 Other
	Accommodation insecurity	How likely or unlikely do you think it is that you will need to leave your accommodation within the next 6 months because you can no longer afford it? [Q26 EQLS] 1 Very likely

		2 Rather likely 3 Neither likely nor unlikely 4 Rather unlikely 5 Very unlikely HH070: TOTAL HOUSING COST

Life	Work-life balance	In general, how do your working hours fit in with your family or social commitments outside work? [Q19 EQLS]
		1 Very well
		2 Rather well
		3 Rather not well
		4 Not at all well
		
		How often has each of the following happened to you during the last 12 months? [Q20 EQLS]
		    a. I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done
		    b. It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend on the job
		    c. I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities
		1 Every day
		2 Several times a week
		3 Several times a month
		4 Several times a year
		5 Less often/ rarely
		6 Never
		
		How easy or difficult is it to combine paid work with your care responsibilities? [Q44 EQLS]
		1 Very easy
		2 Rather easy
		3 Rather difficult
		4 Very difficult
		
		PL089: NUMBER OF MONTHS SPENT FULFILLING DOMESTIC TASKS
		Number of months
		
		About how much time (in minutes) in total per day do you usually spend getting to and from work or study using your usual mode of transportation? [Q57 EQLS]
		Number in minutes

Perception of tensions and trust	Perception of tensions and trust	In all countries there sometimes exists tension between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between each of the following groups in this country? [Q34 EQLS]
		    a. Poor and rich people
		    b. Management and workers

		  PW191: TRUST IN OTHERS To what extent do you trust other people? Please answer (circle) on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that in general you do not trust any other person and 10 that you feel most people can be trusted.

Support	Support	From whom would you get support in each of the following situations? For each situation, choose the most important source of support. [Q40 EQLS]
		    a. If you needed help around the house when ill
		    b. If you needed advice about a serious personal or family matter
		    c. If you needed help when looking for a job
		    d. If you were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to
		    e. If you needed to urgently raise [1/12 of annual national at risk-of-poverty threshold] to face an emergency
		    f. If you needed help in looking after your children
		1 A member of your family / relative
		2 A friend, neighbour, or someone else, who does not belong to your family or relatives
		3 A service provider, institution or organisation
		4 Nobody

Environment	Perceived risk	Generally speaking, how concerned are you about environmental issues? Please tick one box below to indicate what you think, where 1 means you are not at all concerned and 5 means you are very concerned. [Q6 ISSP 2020] Here is a list of some different environmental problems. Which problem, if any, do you think is the most important for your country as a whole? [Q7 ISSP 2020] 1 Air pollution 2 Chemicals and pesticides 3 Water shortage 4 Water pollution 5 Nuclear waste 6 Domestic waste disposal 7 Climate change 8 Genetically modified foods 9 Using up our natural resources 10 None of these

	Impacts	Do you think climate change will negatively impact you, your lifestyle, and expenses? 1 Very likely 2 Rather likely 3 Neither likely nor unlikely 4 Rather unlikely 5 Very unlikely Do your household experience any type of damage due to climate change? 1 Yes 2 No
	Will to act	How willing would you be to pay much higher prices in order to protect the environment? [Q11a ISSP 2020] 1 Very willing 2 Fairly willing 3 Neither willing nor unwilling 4 Fairly unwilling 5 Very unwilling And how willing would you be to pay much higher taxes in order to protect the environment? [Q11b ISSP 2020] 1 Very willing 2 Fairly willing 3 Neither willing nor unwilling 4 Fairly unwilling 5 Very unwilling And how willing would you be to accept cuts in your standard of living in order to protect the environment? [Q11c ISSP 2020] 1 Very willing 2 Fairly willing 3 Neither willing nor unwilling 4 Fairly unwilling 5 Very unwilling How likely do you think it is that you will actually limit their energy use to try to reduce climate change? 1 Not at all likely 2 Not very likely 3 Likely 4 Very likely
Political action	Political action	There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you… [ESS 10 B15, B16, B17, B18, B19, B20, B21, B22] a. …contacted a politician, government or local government official?

		b. …donated to or participated in a political party or pressure group? c. …worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker? d. …signed a petition? e. …taken part in a public demonstration? f. …boycotted certain products? g. …posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter? h. …volunteered for a not-for-profit or charitable organisation? 1 Yes 2 No
Work	Work environment	Do you work in a group or team that has common tasks and can plan its work? (Q58 EWCS) 1 Yes 2 No For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your work situation (Q61 EWCS) 1 Always 2 Most of the time 3 Sometimes 4 Rarely 5 Never A. Your colleagues or peers help and support you B. Your manager helps and supports you C. You are consulted before objectives are set for your work D. You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation E. You have a say in the choice of your working partners F. You can take a break when you wish G. You have enough time to get the job done H. Your job gives you the feeling of work well done I. You are able to apply your own ideas in your work J. You have the feeling of doing useful work L. You are treated fairly at your workplace M. You experience stress in your work N. You can influence decisions that are important for your work O. Your job requires that you hide your feelings Over the past 12 months, have you been discriminated at work? By this, I mean been treated less favourably or unfairly because of who you are or because you have certain characteristics. (Q72 EWCS) 1 Yes 2 No

7.3.2 A new urban indicator

As emerged during the interviews, space and areas play a central role in causing and exacerbating social exclusion and inequality. Indeed, the interviewees often underlined how growing up in a neighbourhood instead of another one impacts people and their life paths. It depends on several reasons, such as the socioeconomic fabric, structural deficiencies, collective imagination, etc. Thus, in Paragraph 7.3.1, I propose a few new variables concerning urban characteristics to add to the EU-SILC dataset. These questions aim to describe the living condition and report the perception and opinion of the respondents regarding urban, contextual, and environmental aspects. Within this perspective, the focus is on their subjective impressions. Simultaneously, as the image of an area also depends on how outsiders describe and perceive it, it is important to catch whether there might be a stigma attached to a specific context and its residents. This aspect is essential because social exclusion and inequality are often related to and embedded with how people feel and perceive themselves within society.

On the other hand, in addition to the perception of being left out or treated differently due to urban characteristics, several interviewees reported structural disparities within a city. They represent an essential cause and consequence of social exclusion and inequality. Indeed, living in a low-quality area leads to stigma, prejudice, less opportunities, and unbearable environments. Simultaneously, though, there is a tendency to cluster disadvantaged communities in degraded zones because they are cheaper and more affordable. Thus, within this perspective, they create a circle of disparity that is hard to break.

Therefore, in this paragraph, I would suggest a new urban indicator focused on the structural urban disparities within a city. These variations regard several aspects, e.g., the quality and delivery of services, the presence of recreational or cultural activities, public transportation, etc. Within this perspective, having these features makes an area more liveable. Contrarily, their deficiency or lack makes a zone degraded. Specifically, I would propose to make this new urban indicator multilayered and comprehend these features:

1. Quantity and frequency of public transport facilities (e.g., bus, metro, tram, train, sharing);

2. Quantity of administrative, local, and municipal services by inhabitants;

3. Quantity of personal care services by demography (e.g., childcare, hospital, nursing home, etc.);

4. Quantity of banking facilities (e.g., bank branch, ATMs);

5. Quantity of cultural activities (e.g., cinema, theatre, cultural centres, libraries);

6. Quantity of sportive activities (e.g., gyms, sports fields, swimming pools, etc.);

7. Quantity of recreational or green areas;

8. Quantity of grocery shops or supermarkets;

9. Quantity of social activities (e.g., bars, cafes, restaurants);

10. Quantity of local organizations.

As this new urban indicator aims to study the strengths and weaknesses of an area, I suggest not developing this indicator from the EU-SILC dataset but, instead, calculating it from the open data from institutional or city databases. In this way, it can map the characteristics of a zone based on structural and geographic information.

Moreover, several interviewees reported that sometimes the indicators that describe the differences within a city consider too big areas. For instance, they often compare situations among municipalities or urbanistic zones. These data are interesting and efficient when the purpose is to capture the differences or similarities among administrative sections. Otherwise, they risk being too generic and unable to photograph the phenomena occurring within these areas. Thus, I suggest adopting smaller portions such as the LSOAs in the United Kingdom[322].

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[322] The Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. (Look at Chapter 5.5 and Appendix O). (https://www.datadictionary.nhs.uk/nhs_business_definitions/lower_layer_super_output_area.html#:~:text= A%20Lower%20Layer%20Super%20Output,statistics%20in%20England%20and%20Wales.)

7.3.3 A new method of data collection

During the interviews, local associations and organizations emerged as central and crucial in dealing with and responding to these shades of social exclusion and inequality. Currently, they assume an essential role in handling these situations and knowing their struggles and needs.

To begin with, local organizations and associations are the main answer to the necessities of the most vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods. They provide for the lack of welfare and absence of administration by filling their gaps and deficiencies. As previously mentioned, according to the interviewees, the municipalities and institutions struggle in handling these complex situations for several reasons, e.g., fundings, competencies, disinterests, size of the municipalities, etc. Consequentially, they often consider and manage these issues as emergencies through spot or mainstream solutions rather than holistic and tailored projects. Differently, local organizations and associations propose and promote alternatives, e.g., sportive, cultural, and recreational events, requalification of the areas, etc. Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the groups mentioned as excluded did not have access to have access to benefits, assistance, and support because of legal or residential reasons. Thus, within these situations, local organizations stepped in and handled these extreme exclusions by providing vaccination, food, legal help, shelter, etc.

Related to that, a second aspect of local organizations refers to their ability to de-stigmatize these areas and communities. Indeed, as previously mentioned, they have a strong label attached based on rhetoric and collective imagination, produced and spread out by outsiders, such as the media, politicians, etc. Established by a stereotypical way to describe specific communities and areas, these stigmas often relate and refer to their ethnicity, nationality, the status of degradation of buildings, the presence of criminality, etc. In doing so, they aliment a distortive perception of these zones and communities. As denounced by Wacquant (2008) and other scholars (Wacquant et al., 2014), these images impact them and their relationship with the rest of society and institutions. Consequently, people often avoid going to certain areas or reaching specific communities because of fear and a bad reputation.

In extremer cases, these communities and areas might face discrimination and violence on several levels (e.g., individually, bureaucratically, institutionally, in the penal system, etc.). Thus, within this perspective, local organizations attempt to provide a different collective imagination and stress the positive features and potentialities of these areas and communities.

Lastly, local organizations and associations represent the main voice of and for the unheard communities and areas. It is due to a twofold reason. On the one hand, these communities or residents of marginalized areas might have experienced violence and trauma and, thus, struggle trusting authorities. On the other hand, some of these people are undocumented. They hide themselves from the institutions and avoid asking for help because they fear to be denounced. Hence, for these reasons, local organizations have better chances of reaching these communities and areas because they are more trustworthy and are not obliged to report them. Consequentially, local organizations speak up for them and raise their struggles and needs, which entail several aspects, e.g., the decision-making process of an area, the cases of evictions or abuse of power, etc. In addition, interrelated with this issue, local organizations and associations raise awareness among these vulnerable communities and areas. They provide them with the tools and information to speak up for themselves. Indeed, sometimes, these marginalized areas and communities do not know how the bureaucratic, legal, or welfare system works. Thus, they are often unaware of their rights and how to claim them. Within this context, local organizations and associations allowed them to speak up for themselves.

Therefore, due to their presence and privileged interaction and engagement, local organizations and associations could represent a new channel to gather information regarding the most vulnerable and hidden people (e.g., homeless, undocumented, the Roma, Gypsy, Traveller communities, squatters, etc.). Indeed, they could administer a unique questionnaire to these groups and collect information. These data can help policymakers promote more targeted solutions, and local organizations and associations

monitor the flux of people and their needs. Within this perspective, this way to collect data could help having all the voices included and considered in the public and policy debate.

This proposal already has evident limitations, such as the reliability of the collection, the impartiality of the organizations, the management of and control of the gathering, and the impossibility of making these data generalizable. Nevertheless, it could be an alternative method of collecting data which could raise and map the needs, struggles, and potentialities of specific territories and communities.

Conclusion

Social exclusion and inequality represent some of the most demanding challenges in our societies. Hence, this research aimed to investigate them in European cities[323]. Specifically, it attempted to answer three questions:

Q1. How does the European Union define, calculate, and frame social exclusion and inequality?

Q2. How are they manifesting in European cities? Are there extremer forms of exclusion and inequality, i.e., "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality"? If so, who is experiencing them in European cities?

Q3. Can European statistical tools capture the current and emerging forms of inequality and social exclusion? If not, what is missing?

Thus, as mentioned, the purpose of this project was threefold. To begin with, it intended to present how the European Union defines, frames, and monitors inequalities and social exclusion in the Member States. Thus, it illustrated how the European Union conceives and handles these phenomena from a macro level. Secondly, the research sought to portray existing and emerging shades of exclusion and inequality in European cities. Hence, the second question explored these dynamics from a micro and meso level. On the one hand, it provides a panoramic of how and where they manifest, and whom they affect. On the other, it tried to investigate specific shades of inequality and social exclusion that can be interpreted as "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality" (look at Paragraph 2.1). Lastly, the research attempted to understand whether the indicator[324] adopted by the European Union to capture and monitor inequality and social exclusion can grasp these dynamics and their emerging shades.

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[323] Specifically, five cities – one per welfare state regime – were the case studies of this research: Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, Bucharest, and London (look at Chapter 4).

[324] The European indicator adopted to study inequality and social exclusion is AROPE, which stands for "At Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion" (look at Chapter 3).

The research adopted a mixed-method approach to answer these questions and fulfil these aims. To begin with, it reviewed the descriptions and strategies developed by the European Union regarding inequality and social exclusion. Hence, it portrays how the European Union defines, frames, and monitors these dynamics. In addition, the research provided a panoramic of the statistical tools adopted to grasp and monitor them. The data analyses allowed portraying the groups more at risk of social exclusion and inequality. Secondly, the research foresaw interviews with organizations and experts that work with marginalized communities and study these dynamics to portray the current and emerging shades of inequality and exclusion. Lastly, the research compared the statistical analyses conducted for the first question with the insights and considerations of the interviews for the second one to validate the goodness of the indicator and the statistical tools adopted.

Specifically, Chapter 3 answered the first question. The first part of the chapter presented the framework through which the European Union defined inequality and social exclusion. It spotlighted that they are conceptualized from an economic perspective. Indeed, regardless of their multidimensional nature, they are mainly described as central issues in strengthening employment and economic growth, which should lead to a more cohesive society. Hence, inequality and social exclusion became the core goals of the European strategies and plans (e.g., the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, Europe 2020 strategy, and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan). Within this perspective, the European Union adopted and developed specific indicators, namely the Gini coefficient and AROPE, to monitor the achievement of these targets. Nonetheless, the research mainly focused on the latter as it simultaneously captures inequality and social exclusion. Thus, the second part of Chapter 3 illustrated how the European Union calculates these dynamics through the indicator AROPE - which stands for "at risk of poverty or social exclusion" - and the dataset EU-SILC. As Chapter 3 showed, it has several strengths as well as weaknesses (look at Chapter 3.2.2). Nevertheless, according to AROPE, in 2020, 22% of Europeans were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and the categories most exposed to these dynamics were people under 18 (especially, in the case of parents with primary education attainment), unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially, those coming from

outside of the European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels (look at Chapter 3.2.3 and Appendix F). Lastly, the third part of Chapter 3 outlined how the European Union and the Member States frame social exclusion and inequality. On the one hand, it reported the principal strategies and projects promoted by the European Union to handle these issues. On the other, it presented the European tools that allow monitoring of the policies and investments of the Member states to combat social exclusion and inequality from a macro level. They are the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS).

Then, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 answered the second question of the research, i.e., how social exclusion and inequality manifest in European cities and whether and who is experiencing "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality". Chapter 5 answered the first part of this question by reporting how they manifest in the five European cities selected[325]. According to the interviewees, these phenomena go beyond the solely economic sphere. Indeed, they also include and embrace dimensions related to education; environment and housing; political voice and bureaucracy; information and access to services; and health. Hence, Chapter 5 tried to describe and summarise the groups affected by social exclusion and inequality, the characteristics and mechanisms that increase the likelihood of facing them, the issues that came up, and changes over time.

Within this perspective, the interviewees of all the cities involved outlined the importance of the socio-economic background, the relevance of specific mechanisms (e.g., administrative choices, structural and individual discrimination, insufficient clarity and quality of services, the digitalization, the exposure to addictions, and the lack of documents) and embeddedness with criminality in reinforcing the risk of being excluded or unequal.

Regardless of the differences and specificity of each context, Chapter 5 highlights common changes that shape exclusion and inequality in the cities analysed. Among these, the increasing living and housing costs, the privatization of the housing market, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the cuts to the welfare state impacted. In addition, in all the cities except

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[325] Note 1.

Stockholm, the profile of the people at risk of exclusion and inequality remained the same and, in some cases, their conditions worsened. Moreover, in all the cities except Bucharest, the attitude and perception of migrants changed and became more hostile. In some cases, laws and policies (e.g., the Decreto sicurezza and the No Recourse to Public Funds scheme) amplified these misrepresentations and aggravated the conditions of migrants.

On the other hand, Chapter 6 attempted to answer the second part of the second question, i.e., whether and who might experience "abyssal exclusion" and "advanced marginality". Within this perspective, the research tried to understand if there is a coincidence between those who are socio-spatially marginalized and those who are de-humanized, and vice versa. According to the interviewees, these phenomena exist but not necessarily co-exist. Indeed, sometimes abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality converge and embed with each other while, in other cases, they manifest separately. In the former case, it means that, in addition to socio-urban marginalization, there is also a dehumanisation and degradation of the individuals or specific groups living in deprived areas. It mainly depends on urban policies, structure, and socio-economic fabric. Regardless of the peculiarities of each city, the group more recurrently quoted in simultaneously experiencing advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion is the Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller community.

In other cases, the interviewees stated that specific groups experience the processes of abyssal exclusion, but they do not live spatially marginalized. For instance, they are the homeless, the elderly, disabled people and women who migrated from a non-European country. Vice versa, some areas meet the features of advanced marginality, but it does not necessarily lead to the invisibilization or inferiorization of the residents. For example, the neighbourhoods with higher rates of social/public housing, lower socio-economic households or a migrant/minority background are more likely to be quoted as an example of marginality. However, according to the interviewees, the residents do not necessarily experience abyssal exclusion.

Lastly, Chapter 7 compared the statistical analyses conducted for the first question (Chapter 3) with the insights and considerations of the interviews for the second one (Chapters 5 and

6). According to what emerged, AROPE lacks some central dimensions and variables to grasp social exclusion and inequality (look at Chapter 7.1). Thus, it can only describe them from an economic perspective but fails to capture social, political, educative, service-related, and spatial ones. Moreover, it cannot capture the severe shades of these dynamics, such as advanced marginality and abyssal exclusion. On the one hand, AROPE and the EU-SILC dataset do not have information on socio-spatial division, territorial stigmatization, and cohesion within a neighbourhood or community; thus, it is impossible to grasp advanced marginality. On the other hand, regarding abyssal exclusion, it appears that AROPE and EU-SILC cannot capture those disparities beyond the abyssal line and belong to colonial sociability (Santos, 2014).

Therefore, all these considerations lead us to a question: how could we operationalize these insights? In Chapter 7.3, I attempted to propose new variables, indicators, and data collection to photograph and capture social exclusion and inequality in urban contexts. To begin with, through the suggestions offered by the interviewees, I recommended some adjustments to the AROPE indicator and EU-SILC dataset (look at Chapter 7.3.1). Secondly, due to the role of space and context in causing and exacerbating social exclusion and inequality, I proposed a new indicator specific to the study of urban disparity (look at Chapter 7.3.2). Lastly, I suggested involving local organizations in the data collection to enhance and enlarge the voices of the marginal communities (look at Chapter 7.3.3).

In conclusion, this research illustrated the complexity and fluidity of inequality and social exclusion in European cities. On the one hand, it spotlights how these phenomena keep evolving, comprehending new dimensions and shades, and involving new groups over time. On the other hand, their complexity and fluidity arose in the difficulties in grasping and tracing their manifestations and impacts.

Within this perspective, this research pinpointed three principal considerations. To begin with, it highlighted the necessity to keep questioning the data that the European Union – and the Member States – use to monitor these social phenomena. Indeed, as illustrated, inequality and social exclusion are not static and unchangeable issues but rather evolving

ones. Hence, we need more comprehensive tools to grasp and analyse them and promote more incisive and tailored policies to handle them. Within this perspective, a second consideration is the potentiality to adopt a mixed-method approach to question the indicators and study these dynamics. Indeed, the data are an asset in photographing them and comparing contexts, while the qualitative analyses are an added value to deepen their manifestations. Thus, through this combination, it is possible to enlarge the voices considered, keep questioning the indicators adopted, and promote bottom-up proposals, which help promote more comprehensive solutions and policies to handle and tackle them. Lastly, the third consideration is the necessity to design and implement a holistic approach to tackle inequality and social exclusion. Indeed, the research spotlighted the feeling of abandonment and invisibility of some groups and the role of local organizations in dealing with dynamics[326]. Nonetheless, though, they cannot be left alone but need to be inserted in a stronger and more cohesive network with institutions, universities, and residents to enlarge the voices considered in the public and policy debate to design, implement, and promote more targeted and tailored solutions.

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[326] Currently, they are the main answer to the needs of the most vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods. Thus, within this perspective, they represent a central role for multiple reasons. To begin with, local organizations provide for the lack of welfare and absence of administration by filling their gaps. Secondly, they are crucial in reducing abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality by de-stigmatizing these areas and communities. Thus, within this perspective, local organizations attempt to provide a different collective imagination and stress the positive features and potentialities of these contexts and groups. Lastly, local organizations represent the voice of and for the unheard communities and areas. It is due to a twofold reason. On the one hand, these communities might have experienced violence and trauma and, thus, struggle to trust authorities. On the other hand, some of these communities are undocumented. They hid themselves from the institutions and avoided asking for help because they were scared to be reported. Hence, for these reasons, local organizations have better chances of reaching these communities and areas because they are more trustworthy and are not obliged to report them. Consequentially, local organizations speak up for them and raise their struggles and needs.

Glossary

Table GLO.1 reports the codes through which the European countries will appear in figures and tables in this thesis.

Table GLO.1 – Codes for each European country

AT	Austria	**FI**	Finland	**NL**	Netherlands
BE	Belgium	**FR**	France	**PL**	Poland
BG	Bulgaria	**HR**	Croatia	**PT**	Portugal
CY	Cyprus	**HU**	Hungary	**RO**	Romania
CZ	Czech Republic	**IE**	Ireland	**SE**	Sweden
DE	Germany	**IT**	Italy	**SI**	Slovenia
DK	Denmark	**LU**	Luxembourg	**SK**	Slovakia
EE	Estonia	**LT**	Lithuania	**UK**	United Kingdom
EL	Greece	**LV**	Latvia	**EU**[327]	EU27 (2007 - 2013)
ES	Spain	**MT**	Malta		EU28 (2013 – 2019) EU27 (2019 – 2023)

Table GLO.2 reports some of the key concepts of this thesis and their definition.

Table GLO.2 – Concepts and definitions

Concept	Definition
Inequality	It is a broad and multidimensional concept, which goes beyond the sole economic disparity within or among countries and groups as it is strictly embedded and interrelated with the structure of society. Hence, experiencing inequality means being in an uneven position in several aspects, such as socioeconomic resources, status, rights, rewards, and opportunities.
Exclusion	It is the dynamic and multidimensional process by which certain groups or individuals are systematically disadvantaged and, wholly or partially, excluded from any social, economic, political, or cultural system.
Abyssal exclusion	It is a specific type of exclusion which produces and reproduces processes of invisibilization, dehumanization, and inferiorization of subordinate social groups. It legitimises appropriation and violence. Within this perspective, those experiencing abyssal exclusion are considered inferior, often unable to declare their rights and make their voices heard.
Advanced marginality	It is a new regime of urban marginalization, which is appearing in Western cities. It is "the novel regime of socio-spatial relegation and exclusionary

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[327] As countries joined and left the European Union over time, the figures below refer to the "EU" as the mean value of the Member States in a specific year. Thus, from 2007 until 2013, it involves 27 countries (Croatia was not already part of the European Union). Then, from 2013 until 2020, it refers to 28 countries. Finally, as of 2020, it includes 27 countries (the data for the United Kingdom were no longer available after Brexit).

	closure (in Max Weber's sense) that has crystallized in the post-Fordist city as a result of the uneven development of the capitalist economies and the recoiling of welfare states, according to modalities that vary with the ways in which these two forces bear upon the segments of the working class and the ethnoracial categories dwelling in the nether regions of social and physical space" (Wacquant, 2008: 2-3). It has six ideal-typical characteristics. To begin with, it is fuelled by the fragmentation of wage labour. Secondly, it is disconnected from cyclical fluctuations and global trends in the economy. Thirdly, advanced marginality faces territorial stigmatization, i.e., "a negative public image of specific places, which enforces a symbolic dispossession of their inhabitants" (Larsen, Delica, 2019: 542). Fourthly, the areas experiencing advanced marginality face spatial alienation and the dissolution of place. According to Wacquant, they tend to lose their humanization, culture, and identity, and become places where the residents do not feel safe and would like to move out. Fifthly, these areas face the erosion of the hinterland, underlying the changes within the social economy of these communities. Lastly, the areas experiencing advanced marginality are subjected to social fragmentation and symbolic splintering, as they are under the pressure of a double tendency toward precarization and de-proletarianization (Wacquant, 1996; 2007; 2016).
AROPE	AROPE refers to those who fall into one or more of three indicators: • "At the risk of poverty after social transfer", referring to individuals with a disposable income below 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income; • "Severely materially deprived", including people unable to afford at least four of the following deprivation items: i) to pay rent or utility bills, ii) keep home adequately warm, iii) face unexpected expenses, iv) eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, v) a week holiday away from home, vi) a car, vii) a washing machine, viii) a colour TV, or ix) a telephone; • "Living in a household with a very low work intensity", corresponding to those aged 0-59 living in households where the adults (aged 18-59) worked 20% or less of their total work potential during the past year. Moreover, in 2021, according to the new EU 2030 targets, the indicator has been modified. The severe material deprivation component has been adjusted by adding six items (Having an internet connection; replacing worn-out clothes with some new ones; having two pairs of properly fitting shoes; spending a small amount of money each week on him/herself; having regular leisure activities; getting together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month). According to this new definition, an individual is considered severely materially and socially deprived when unable to afford at least seven out of thirteen items. Furthermore, the (quasi)-jobless household indicator is defined as people from 0-64 years living in households where the adults worked less than 20% of their total combined work-time potential during the previous 12 months.
EU-SILC database	It is the EU Survey on Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, and it aims to provide comparable data on income, poverty, social exclusion, and living conditions.

Local organizations, NGOs, resident associations	In this thesis, these denominations are used interchangeably as they refer to the civil society that help, support, and defend vulnerable groups. I acknowledge here the differences but, for the purposes of this work, they are clustered together.
Roma, Gypsy, Travellers community	It is an umbrella term which comprehends a range of ethnic people. Indeed, they are three diverse communities classified and treated jointly in policy. Over the thesis, they might be quoted as a unique community or by their specific groups based on what the interviewees stated.
BAME community	Black, Asian and minority ethnic community. It is an acronym mainly used in the United Kingdom.
Homeless	S/he is a person without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing.
Migrant	S/he is tendentially a person with low socio-economic background. When, in the thesis, the interviewees talk about migration, it is important to keep in mind the differences between high- and low-qualified migrants. Moreover, there is still a discrimination towards non-Europeans and non-Anglo-Saxon migrants.
Asylum seeker / refugee	An asylum seeker is a person looking for protection because they fear persecution, or they have experienced violence or human rights violations. A refugee is a person who asked for protection and was given refugee status.
Squatter	S/he is a person who occupies an abandoned or unoccupied area of land or a building, usually residential, without owning, renting, or otherwise having lawful permission to use.
Public housing	It refers to housing owned and managed by State, Region or Municipality.
Social housing	It refers to housing that can be either entirely public, semi-private, or managed by associations or societies receiving regional or national funds.

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APPENDIX A – Interviewees

Italy – Rome

The table A.1 reports the list of associations who participate in the interviewees, specifying the neighbourhood and aims of their interventions.

Table A.1 – Italian associations interviewed

Municipality	Neighbourhood	Association	Aims
III	Fidene	Palestra Popolare Colle Salario	It is a gym, and it has been used as temporary housing for households in a housing emergence.
	Tufello	Comitato Popolare Tufello – III Municipio Roma	Housing assistance for the families of ATER public housings of Rome.
		Cooperativa sociale "Parsec"	It promotes services and interventions to answer to the emerging social needs.
IV	San Basilio	Parrocchia	It is the assigned local church.
		Ente pubblico nel settore culturale	It is a public entity which works in the cultural sector.
V	Quarticciolo	Doposcuola Quarticciolo	It is a free and open afterschool.
		Palestra Popolare del Quarticciolo	It is a gym opened in the former and abandoned boiler room owned by Ater. In adding to the sportive activities, it is a place where the residents and community can meet, share, and organize.
		Comitato di quartiere Quarticciolo	It is a self-organized experience begun in 2017. They offer several services among which legal assistance, alimentary help, aid, and support for the residents.
VI	Torre Maura	La Via del Fare	It focuses on territorial network and social solidarity, through projects to improve the quality of life.
	Tor Bella Monaca	El CHEntro sociale	It is a self-managed social and cultural centre.
		Associazione 21 luglio	It is a non-profit organization which supports groups and individuals in conditions of extreme segregation and discrimination, safeguarding rights and promoting the wellbeing of children.
		Associazione Cubo Libro	It tries to promote a sociocultural change and development for those places considered at the margins of culture.
		USB	It has as objectives to contraposing the job fragmentation by connecting the working place, the territory, and the social parts.
		ASIA USB	It is the tenants and inhabitants' association.

		Libera. Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie	It is a network of associations, cooperatives, and movement engaged against mafia, corruption, and criminality.
		Associazione Torpiubella	It is an association for urban and social regeneration for the community of Tor Bella Monaca.
	Giardinetti-Tor Vergata	Comitato di Quartiere Torrenova - Tor Vergata	It is a neighbourhood committee.
IX	Laurentino 38	Ponte di Incontro Onlus	It is an association aimed at social promotion. Since the 1990s, it is committed in contrasting the school dropouts and educational poverty, and in providing alternative cultural spaces.
X	Acilia	Comitato Disabilità Municipio X	It aims at monitoring the correct respect of disabled people's rights.
	Ostia	Comitato di Quartiere Stella Polare Nord	It is a neighbourhood committee.
		Francesca Faiella	Writer.
		Retake Ostia	It is a spontaneous movement of citizens, non-partisan, which promotes urban decorum, civic pride, volunteering, education and legitimate art.
XI	Corviale	Aldo Feroce	Photographer.
		Corviale Domani	It is a local partnership made up of associations, organizations, research institutions, operators and experts from different disciplinary fields, which has started a path of participatory planning from below with the aim of involving the whole community of Corviale.
		Calciosociale	It is a sportif society which operates in context at high risk of deviance. It proposes ludic activities combined with educative ones.
		Laboratorio Corviale	It is a project aimed at flanking the physical transformation of the Corviale by promoting urban regeneration.
		Comitato inquilini di Corviale	It works in agreement with the Patronato labor and the Caf to better assist the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.
XIII	Bastogi	Fondazione Specchio d'Italia O.N.L.U.S.	It gives practical help to people in need.
		Gruppo di Azione Sociale - OLTRE BASTOGI	It is an educative place.
		Associazione AMICI dei BIMBI Onlus	It aims to increase the awareness of solidarity in civil society, the cultural knowledge in favour of children by promoting supports, aid

			and dissemination activities of various kinds towards children in need.
Multiple areas of the city		CSV Lazio - Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato	It aims to promote, strengthen, support, and qualify the presence and role of civic society.
		Caritas Roma	The Diocesan Caritas of Rome is a pastoral organization established by the bishop to promote charity in parishes and communities in all their forms.
		Comunità di Sant'Egidio	It is a catholic community which pays attention to the peripheries, the peripherical and poor people.
		Nonna Roma	It aims to combat poverty and economic and social inequalities, by proving support, opportunities, and services.
		Popica Onlus	It operates in Rome and Romania thanks to the commitment of its volunteers, actively combating social exclusion present in the urban context and placing itself alongside the most vulnerable and discriminated against with particular attention to children.
		A Buon Diritto Onlus	It works every day to guarantee the fundamental rights of the person. Since 2001, it has been providing qualified assistance to those who are deprived of their freedom, to those seeking to integrate into our country, to those who are victims of discrimination or episodes of racism, to those who have suffered abuse or torture.
		Binario 95	It is a project of the Europe Consulting Onlus. It operates in the field of social and health assistance, the job placement of disadvantaged people, the reception, orientation and social inclusion of homeless people, immigration, communication, information technology oriented towards social services or cultural and publishing.
		Forum Terzo Settore Lazio	It is the representative body and place of exchange and participation in the non-profit world.
		Fondazione Bulgari	It is committed to supporting childhood and youth employment in sensitive neighbourhoods, combating educational inequalities and poverty.
		Casa per i diritti sociali	It is a voluntary association committed to promoting the human and social rights of the weakest people and human groups, in Italy and in the South of the world.
		Fondazione Villa Maraini	It is the National Agency of the Italian Red Cross for pathological addictions.
		Liberi Nantes	It is a volunteer-based sportive association, aimed to promote and spread game and

| | | | sportive practice as fundamental tools for human growth and social inclusion. |

The table A.2 reports the list of experts who participate in the interviewees, specifying their area of study.

Table A.2 – Italian experts interviewed

Experts	Research interests
Federico Tomassi	Urban and territorial analysis. He is involved with the research project MappaRoma.
Giorgio De Finis	He is an anthropologist, artist, and independent curator. He is the creator and curator of the MAAM - Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove di Metropoliz_città meticcia.
Carlo Cellamare	He carries out research on the relationship between urban planning and daily life and suburban regeneration. He conducted studies on Tor Bella Monaca.
Francesco Montillo	He carries out research on the outskirts of Rome, in particular on Tor Bella Monaca.
Salvatore Monni	He is Associate Professor at the Department of Economics of Roma Tre University. He is involved with the research project MappaRoma.
Federico Bonadonna	He is an anthropologist and works in the sector of social policies.
Enrico Puccini	He is the president of the Osservatorio Casa Roma. He carries out research on housing policies and urban regeneration.

Belgium – Brussels

The table A.3 reports the list of associations who participate in the interviewees, specifying the neighbourhood and aims of their interventions.

Table A.3 – Belgian associations interviewed

Municipality	Neighbourhoods	Associations	Aims
Anderlecht	Cureghem	Amo Rythme	Service d'aide en Milieu Ouvert (Open Environment Support Service)
		Philippon Toussaint	Services de l'administration de l'aide à la jeunesse (Youth Welfare Administration Services)
Molenbeek	Molenbeek	Habitat & Humanisme	Association to respond to the exclusion and isolation of people in difficulty
		Molenbeek Vivre Ensemble	It aims to develop social action in terms of social cohesion by working with a view to prevention and permanent education.
Koekelberg	Koekelberg	Les Amis d'Accompagner	It is a first-line socio-legal guidance and ambulatory accompany service.

Bruxelles-ville	Marolles	Francesca (Social worker)	Project of social cohesion
		Entr'aide des Marolles	ASBL for improving the well-being and health of the inhabitants and families of the Marolles district through a global approach to health.
		CPAS - OCMW	Public center for social action
		Coordination Sociale des Marolles	It brings together more than 100 associations active in the Marolles district of Brussels.
	Sablon	Fondation Roi Baudouin	It is an independent and pluralist public utility foundation.
		L'ATELIER DES DROITS SOCIAUX	It aims to get rid of economic, legal, and political exclusion, namely in the workplace, in housing, health, social security, social aid, and legal aid.
	Anneessens	Maison d'Accueil Socio-Sanitaire de Bruxelles	It is particularly aimed at drug users, the most marginalized, the least demanding, who for social, psychological, psychiatric reasons, etc., have not joined the support networks and "classic" care.
Schaerbeek	Quartier Nord	Espace P… Bruxelles	Support and care service for licensed sex workers.
	Collignon	Centre d'aide à l'enfant NASCI	Child Services Center
Saint-Josse-ten-Noode	Saint-Josse	Centre d'aide aux personnes BRABANTIA – Antenne Caritas International	It focuses on fighting against poverty and promoting social integration.
		La Ruelle	It focuses on families living in very precarious situations, by promoting meetings between people from all social, economic and cultural backgrounds, and of all generations.
		Arab women's solidarity association – Belgium	Arab Women's Solidarity Association Belgium is an association of men and women of Arab, Belgian and other origin. It is a mixed secular association which promotes the rights of Arab women, whether they are living in their country of origin or elsewhere.
Saint-Gilles	Saint-Gilles	Angela. D	Innovative Association to Manage Housing Together and Act Sustainably
Ixelles	Matonge	Groupe Siréas	It provides appropriate assistance to anyone in social difficulty, in particular to refugees and immigrants.
		D'Broej	Youth Emancipation

Multiple areas of the city		BASTA	Belgian Antimafia
		Rèseau Belge de Lutte contre la pauvreté (BAPN)	BAPN makes every effort to fight poverty at the federal and European levels. BAPN undertakes actions and does political work aimed at changing social, political and economic structures in order to break the vicious circle of poverty.
		Centre Médical Projet Lama	It helps drug users through an in-depth assessment of their overall situation: social, psychological, medical.
		Observatoire de la Santé et du Social de Bruxelles-Capitale - Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad	It is a study service of the services of the United College of the Common Community Commission.
		Federal Public Planning Service Social Integration	It is a federal public service which strives to guarantee that all persons living in poverty can live with dignity.
		Coordination des sans-papiers de Belgique	It is an autonomous network of all undocumented collectives currently fighting in Brussels/Belgium.
		Perspective Brussels	Multidisciplinary centre of expertise, which gives the Brussels Region the means to get to know itself better and prepare for its future.

The table A.4 reports the list of experts who participate in the interviewees, specifying their area of study.

Table A.4 – Belgian experts interviewed

Expert	Area of interest
Rafael Costa	Spatial demography, fertility and family, internal and international migration, and residential segregation
Lena Imeraj	Residential segregation and urban geographies, in relation to ethnicity/ethnic diversity, migration/mobility and socioeconomic inequalities.
Christian Kesteloot	The relations between urban space and economic change and the impact of urban environments on social integration and exclusion in Belgium.
Gilles Van Hamme	European territorial dynamics in globalization and metropolitan dynamics in Europe.
Rudi Van Dam	Coordinator social indicators at Fedederal Public Service Social Security Belgium
Florence Degavre	Research in Qualitative Social Research and Socioeconomics.

Sweden – Stockholm

The table A.5 reports the list of associations who participate in the interviewees, specifying the neighbourhood and aims of their interventions.

Table A.5 – Swedish associations interviewed

Municipality	Neighbourhoods	Associations	Aims
Rinkeby-Kista	Rinkeby	Rinkeby-Kista Stadsdelsförvaltning (District administration)	It is responsible for a large part of the municipal service within the Rinkeby-Kista district area.
	Husby	Socialt center Husby	It is a center for helping those having problems with the Swedish Migration Agency, in your home, with your boss, with the municipality, or other problems. It is composed of three organizations: a trade union (SAC syndicalists), a group of lawyers (Folkrörelsejuristerna) and a group that fights for the right to housing in Stockholm (Ort till Ort).
		Unga Station Järva – Husby (Stockholms Stadsmission)	Young station Järva Husby is children and young people between 0 to 21 years and your family. It is a meeting place where you can meet others.
Spånga-Tensta	Tensta	Kvinnocenter i Tensta-Hjulsta (The Tensta-Hjulsta Women's Centers)	The association contributes to increasing women's opportunities for influence and involvement in societal structures, especially at local level.
Botkyrka	Botkyrka	Botkyrka municipality (Deparment of Art, Culture, and Recraition)	They promote activities to support and encourage young and young adults' commitment and participation in the local cultural and leisure life and provide opportunities for their own creation and drive of creative ideas.
Multiple areas of the city		Social Services Administration of Stockholm City	The social administration creates the conditions for an equal and legally secure social service and disability care throughout the city.
		IM Sweden	IM is a Swedish development cooperation organization working to achieve a world free from poverty and exclusion

		Frälsningsarméns Traffickingcenter Safe Havens	It offers legal and social support to people exposed to human trafficking or human exploitation. The goal is to provide perspective on and access to the rights this target group should have.
		SAC Syndikalisterna	Since 1910, the SAC has fought for the common interests of the workers; for better pay, holidays and leave, freedom of association and workplace democracy, realized through united and combative operating sections in the workplace.
		Fackligt Center För Papperslösa	It is the Union Center for the Undocumented
		Crossroads	Crossroads works with those living in social and economic vulnerability, being EU citizens or third-country citizens who not having a Swedish social security number.
		Frälsningsarméns EU-center	It is a social center with day activities aimed at the target group of vulnerable EU migrants, third-country nationals and asylum-seeking women and men (18 years or older) who reside in the Stockholm area
		Nya Kompisbyrån	It is a non-partisan and non-religious non-profit organization that aims to increase the community in society between new and established Swedes.
		ActAlliance	It is a global faith-based coalition organized in national and regional forums operating in more than 120 countries
		Civil Rights Defenders	It is an international human rights organization based in Stockholm, Sweden. We defend people's civil and political rights.
		Convictus Axelsberg - Day activities	They work with people who live in vulnerability. It is often both in homelessness and with drug or alcohol dependence
		Convictus Axelsberg - Night shelter for EU and third country women	It is aimed only at homeless women who are EU or third-country nationals.

		Ingen människa är illegal	It works practically and politically with the rights of refugees and migrants.

The table A.6 reports the list of experts who participate in the interviewees, specifying their area of study.

Table A.6 – Swedish experts interviewed

Expert	Area of interest
Ida Borg	Housing, welfare states and poverty.
Siddartha Aradhya	Immigrant integration, intergenerational perspective
Louisa Vogiazides	Migrant integration, Residential mobility, Segregation, Neighborhood dynamics
Leandro Schclarek Mulinari	The connection between location, racism and the construction of threatening images. Together with Folkets Husby he surveyed the level of security and vulnerability in Järva.
Andrea Voyer	Processes of social inclusion and exclusion on the basis of immigration, race, and class
Magnus Bygren	Mechanisms behind vertical and horizontal segregation in different contexts
Sofiya Voytiv	Gender and social networks, the Russian-Ukrainian war and its effects on migrant and diasporic individuals, and mixed methods perspective in social science.
Anonymous	Homelessness, Roma communities

Romania – Bucharest

The table A.7 reports the list of associations who participate in the interviewees specifying the aims of their interventions.

Table A.7 – Romanian associations interviewed

Associations	Aims
ASIS "Sprijinirea Integrarii Sociale"	It works grassroots with vulnerable groups: homeless people and disadvantaged families.
MKBT: Make Better	It is a hybrid organization, which has both the status of an NGO and a consulting firm, active in the field of urban development and regeneration in Romania.
FCDL Frontul Comun pentru Dreptul la Locuire	It is an initiative started by people whose basic rights to housing are in danger of being breached or have already been breached.
Carusel	It is a group of activists and professionals in the field of risk reduction, and its interventions are based on scientific evidence, on international guidelines, following strategies and principles substantiated by long studies.

Samusocial	It is a municipal humanitarian emergency service whose purpose is to provide care and medical ambulatory aid and nursing to homeless people and people in social distress.
Asociația Don Orione	It offers services for elderly, children, and disable people.
Romanian Angel Appeal Foundation (RAA)	It tries to improve the quality of life for children and young people affected by chronic diseases who are at risk of social exclusion.
Agentia Impreuna	It is aimed at preserving and affirming the personality of the Roma, through research, documentation and dissemination activities, elaboration and implementation of social policies for the benefit of the Roma.
Fundatia Parada	It is a Romanian non-governmental, apolitical, non-profit organization, whose statutory purpose is to support homeless children, young people and families, through integrated social assistance, educational-training and socio-professional integration services.
COSI (Civic Orientation and Social Integration)	It is a non-governmental and non-profit organization whose main purpose is to promote the social inclusion of children, young people and adults with limited possibilities or special needs.
ActiveWatch	It is a human rights organization that militates for free communication for public interest.
Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării	It is the autonomous state authority, under parliamentary control, which carries out its activity in the field of discrimination.
Romanian Harm Reduction Network (RHRN)	RHRN's mission is to promote a harm reduction approach by facilitating communications between partner organisations in order to improve harm reduction service quality at the national level, and to facilitate the implementation of effective policies and programmes targeting drug users and other vulnerable groups.

The table A.8 reports the list of experts who participate in the interviewees, specifying their area of study.

Table A.8 – Romanian experts interviewed

Expert	Area of interest
Nicolae-Adrian Dan	Social policies; Social and community development; groups at risk; Research methodology.
Florin Lazăr	Social policies; HIV AIDS; Risk groups; Social assistance in Romania.
Marian Ursan	Vulnerable and marginalized groups; HIV, AIDS; Drug use; Commercial Sex.
Ionel Nicu Sava	International social theory, Collective action, Periphery and development.
Irina Zamfirescu	Housing, city, public administration, human rights, freedom of expression.
Gelu Duminica	Studies on the condition of Roma and people at risk of social exclusion.
Pieter Florin Manole	Human rights activist, Romanian politician and deputy.
Catalin Raiu	Researcher at FORB Romania.
Sorin Cace	Researcher at the Research Institute for Quality of Life.

The United Kingdom – London

The table A.9 reports the list of associations who participate in the interviewees, specifying the boroughs and aims of their interventions.

Table A.9 – British associations interviewed

Borough	Associations	Aims
Brent	Harlesden Mutual Aid	It delivers regular meals, food parcels once a week and carry out routine services like shopping and collecting medication, to support the Harlesden Community.
Hackney	Kanlungan	It is a registered charity consisting of several Filipino and Southeast and East Asian community organisations working closely together for the welfare and interests of Filipino and other migrant communities in the UK.
	Hackney quest	It aims to give young people, families and members of the community the practical and emotional support they need to develop and pursue their aspirations and deal positively with life's challenges.
Haringey	West green road/seven sisters development trust	It represents the shared interests of residents, businesses and groups based in and around Wards Corner.
Southwark	Doing Social	It is helping to create the conditions for inclusive innovation to thrive, so that communities can access better opportunities to co-create innovations which can improve their lives and wellbeing.
	Southwark Group of Tenants Organisation (SGTO)	It is an independent voluntary organisation representing and promoting the rights of tenants and residents' groups in Southwark. They represent the social housing residents directly with the council. They provide information and support for the residents, but also opportunities and activities and access to computers
Barking & Dagenham	Barking & Dagenham Giving	It is the platform for anyone who has a stake in the borough to get involved in addressing local issues.
Multiple areas of the city	Just Space	It is an informal alliance of around 80 community groups, campaigns and concerned independent organisations which was formed to function as a voice for Londoners at grass-roots level during the formulation of London's major planning strategy, particularly the London Plan.
	Roma support group	It is a Roma-led Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England and Wales working with East European Roma refugees and migrants.
	National Roma Network (Migration Yorkshire)	It is a partnership of voluntary and community organisations, Roma community groups and individuals, representatives from local and central government and statutory organisations, universities, and researchers.

	Housing First	It is one of the important solutions to homelessness. Homeless Link is driving the scale up of high-fidelity Housing First as a solution for people who are facing multiple disadvantages.
	ReSpace Projects	It is an association of social groups, businesses, councils, communities, and projects that are committed to finding new, collaborative ways to work together – for the benefit of all.
	Anonymous	It is a charity for migrants and refugees.

The table A.10 reports the list of experts who participate in the interviewees, specifying their area of study.

Table A.10 – British experts interviewed

Experts	Interests
Matt Barnes	Secondary analysis of complex survey data and his research focuses on poverty, disadvantage, and social exclusion.
Tania Burchardt	Theories of justice, including the capability approach, measurement of inequality and applied welfare policy analysis.
Polly Vizard	Multidimensional poverty and inequality, the analysis of deprivation and distributional outcomes using social surveys and administrative data, social and public policy, social indicators, Sen's capability framework, human rights-based approaches, and equality and human rights monitoring.
Eleni Karagiannaki	Poverty, income and wealth inequality, intergenerational transfers, intergenerational mobility, household economics.
Ellie Benton	Housing and Communities.
Laura Lane	Housing and Communities.
Ilona Pinker	Forced migration, belonging, poverty and destitution, children's rights and welfare, racial discrimination and inequality, and access to justice.
Anne Power	Debt in low-income communities, welfare reform, private renting, energy saving, estate regeneration, European and American cities, and international human settlements.
Aleksandra Jadach-Sepioło	Urban revitalization and urban development.
Bert Provan	Housing, neighbourhood renewal and the social impact of regeneration, the impact of welfare reforms, social return on investment, and comparative French housing policies.
Rowland Atkinson	Gentrification and displacement, cities and crime, wealth, poverty and exclusion, segregation and urban security, and gated communities and fortress homes.

APPENDIX B – Questions

The questions that guided the interviews are:

1. Based on your experience, how do you define social exclusion and inequality in [city]?
   - What are their main dimensions?
   - Causes? Consequences?
   - What are the phenomena related to these dynamics?
   - In your opinion, are there shades of abyssal exclusion and advanced marginality present in [city]? Which are the groups more exposed? Which are areas more at risk of these phenomena?

2. Based on your experience, who are the people suffering and experiencing the dynamics of exclusion and inequality?
   - In terms of socioeconomic background; Nationality; Education; Job; Living and housing conditions.
   - Have you seen any changes over the past ten years?

3. Based on your experience, which are the most at-risk areas or neighbourhoods?
   - What is the role of neighbourhoods in reinforcing exclusion?
   - Are there forms of segregation or ghettoization?
   - Are these neighbourhoods historically poor or have there been some changes?
   - Have they specific characterises? (e.g., prices, ethic component, closeness/farness from the working place, presence of Roma camps or centres for refugees)

4. Europe calculates inequality and exclusion as people either at risk of poverty or severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity. In your opinion, is this measure able/enough to photograph these phenomena? If so, why? If it does not, what is missing?

APPENDIX C – Other databases

As reported, several indicators and datasets provide measures for inequality and exclusion for European countries. Even though the European Union calculates these phenomena through AROPE and the EU-SILC database, it is relevant observing how they are defined and quantified in other datasets. This paragraph will overview some of the principal ones at the European and World level.

1. European Quality of Life Survey

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS)[328] is an ongoing survey developed by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). It aims to examine the objective circumstances of Europeans and how they feel about those and their lives in general. Thus, it covers several issues, including employment, income, education, housing, family, health, work-life balance, and subjective well-being. Over the years, EQLS has enhanced its questions and topics, developing into a valuable and comprehensive set of indicators, complementing traditional indicators of economic growth with the living standard. Thus, as they are more inclusive and able to capture social aspects of progress, EQLS is often integrated into the decision-making process and taken up by public debate at the European Union and national levels. Regarding the analysis of

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[328] Started in 2003, this pan-European survey is carried out every four years. By performing it regularly, it has also become possible to track nodal trends in the quality of lives of Europeans over time. Its target population is the resident population age 18 or above in the European Union member countries and the candidate countries. The sample size is set at a minimum of 1000 achieved interviews per country. In each wave, the sample has been selected randomly for a face-to-face interview. Moreover, over time, the geographical coverage of the survey has expanded: First EQLS in 2003 - 28 countries: 27 EU Member States and Turkey; Second EQLS in 2007-2008 - 31 countries: 27 EU Member States, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Turkey and Norway; Third EQLS in 2011-2012 - 34 countries: 27 EU Member States and Croatia, Iceland, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, and Kosovo; and Fourth EQLS in 2016 - 28 Member states and five candidate countries: Albania, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

As every dataset, EQLS has its strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, it enriches the panoramic offered by Eurostat, providing more information on how individuals perceive their living and experiencing circumstances. It captures a subjective perspective on social and economic dynamics. Specifically, regarding inequality, EQLS provides wider information on living conditions and quality of life. Concerning social exclusion, it produces an index based on the experience and perception of individuals. On the other hand, its limit is that it still misses a political and right component of these dynamics.

inequality and exclusion, Eurofound considers their reduction a priority. Specifically, concerning inequality, the Foundation examines its drivers, including gender, age, disability, employment status and citizenship, with implications for pay and income, and access to welfare, health, and education services. Thus, through EQLS, Eurofound has examined income and social inequality. The former is analysed by looking at the distribution of wages in the European Union and within its Member States, while the latter focuses on several indicators of quality of life. Moreover, it has also studied the gender gap and inequalities in working conditions through the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). On the other hand, regarding social exclusion, Eurofound provides a specific indicator, the Social Exclusion Index (SEI)[329].

2. OECD Database

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international and intergovernmental economic organization aimed at improving and comparing policy experiences. The presence of several countries displayed in different parts of the globe[330] with diverse welfare and policies allows for confronting and observing similarities and differences among them. Thus, it permits catching and transferring the best practices to improve and converge policies. OECD offers data and metadata on economic, political, social, health, and environmental issues. Specifically, regarding inequality and exclusion, OECD provides mainly economic information. Hence, OECD does not have an indicator to capture social exclusion, but it adopts income inequality measures to study and monitor disparities. OECD provides six indicators to measure it: the Gini coefficient, the S80/S20 ratio, the P90/P10 ratio, the P90/P50 ratio, the P50/P10 ratio, and the Palma ratio. Moreover,

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[329] It refers to the overall average score from responses to four statements: "I feel left out of society", "Life has become so complicated today that I almost cannot find my way", "I do not feel that the value of what I do is recognized by others", and "Some people look down on me because of my job situation or income". Responses are scored on a scale from 1 to 5, where one means "Strongly disagree" and five means "Strongly agree". Thus, SEI results from the combination of these four items, with value raking from 1 to 5.

[330] Currently, it counts 38 members countries: Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union countries except Bulgaria, Croatia, Romana (which are under consideration), Malta and Cyprus.

OECD has a platform for promoting and conducting policy-oriented research on inequalities and discussing how policies can best address them. It is the Centre for Opportunity and Equality (COPE).

3. World Bank and Luxembourg Income Study

The World Bank and Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) provide information on the economic inequality situation among countries. Thus, both offer data regarding income and wealth inequalities through the indexes and ratios presented above. Specifically, the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) is a cross-national data centre committed to promoting and facilitating comparative research on socio-economic outcomes. To begin with, it acquires datasets with income, wealth, employment, and demographic information from several countries. Then, it harmonises them to enable cross-national comparisons. Finally, it makes them publicly available in two databases: the Luxembourg Income Study Database (LIS) and the Luxembourg Wealth Study Database (LWS). The former is the largest available income database of harmonised microdata collected from about 50 countries in Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The LWS is the only cross-national wealth micro-database in existence.

4. World Inequality Database

Developed in 2011 as The World Top Incomes Database (WTID), it became the World Inequality Database (WID) in 2015. It provides access to the most extensive available database on the historical evolution of the world distribution of income and wealth within and among countries. WID includes an extended version of the historical database on the long-run evolution of aggregate wealth-income ratios. Scholars such as Piketty and Zucman adopted and investigated the changing structure of national wealth and income through this database. Hence, regarding inequality, this database provides information on income and wealth shares among countries and world regions. Unfortunately, it does not provide an indicator for exclusion. However, this database allows diving into the income and wealth changes in the European Union member states. As the Gini index tends to downplay shifts

happening at the top end and the bottom of the distribution, WID prefers to use several inequality metrics combining available sources (national accounts, fiscal and wealth data, surveys). Specifically, WID measures economic inequality by focusing on the share of national income by each group. As affirmed in its report in 2018, "the analysis should not stop with the top 10%, but also describe the shares and income levels of other income groups, such as the bottom 50% or the 40% who fall between the bottom 50% and the top 10% and who are often referred to as the middle class. One may also want to refine the focus on the top other distribution, looking at the top, for instance, as recent research has shown that inequality within the top is large and growing" (Alvaredo et al., 2018: 28). This approach allows a more thorough and straightforward description of the level and evolution of inequality. On the other hand, as this database has historical data storage, it permits capturing and observing when these changes occurred. Therefore, WID data are particularly relevant to capture how income inequality has increased in the last decades.

5. Human Development Index

Developed by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq in 1990, the Human Development Index is a statistical composite indicator aimed at assessing the development of a country. Its dimensions are (1) a long and healthy life; (2) being knowledgeable; and (3) having a decent standard of living. By adopting these three features, it attempts to measure development beyond economic growth alone. This index has the advantage of being aware of the connections between politics and inequality (Alacevich, Soci, 2019). On the other hand, it has some limitations and weaknesses. Indeed, notwithstanding the widening of the calculation through different dimensions of inequality, it still omits some relevant aspects, such as any measure of gender equity or environmental sustainability. Hence, the HDI simplifies and captures only part of what human development entails.

However, the United Nations Development Programme also provides the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI). It "adjusts the HDI value for inequality within countries in each of its components (health, education and income)" (UNDP, 2019: 35). It allows a better comprehension of inequalities. Currently, inequality is calculated as the

coefficient of human inequality, an unweighted average of disparity across three dimensions. Moreover, the difference between the IHDI and HDI is defined as the human development cost of inequality or the overall loss of human development due to inequality.

6. European Social Survey

The European Social Survey (ESS) is a cross-national survey conducted since its establishment in 2002. They conduct face-to-face interviews every two years. Thus, to this date, there are eleven rounds of ESS. They involve a minimum of 1500 respondents per country drawn from a probabilistic sample representing the population aged 15 and above. The ESS measures values, attitudes, and beliefs patterns of the populations of European countries[331].

Regarding inequality and exclusion, ESS provides relevant information. Through questions concerning the socio-demographic profile of the interviewed, it can analyse income disparities and consequential socio-economic inequalities. Moreover, in the seventh round of ESS (2014), the rotating module focused on the social determinants of health and health inequalities. It permits to deepen of the shades of socio- and health disparities among groups and countries[332].

On the other hand, ESS does not provide a unique indicator for social exclusion. However, it provides a series of items committed to covering the various dimensions of exclusion without an explicit expectation that these would be combined to form a social exclusion index or scale. As they stated, "our intention was to cover the range of factors (within a

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[331] According to its website, "the main aims of the ESS are to chart stability and change in social structure, conditions and attitudes in Europe and to interpret how Europe's social, political and moral fabric is changing; to achieve and spread higher standards of rigour in cross-national research in the social sciences, including for example, questionnaire design and pre-testing, sampling, data collection, reduction of bias and the reliability of questions; to introduce soundly-based indicators of national progress, based on citizens' perceptions and judgements of key aspects of their societies; to undertake and facilitate the training of European social researchers in comparative quantitative measurement and analysis; and to improve the visibility and outreach of data on social change among academics, policy makers and the wider public".

[332] Specifically, this section includes items related to health measurements (BMI, self-reported diagnoses, and mental well-being), social determinants (childhood conditions, housing quality and working environment), behaviours (smoking, alcohol use, fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity), and use of primary, secondary, and alternative health care.

limited number of items) in order for analysts to choose which items to include and how to combine them" (Vogel et al., 2001: 117). Specifically, the section involves items focused on comprehending exclusion from a broader perspective. Thus, ESS provides 14 questions encompassing several issues and dynamics of exclusion. They include variables about subjective well-being (trust in people, satisfaction with life, happiness, health), social and personal network (frequency of socially meeting with others or of being involved in social activities), security (being a victim of a burglary or feeling unsafe in walking alone), financial and living situation (difficulties in making ends meet).

The main limitation of this survey is that each country can decide whether participate. Thus, as presented in the table below (Table C.1), some countries have attended all the rounds, while others are only a few. Moreover, Malta is not present.

Table C.1 – ESS participation countries by year and round[333]

	Round 1 [2002]	Round 2 [2004]	Round 3 [2006]	Round 4 [2008]	Round 5 [2010]	Round 6 [2012]	Round 7 [2014]	Round 8 [2016]	Round 9 [2018]	Round 10 [2020]
AT	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
BE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
BG			•	•	•	•			•	•
CY			•	•	•	•			•	
CZ	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
EE		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
EL	•	•		•	•					•
ES	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
FI	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
FR	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
HR				•	•				•	•
HU	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
IE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
IT	•	•				•		•	•	•
LT				•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LU	•	•								
LV			•	•			•		•	
NL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PT	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
RO			•	•						
SE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
SI	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
SK		•	•	•	•	•			•	•

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[333] Data source: https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/participating-countries.

UK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	

7. International Social Survey Programme

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) is a cross-national collaboration programme conducting annual surveys on diverse topics relevant to social sciences. Established in 1984, its funding member were Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Since then, the ISSP has included more states covering various cultures around the globe[334]. The questionnaire is composed of a common section containing background variables and rotating modules on one specific issue each year planned to be repeated every five or ten years. Thus, ISSP allows comparing countries over time. Nonetheless, it has a twofold limitation. The sampling procedures differ by country: partly simple, partly multi-stage stratified random samples. The mode of interviewing also varies by state: partly face-to-face interviews with a standardized questionnaire, partly paper and pencil and postal surveys.

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[334] In Europe, it includes all the European Union Member States but Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, and Romania.

APPENDIX D – Minimum effective sample size for countries

Minimum effective sample size for countries (based on the use of a sample of households/addresses) (Eurostat, 2019: 28).

Table D.1 - Minimum effective sample size for countries

EU-Member States	Households		Persons aged 16 or over to be interviewed	
	Cross-sectional	Longitudinal	Cross-sectional	Longitudinal
Belgium	4 750	3 500	8 750	6 500
Bulgaria	4 500	3 500	10 000	7 500
Czech Republic	4 750	3 500	10 000	7 500
Denmark	4 250	3 250	7 250	5 500
Germany	8 250	6 000	14 500	10 500
Estonia	3 500	2 750	7 750	5 750
Ireland	3 750	2 750	8 000	6 000
Greece	4 750	3 500	10 000	7 250
Spain	6 500	5 000	16 000	12 250
France	7 250	5 500	13 500	10 250
Croatia	4 250	3 250	9 250	7 000
Italy	7 250	5 500	15 500	11 750
Cyprus	3 250	2 500	7 500	5 500
Latvia	3 750	2 750	7 650	5 600
Lithuania	4 000	3 000	9 000	6 750
Luxembourg	3 250	2 500	6 500	5 000
Hungary	4 750	3 500	10 250	7 750
Malta	3 000	2 250	7 000	5 250
Netherlands	5 000	3 750	8 750	6 500
Austria	4 500	3 250	8 750	6 250
Poland	6 000	4 500	15 000	11 250
Portugal	4 500	3 250	10 500	7 500
Romania	5 250	4 000	12 750	9 500
Slovenia	3 750	2 750	9 000	6 750
Slovakia	4 250	3 250	11 000	8 250
Finland	4 000	3 000	6 750	5 000
Sweden	4 500	3 500	7 500	5 750
United Kingdom	7 500	5 750	13 750	10 500
Total of EU Member States	135 000	101 500	282 150	210 850

APPENDIX E - EU-SILC variables regarding living conditions and wellbeing

EU-SILC variables regarding living conditions and wellbeing (Eurostat, 2023)

Table E.1 - EU-SILC variables regarding living conditions and wellbeing

Subject matter	Variable	Unit	Question
Living conditions and wellbeing	Ability to make ends meet	Household	*A household may have different sources of income and more than one household member may contribute to it. Thinking of your household's total income, is your household able to make ends meet, namely, to pay for its usual necessary expenses?*
	General health	Individual	*How is your health in general?*
	Unmet need for medical examination or treatment	Individual	*Was there any time during the past 12 months when you really needed medical examination or treatment (excluding dental) for yourself?*
	Unmet need for dental examination or treatment	Individual	*Was there any time during the past 12 months when you really needed dental examination or treatment for yourself?*
	Leaking roof, damp walls/floors/foundation, or rot in window frames or floor	Household	*Do you have any of the following problems with your dwelling/accommodation?* *A leaking roof* *Damp walls/floors/foundation* *Rot in window frames or floor*
	Bath or shower in dwelling	Household	*Is there a shower unit or a bathtub in your dwelling?*
	Indoor flushing toilet for sole use of household	Household	*Is there an indoor flushing toilet in your dwelling?*
	Replacing worn-out clothes by some new (not second-hand) ones	Individual	*Could you tell me if you can replace worn-out clothes by some new (not second-hand) ones?*
	Two pairs of properly fitting shoes	Individual	*Do you have two pairs of shoes in a good condition that are suitable for daily activities?*
	Get-together with friends/family (relatives) for a	Individual	*Do you get-together with friends/family (relatives) for a drink/meal at least once a month?*

	drink/meal at least once a month		
	Regularly participate in a leisure activity (that costs money) outside home	Individual	*Do you regularly participate in a leisure activity (that costs money) outside home?*
	Spend a small amount of money most weeks on yourself, for your own pleasure	Individual	*Do you spend a small amount of money most weeks on yourself, for your own pleasure (buying/doing something for yourself)?*
	Internet connection at home for personal use at home	Individual	*Do you have an Internet connection at home for personal use when needed?'*
	Replacing worn-out furniture	Household	*Could you tell me if your household replaces furniture (bed, sofa/dresser, cupboard) when worn out or damaged?*
Neighbourhood problems and exposure to crime, violence, and environmental problems	Crime, violence or vandalism in the area	Household	*Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: crime, violence and vandalism in the local area?*
	Problems with the dwelling: too dark, not enough light	Household	*Is your dwelling too dark, meaning is there not enough day-light coming through the windows?*
	Noise from neighbours or from the street	Household	*Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: too much noise in your dwelling from neighbours or from outside (traffic, business, factory, etc.)?*
	Pollution, grime or other environment problems	Household	*Do you have any of the following problems related to the place where you live: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as: smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or polluted water?*

APPENDIX F – AROPE by socio-demographic characteristics

The table F.1 shows the variations of the share of AROPE (developed for the Europe 2020 strategy) at European level by socio-demographic characteristics between 2008 and 2020.

Table F.1 - Variations of the share of AROPE at European level by socio-demographic characteristics between 2008 and 2020 (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13)

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AROPE		24	23	24	24	25	25	24	24	24	22	22	21	22
Gender	Male	22	22	23	23	24	24	24	23	23	22	21	20	21
	Female	25	25	25	25	26	26	25	25	24	23	23	22	22
Age	Under 18	27	27	28	27	28	28	28	27	26	25	24	23	23
	18-64	23	23	24	24	25	26	25	25	24	23	22	21	22
	Over65	23	22	20	20	19	18	18	17	18	18	19	19	19
Status	Employed	13	12	12	13	13	13	13	13	12	12	12	11	11
	Unemployed	65	64	65	66	67	67	67	66	67	65	65	65	65
	Retired	25	23	21	21	20	19	19	18	19	19	19	19	19
	Other persons outside the labour force	41	41	41	42	44	43	43	44	44	44	43	43	43
Education	Primary edu	33	33	33	34	35	35	35	35	35	34	34	33	34
	Secondary edu	22	21	22	22	23	23	23	22	22	21	20	20	20
	Tertiary edu	11	11	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	11	11	11	11
Citizenship	Reporting country								22	22	21	20	20	20
	Non-EU28 countries (2013-2020) nor reporting country								51	52	50	46	46	49
Urbanizatio n	Cities	23	22	23	23	25	25	24	24	24	23	22	22	22
	Town	20	20	20	21	23	22	22	22	22	21	20	19	20
	Rural	29	29	29	29	27	28	27	26	26	24	24	22	23
Children by their parents' education	Children with parents with primary education	56	57	60	60	62	63	64	66	64	63	60	60	60
	Children with parents with secondary education	29	28	31	31	32	32	32	30	31	29	29	27	27
	Children with parents with tertiary education	10	10	10	10	11	11	11	11	10	9	10	10	9

APPENDIX G – Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)

Table G.1 recaps the presence of comments regarding inequality or exclusion in the CSRs between 2011 and 2020 by country. The category "exclusion" mainly refers to the phrases related to the "at risk of poverty or exclusion" indicator and circumstances. On the other hand, the category "inequality" comprehends several forms of disadvantages, encompassing differences in income, digital divide, education, access to services, regional, and migrant background. Hence, the European Commission and Council specify what type of inequality needs to be addressed in each country and which group is more exposed to these. For instance, those more at risk of these issues are the elderly, disabled, children, the Roma, and marginalised communities. However, the differences among countries in the number of comments reflect the variations among the welfare state regimes. For instance, the Eastern and Mediterranean ones reported a higher number of suggestions on these issues. The European Commission and Council have pointed out that these countries keep having weak and fragmented social policies and actions. Notwithstanding these differences, since 2017, the comments on inequality and exclusion in CSRs have been rising and wide spreading. This increase in attention happened even in the Nordic countries. For instance, in Sweden, in 2017 and 2018, it has been pointed out that the lack of available and affordable housing might limit labour market mobility and affect the integration of migrants into the labour market.

Table G.1 - Presence of inequality or exclusion recommendations (R) and comments (C) in the CSRs between 2011 and 2020 by country[335]

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
AT						X														X
BE						X						X	X	X		X		X		
BG	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X		X
CY	X		X	X																
CZ																				X
DE												X		X				X		X
DK																				
EE	X													X		X		X		X
EL																		X		X
ES			X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X		X		X		X
FI																X				X
FR							X							X	X	X		X		
HR							X							X	X	X	X	X		X
HU		X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X				X
IE							X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X				X
IT						X	X	X		X				X		X		X		X
LT			X		X	X		X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LU																				X
LV			X		X	X		X		X		X		X		X	X	X		
MT																X				
NL																				

[335] https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/country-specific-recommendations-database/.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2020-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2017-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

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https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2013-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2012-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2011-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

PL				X													X
PT							X			X			X		X		
RO				X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	X	X	X
SE											X		X		X		X	
SI													X		X		X	X
SK		X	X									X	X			X	X	
UK			X	X		X							X		X		X	X

The tables G.2 below report the comments and recommendations from the CSRs by country regarding issues, groups or areas exposed to inequality and social exclusion (e.g., old people, disabled, intergenerational, digitalisation, wealth or income, Roma, children, regional).

Table G.2 – Comments from CSRs by country from 2011 to 2020

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
AT			X (people with a migrant background are three times more often employed and paid below their actual qualification levels than Austrians (2008: 27,5 % v 9,7 %). Also their education outcomes are lower and their poverty risk is twice as high (26,6 % v 12,6 %)		

BE			X (The population groups with the lowest participation in the labour market include those with a migrant background, the elderly and low-skilled youth in all regions. These groups are also exposed to higher risks of poverty and social exclusion.)		
BG	X (Bulgarian citizens experience a greater degree of poverty in comparison to the EU average)		X (Bulgarian citizens experience the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion in the Union.)	X (Significant proportions of the unemployed are not covered by the standard safety nets (unemployment benefits and social assistance) but rely instead on family solidarity or informal work. Bulgarians experience one of the highest risks of poverty and social exclusion in the EU.)	X (Poverty and social exclusion remain a concern, as the country has one of the highest rates of material deprivation in the Union. The Roma population faces particularly high levels of poverty and social exclusion. The majority of young Roma are neither in employment nor in education or training.)
CZ					
DE					
DK					
EL					

ES		x (Poverty has increased with 1.1 million more people at risk in 2010 and child poverty is at an alarming high of 26.2%. The in-work poverty rate for temporary workers is more than twice as high as the one for permanent workers.)	X (Mainly as a result of the labour market situation, but also due to the limited effectiveness of social protection in reducing poverty, Spain is below the EU average in the main key indicators measuring poverty and social exclusion, with children being particularly exposed.)	X (As a result of the crisis, Spain also witnessed one of the highest falls in household disposable income and one of the highest levels of income inequality in the EU.)	X (Facing high levels of poverty, especially among low-income households with children, Spain made limited progress in improving the targeting of family support schemes and care services)
FI					
FR		_			
HR					

HU	X (Poverty and related factors, such as joblessness or low education levels, continue to affect some disadvantaged groups, particularly the Roma, disproportionately. The low-skilled have a particularly low employment rate (36,8 %, compared with the European average of 53,4 %), especially among men. According to estimates, 70 % of the Roma population live under the poverty threshold. A great majority of them live in deprived regions, with little access to labour market opportunities and public services.)		X (The social situation continues to worsen: 31 % of the population is at risk of poverty or social exclusion and a high percentage of people face severe material deprivation. Poverty continues to disproportionately affect disadvantaged territories and communities, in particular Roma.)	X (The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Hungary is growing steadily and currently represents close to a third of the whole population. Poverty continues disproportionately to affect disadvantaged groups, in particular children and the Roma. While a National Social Inclusion Strategy is in place, policy measures in most fields do not systematically promote the goals defined by that strategy. Integrated and streamlined policy measures are needed to reduce poverty effectively.)	X (A number of programmes have been implemented to improve the inclusion of Roma in the labour market and a monitoring system has been put in place. Streamlined, coordinated policy measures, capable of significantly reducing poverty, are, however, still lacking. Poverty indicators, although suggesting moderately improving trends, still show poverty to be at a worryingly high level, especially among Roma and children. Gaps remain in both the adequacy and coverage of social assistance.)

415

				X (there is still a large working age population with low skills, resulting in inequality and skills mismatches. This has contributed to a growing risk of poverty or social exclusion of children in Ireland and exacerbates the issue of the unequal labour market participation of women which stood at 67.2% in 2013)	X (Ireland has one of the highest proportions of people living in 'low work-intensity' households in the EU. This generates serious social challenges and raises the risk of child poverty)
IE					
IT			X (The risk of poverty and social exclusion, and in particular severe material deprivation, are markedly on the rise, while the social protection system has increasing difficulties coping with social needs since it is dominated by pension expenditure.)	X (Italy is witnessing declining household disposable income combined with rising poverty and social exclusion, affecting families with children in particular. Social expenditure in Italy remains largely oriented towards the elderly and with little focus on activation, limiting the scope to address the risk of social exclusion and poverty.)	X (Italy has witnessed one of the highest increases in poverty and social exclusion rates in the EU, with a particular impact on children. Social assistance schemes remain fragmented and ineffective in tackling this challenge with resulting substantive cost inefficiencies.)

LT			X (Poverty and social exclusion are still worryingly high. In particular, the increase in child poverty is of concern.)	X (Despite recent improvement, working-age poverty remains above the EU averal)	
LV			X (A high proportion (40 %) of the Latvian population is at risk of poverty or social exclusion and for children it is even higher, standing at 43,6 %. Overall, the at-risk-of- poverty rate increased slightly in 2012, suggesting that growth does not automatically translate into less poverty, and that targeted policies are necessary. Latvia has taken some steps to address the poverty of unemployed people and children)	X (Working age poverty remains very high in Latvia)	X (In 2014, around 32.7% of Latvia's population were at risk of poverty or social exclusion and income inequality remains among the highest in the EU.)
NL					
PL					
PT				X (Despite efforts to alleviate the negative social impact, the necessary economic adjustment following the crisis has had negative repercussions in terms of poverty.)	

RO			x (The health sector in Romania features major inequities in terms of access to services provided and their quality. Poverty reduction continues to be a major challenge. In 2011, 40,3 % of the population were at risk of poverty and social exclusion, about two thirds more than the EU average of 24,2 %. Children are particularly affected (49,1 %).)	X (Poverty reduction remains a major challenge.)	X (Reducing poverty and social exclusion remains a major challenge for Romania. Although decreasing, the rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion remains high at 40 % in 2013, far above the EU average. The effectiveness of social transfers (excluding pensions) in reducing poverty appears limited)
SE					
SK		x (Marginalised communities, including the Roma, are largely excluded from the labour market and the mainstream education system)			

UK		X (The Universal Credit, which aims to simplify the benefit system, has not yet been implemented, but considerable risks remain that the positive impact of new policies on employment and incomes will be more than offset by declining amounts available for benefits, so poverty, particularly for families with children, risks increasing. Independent estimates forecast that in 2020-21 absolute child poverty will reach its highest level since 2001-02, and that the government will miss targets for reducing child poverty set down in the Child Poverty Act)			

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AT					X (Finally, greater use of wealth-related taxes could make the tax system fairer, especially in view of Austria's persistently high wealth inequality)

BE	X (Educational inequalities linked to socioeconomic background are amongst the highest in the Union and poor educational outcomes partly explain the observed underperformance on the labour market of people with a migrant background)	X (In 2015, the risk of poverty and social exclusion was 50.7 % for non-EU born residents, compared to 17 % for the native-born)	X (However, despite good average performance in international comparison, long-standing high educational inequalities remain.)	x (People with a migrant background, in particular women, continue to experience higher unemployment, lower activity rates, higher in-work poverty and over-qualification.)	
BG	X (Very high 'at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion' and inequality levels remain in Bulgaria. Progress in addressing poverty and social exclusion is hindered by continuing challenges over integrating Roma into the labour force, facilitating school-to-work transitions, and improving the coverage and effectiveness of social, health and labour market policies.)	X (While the risk of poverty or social exclusion for children has slightly decreased, it remains one of the highest in the EU and is strongly linked to the educational level of the parents.)	X (Inequality of income and access to services (education, healthcare and housing), as well as the risk of poverty or social exclusion remain among the highest in the EU)	X (Bulgaria is still facing high income inequality and risk of poverty or social exclusion. Though decreasing, the rate of poverty or social exclusion in 2018 was 32.8 %, still well above the EU average.)	X (The COVID-19 crisis disproportionally affects vulnerable groups and exacerbates existing social challenges. The share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was already high before the crisis, especially among children, the elderly, people with disabilities and Roma, while social transfers managed to reduce poverty only to a limited extent. Income inequality was one of the highest in the EU)

CZ					X (Education outcomes continue to be strongly affected by socioeconomic inequalities and low investment.)
DE	X (The at-risk of poverty rate in old-age (16,3 % in 2014) is above the EU average (13,8 %) and the replacement rate of the statutory pension scheme is being gradually reduced, while rates of enrolment in second or third-pillar pension schemes are too low to alleviate this risk.)	X (income inequality moderated only recently, while wealth inequality remains among the highest in the euro area.)		X (Though the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion has fallen since its peak in 2014, challenges in equality of opportunities remain.)	X (Already existing inequalities in basic skills, linked to socio-economic and migrant backgrounds, risk to be exacerbated.)
DK					

EL					X (Greece is characterised by high income inequality and has the lowest impact of social transfers on reducing the risk of poverty in the EU (15.83% in 2017 versus an EU average of 33.98%)	X (Access is still an issue, and self-reported unmet healthcare needs are among the highest in the EU, with large differences by income groups and employment status. Greece should also further promote access to affordable housing, especially for households at risk of poverty, for example by introducing a scheme to assist vulnerable homeowners with a mortgage.)

ES		X (The widespread use of temporary contracts is associated with lower productivity growth (including through lower on-the-job training opportunities), poorer working conditions and higher poverty risks.)	X (Economic growth and job creation are helping to reduce the share of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which nevertheless remains above the EU average, as well as income inequality. In-work poverty is a concern especially amongst households with members employed on temporary or part-time contracts. The child poverty rate, although declining, remains very high.)	X (Though decreasing, the proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion as well as income inequality remains above the Union average)	X (The crisis will likely increase the high levels of poverty or social exclusion in Spain, especially among families with children)
FI			X (Also, some weaknesses remain in the social protection of entrepreneurs and the self-employed and the relative risk of poverty for the self-employed in Finland is high.)		X (These efforts should also support groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, such as the low-skilled, persons with disabilities, people with partial work ability and people with a migrant background.)

FR		X (pupils from a disadvantaged background are more often steered towards initial vocational education, which also accounts for the large majority of early drop outs, contributing to high educational inequalities.)	X (Income inequalities after transfers are below the EU average and, despite a recent increase, the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion remains relatively low. However, some groups, in particular single-parent families, people not born in the EU and people living in deprived urban areas, face a higher risk of poverty.)	X (poverty. The proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion has further decreased to an historical low of 17.1% in 2017, compared to an average of 22.4% in the EU. However, income inequality remains well above the pre-crisis level)	
HR		X (According to the latest data, in 2015, almost 30 % of the population was exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion.)	X (Despite recent improvements, the share of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion remains high, with marked territorial disparities across counties. The elderly, the low skilled and people with disabilities are particularly affected. The)	X (The proportion of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion is declining, but remains above the EU average)	X (Due to a slowdown in economic activity, employers have difficulty paying wages, which is expected to result in increased unemployment and poverty levels, with even more pronounced territorial disparities.)

HU	X (Poverty indicators are improving, but they remain high, especially among the most disadvantaged, in particular Roma and children. The adequacy and coverage of social assistance remains a challenge and recent reforms could further restrict the conditions for access to a number of benefits.)	X (Some poverty indicators are back to pre-crisis levels but remain above the EU average. Poverty among children and Roma remains particularly high, although declining. A significant proportion of Roma in employment work in the public works scheme.)	X (The proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion has decreased to 26.3 % in 2016 but remains above the EU average. Children in general are more exposed to poverty than other age groups.)		X (Income inequalities increased over the past decade, due in part to changes in the tax and benefit system. Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, both severe material deprivation and material and social deprivation were high, particularly among households with several children and among the Roma population. The)
IE	X (The proportion of children (aged 0 to 17) at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) fell to 30,3 % in 2014 but remains higher than the EU average of 27,8 %. The corresponding AROPE figure for single-parent households (62,5 % in 2014) is much higher than the EU average (48,2 %).)	X (As a result, residential property prices and rents continue to increase rapidly, in turn resulting in a recent high increase in housing exclusion and homelessness. There is currently no evidence of overvaluation, but constraints limiting the supply of housing could generate macro-financial risks if they are not resolved.)	X (Ireland's persistent high at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion rate is linked to the high proportion of people living in households with low work intensity)		X (This raises concerns about the potential risks of deepening inequalities, entrenched poverty and social exclusion. Single parents with children are among the groups most affected by homelessness. Substantial regional and urban differences persist, with 69% of all homeless adults concentrated in the greater Dublin area.)

IT	X (Poverty levels are high — more than a quarter of Italians are at risk of poverty or social exclusion — and the provision of social assistance remains weak and fragmented.)	X (The rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is well above the EU average, especially for children and people with a migrant background. There are also substantial regional disparities. Some progress has been made regarding the national anti-poverty strategy)	X (Unlike the EU trend, the rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion has continued to increase and at 30 % in 2016 it was well above the EU average)	X (In 2017, 28.9% of the population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, above both the pre-crisis levels and well above the 2017 EU average (22.4%). Children, especially those with a migrant background, are particularly affected. In-work poverty is high and rising, in particular among temporary workers and people with a migrant background)	X (Prior to the crisis, the social situation was slowly improving, even if the risk of poverty or social exclusion, in-work poverty and income inequality remained high and with major regional differences. Given the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and its aftermath, social safety nets should be strengthened to ensure adequate income replacement, irrespective of their employment status, including those facing gaps in access to social protection.)
LT	X (The level of poverty among the elderly in Lithuania is among the highest in the Union.)	X (The high proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, together with growing income inequality, remain major challenges for Lithuania.)	X (The high proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, together with high income inequality, remain major challenges for Lithuania that hinder its prospects for economic growth)	X (The high proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, together with high income inequality, remain major challenges for Lithuania that hinder its prospects for inclusive economic growth.)	X (The low progressivity and ability to redistribute of the tax and benefit system limits the country's ability to finance public goods and services, and to reduce poverty and income inequality.)

LV	X (Latvia's at risk-of-poverty and social exclusion rate is among the highest in the EU)	X (Income inequality in Latvia is high)	X (Weaknesses in the social safety net are reflected in the high proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and indicate challenges on minimum income, pensions and the inclusion of people with disabilities)	X (The adequacy of social benefits remains low and the impact of social transfers on poverty and inequality reduction is limited.)	
NL					
PL					X (incomes. The biggest increase in extreme poverty reported in 2019 by the household budget survey was observed for people or families living on allowances (other than pensions and disability pensions), signalling the weaknesses in the social security system)

PT	X (In view of the recent deterioration of the social situation, especially as regards the increasing level of child poverty, important measures have also been taken to reinforce social assistance, namely in the areas of the minimum income scheme, child benefits and low pensions. The impact of these measures in reducing the intensity of poverty needs to be assessed)		X (The 'at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion' rate is coming closer to the EU average and the income share of the poorest 20 % has increased since 2015. However, the level of income inequality is still high.)	X (Income inequality remains high and the impact of social transfers on poverty reduction is limited.)	

RO	X (Romania has one of the highest risks of poverty or social exclusion in the Union)	X (Inequalities are driven to a large extent by unequal access to health care, education, services and access to labour market. Moreover, the difference between income inequality before and after taxes and social transfers is amongst the smallest in the EU. Although declining, the risk of poverty or social exclusion has been very high, in particular for families with children, people with disabilities, Roma, and the rural population. In 2016, a comprehensive anti-poverty package was adopted in a policy shift toward the enhanced provision of services catered to specific groups of the population)	X (The risk of poverty or social exclusion has been very high. Families with children, people with disabilities, Roma, and the rural population have been particularly affected. High income inequality persists, also due to the low impact of the tax-benefit system on mitigating market income inequality.)	x (Despite recent improvements, poverty and income inequality remain high, and regional disparities are deepening. One in three Romanians is still at risk of poverty and social exclusion, with particular groups such as children, the Roma, people with disabilities and the elderly being more affected)	X (The risk of poverty and social exclusion, at 31,2% in 2019, was among the highest in the EU, though on a steadily declining path. However, the pandemic's impact on the economy may lead to the deterioration of social conditions. Poverty and social exclusion, including child-poverty, in-work poverty and income inequalities are expected to increase, with vulnerable groups such as non-standard workers, undeclared workers, the self-employed, Roma, people with disabilities, the elderly and the homeless among the most exposed.)

SE	X (The high influx of refugees experienced in the past year has a number of social and economic consequences for Sweden.)	X (Lack of available and affordable housing can also limit labour market mobility and the effective integration of migrants into the labour market, and contribute to intergenerational inequality.)	X (cities. Lack of available and affordable housing can also limit labour market mobility and the effective integration of migrants into the labour market and contribute to intergenerational inequality.)	X (The housing shortage makes it harder for people to change jobs and can contribute to intergenerational inequality.)	
SK		X (The recently adopted anti-segregation legislation, on the marginalised Roma community, has yet to be fully implemented to bring about positive change and increase their participation in inclusive mainstream education, with a special focus on early childhood education and care as well as pre-school education)		X (Even though the share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is below the EU average, levels are considerably higher in a number of districts in Southern and Eastern Slovakia.)	

UK		X (As a result of previously announced reforms and cutbacks, in particular to in-work support, social policy outcomes including child poverty may come under pressure in the near-to-medium term, particularly in a context of higher inflation. The number of children in poverty who live in working households is a particular cause for concern.)	X (Home ownership has fallen significantly for younger people, contributing to intergenerational inequality.)	X (peak. The high proportion of low-skilled employees has limited career progression prospects, weighing on productivity and contributing to high levels of in-work poverty.)	X (The current crisis is likely to have a bigger impact on the most vulnerable, exacerbating poverty. The risk of poverty or social exclusion was already increasing before the crisis, despite record low unemployment. In-work poverty and child poverty are also high. Welfare cuts and reforms risk undermining the strong poverty-reducing effect of the United Kingdom tax-benefit system. There is scope to strengthen support to the most vulnerable, including children in poverty, especially given that the crisis is expected to further increase income inequality.)

Table G.3 – Recommendations from CSRs by country from 2011 to 2020

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
AT					
BE					

BG	x ("Take steps to address the challenge of combating poverty and promoting social inclusion, especially for vulnerable groups facing multiple barriers.")	X (To alleviate poverty, improve the effectiveness of social transfers and the access to quality social services for children and the elderly and implement the National Roma Inclusion Strategy.)	X (Undertake a review of the minimum thresholds for social security contributions to ensure that the system does not price the low-skilled out of the labour market. Ensure concrete delivery of the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020 and the National Roma Integration) Strategy.)	X (In order to alleviate poverty, further improve the accessibility and effectiveness of social services and transfers for children and older people.)	X (In consultation with the social partners and in accordance with national practices, establish a transparent mechanism for setting the minimum wage and minimum social security contributions in the light of their impact on in-work poverty, job creation and competitiveness.)
CZ					
DE					
DK					
EL					

				X (Undertake a review of the minimum thresholds for social security contributions to ensure that the system does not price the low-skilled out of the labour market. Ensure concrete delivery of the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020 and the National Roma Integration Strategy.)		
ES			x ("Take specific measures to counter poverty, by making child support more effective and improving the employability of vulnerable groups")		X	
FI						
FR					X (Pursue the modernisation of vocational education and training, implement the reform of compulsory education and take further actions to reduce educational inequalities in particular by strengthening measures on early school leaving)	

433

HR				X	
HU				X ("Undertake a review of the minimum thresholds for social security contributions to ensure that the system does not price the low-skilled out of the labour market. Ensure concrete delivery of the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting") Social Inclusion 2020 and the National Roma Integration Strategy.	X (In orderv to alleviate poverty, implement streamlined and integrated policy measures to reduce poverty significantly, particularly among children and Roma.)	x (Increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in particular Roma in inclusive mainstream education, and improve the support offered to these groups)

IE					X (Tackle low work intensity of households and address the poverty risk of children through tapered withdrawal of benefits and supplementary payments upon return to employment.)	X (Take steps to increase the work-intensity of households and to address the poverty risk of children by tapering the withdrawal of benefits and supplementary payments upon return to employment and through better access to affordable full-time childcare.)
IT					X (To address exposure to poverty and social exclusion, scale-up the pilot social assistance scheme, in a fiscally neutral way, guaranteeing appropriate targeting, strict conditionality and territorial uniformity, and strengthening the link with activation measures.)	

LT		X ("Increase work incentives and strengthen the links between the social assistance reform and activation measures, in particular for the most vulnerable, to reduce poverty and social exclusion"	X ("Implement concrete targeted measures to reduce poverty and social exclusion. Continue to strengthen the links between the cash social assistance reform and activation measures.")		
LV		X ("Tackle high rates of poverty and social exclusion by reforming the social assistance system to make it more efficient, while better protecting the poor")	X (Tackle high rates of poverty by reforming social assistance for better coverage, by improving benefit adequacy and activation measures for benefit recipients. Reinforce the delivery mechanisms to effectively reduce child poverty)		
NL					

PL			X (Combat in-work poverty and labour market segmentation including through a better transition from fixed-term to permanent employment and by reducing the excessive use of civil law contracts)		
PT					
RO			X (To alleviate poverty, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social transfers with a particular focus on children).	X (order to alleviate poverty, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social transfers, particularly for children, and continue reform of social assistance, strengthening its links with activation measures)	
SE					
SK		X ("Marginalised communities, including the Roma")			

UK				x (Enhance efforts to support low-income households and reduce child poverty by ensuring that the Universal Credit and other welfare reforms deliver a fair tax-benefit system with clearer work incentives and support services)	X (To address exposure to poverty and social exclusion, scale up the pilot social assistance scheme, in a fiscally neutral way, guaranteeing appropriate targeting, strict conditionality and territorial uniformity, and strengthening the link with activation measures.)	

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AT					
BE		X (Ensure that the most disadvantaged groups, including people with migrant background, have equal access to quality education, vocational training, and the labour market.)			
BG					
CZ					
DE					

DK					
EL					
ES					
FI					
FR			X (Foster equal opportunities and access to the labour market, including for people with a migrant background and people living in deprived areas)		
HR			X (Consolidate social benefits and improve their poverty reduction capacity)	X (Consolidate social benefits and improve their capacity to reduce poverty)	
HU					
IE		X (Take steps to increase the work-intensity of households and to address the poverty risk of children by tapering the withdrawal of benefits and supplementary payments upon return to employment and through better access to affordable full-time childcare.			
IT					

LT			X (Ensure that the most disadvantaged groups, including people with migrant background, have equal access to quality education, vocational training, and the labour market.)	X (Address income inequality, poverty and social exclusion)	X (Ensure the coverage and adequacy of the social safety net and improve the effectiveness of the tax and benefit system to protect against poverty)
LV				X (Address social exclusion notably by improving the adequacy of minimum income benefits, minimum old-age pensions and income support for people with disabilities)	
NL					
PL					
PT					
RO				X (Improve the quality and inclusiveness of education, in particular for Roma and other disadvantaged groups)	
SE					

SK		X (Improve activation measures for disadvantaged groups, including by implementing the action plan for the long-term unemployed and by providing individualised services and targeted training.)		X (Promote integration of disadvantaged groups, in particular Roma.)	
UK					

APPENDIX H – Italian data

Figure H.1 shows AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 in Italy between 2008 and 2020 in Italy.

Figure H.1 – AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 in Italy between 2008 and 2020 (Eurostat, source: ilc_peps01; tessi010; ilc_lvhl11; ilc_mddd11; ilc_di12; tessi180)
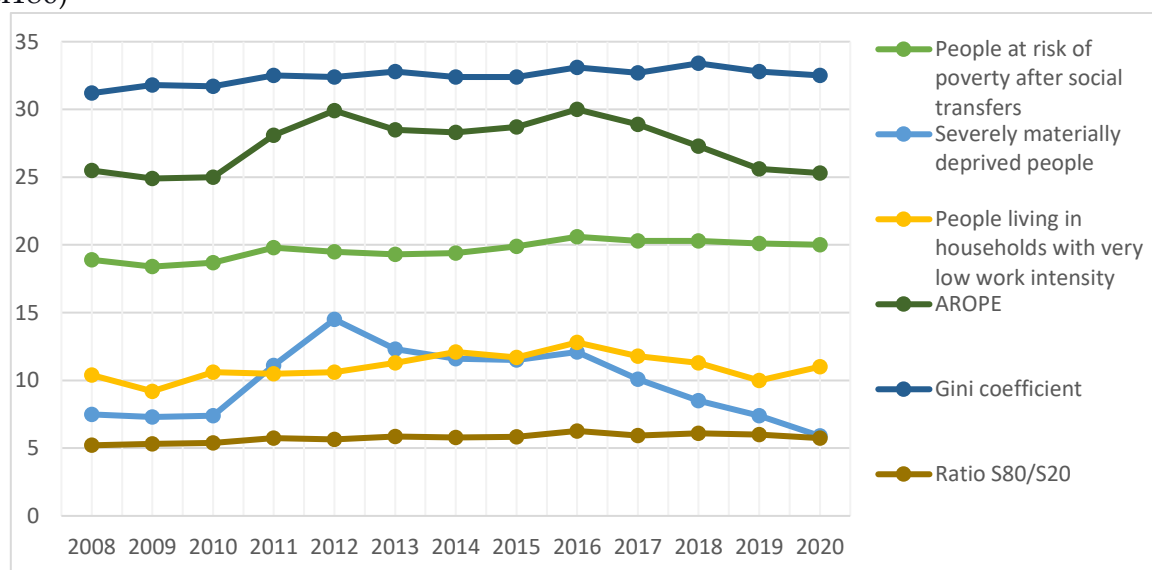
Figure H.2 summarizes the share of AROPE by the main socio-demographic peculiarities in 2008 and 2020 at the Italian level. During this period, the levels of AROPE reached the highest levels in 2012 and 2016 (30%). However, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 (especially, in the case of parents with primary education attainment), unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially those not coming from other European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels. Only in the case of people over 65, retired and single parents, the level of AROPE decreased evidently between 2008 and 2020 (respectively, - 5 pp, - 5 pp and - 7 pp). Nevertheless, households composed of an adult with one or more children were more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than any other type of household.

Differently, in the other cases, the conditions remained stable or worsened. For instance, the level of AROPE experienced by not European foreigners and people with parents with primary education levels increased respectively by 10 pp and 6 pp between 2008 and 2020.

Figure H.2 – Share of AROPE (%) in 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Italy (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)
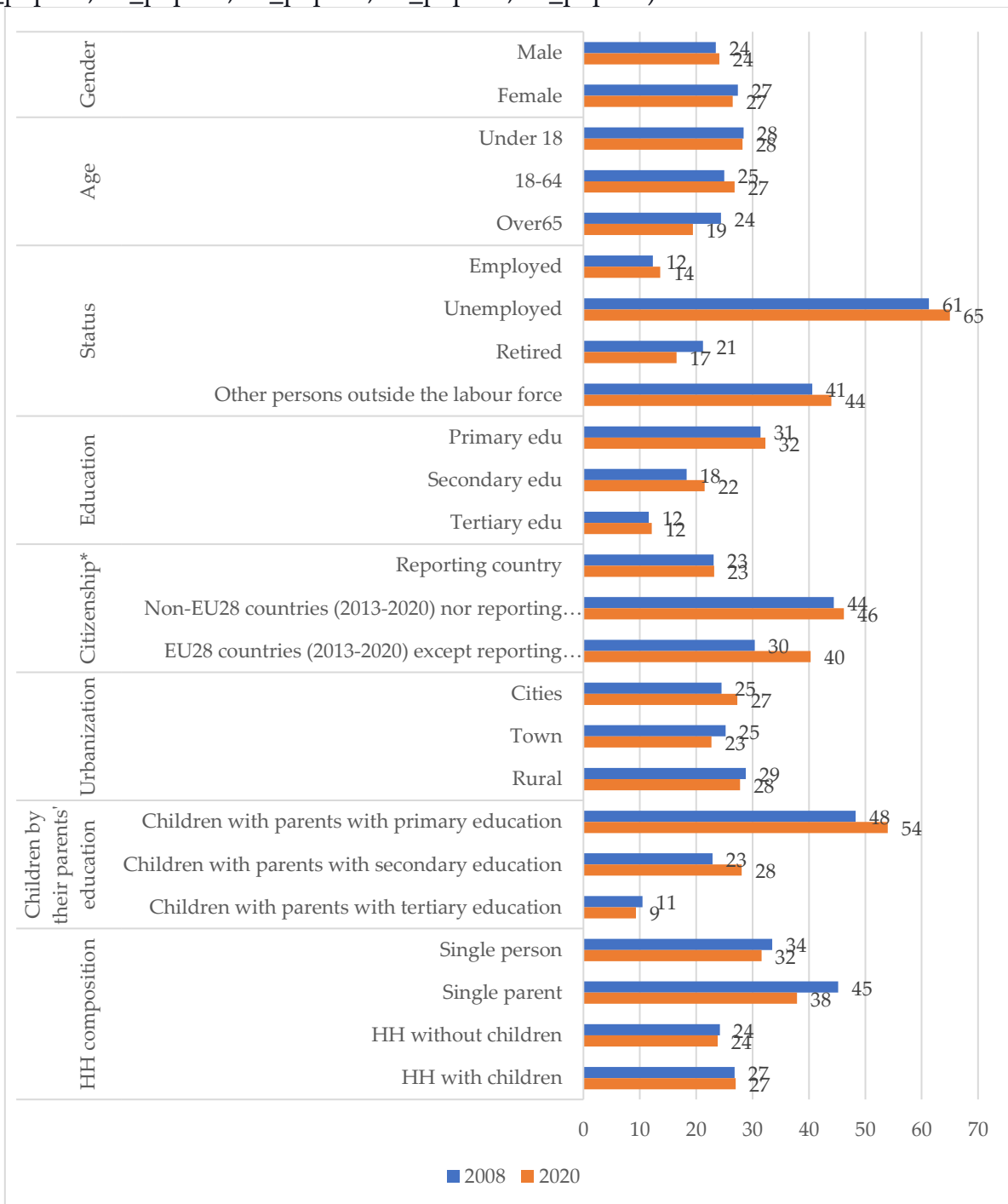
Note: "Citizenship" refers to 2009 and 2020 due to the availability of data.

Table H.1 shows the variations of the share of AROPE at Italian level by socio-demographic characteristics between 2008 and 2020.

Table H.1 - Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Italy (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AROPE		26	25	25	28	30	29	28	29	30	29	27	26	25
Gender	Male	24	23	23	26	28	27	27	28	29	28	26	25	24
	Female	27	27	27	30	32	30	30	30	31	30	28	27	27
Age	Under 18	28	29	30	32	34	32	32	34	33	32	31	28	28
	18-64	25	24	25	29	30	30	30	30	32	31	29	27	27
	Over65	24	23	20	24	25	22	20	20	23	22	20	20	19
Status	Employed	12	13	13	16	18	17	16	17	17	17	16	15	14
	Unemployed	61	61	63	68	68	68	70	68	68	67	66	66	65
	Retired	21	20	18	21	22	19	16	17	21	20	17	15	17
	Other persons outside the labour force	41	38	40	42	43	41	41	41	44	44	43	43	44
Education	Primary edu	31	30	30	35	37	35	35	36	37	36	34	33	32
	Secondary edu	18	18	19	22	23	24	24	24	25	25	22	22	22
	Tertiary edu	12	11	11	13	15	13	15	13	16	15	15	12	12
Citizenship	AROPE - reporting country		23	23	26	28	26	26	26	27	26	25	24	23
	Non-EU28 countries (2013-2020) nor reporting country		44	44	47	45	48	51	51	54	54	46	43	46
	EU28 countries (2013-2020) except reporting country		30	35	49	42	40	41	40	49	42	40	30	40
Urbanization	Cities	25	24	24	28	29	28	28	29	30	30	29	28	27
	Town	25	25	25	27	29	27	27	30	29	28	26	24	23
	Rural	29	29	27	31	35	35	34	27	31	29	27	25	28
Children by their parents' education	Children with parents with primary education	48	49	52	54	60	53	59	64	60	58	55	49	54
	Children with parents with secondary education	23	24	24	28	30	30	30	30	31	30	29	28	28
	Children with parents with tertiary education	11	9	10	10	11	10	13	12	13	13	12	11	9
HH composition	Single person	34	33	32	35	36	33	32	32	35	34	31	31	32
	Single parent	45	47	50	47	51	45	44	44	40	46	41	38	38
	HH without children	24	23	22	26	27	26	26	26	28	27	25	25	24
	HH with children	27	27	28	30	33	31	31	32	32	31	30	27	27

Figure H.3 shows the differences in the capacity to afford to do and buy things between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in Italy in 2020.

Figure H.3 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2020 in Italy (EU-SILC)
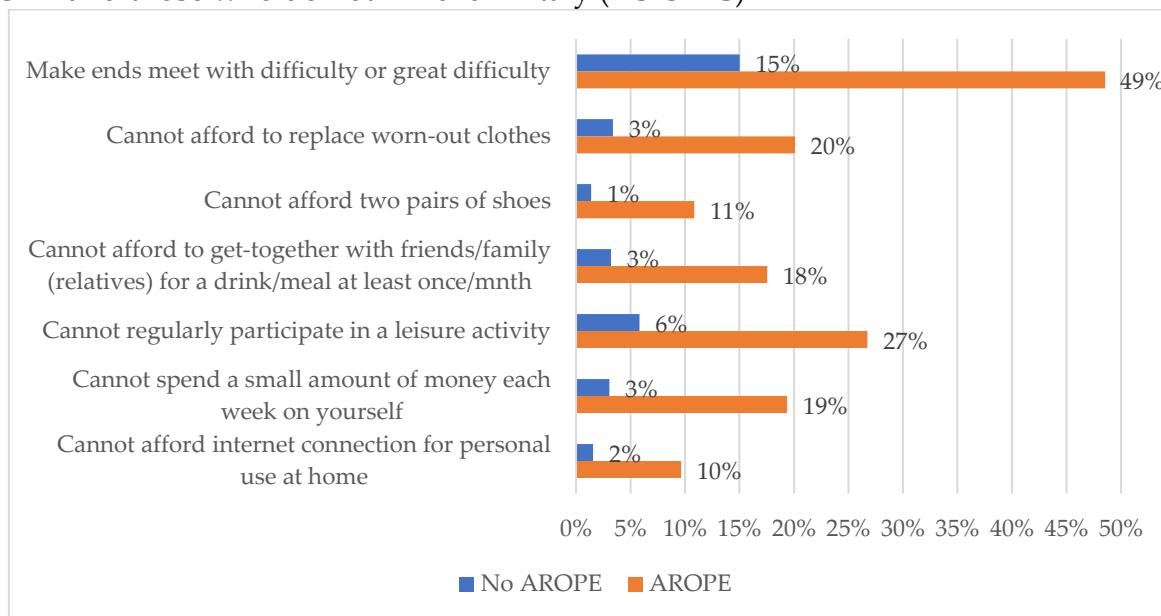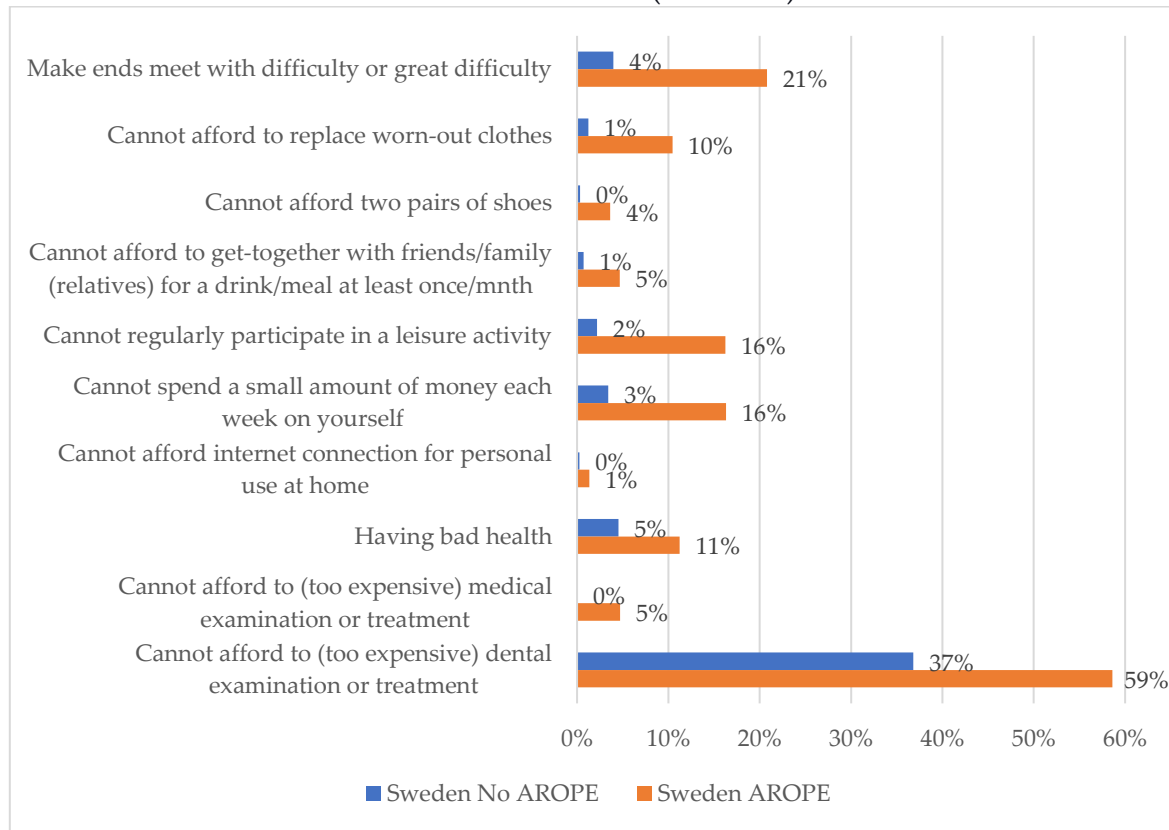

Figure H.4 presents the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in Italy in 2020.

Figure H.4 - Quality of neighbourhood and living in an overcrowded household by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2020 in Italy (EU-SILC)
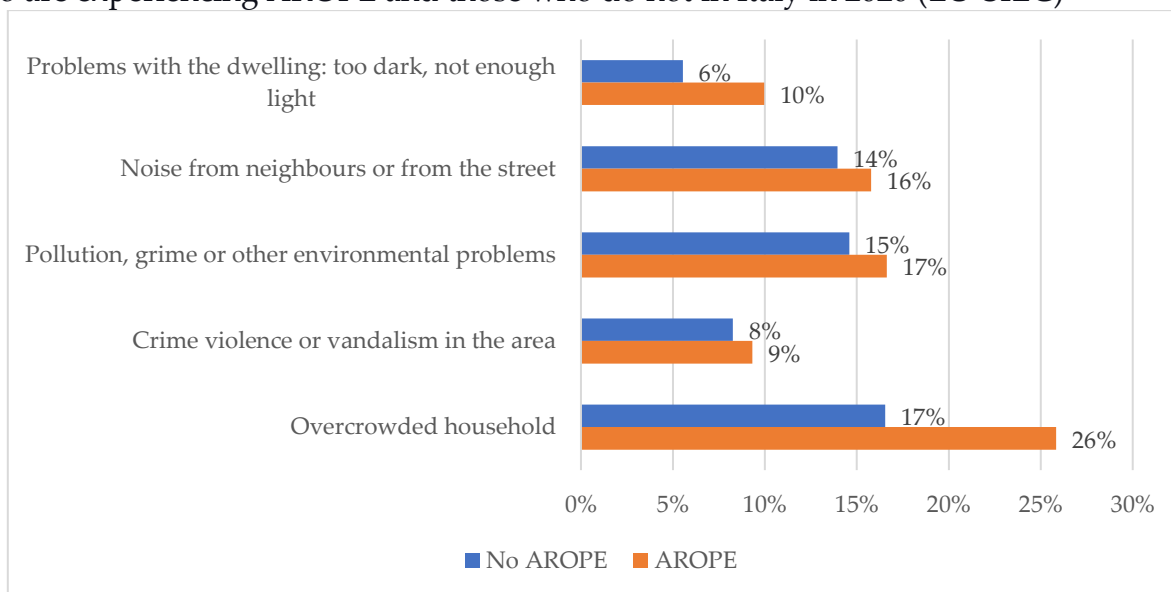
APPENDIX I – Belgian data

Figure I.1 shows AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 between 2008 and 2020 in Belgium.

Figure I.1 – AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 in Belgium between 2008 and 2020 (Eurostat, source: ilc_peps01; tessi010; ilc_lvhl11; ilc_mddd11; ilc_di12; tessi180)
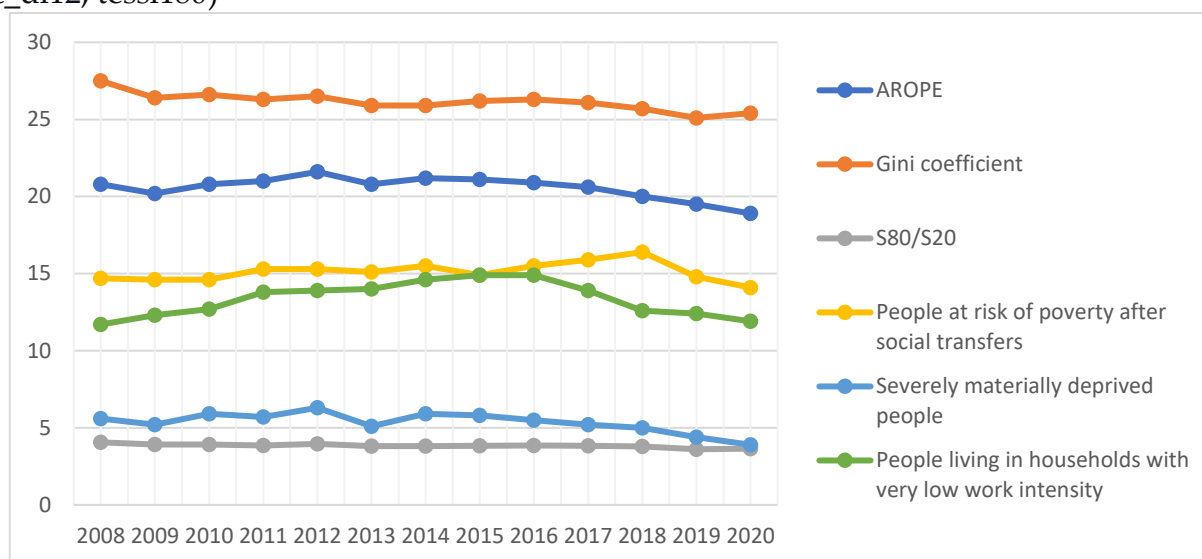
Figure I.2 summarizes the share of AROPE by the main socio-demographic peculiarities in 2008 and 2020 at the Belgian level. During this period, the levels of AROPE reached the highest levels in 2012 (22%). However, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially those not coming from other European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels.

Nevertheless, the level of AROPE decreased evidently between 2008 and 2020 among foreigners from outside Europe, people living in rural areas, and single parents (respectively, - 7 pp, -7 pp, and -6 pp). Differently, in the same period, the situation of unemployed and children (under 18) with parents with primary education worsened evidently (respectively, +12 pp and +13 pp).

Figure I.2 – Share of AROPE (%) in 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Belgium (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)
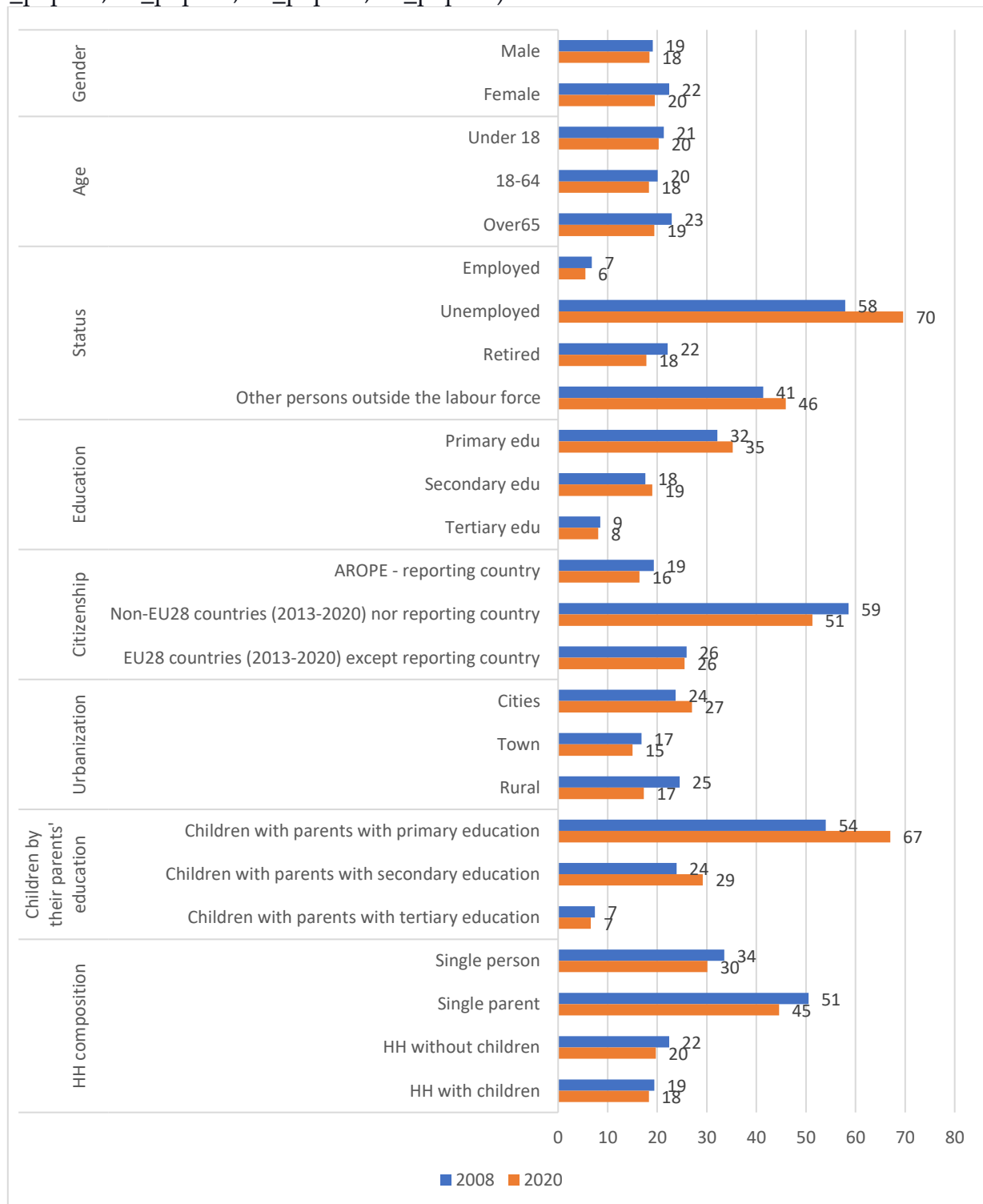
Note: "Citizenship" refers to 2009 and 2020 due to the availability of data.

Table I.1 shows the variations of the share of AROPE at Belgian level by socio-demographic characteristics between 2008 and 2020.

Table I.1 - Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Belgium (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AROPE		21	20	21	21	22	21	21	21	21	21	20	20	19
Gender	Male	19	19	20	20	21	20	21	20	20	19	19	19	18
	Female	22	22	22	22	22	21	22	22	22	22	21	20	20
Age	Under 18	21	21	23	23	23	22	23	23	22	22	23	22	20
	18-64	20	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	22	21	20	19	18
	Over65	23	23	21	22	21	20	17	16	16	17	17	17	19
Status	Employed	7	7	7	6	7	6	7	6	6	7	6	6	6
	Unemployed	58	54	53	57	58	70	64	68	67	67	64	70	70
	Retired	22	21	20	20	20	19	17	16	17	16	16	16	18
	Other persons outside the labour force	41	41	41	42	45	46	47	47	48	48	47	45	46
Education	Primary edu	32	33	32	34	35	35	35	35	35	35	34	32	35
	Secondary edu	18	15	17	18	18	18	19	20	20	20	19	19	19
	Tertiary edu	9	9	9	10	11	11	10	11	10	9	8	9	8
Citizenship	AROPE - reporting country	19	18	18	18	19	18	18	18	19	18	17	17	16
	Non-EU28 countries (2013-2020) nor reporting country		59	63	66	62	68	71	63	60	61	53	47	51
	EU28 countries (2013-2020) except reporting country		26	29	32	29	26	29	29	26	27	27	25	26
Urbanization	Cities	24	23	25	26	31	30	29	30	30	31	29	29	27
	Town	17	17	16	15	17	16	17	17	17	16	16	15	15
	Rural	25	21	19	18	18	20	21	19	20	21	19	19	17
Children by their parents' education	Children with parents with primary education	54	54	58	59	59	62	64	72	70	70	69	71	67
	Children with parents with secondary education	24	20	26	29	24	28	31	30	30	30	33	30	29
	Children with parents with tertiary education	7	8	8	8	12	8	9	10	6	8	7	8	7
HH composition	Single person	34	33	31	31	31	34	33	32	31	31	30	29	30
	Single parent	51	49	50	53	52	55	51	49	52	49	50	44	45
	HH without children	22	23	22	22	23	22	21	21	22	21	19	19	20
	HH with children	19	18	20	20	21	20	21	21	20	21	21	20	18

Figure I.3 shows the differences in the capacity to afford to do and buy things between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in Belgium in 2020.

Figure I.3 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2020 in Belgium (EU-SILC)
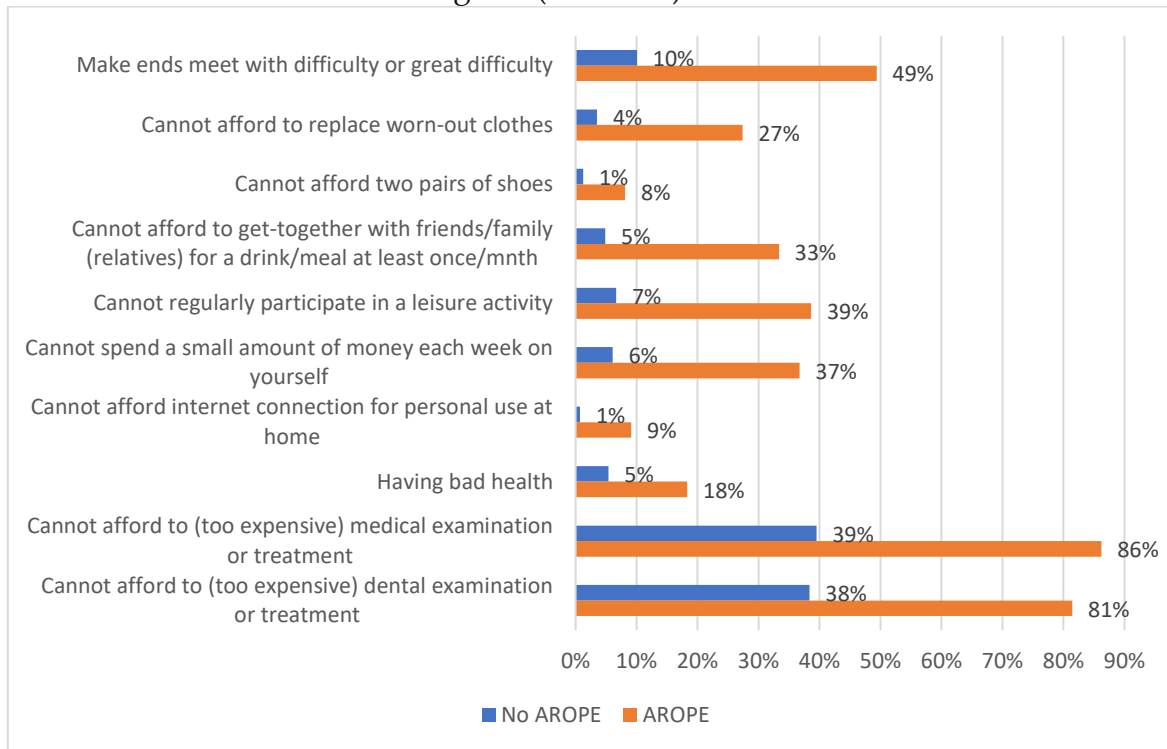
Figure I.4 presents the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in Belgium in 2020.

Figure I.4 - Quality of neighbourhood and living in an overcrowded household by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in Belgium in 2020 (EU-SILC)
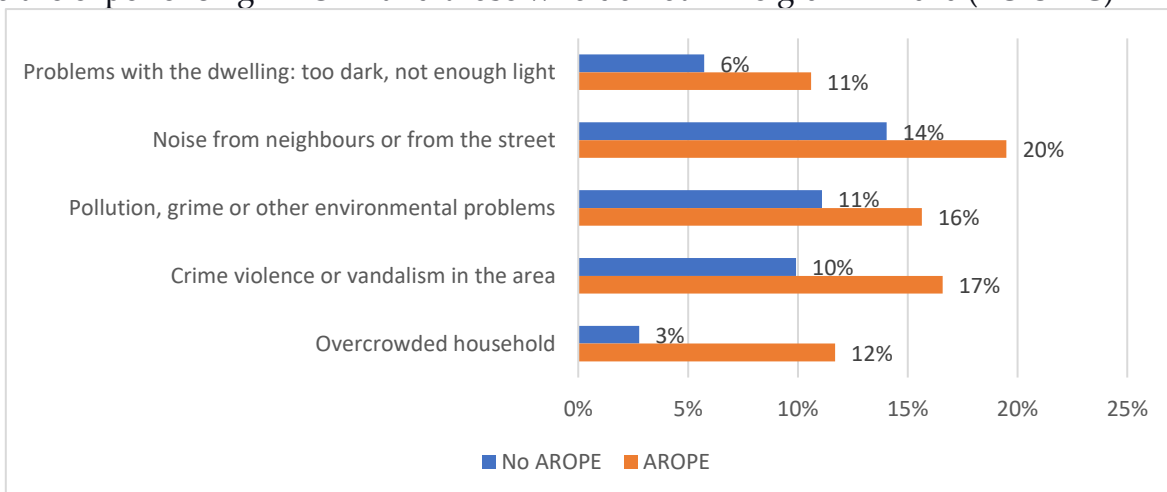
Figure I.5 displays the share of AROPE by NUTS1 in Belgium in 2020. In the Belgian case, the NUTS1 corresponds to its three main regions: Wallonia, Flanders, and Brussels-Capital.

Figure I.5 - Share of AROPE by NUTS1 in Belgium in 2020 (EU-SILC)

Created with Datawrapper
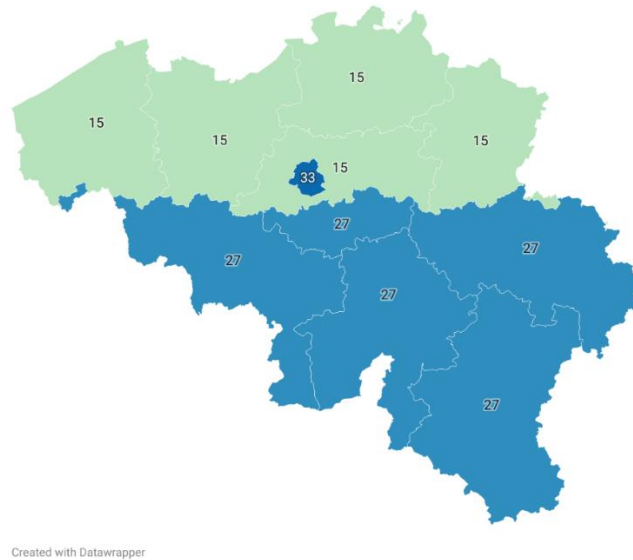
Table I.2 displays the differences in the capacity to afford to do and buy things, the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions, and living in overcrowded households between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in Belgium and its regions in 2020.

Table I.2 - Capacity to afford to do and buy things, the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions, and living in overcrowded households between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in Belgium and its regions in 2020 (EU-SILC)

	Brussels Region		Flemish Region		Wallon Region		Belgium	
	No AROPE	AROPE	No AROPE	AROPE	No AROPE	AROPE	No AROPE	AROPE
Make ends meet with difficulty or great difficulty	16%	63%	7%	40%	15%	53%	10%	49%
Having bad health	7%	16%	5%	21%	9%	26%	5%	18%
Cannot afford to replace worn-out clothes	6%	39%	4%	28%	6%	33%	4%	27%
Cannot afford two pairs of shoes	0%	5%	1%	10%	2%	9%	1%	8%
Cannot afford to get-together with friends/family (relatives) for a drink/meal at least once/mnth	7%	43%	5%	32%	7%	41%	5%	33%
Cannot regularly participate in a leisure activity	9%	46%	6%	34%	12%	51%	7%	39%
Cannot spend a small amount of money each week on yourself	11%	47%	5%	31%	10%	46%	6%	37%
Cannot afford internet connection for personal use at home	1%	12%	1%	12%	1%	12%	1%	9%
Cannot afford to (too expensive) medical examination or treatment	50%	91%	15%	73%	84%	89%	39%	86%
Cannot afford to (too expensive) dental examination or treatment	60%	92%	22%	62%	69%	90%	38%	81%
Problems with the dwelling: too dark, not enough light	8%	11%	4%	7%	8%	14%	6%	11%
Noise from neighbours or from the street	21%	21%	13%	15%	14%	24%	14%	20%
Pollution, grime or other environmental problems	25%	28%	8%	9%	13%	17%	11%	16%
Crime violence or vandalism in the area	23%	24%	7%	11%	12%	19%	10%	17%
Overcrowded household	15%	35%	2%	5%	1%	8%	3%	12%

APPENDIX J – Swedish migration flows

The figures below (Figures J.1, J.2, J.3, and J.4) display the changes in population and migration flows over time.

Figure J.1 - Population changes in Sweden 1900–2021[336]
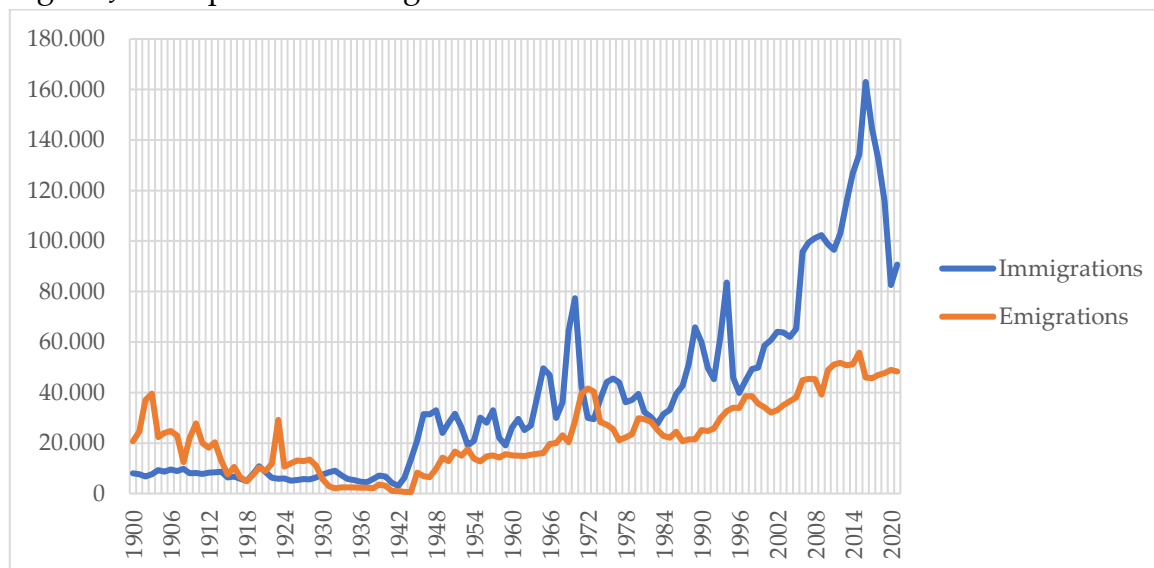
Figure J.2 – Immigration from Scandinavian countries 1973-2000[337]
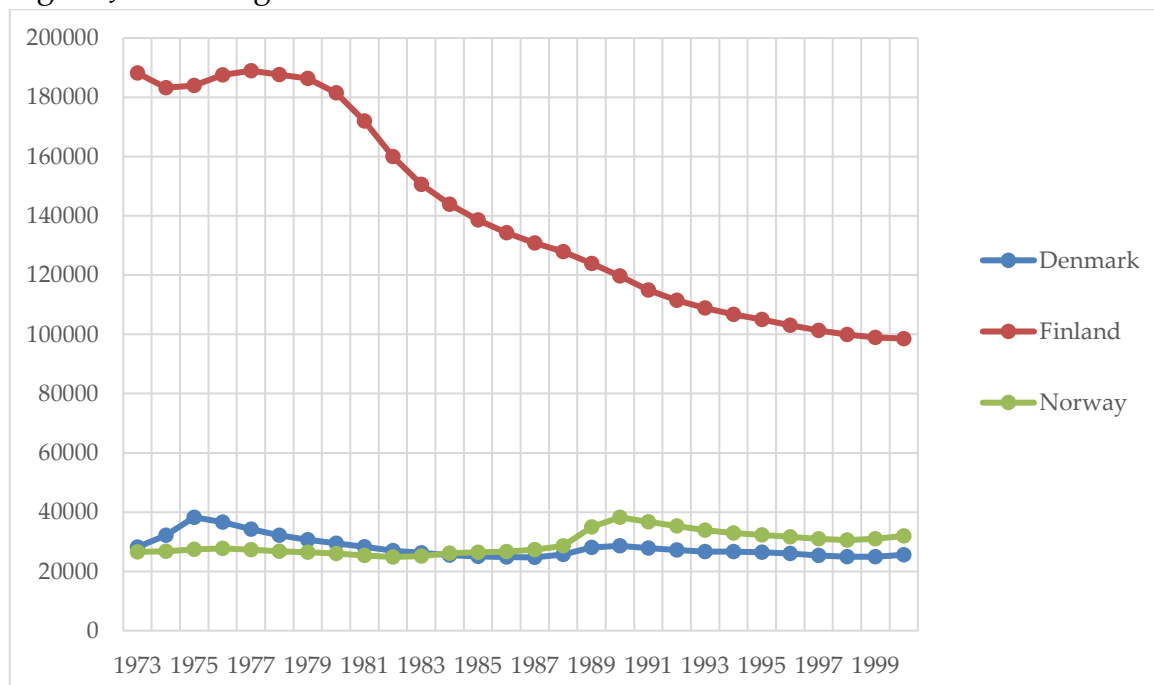
[336]   https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/yearly-statistics--the-whole-country/population-and-population-changes/.

[337] http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101F/UtlmedbR/.

Figure J.3 - Main foreign-citizens groups 1973-2000[338]
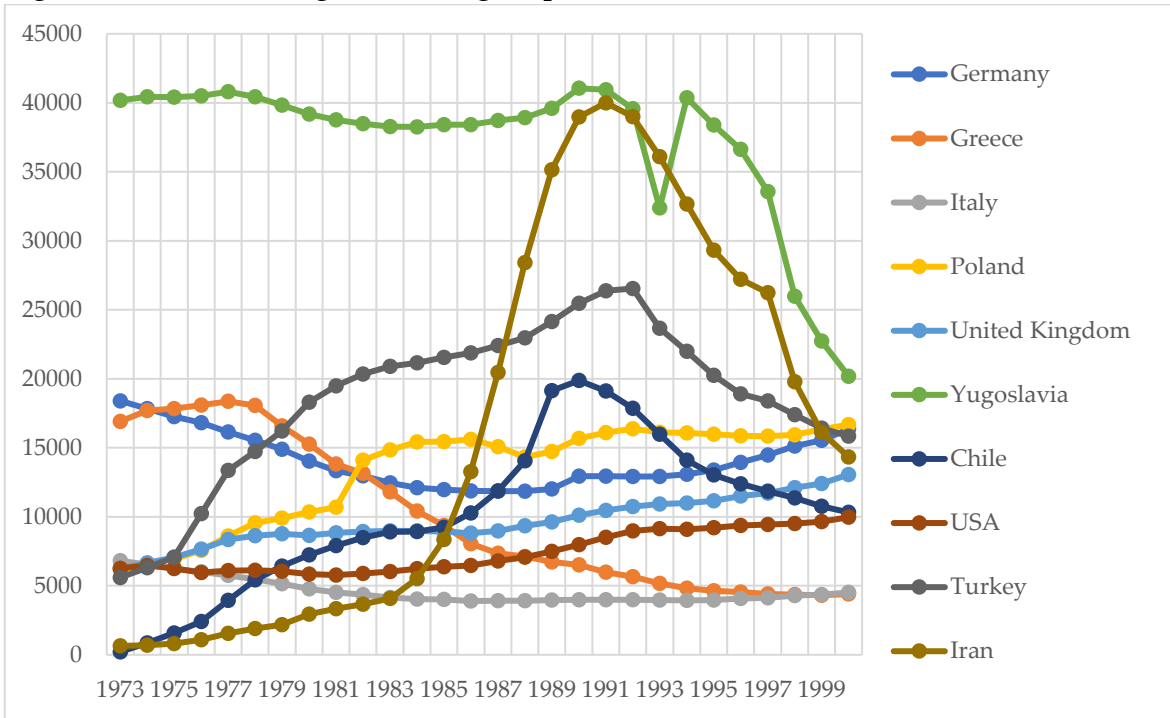
Figure J.4 - Main foreign-citizen groups 2000-2021[339]
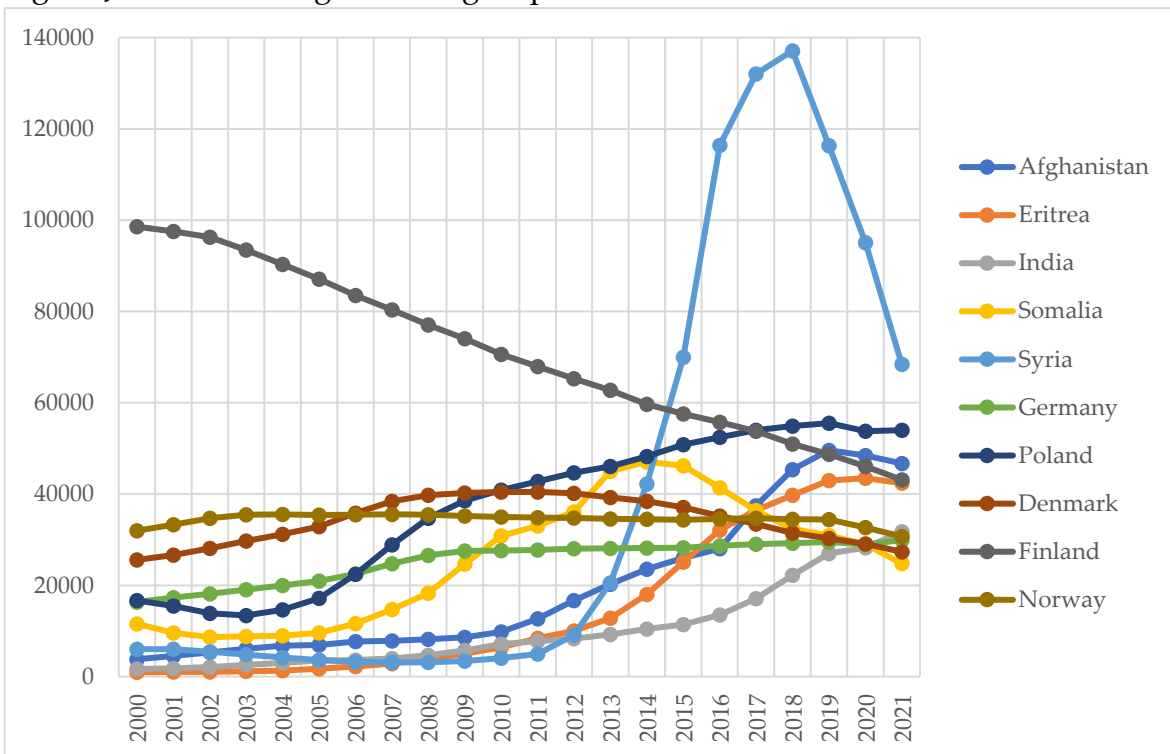
[338] http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101F/UtlmedbR/.
[339] http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101F/UtlmedbR/.

APPENDIX K – Swedish data

Figure K.1 shows AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 between 2008 and 2020 in Sweden.

Figure K.1 – AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 in Sweden between 2008 and 2020 (Eurostat, source: ilc_peps01; tessi010; ilc_lvhl11; ilc_mddd11; ilc_di12; tessi180)
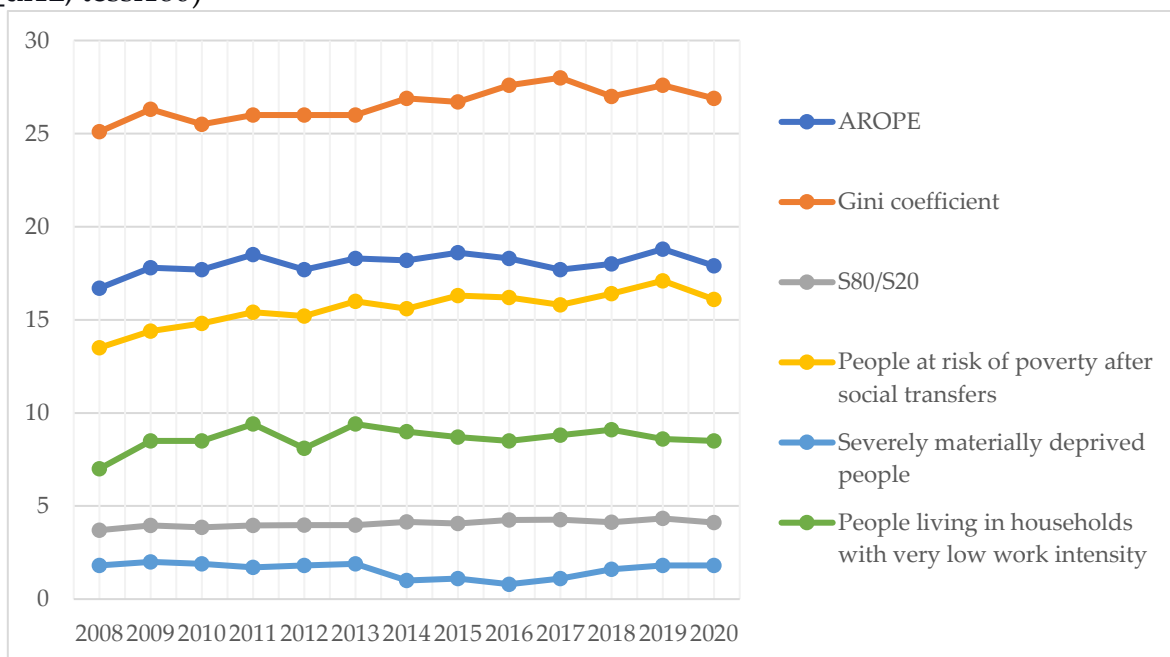
Figure K.2 summarizes the share of AROPE by key socio-demographic peculiarities in 2008 and 2020 at the country level in Sweden. During this period, the levels of AROPE fluctuated between 17% and 19%. However, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment), unemployed, people out of the labour market, foreigners (especially those not coming from other European countries), single parents, and people with low education levels. However, migrants and retired reduced their level of AROPE between 2008 and 2020 (respectively, - 10 pp, - 6 pp and - 6 pp).

Differently, the share of AROPE by unemployed, people outside the labour force, and children with parents with low education levels worsened (respectively, 13 pp, 11 pp and 12 pp).

Figure K.2 – Share of AROPE (%) in 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Sweden (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)
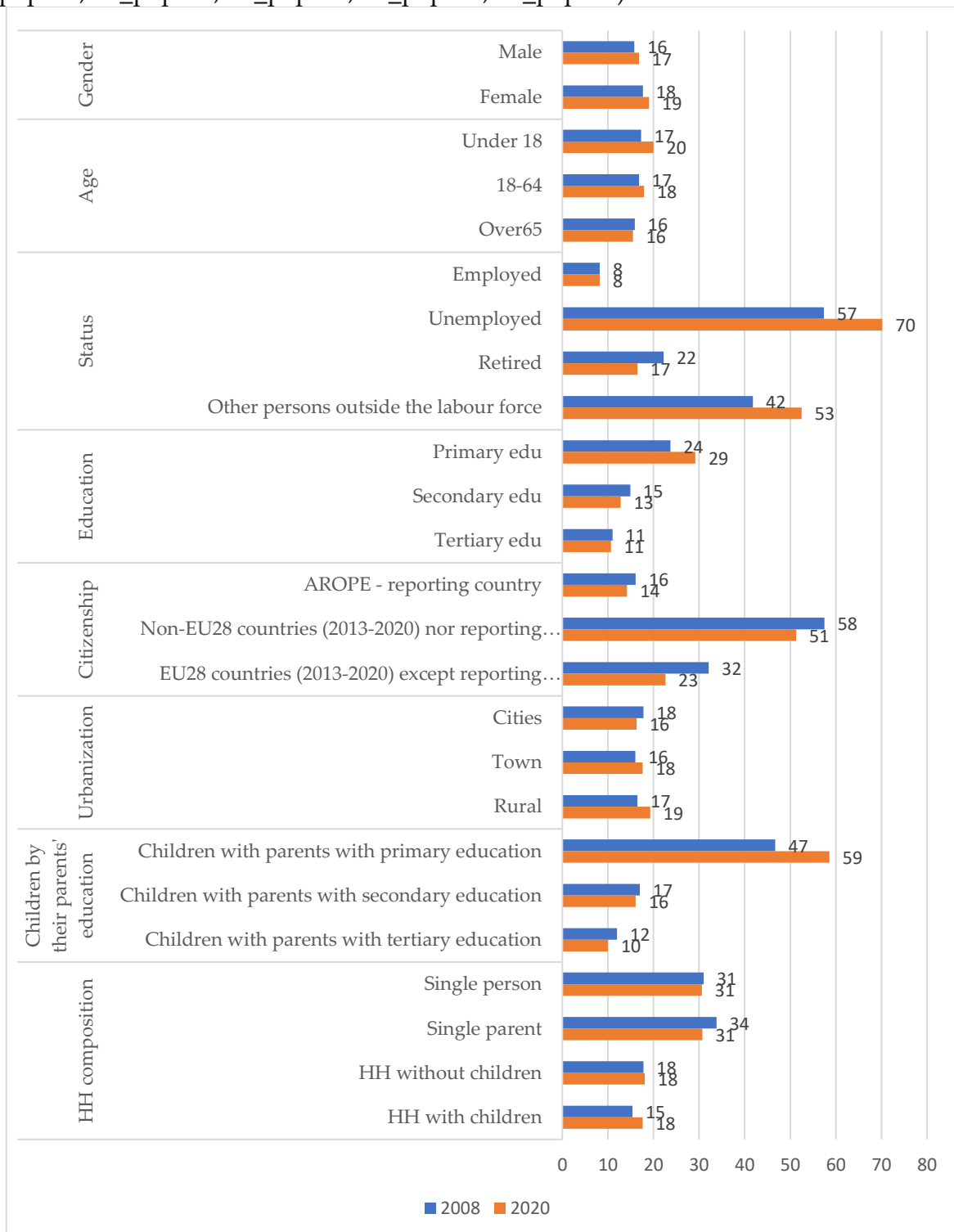
Note: "Citizenship" refers to 2009 and 2020 due to the availability of data.

Table K.1 shows the variations of the share of AROPE at country level in Sweden by socio-demographic characteristics between 2008 and 2020.

Table K.1 - Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Sweden (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AROPE		17	18	18	19	18	18	18	19	18	18	18	19	18
Gender	Male	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	18	17
	Female	18	19	19	20	19	20	19	20	20	18	19	20	19
Age	Under 18	17	19	19	20	19	20	21	20	20	19	21	23	20
	18-64	17	18	18	19	18	19	19	19	18	18	18	18	18
	Over65	16	17	15	16	16	15	14	16	17	16	15	15	16
Status	Employed	8	8	9	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	8	8
	Unemploye	57	59	53	59	58	57	58	57	62	65	69	71	70
	Retired	22	18	15	19	18	18	16	18	19	17	17	16	17
	Other persons outside the labour force	42	49	49	47	47	50	52	53	55	53	53	56	53
Education	Primary edu	24	26	25	27	27	26	25	26	29	28	28	30	29
	Secondary edu	15	16	16	16	15	17	16	15	14	13	14	13	13
	Tertiary edu	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	14	13	12	11	12	11
Citizenship	AROPE - reporting country	15	16	16	16	15	16	16	16	15	14	14	14	14
	Non-EU28 countries (2013-2020) nor reporting country		58	60	63	54	50	55	63	61	58	58	58	51
	EU28 countries (2013-2020) except reporting country		32	31	25	33	30	34	31	27	29	26	33	23
Urbanization	Cities	18	18	20	20	19	19	19	21	20	18	17	18	16
	Town	16	16	16	16	15	17	17	17	16	16	17	17	18
	Rural	17	18	18	19	18	19	18	18	18	21	20	21	19
Children by their parents' education	Children with parents with primary education	47	55	57	56	56	70	69	72	70	60	62	69	59
	Children with parents with secondary education	17	18	19	21	22	22	17	14	14	15	17	19	16
	Children with parents with tertiary education	12	14	12	14	12	12	11	11	12	12	12	13	10
HH composition	Single person	31	33	31	32	34	34	34	35	34	32	33	31	31
	Single parent	34	35	41	42	35	39	37	42	37	38	39	39	31
	HH without children	18	19	18	19	18	19	18	20	19	18	18	18	18
	HH with children	15	16	17	18	17	17	18	17	18	18	18	19	18

Figure K.3 shows the differences in the capacity to afford to do and buy things between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those not in Sweden in 2020.

Figure K.3 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2020 in Sweden (EU-SILC)

Figure K.4 presents the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those not in Sweden in 2020.

Figure K.4 - Quality of neighbourhood and living in an overcrowded household by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in Sweden in 2020 (EU-SILC)
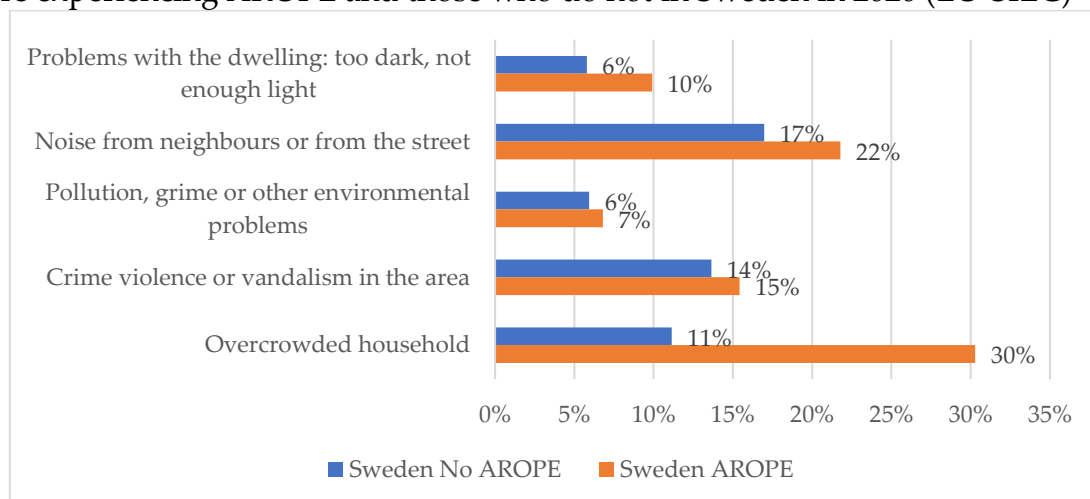
APPENDIX L – The Roma population in Romania

According to the census of 2011[340], the Roma population represent the second-biggest minority group in Romania, after Hungarians. By minority, it means "a group of individuals who identify themselves with each other on the basis of recognition of common ancestry and features such as religion, biology, culture, history and language and do not represent a majority in any one given society" (Filipescu, 2009: 299; Oprean, 2011). Since their first appearance, they became a permanent presence in the history of Romania. However, since then, Roma people have been undervalued, described as uncivilized, and put in a subordinate relationship with Romanians (Beck, 1989). Thus, they have been discriminated against, oppressed, marginalized, and considered inferior.

The main hypotheses on the arrival of the Roma population in Europe theorize that they came from Northern India (according to linguistic studies) between the IX and XIV centuries in several waves (Achim, 2013; Oprean, 2011; Anastasoaie, 2003). They probably arrived in the Romanian lands passing by the Balkans and coming from the Danube. The first document where they were mentioned is a donation in Wallachia in 1385. So, the Roma were included in the possessions. Indeed., since their arrival, they lived in slavery. On this issue, there are different theories about whether they became enslaved in Romania or arrived as such (Achim, 2013). However, during the enslavement period, they were considered the "unwanted other" (Oprean, 2011) and treated as commodities (Anastasoaie, 2003). Marrying or getting pregnant with a Roma person meant automatically becoming a slave as well. They had different duties and conditions based on which Romanian principalities they lived in and on their master. Based on the latter, it is possible to divide Roma slaves into three categories: the ones belonging to the lord, the ones belonging to a monastery, and the ones belonging to a boyar (Achim, 2013). However, all the enslaved

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[340] https://insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/alte/2012/Comunicat%20DATE%20PROVIZORII%20RPL%202011e.pdf.

Roma had no rights and, as they were so marginalized, they could not organize any resistance (Oprean, 2011).

The living and working condition of the Roma population remained the same until the XIX century when slavery ended. The Age of Enlightenment and its new ideas of equality helped the promotion of the abolition of slavery in all the principalities through several laws between the1842 and 1855 (Oprean, 2011; Achim, 2013; Anastasoaie, 2003). Then, in 1864, the complete abolishment of slavery happened when Prince Ioan Cuza "fully released the Roma slaves and gave them the right to live in the areas that they had previously worked in" (Oprean, 2011: 16).

Notwithstanding the end of enslavement, the living and working conditions of the Roma population did not change or improve that much. Indeed, even if they were free, they would not have any financial compensation or land. Thus, some decided to move away (often to the USA or other European countries); others turned back to their former occupations and masters, becoming dependent peasants. Consequentially, they kept their status as a poor and marginalized community (Oprean, 2011; Achin, 2013; Anastasoaie, 2003).

The intra-war period represented an era of changes, progress, and developments in Romania. The Roma population, who officially became citizens of Romania in 1918, have been impacted by these socioeconomic evolutions. On the one hand, technological advancements caused the disappearance of some occupations, where the Roma were overrepresented. Thus, some lost their jobs. On the other, the costume and social changes resulted in the Romanization of the Roma. Hence, a process of linguistic, ethnic, and cultural assimilation began (Villa, 2012; Achim, 2013).

Moreover, in the 1930s, there has been a rise in minorities all over Romania (Achim, 2013; Anastasoaie, 2003; Oprean, 2011). Simultaneously, the firsts Roma intellectuals started promoting awareness and desire for emancipation. For instance, in 1933, two Roma organizations emerged (Asociaþia Generalã a Þiganilor din România and Unionea Generalã a Romilor din România- I.G.R.R.) and a newspaper was founded (Voice of Roma). Since then, organizations and activities for Roma emancipation have spread out (Villa, 2012; Achim, 2013; Anastasoaie, 2003; Oprean, 2011).

Nevertheless, the advent of the Second War World and the regime of Antonescu in 1940 ended the rise of the Roma organizations and signed the beginning of a new period of persecution and discrimination. Simultaneously, several scientific studies supported the idea of a "Gypsy problem" arguing that they would represent a danger that could be handled through sterilization and interment into forced labour camps (Achim, 2013; Anastasoaie, 2003).

Therefore, due to these studies and the rise of fascist parties and beliefs, the Roma were conceived as racially inferior. As such, the people started arguing that they were not Romanians. Consequentially, they were not considered equal, and they should not have the same rights as the rest of the population (Oprean, 2011). Thus, Antonescu sought to protect and avoid any contamination of the Romanian race by evacuating all the Roma from the periphery of the cities. He decided to move and deport them to Transnistria, a region conquered in 1942 thanks to the help of Germany (Villa, 2012; Anastasoaie, 2003; Achim, 2013). The conditions in Transnistria were inhuman: lack of daily food, forced work, lack of heating, epidemics, cold, etc. For instance, the situation was so extreme that there were some cases of cannibalism (Villa, 2012). For the Roma, "Transnistria was a holocaust, the forgotten holocaust" (Villa, 2012: 205). All over Europe, "estimates of the total number of Gypsies who were systematically murdered at Auschwitz–Birkenau and other Nazi camps, shot by SS troops, the Gestapo, the gendarmes and fascist militias, or who died in the labour camps set up at the time in many countries or died of disease etc, range from 250,000 to 500,000" (Achim, 2013: 188).

After the Soviet offensive in 1944, the territory of Transnistria was evacuated, including the surviving Roma. When they returned, they still were under a strict regime of control by the police and compulsory work (Anastasoaie, 2003).

At the end of the Second War World, Romania was under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. The communist period and Ceaușescu's dictatorship (1946-1989) were even more troublesome for the Roma population. Indeed, the regime did not recognize the Roma as a minority. Consequentially, they "were not represented as an ethnic group at the level

of the Party and state administration; there were no institutions to promote their collective interests and to deal specifically with the problems of this minority, within the limits of the totalitarian Communist State, of course" (Achim, 2013: 190). Simultaneously, the several socio-economic transformations that occurred in this period affected the Roma as well as the rest of the population. "The nationalisation of the economy, the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, the transformation of the village as a result of the collectivisation of agriculture, the policy of social "homogenisation", the transformations affecting the rural and particularly the urban environment, the occupational changes that took place—all of these naturally could not fail to affect the Gypsies" (Achim, 2013: 191). These transformations impacted them both positively and negatively. On the one hand, their living and working conditions improved, and they had access to stable, even if inadequate, services (Achim, 2013; Oprean, 2011). On the other, due to their background and lack of education, they had to work in low-skilled jobs, while others had difficulties adapting to this new socio-economic system. Moreover, the communist regime failed to provide a job for all the Roma (Achim, 2013). Thus, from the 1970s, the issue of the Roma and their management re-emerged. Specifically, several policies and measures were introduced aimed at their assimilation and settlement. However, in 1983, a report of the Propaganda Section of the Party's Central Committee considered these initiatives as a failure, blaming Roma's "backward mentality" and their negative attitude toward work (Anastasoaie, 2003).

The end of Ceaușescu's dictatorship and shift towards democracy did not represent an improving passage for the Roma. Due to their low working and educational background, they struggled more than the rest of the population in adapting to the new socio-economic system. In addition, the 1990s and 2000s witnessed a rise in anti-gyspyism attitudes and violence (Opreon, 2011; Bumbu, 2012). Within these positions, the media and politics played a role. The former exacerbated a negative image of this community, describing them as criminal or social problems through stereotypes (Opreon, 2011; Bumbu, 2012). The latter – mainly the extremist parties but not only - have sometimes done hate speeches or affirmations, which are alarming (Bumbu, 2012).

However, since the 1990s, Romania wanted to join the European Union. It achieved this goal in 2007 together with Bulgaria. Like the other member states, Romania had to reach specific socio-economic, financial, and policy parameters. Some of these focused on the promotion of integration of minorities, especially the Roma. An example is the programme 2000-2007 (Filipescu, 2009). Regardless of the results of these initiatives, Romania had to put into practice modalities and projects for the integration of its minorities to join the EU. Nevertheless, the Roma population is still socially and economically disadvantaged.

Hence, the consequences of these centuries of marginalization, discrimination, and oppression are still visible today. Indeed, compared to the rest of the population, the Roma population has a lower educational level (Bumbu, 2012), and is overrepresented among the people who live in informal housing or among squatters (Valceanu et al., 2015; Foundation Open Society Institute, 2018; Swinkels et al., 2014). Roma people keep living in worse housing and working conditions. Within this perspective, the slavery period played a central role in developing prejudices and stigmas of the Roma population (Beck, 1989). Moreover, the pandemic has disproportionally hit these marginalized communities, which became hotbeds for the virus to spread (Berescu et al., 2021). Specifically, through policies of securitization and criminalization, a "negative" quarantine was applied to the Roma. This term "describes the racialisation of the epidemic, to observe the changes in the governance of the ghetto and to reveal its institutional nature. Negative quarantine enables a distinct spatialisation of racism. It is the more or less arbitrary imposition of a state of quarantine without concern for the ability of the locked-up community and its members to survive during this time. The negative quarantine is not finalised by a restoration of normalcy but by a more or less harsh accentuation of extreme conditions that existed before the quarantine" (Berescu et al., 2021: 127). These dynamics reinforce and exacerbate the existing stereotypes and racist attitudes toward Roma.

In the specific case of Bucharest (Table L.1), they tend to be more present in Sector 5. In 2011, sector 5 was the district with the higher percentage of Roma population (2,9%), while the sixth one was the least (0,9%).

Table L.1 – Population, density, and share of Roma population in Bucharest by sectors in 2011 and 2022[341]

	Population in 2022	Density 2022 (pop/km²)	Population in 2011	Density 2011 (pop/km²)	% Roma in 2011	Changes in pop 2022-2011
Municipality of Bucharest	2161842	9008	1883425	7848	1,4%	278417
Sector 1	264233	3775	225453	3221	1,7%	38780
Sector 2	367221	11476	345370	10793	1,9%	21851
Sector 3	490797	14435	385439	11336	1,2%	105358
Sector 4	337160	9916	287828	8466	0,9%	49332
Sector 5	304584	10503	271575	9365	2,9%	33009
Sector 6	397847	9704	367760	8970	0,5%	30087

APPENDIX M – Romanian data

Figure M.1 shows AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 between 2008 and 2020 in Romania. During this period, AROPE decreased by 14 pp, while the indicators of economic inequality fluctuated in similar ranges. Indeed, the Gini Index passed from 36 to 34, where S80/S20 from 7 to 6,6. Notwithstanding the reduction of material deprivation, these data show how poverty and income gap are still outstanding in Romania[342].

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[342] Indeed, the European Commission "considers Romania to be in a critical situation when it comes to the risk of poverty and social exclusion, impacts of social transfers on the reduction of poverty, meeting people's healthcare needs and ensuring equality and non-discrimination" (Vasilescu, 2019: 23). The reasons behind these rooted and increasing disparities are several. On the one hand, they are the consequences of structural causes, i.e., the structure and size of the economy, the segmented labour market, the differences between rural and urban areas, and the changes in taxation (Stănescu, Dumitru, 2017). On the other, there are also some individual characteristics, namely living in a big household with a lot of children – the related issue of child poverty –, having lower education, being unemployed, belonging to the Roma community, and living in rural areas. Thus, the reasons for these rooted phenomena of social exclusion, poverty, and inequality in Romania are due to the correlation between structural causes and individual characteristics, which feed each other and exacerbate these situations. Currently, the reduction of poverty and social exclusion is far to be reached, especially in rural areas or within marginalized neighborhoods and groups. Moreover, Romania is facing an increase in income inequality distributions. These differences are particularly evident among the active-age working groups than among pensioners, reflecting the relatively equal income structure that prevailed in the past.

Figure M.1 – AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 in Romania between 2008 and 2020 (Eurostat, source: ilc_peps01; tessi010; ilc_lvhl11; ilc_mddd11; ilc_di12; tessi180)
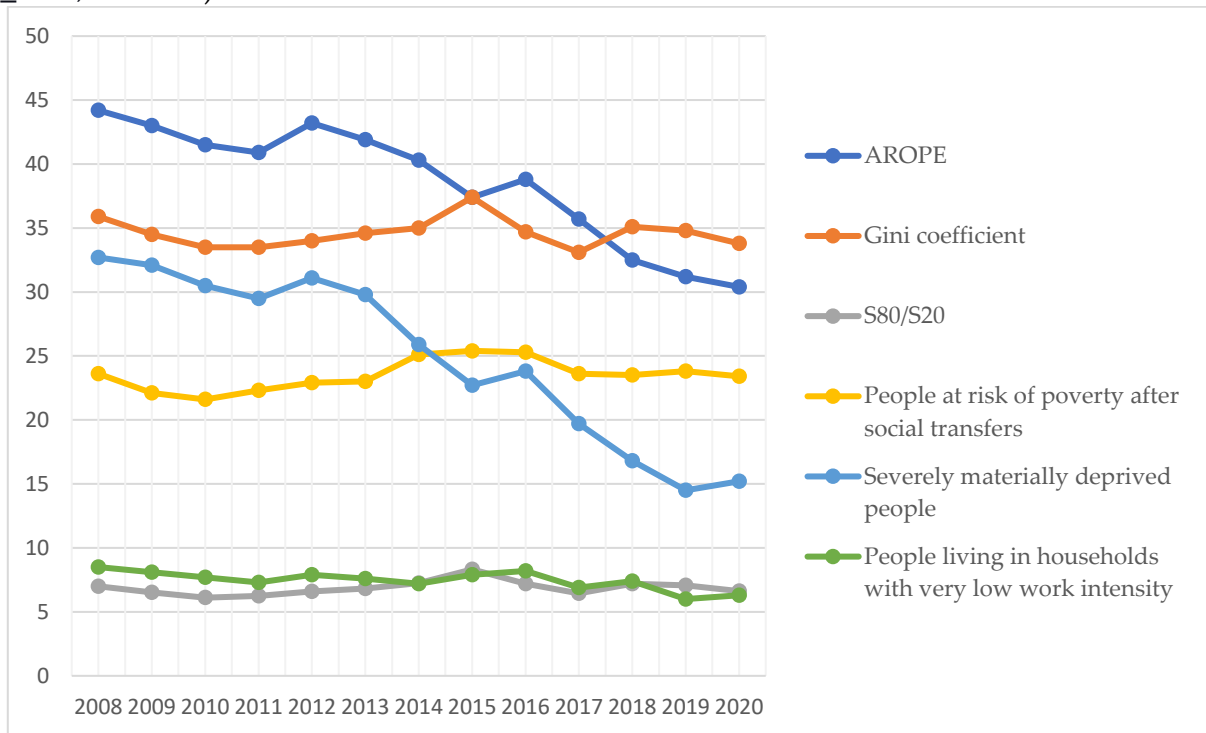
Figure M.2 summarizes the share of AROPE by key socio-demographic peculiarities in 2008 and 2020 at the country level in Romania. During this period, AROPE decreased drastically moving from 44% to 30%. According to these data, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, people out of the labour market, people living in rural areas, single households and parents, and people with low education levels. Looking at the specific socio-demographic peculiarities, in 2020, the share of AROPE reduced over time similarly to the national level except for unemployed people. Indeed, it is the only case where the risk of poverty or social exclusion increased (6 pp more than in 2008). However, children with parents with primary education remained more exposed to AROPE (87% in 2008 and 84% in 2020). Differently, the share of AROPE reduced the most in the case of single parents, people living in town, and people over 65 years old (respectively, -32 pp, -19 pp, and - 18 pp than 2008).

Figure M.2 – Share of AROPE (%) in 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Romania (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)
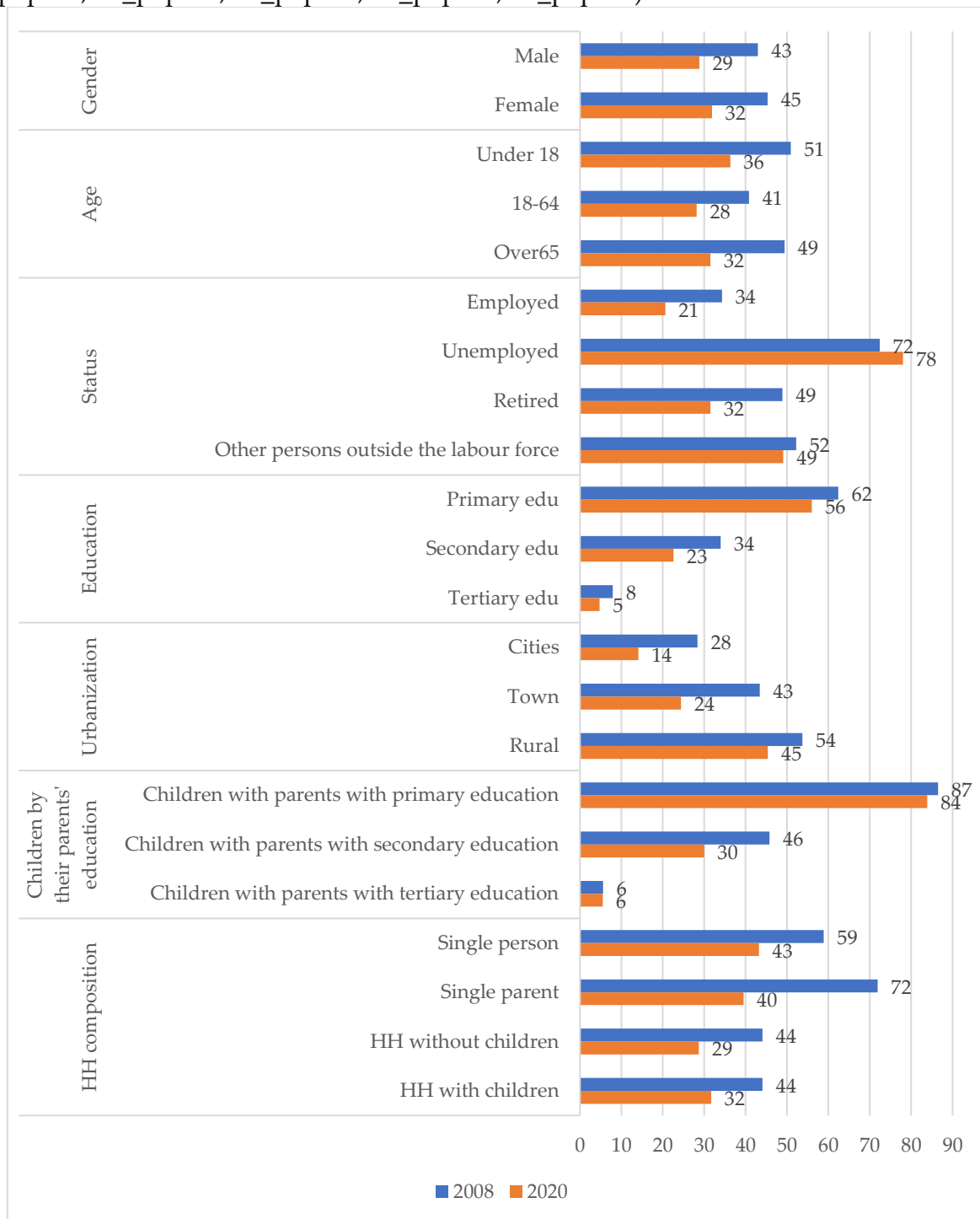
Table M.1 shows the variations of the share of AROPE at country level in Romania by socio-demographic characteristics between 2008 and 2020.

Table M.1 - Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Romania (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
AROPE		44	43	42	41	43	42	40	37	39	36	33	31	30
Gender	Male	43	42	41	40	43	41	40	37	38	35	31	30	29
	Female	45	44	42	42	44	43	41	38	40	37	34	32	32
Age	Under 18	51	51	48	49	53	51	51	47	49	42	38	36	36
	18-64	41	41	40	40	42	41	39	36	37	35	31	29	28
	Over65	49	43	40	36	35	36	35	33	34	33	33	34	32
Status	Employed	34	34	34	34	36	34	31	28	29	27	23	22	21
	Unemployed	72	73	74	73	77	78	77	75	74	67	61	60	78
	Retired	49	45	42	38	38	38	37	34	35	33	32	33	32
	Other persons outside the labour force	52	52	51	51	57	56	57	55	57	56	53	50	49
Education	Primary edu	62	59	58	56	57	57	57	50	51	56	55	55	56
	Secondary edu	34	33	33	34	37	35	34	29	29	29	25	24	23
	Tertiary edu	8	11	10	11	13	12	10	8	12	7	6	6	5
Urbanization	Cities	28	30	29	29	31	33	27	24	24	20	19	15	14
	Town	43	31	40	41	35	33	33	31	33	31	25	28	24
	Rural	54	51	49	48	57	53	52	51	52	49	46	44	45
Children by their parents' education	Children with parents with primary education	87	88	88	87	86	87	91	78	74	84	79	82	84
	Children with parents with secondary education	46	45	44	46	51	49	50	45	47	39	33	31	30
	Children with parents with tertiary education	6	5	8	11	15	9	10	8	15	5	7	5	6
HH composition	Single person	59	55	55	50	49	49	50	48	47	44	43	45	43
	Single parent	72	65	56	61	60	63	59	53	58	45	49	46	40
	HH without children	44	42	40	37	37	37	35	33	34	33	31	30	29
	HH with children	44	44	43	44	48	46	44	41	43	38	34	32	32

Figure M.3 shows the differences in the capacity to afford to do and buy things between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those not in Romania in 2020.

Figure M.3 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2020 in Romania (EU-SILC)
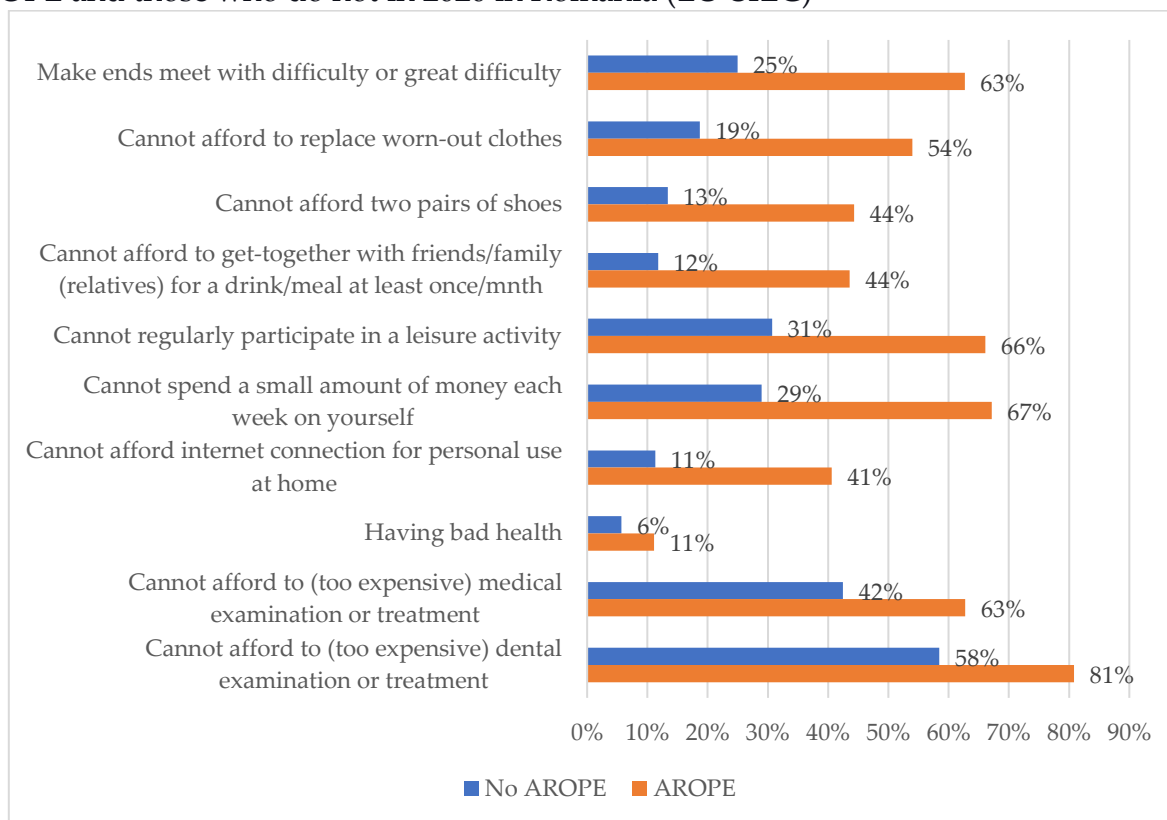
Figure M.4 presents the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those not in Romania in 2020.

Figure M.4 - Quality of neighbourhood and living in an overcrowded household by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in Romania in 2020 (EU-SILC)
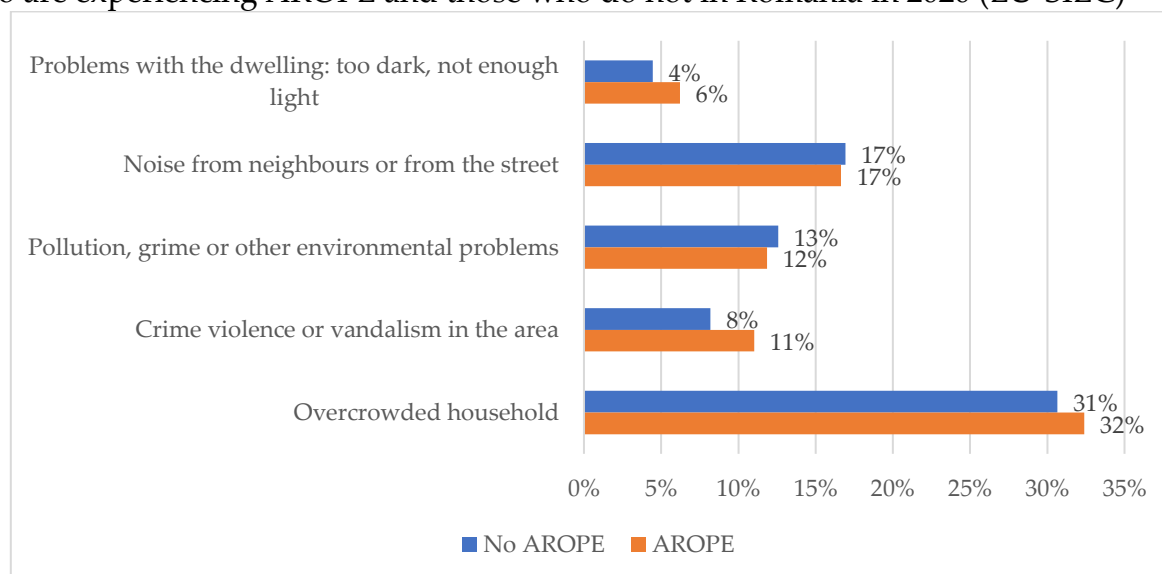
APPENDIX N – British data

Figure N shows AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 in the United Kingdom between 2008 and 2018. During this period, AROPE, Gini Index, and ratio S80/S20 remained stable (respectively, 23%, 34, and 6).

Figure N.1 – AROPE and its components, Gini coefficient, and ratio S80/S20 in the United Kingdom between 2008 and 201 (Eurostat, source: ilc_peps01; tessi010; ilc_lvhl11; ilc_mddd11; ilc_di12; tessi180)
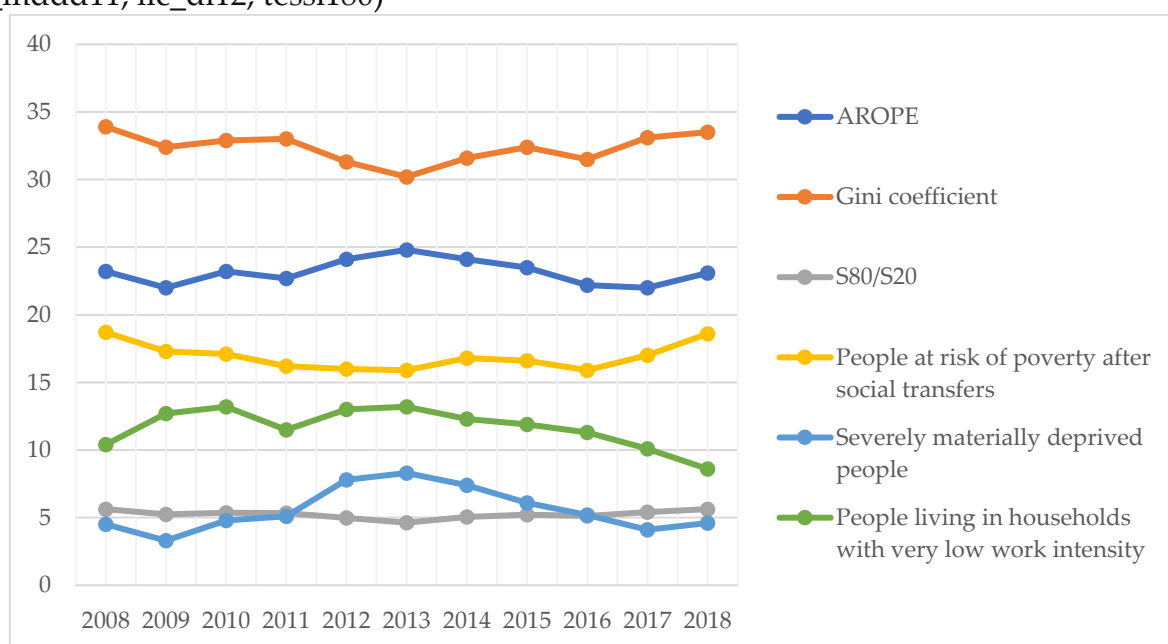
Figure N.2 summarizes the share of AROPE by key socio-demographic peculiarities in 2008 and 2018 at the country level in the United Kingdom. According to these data, the categories most exposed to these dynamics remained the same: people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, people living in rural areas, and single parents. Looking at the specific socio-demographic peculiarities, in 2018, the share of AROPE reduced the most in the case of the people under 18 with parents with primary education attainment, unemployed, single parents, and people over 65 years old (respectively, -14 pp, - 10 pp, - 8 pp, -7 pp than 2008). Differently, the AROPE increased in the case of children with parents with secondary education and people living in town (respectively, + 6 pp and + 4 pp than 2008).

Figure N.2 – Share of AROPE (%) in 2008 and 2018 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in the United Kingdom (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)
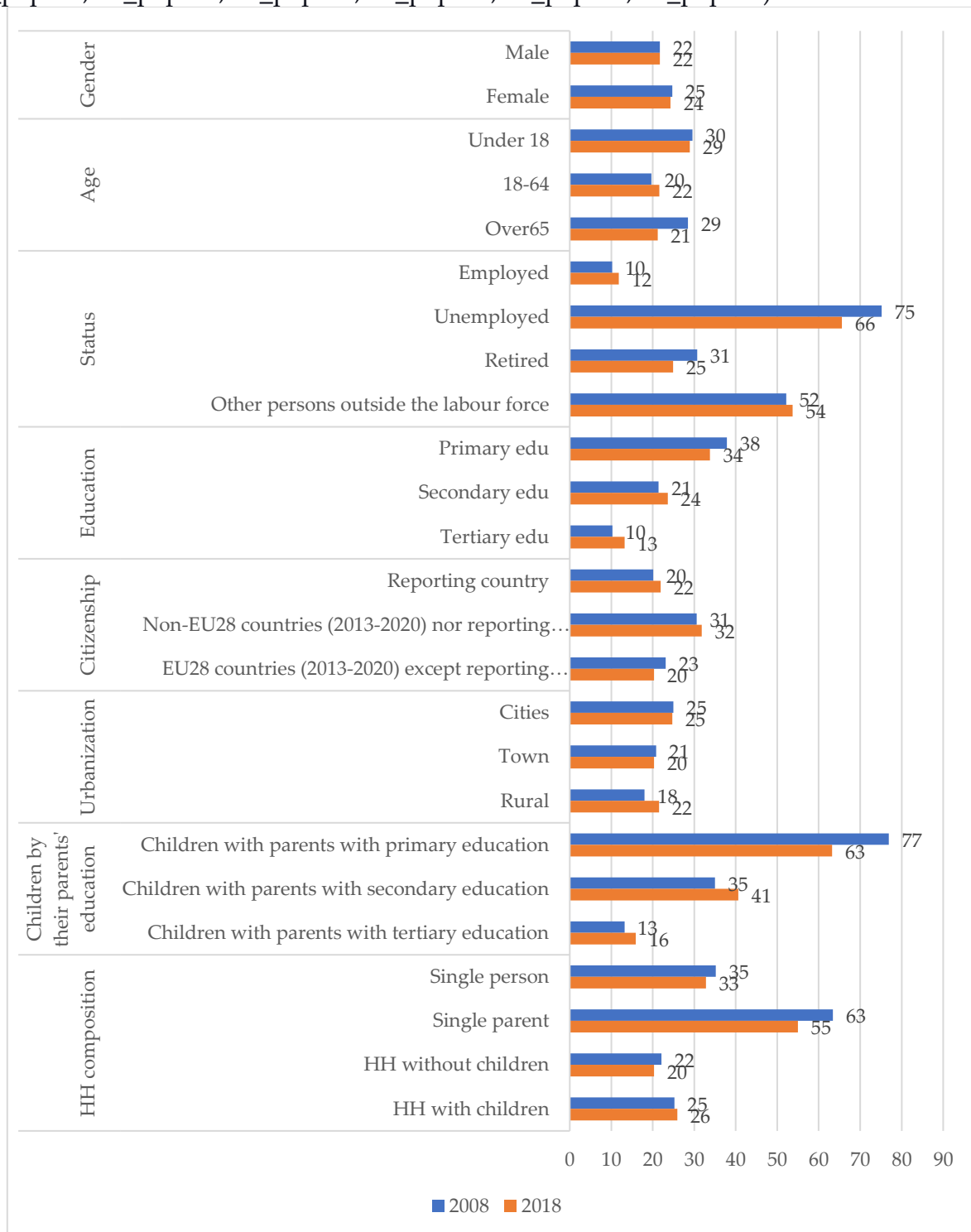
Table N.1 shows the variations of the share of AROPE at country level in the United Kingdom by socio-demographic characteristics between 2008 and 2018.

Table N.1 - Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2018 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in the United Kingdom (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
AROPE		23	22	23	23	24	25	24	24	22	22	23
Gender	Male	22	21	22	21	23	24	23	23	21	21	22
	Female	25	23	24	24	25	26	25	24	23	23	24
Age	Under 18	30	27	30	27	31	33	31	30	27	27	29
	18-64	20	20	21	21	24	24	23	23	22	21	22
	Over65	29	23	22	23	17	18	19	18	18	18	21
Status	Employed	10	8	9	10	12	12	11	10	11	10	12
	Unemployed	75	63	64	69	71	71	76	73	67	72	66
	Retired	31	26	25	25	20	21	21	21	20	21	25
	Other persons outside the labour force	52	51	52	51	54	56	55	57	53	54	54
Education	Primary	38	33	34	34	32	34	31	31	29	34	34
	Secondary	21	19	23	22	24	24	22	22	21	24	24
	Tertiary	10	12	11	13	13	13	12	13	13	12	13
Citizenship	Reporting country	22	20	21	21	22	22	22	21	21	21	22
	Non-EU28 countries (2013-2020) nor reporting country		31	37	38	30	35	35	35	33	27	32
	EU28 countries (2013-2020) except reporting country		23	19	22	21	24	23	24	18	25	20
Urbanization	Cities	25	24	26	25	27	29	27	27	25	25	25
	Town	21	18	18	21	21	21	20	18	19	19	20
	Rural	18	20	19	18	18	18	21	20	17	16	22
Children by their parents' education	Children with parents with primary education	77	67	71	63	76	75	59	63	54	61	63
	Children with parents with secondary education	35	30	37	34	37	41	37	33	35	42	41
	Children with parents with tertiary education	13	13	11	13	14	14	17	16	14	14	16
HH composition	Single person	35	33	34	34	33	35	35	32	33	31	33
	Single parent	63	55	62	60	62	62	60	58	57	57	55
	HH without children	22	20	21	22	20	20	20	20	20	19	20
	HH with children	25	24	26	24	28	30	28	27	24	25	26

Figure N.3 shows the differences in the capacity to afford to do and buy things between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those not in the United Kingdom in 2018.

Figure N.3 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in 2018 in the United Kingdom (EU-SILC)
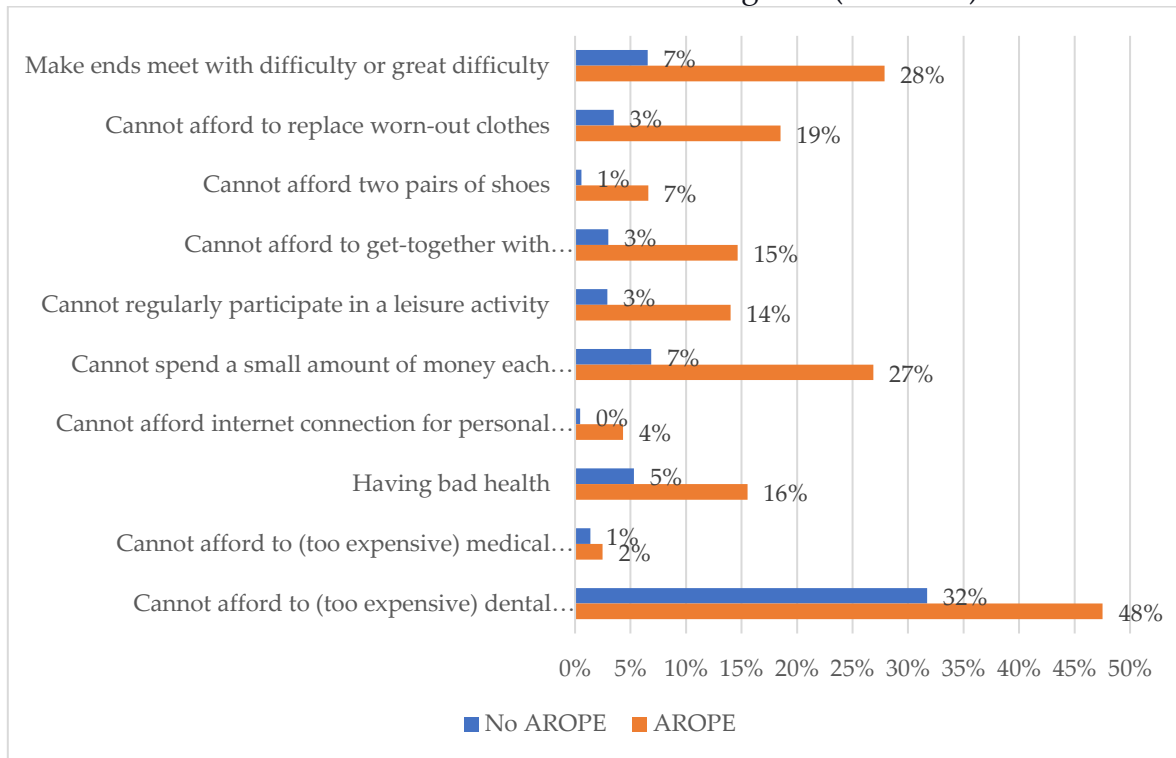
Figure N.4 presents the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those not in the United Kingdom in 2018.

Figure N.4 - Quality of neighbourhood and living in an overcrowded household by people who are experiencing AROPE and those who do not in the United Kingdom in 2018 (EU-SILC)
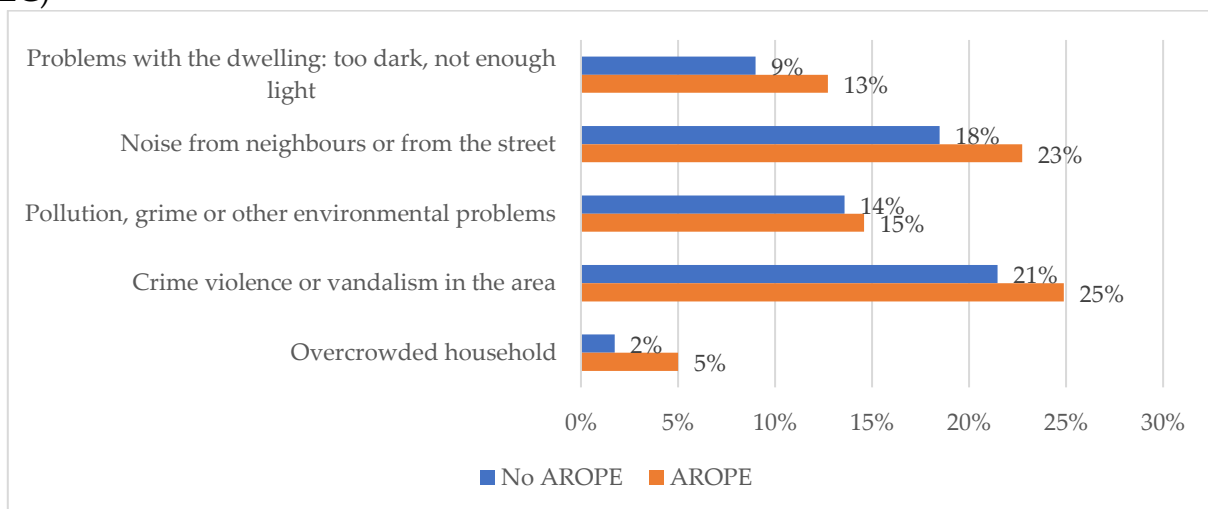
Figure N.5 shows the share of AROPE by the British regions and in London. Moreover, tables N.2 and N.3 display the differences in the capacity to afford to do and buy things, the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions, and living in overcrowded households between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in the UK, its regions, and London in 2018.

Figure N.5 – Share of AROPE in the UK, its regions, and London in 2018 (EU-SILC)
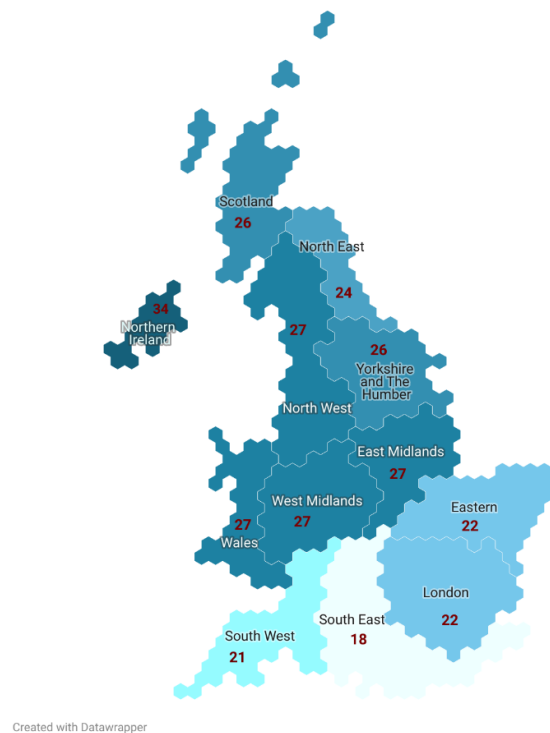
Table N.2 - Capacity to afford to do and buy things, the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions, and living in overcrowded households between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in the United Kingdom and London in 2018 (EU-SILC).

	London		UK	
	No AROPE	AROPE	No AROPE	AROPE
Make ends meet with difficulty or great difficulty	9%	33%	7%	28%
Having bad health	5%	17%	5%	16%
Cannot afford to replace worn-out clothes	4%	17%	3%	19%
Cannot afford two pairs of shoes	1%	10%	1%	7%

Cannot afford to get-together with friends/family (relatives) for a drink/meal at least once/mnth	5%	21%	3%	15%
Cannot regularly participate in a leisure activity	6%	20%	3%	14%
Cannot spend a small amount of money each week on yourself	9%	33%	7%	27%
Cannot afford internet connection for personal use at home	0%	4%	0%	4%
Cannot afford to (too expensive) medical examination or treatment	0%	0%	1%	2%
Cannot afford to (too expensive) dental examination or treatment	26%	67%	32%	48%
Problems with the dwelling: too dark, not enough light	10%	18%	9%	13%
Noise from neighbours or from the street	27%	35%	18%	23%
Pollution, grime or other environmental problems	27%	29%	14%	15%
Crime violence or vandalism in the area	36%	35%	21%	25%
Overcrowded household	5%	18%	2%	5%

According to the data, in 2018, people experiencing AROPE in London are more likely to cannot afford dental examinations or treatments because of their cost than those being at risk of poverty or social exclusion at the national level (67% vs 48%). Moreover, in London, 18% of them live in overcrowded households (compared to only 5% at the national level), and they are more likely to face neighbourhoods' issues compared to the national level.

Appendix O – Other measures

In addition to the European indicators, each city (and country) has its own data and studies. Here, I present the principal measures and institutions involved. Moreover, I will spotlight some of the limits and strengths of them.

In Italy, the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) provides several measures to capture and photograph the socioeconomic situation. Among these, it develops the Equitable and Sustainable Well-being project (BES) which, through several indicators, covers multiple domains, namely health, education and training, labour, economic well-being, social relations, politics and institutions, safety, subjective well-being, landscape and cultural heritage, environment, innovation, research and creativity, and quality of services. Notwithstanding the goodness of data and its capacity to overcome several dimensions of people's life, it still misses two aspects. On the one hand, the BES is not a unique index. Thus, each domain is analysed and reported separately. On the other, it can only photograph the context at regional, provincial, and major city levels. Thus, it cannot deepen within the urban differences of a city.

On the other hand, in the specific case of Rome, the municipality provides for some data which are unfortunately not updated and precise. Indeed, the data are insufficient, often not updated, and referred to extended territories that make the monitoring impossible. According to the interviewees, this inadequacy is visible through three examples. The first one is the absence of macro surveys or investigations on the Roman territory that focused on inequality and social exclusion. Embedded with this deficiency is the problem of the availability and updating of data. Indeed, even in the few cases of macro studies on Rome, the information and maps reported are often outdated. Related to that, a second example is the work of Lelo, Monni, and Tomassi. Their books and maps tried to photograph the social geography of Rome, with a focus on inequalities. Although their studies spotlighted several issues and led to a public debate over them, these maps still show data referred to years later. For instance, they cited the data from the 2011 census or those from 2015 and 2016. It means that the maps produced did not show the current situation. It represents a huge

problem as the policies will not be tailored to specific conditions and, thus, will be incapable of intervening efficiently. A third example – interrelated with the previous two – concerns the Roman mapping system, which is outdated and unrepresentative of the territorial divisions. Currently, the geographic measures adopted refer to the municipal extension and the urban zones. The former is the area of each municipality within Rome; the latter are urban areas defined and calculated in 1977 and, therefore, based on a structurally different city. Urban zones are currently the most specific level of analysis. Nevertheless, they are insufficient as they are no longer representative and diverse within their borders. An example of the extension and diversity of these urban zones is Torre Angela. It comprehends the public housing complex of Tor Bella Monaca, the surrounding neighbourhood, and the rich gated community of Torre Gaia. These three spaces have completely different socio-economic situations. Regardless, the data capture their conditions together and, thus, their average does not show the reality of the contexts. Recently, a study conducted by Enrico Puccini[343] demonstrated this fail in grasping the specificity of the disparities.

In Belgium, the predominant source for data is Statbel[344], which is the national institute of Statistics. It provides good-quality information on living and working conditions in Belgium mainly at the regional and province level. Again, the indicators for exclusion and inequality often cannot deepen within the urban differences of a city.

Regardless, in the Region of Brussels, several institutes conduct macro studies on these dynamics, producing a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis. Among these, particularly relevant and interesting are: the maps of "Monitoring des quartiers"[345], the report on poverty developed by Observatoire de la Santé et du Social Bruxelles – Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzjin Brussel[346], and the social diagnosis produced by the Service de la Prévention de Bruxelles[347]. These studies allow a more specific

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[343] https://fondazionepaolobulgari.org/2020/12/15/ripartire-da-tor-bella-monaca-e-dai-dati-mancanti/.

[344] https://statbel.fgov.be/en.

[345] https://monitoringdesquartiers.brussels.

[346] https://www.ccc-ggc.brussels/fr/observatbru/publications/barometre-social.
https://www.ccc-ggc.brussels/fr/observatbru/publications/rapports-thematiques-pauvrete-0.
[347]

https://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&hash=4d66c3814a2a04e2e1

comprehension of the differences within the Region of Brussels and its communes. However, even in these cases, sometimes the data are not updated and incomplete.

Sweden has advanced studies on inequality, exclusion, and segregation thanks to its well gathered and updated data. They come from the Statistikmyndigheten[348] (the Swedish Statistics) and allow analyses at the country, region, and urban levels.

In Romania, the Institutul Naţional de Statistică[349] (the National Institute of Statistics) manages and develops data and information on living and working conditions. Currently, the data are often insufficient and inadequate to capture the complexity of phenomena like exclusion, inequality, and poverty. On the one hand, it is due to the lack of updated and in-depth information. On the other, Romania has a complicated mechanism for obtaining documents and citizenship (as reported in Paragraph 5.4.2) and the highest percentage of Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller population. As previously mentioned, this community often does not have the document and is more likely to face extremer cases of exclusion, inequality, and deprivation. Thus, the data collection fails to cover and capture the living conditions of undocumented people.

Moreover, some interviewees even doubted the accuracy and goodness of the reports and results produced at the national or regional level. They denounced the manipulation of the data, which are often gathered and managed by some Minister or Agency.

The United Kingdom adopts the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to study social exclusion and poverty in small areas (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). It is a specific indicator that comprehends seven domains of deprivation weighted as follows: income (22.5%); employment (22.5%); education (13.5%); health (13.5%); crime (9.3%); barriers to housing and services (9.3%); and living environment (9.3%). The IMD is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). "The IoD2019 is based on 39 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains of deprivation which are combined and

08b5f932fa52b761fe63bf&file=fileadmin/sites/ajss/upload/ajss_super_editor/DGAJ/Documents/Prevention/Bruxelles.pdf.

[348] https://www.scb.se/en/.

[349] https://insse.ro/cms/ro.

weighted to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. This is an overall measure of multiple deprivation experienced by people living in an area and is calculated for every Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA), or neighbourhood, in England. All neighbourhoods in England are then ranked according to their level of deprivation relative to that of other areas. High-ranking LSOAs or neighbourhoods can be referred to as the 'most deprived' or as being 'highly deprived' to aid interpretation"[350]. Hence, IMD overcomes the limits of traditional measures focused on income and economic deprivation and deepens the differences among areas. Indeed, it can capture the differences at the urban level, showing the disparities within a city (and boroughs in the case of London).

In addition, at the national level, the Office of National Statistics[351] provides a range of information regarding the socioeconomic conditions of the British population. An interesting fact of the last census conducted in 2021 is that distinguished each community belonging to the umbrella term "Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller". Thus, it classified them as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Traveller Irish, Traveller, Gypsy/Romani, Welsh Traveller, Scottish Traveller*, Gypsy/Traveller, and Roma. Indeed, until 2021, all these communities were considered under the same ethnic group, regardless of their differences. This distinction is particularly relevant and essential as it allows a better comprehension of each community and their needs, struggles, characteristics, and location.

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[350]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf.

[351] https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/statistics.

List of figures

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 5

Appendix H

Appendix I

Appendix J

Appendix K

Appendix M

Appendix N

List of tables

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Glossary

Appendix A

Appendix C

Appendix D

Appendix E

Appendix F

Appendix G

Appendix H

Appendix I

487

attainment, and household composition in Belgium (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

Table I.2 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things, the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions, and living in overcrowded households between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in Belgium and its regions in 2020

Appendix K

Table K.1 – Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Sweden (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

Appendix L

Table L.1 – Population, density, and share of Roma population in Bucharest by sectors in 2011 and 2022

Appendix M

Table M.1 – Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2020 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in Romania (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

Appendix N

Table N.1 – Share of AROPE (%) between 2008 and 2018 by gender, age group, employment status, education level, citizenship, urbanization, children by their parents' education attainment, and household composition in the United Kingdom (Eurostat, Data sources: ilc_peps01; ilc_peps02; ilc_peps04; ilc_peps05; ilc_peps13; ilc_peps60)

Table N.2 – Capacity to afford to do and buy things, the quality of living and neighbourhood conditions, and living in overcrowded households between people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and those who are not in the United Kingdom and London in 2018 (EU-SILC).