



## **THESIS**

# **Access to social housing programs and barriers marginalized groups, Roma and Egyptian Minorities, face in Tirana, Albania**

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## ABSTRACT

The transition period from socialism to democracy, mainly from 1990 to 1991, was the time when Roma and Egyptian minorities suffered the highest deterioration in terms of unemployment, high levels of illiteracy, and experienced lack of health services, access to education, employment and especially inadequate housing conditions. The latter is a concern for many homeless households in Albania, which ultimately constitutes one of the fundamental human rights. The Albanian government set up different social housing programs, where potential beneficiaries are required to meet certain criteria that not every applicant is able to, especially low-income members of Roma and Egyptian minorities. This target group and the criteria they cannot comply with are the main focus of my study. Is their inability to meet the criteria an indicator of institutional miss coordination at a national level or the continuation of inadequate social inclusion practices?

I chose to conduct qualitative research based on the triangulation of different components that consist in document analysis, mainly the projected goals laid out in the National Action Plan and a collection of policy reports relaying what the current reality looks like; ultimately the third component is a scientific analysis of other authors' perspectives and findings in this field, which will assist my research in observing from different angles the conceptualization of poor living conditions of the Roma and Egyptian communities and create an in-depth understanding of the social practices toward certain vulnerable groups.

The research findings prove that the obstacles faced by Roma and Egyptians are the product of vague governmental system coordination, which combined with the absence of anti-discrimination measures, leads to social exclusion practices. My conclusion suggests that facilitating conditions for these applicants and holding the local government body accountable, on one hand, ensures an increase in the number of homeless applicants in these programs while helping policymakers address the potential weaknesses of a social program on the other hand. Ultimately this contribution will have a positive impact on social development, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged groups.

*Key Concepts:* Housing programs, Roma and Egyptian minorities, National Action Plan 2015-2020, criteria, Law on Social housing, effectiveness, ethnic discrimination, barriers, social inclusion.

## Introduction

Over previous years, several policy measures in favor of Roma Social Inclusion have been undertaken by the Albanian Government. The implementation of these measures, however, have never brought a permanent solution due to insufficient human and financial resources, inadequate institutional coordination at the national and local level and deficiencies in the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The Albanian government set up different social housing programs, where potential beneficiaries are required to meet one of the following criteria: applicants do not own an apartment; own living space below the housing norms; or have remained homeless as a result of natural disasters (Law no.9232, article 4).<sup>1</sup> The selection of beneficiaries is based on their living conditions as well as their social and economic circumstances. Different programs are addressed to different groups.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Ministry of Finance and Economy 2019 report, the total number of applicants in housing programs 2018 is 12,095 and beneficiaries 1,545. Ultimately, the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians (NAPIRE) 2015-2020, is a plan that represents a new commitment covering the period of 2016 to 2020 and targeting two respective communities, Roma and Egyptians. Present in Albania for centuries, Roma and Egyptians<sup>3</sup> are ethnic groups settled all over the country, but mainly concentrated in the western and southern parts of the region. They are considered the most vulnerable minorities in Albania and regularly face widespread poverty, socio-economic marginalization, and discrimination. According to the 2011 census, Albania is a predominantly ethnic homogeneous country. Among the minorities, the Roma population counts 8301 individuals and the Egyptians 3368 individuals—less than 0,5% of the 2,8 millions of inhabitants of the country.<sup>4</sup> Roma and Egyptians are facing a level of poverty estimated at three times higher than other parts of the population in Albania, due to long-standing social exclusion.

<sup>1</sup> <http://ekb.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/ligji-nr.9232-korr.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> (Law no. 22/2018 on social housing, article 11).

<sup>3</sup> The term “Roma” used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari, Balkan Egyptians, Eastern groups (Dom, Lom, and Abdal) and groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term 'Gens du voyage', as well as people who identify themselves as Gypsies.

<sup>4</sup> INSTAT (2012) *Population and housing census in Albania 2011*: main results, Tirana, INSTAT

While Egyptians speak Albanian and tend to be generally more integrated than the Roma, the latter has been recently recognized as a national minority.<sup>5</sup>

Many research studies (INSTAT, 2011; UNDP 2013, 2015, 2017) have highlighted the poor housing conditions that the Roma and Egyptian populations live in. About 15% of Roma households live in non-conventional dwellings, defined as shelters, tents, shacks, barracks, or any other type of precarious constructions (UNDP, 2015). Census results show a similar situation for the Egyptian community, who share this kind of extreme housing deprivation, often in apartments and in a semi-detached or terraced houses (UNDP, 2015).

In this paper, I will analyze the housing situation in Albania and conduct a qualitative research in connection with the barriers that these marginalized groups face in their attempt to be qualified in one of the designed housing programs. The focus of my study will be particularly on those with the lowest incomes among other subgroups of applicants, who after some unsuccessful attempts hardly qualify as applicants in these programs. By raising the research question of *how is the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania responding to the actual housing demand/issues for Roma and Egyptian community*, I contend that present social housing strategies for Roma and Egyptians—regardless of whether coordinated with different measures—are frequently hampered by institutional lack of engagement in monitoring and evaluating mechanisms, by the absence of political will and financial support by national governments, and lastly by negligence and lack of in-depth investigation of the discriminatory causes that hinder the integration of these two communities.

The National Action Plan is the most important established plan, within the framework of the Strategy National Development and Integration 2016-2020. To investigate urban housing programs established by this plan and identify program's deficits and errors, in the first chapter I will focus on Roma and Egyptian minorities' background, with special attention to those who find it almost impossible to enjoy the right of housing, residing in the capital, Tirana.

In Albania, the key reform in the field of housing for 2018 was the adoption of the law no. 22/2018, "On social housing." According to the legal definition, social housing programs are programs that serve to accommodate families and individuals, who are not economically and/or socially able to

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<sup>5</sup> Law No.96/2017 on the "Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania"

take advantage of offers on the housing market or mortgage loans<sup>6</sup>. Allocation criteria are based on social and economic indicators rather than ethnic or minority affiliation. However, the major problem is that the “verifiable source of earnings” criterion is one that the majority of the Roma and, to a lower extent, Egyptians, are not able to meet, due to work in the informal sectors (Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), 2012). Furthermore, transparency and information are not fully served by municipalities; beneficiaries are essentially "self-taught" and need to engage themselves, through the study of the law, to obtain the necessary information. Even if they manage to get the right information, there is still a lack of flexibility in providing the requested documentation due to unnecessary bureaucracy from local government and other actors throughout the required administrative procedures (Supreme State Audit, 2019), barriers that I will be analyzing in details throughout the second chapter. I hypothesize that all these barriers are not just indicators of a weak governmental system, but continue to feed the stigmatic marginalization attitude toward minority populations and create invisible gaps that hinder their adaptation to the society and lately prevent housing policies to be effective and efficient for their target groups.

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<sup>6</sup> Law no. 22/2018 on Social Housing, Republic of Albania



## CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 Case Background

The way the state uses and allocates public sources to fulfill housing needs is crucial when it comes to vulnerable and marginalized groups.<sup>7</sup> Priority is given to fifteen groups, including single-parent families, large families, the elderly, people with disabilities, young couples, families who have changed residences, orphans, migrant workers, asylum seekers, fallen officers, victims of domestic violence, Roma families, Egyptian families and beneficiaries of economic assistance. In particular, social housing programs include social housing programs for rent; the program for improving or renovating extant dwellings, new construction; low-cost housing programs; development of areas for housing purposes; the creation of temporary housing; the construction of specialized dwellings.<sup>8</sup> One of the strategic areas of the National Action Plan is the *Housing and Urban Integration of Roma and Egyptian communities 2016-2020*, which has two major objectives. The first objective "*Improvement of the mechanisms to relieve the Roma and Egyptian families during the legalization procedures*", includes several measures to be taken, such as providing free legal aid to Roma and Egyptians in proceedings regarding the legalization process (i.e. the certificate of ownership, inheritance proceedings); the integration of Roma and Egyptian families through pilot projects for the urbanization and assisting local authorities to map the informal settlements of Roma and Egyptians. Under the second objective entitled "*More Roma and Egyptian families involved in housing programs directly and indirectly*", among the measures to be taken are assisting Roma and Egyptian families, who cannot afford to pay rent for social housing; the training of local government staff to draft financial proposals to attract funding and to implement housing projects; informing and providing technical assistance to local government units for the implementation of Ministry of Urban Development program Improving the living conditions of Roma and Egyptians; amending the law on Social Housing programs to include Roma and Egyptian families, etc., (Written Statement by Albania, 2020).<sup>9</sup> The principles on which this plan was meant to rely on are the promotion of social inclusion, the use of a targeted approach to address

<sup>7</sup> Based on the law Nr. 96/2017 for the protection of national ethnic groups in the Republic of Albania, national minorities are considered the Greek, Macedonian, Romanian, Roma, Egyptian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, Serbian and Bulgarian minorities.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Strategjia%20e%20Strehimit%20Social%20Shqip.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Osce.org. 2020. *Written Statement by Albania*

specific exclusion issues, respecting differences, fostering cooperation between different stakeholders, promoting inter-sectorial links, progress measurement, and budgeting for implementation.<sup>10</sup> Several actors, especially those at the local level, were expected to closely cooperate with governmental structures to generate adequate tools and instruments to collect and analyze data on social housing needs.

## Methodology

Although there is a lack of research on analyzing whether the involved structures followed the rules and objectives set up by the National Action Plan, my overall strategy for this study is based on the triangulation of different components coherently and logically. These three components of my methodology consist in document analysis, including the projected goals laid out in the National Action Plan and a collection of policy reports relaying what the current reality looks like according to European Social Policy Network (ESPN) in Albania, the Supreme State Audit (SSA) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Ultimately, the third component is a scientific analysis of other authors' perspectives and findings in this field, which will assist my research in observing from different angles the conceptualization of poor living conditions of the Roma and Egyptian communities. The reason why I chose to conduct qualitative research is to create an in-depth understanding of the attitudes toward certain vulnerable groups, behaviors, interactions, events, and social processes that comprise everyday life. Based on the collection of primary and secondary data, I will offer a comparison of the social housing perspective both at a national and European level. My expectations for the collection, measurement, and analysis of this data are that this analysis will reveal some good arguments which will not only prove the existence of some ongoing problems on housing policy mechanisms but even suggest optimal measures to be taken to ensure the right to housing for less favored social groups.

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<sup>10</sup> Rcc.int. 2015. *National Action Plan For Integration Of Roma And Egyptians In The Republic Of Albania, 2015-2020*.

## CHAPTER 2

## 2.1 Document Review

- a. European Social Policy Network Thematic Report on National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion – Albania (2019).

The reason for examining the European Social Policy Network Thematic Report on National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion as a part of my research is to make a comparison of perspectives on how a European structure observes and analyzes the current housing situation in Albania. In 2019, the Ministry of Finance and Economy asked all municipalities to report on the number of applicants and beneficiaries by categories and housing programs. They say Roma and Egyptians are the categories most in need of housing services. Unfortunately, there are no reliable and accurate data regarding the size of the Roma and Egyptian populations in Albania. The only data possessed, comes from some research studies (INSTAT, 2011; UNDP 2013, 2015, 2017) that have highlighted the poor housing conditions that the Roma population continues to live in. About 15% of Roma households live in non-conventional dwellings, defined as shelters, tents, shacks, barracks, or any other type of precarious constructions (UNDP, 2015). Census results show a similar situation for the Egyptian community, who share this kind of extreme housing deprivation, often in apartments and in a semi-detached or terraced houses (UNDP, 2015). The data reported by the Ministry of Finance and Economy is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Social housing applicants and beneficiaries by category: Albania, 2018**

<b>Categories eligible for social housing programs</b>	<b>No of applicants</b>	<b>No of beneficiaries</b>	<b>Beneficiaries as % applicants</b>	<b>Beneficiaries as % total beneficiaries</b>
<b>People with disabilities</b>	1,210	313	25.9	20.3

<b>Recipients of economic assistance</b>	1,386	272	19.6	17.6
<b>Roma households</b>	480	242	50.4	15.7
<b>Egyptian households</b>	775	118	15.2	7.6
<b>Households headed by women</b>	1,553	124	8.0	8.0
<b>New families (young age)</b>	1,174	22	1.9	1.4
<b>Migrant workers</b>	74	3	4.1	0.2
<b>Asylum-seekers</b>	110	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Victims of domestic violence</b>	91	13	14.3	0.8
<b>Single-parent households</b>	833	76	9.1	4.9
<b>Large households</b>	370	21	5.7	1.4
<b>Seniors</b>	272	56	20.6	3.6
<b>Orphans</b>	183	6	3.3	0.4
<b>Returned emigrants</b>	153	7	4.6	0.5
<b>Family members of fallen officers</b>	4	2	50.0	0.1
<b>Households that have changed their residence</b>	370	83	22.4	5.4
<b>Other groups</b>	2,994	453	15.1	29.3
<b>Total</b>	12,095	1,545	12.8	

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economy (2019). Note: The total number of beneficiaries (1,545) and applicants (12,095) by category differs as some applicants or beneficiaries may fall under more than one category.

In 2018, 12,095 households applied to social housing programs, among whom only 1,545 households benefited. The main beneficiaries were people with disabilities (23%), recipients of economic assistance (17.6%), and Roma households (15.7%). Considering only the first four categories, there is a significant difference regarding the number of applications and the number of beneficiaries, which highlights the fact that housing needs are largely unmet. The number of applicants for Roma and Egyptian households is low, accordingly for both communities there are 1,255 applicants out of 12,095 and only 360 households benefited out of 1,545. In other words, Roma and Egyptian households represent only 10.3% of all applications. Lack of data regarding the total number of homeless Roma and Egyptians raises the hypothesis that there are still many unidentified homeless people belonging to these categories and as a result, the number of people incapable of qualifying as applicants in the actual housing programs, is higher. The reason why their housing needs are unmet is firstly related to the unsuitable criteria set for low-income families, the socio-economic circumstances in which they live, the difficulty of obtaining the relevant documents and finally by continued stigmatization and discriminatory attitude by the rest of the society.

b. Supreme State Audit Assessment - "Effectiveness of social housing programs"

In the framework of fulfilling its constitutional function and in implementation of the annual plan 2019, the Supreme State Audit (SSA) undertook the performance audit with the topic: "Effectiveness of social housing programs"<sup>11</sup>. The object of this audit was to generate new information on social housing programs, analyzing and evaluating the activity of local self-government bodies and central institutions to increase the effectiveness of measures taken to implement social housing programs, and to increase the impact of them in improving the livelihood of the needy.

According to the SSA report, housing programs have not been fully implemented as social policies, which should address the social phenomenon of the homeless. The lack of a national register on

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<sup>11</sup> Supreme State Audit, 2019. *"Effectiveness of social housing programs "*. Tirana.

the number of homeless people and investments in social housing makes access to social programs quite limited. Municipalities are reluctant to provide complete information to citizens from the risk of unbearable influxes into the social housing scheme.

In their evidence, the new law no. 22/2018 “On social housing”, although it follows good European models, is a possible risk for not providing a realistic solution concerning the full implementation of social housing programs, as it extends beyond what the capacities of municipalities can afford. Given that their financial resources were limited to managing a previous 3-program housing scheme, the dynamics offered by the new law make it riskier to implement a 5-program housing scheme. Synthetically, the main problems are:

The source of the complete non-functioning of social housing programs was not the legal basis, but the non-implementation of the law itself, influenced by the factors: lack of financial and human capacity of municipalities; lack of real statistics on the number of homeless; lack of a consolidated structure dedicated to housing issues in most municipalities; insufficient human capacity of municipalities to fully absorb and exercise the powers of law; positioning of housing in the periphery of policy-making and policy-implementation, both by municipalities and central structures. The Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) does not have data on what is the average income and the lack of this element makes it difficult to identify real needy people who enter or leave social housing schemes.

Regarding the flexibility of the housing bonus, one of the most acute problems is that not all social categories have the opportunity to prepare documentation. The cost of documentation goes to about 2,500-4,000 ALL (20 - 32 EUR) and requires obtaining a set of certificates for the status of the homeless, including certificates from the Immovable Property Registration Office (IPRO). Also, the lease is required to be notarized and private entities are not expected to lease it through the bonus, to avoid 15% income tax payment. Thus, they have encountered difficulties for some categories such as Roma and Egyptian communities; persons with disabilities (unable to find an apartment on the first floor or with an elevator). Although the concept of the social owner has emerged with the new law, this notion has been missing, and so have the social policies and privileges that a private entity offering social housing are missing.

- c. The actual conditions of the homeless in two areas of Tirana reported by a local NGO in April 2019 and the connection with Law no. 22/2018 on Social Housing.

According to a local non-profit organization called Rromano Kham, which works among Roma and Egyptians in the area of housing issues in Tirana, access to housing for these marginalized groups is a problem that requires practical solutions; from addressing housing needs, implementing housing programs and providing concrete solutions for the housing of residents. Their focus is in the “May 5<sup>th</sup>” and Siri Kodra” areas. Based on terrain observations, housing conditions and life quality of Roma and Egyptian families in the area of “May 5<sup>th</sup>” and “Siri Kodra” do not meet suitable social and technical standards. Most residents in both areas do not have access to affordable housing; or in other words, they are unable to afford the market price for renting a home.

The latest report prepared in April 2019 and provided in personal communication by its project manager senior, Mrs. Brisilda Taco, and her two co-workers, states that obstacles to enjoying the right to housing are considerable and in the vast majority of cases are associated with deep and long-standing social and economic problems. In general, they are less likely to meet the eligibility criteria for basic and social services because of the lack of personal documents or a formal residence transfer, illiteracy or inability to complete the application forms, the highly complicated nature of the administrative procedures, high market prices, and inequality between Roma and Egyptians and the majority population in the job market. Based on interviews that NGO’s employees have conducted with members of the Roma and Egyptian minorities, it has been communicated that most of the individuals are part of the informal job market or have been unable to find a job due to low level of professional skills. If we go back to the Law no.9232. article 12 states that social housing programs must intertwine with other social service programs, mainly those of employment, education, and health care, which in our case this agreement or cooperation does not seem to work properly.<sup>12</sup> The Ministry responsible for housing and the line ministry, according to the type of service, is expected to design joint guidance to determine how these programs should interact.

Rromano Kham has also facilitated and tracked the applications of 30 Roma and Egyptian individuals from the area of “May 5<sup>th</sup>” and “Siri Kodra” in Tirana, for the housing bonus program.

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<sup>12</sup> Law no. 22/2018 on social housing, article 12

The application follows several administrative stages and finalizes with the submission of an application for a subsidized rent bonus at the administrative unit found in the respective area in the Municipality of Tirana. In the first week of the following month, the candidate must collect a list of 23 documents, including proof of ownership or business, and submit them to the Municipal Unit by paying administrative costs, the payment of which was supposed to be at the expense of the local self-government unit for these applicants states the law.<sup>13</sup>

The main reason why a candidate does not get a rental bonus can also be traced to his or her ethnicity and discrimination, according to this report. In most cases, landlords are afraid to let a flat or apartment to a person or family that belongs to the Roma or Egyptian minority. Even those applicants who managed to rent a house have been rejected because they could not receive the lease from the landlord. Article 24 in the law explains the agreement between the social owners and the local self-government unit. This article determines<sup>14</sup> the term of the agreement, the amount of the monthly rent and the manner of its repayment; and lastly the manner of administration of the property and the relations with the lessee. The plain fact is that, for as long as there are only private landlords, a tax burden of 15% tends to fall on the tenant, even though the Civil Code of the Republic of Albania (Article 849) states clearly that the tax should be paid by the owner of the property.

As this document reflects there are many gaps and barriers which make the implementation process difficult and in some cases unsuccessful for those considered as less favored in society. Regarding the fair and efficient implementation of public policies, Rromano Kham suggests three main issues to be considered by the Municipality of Tirana, the National Housing Authority, and the Ministry of Finance and Economy: recognizing and considering the administrative and economic barriers of marginalized Roma and Egyptian groups for providing realistic and effective access to the right of housing; raising awareness of local actors to take active housing access actions for marginalized Roma and Egyptian groups from the area of "May 5th" and "Siri Kodra", according to the needs and opportunities of these groups; and lastly awareness of residents and civil society stakeholders about the options for accessing the right to sustainable and progressive housing.

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<sup>13</sup> Law no. 22/2018 on social housing, article 14, point 4

<sup>14</sup> Law no. 22/2018 on social housing, article 24



## 2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

A study from the College of Health, Social and Behavioral Sciences (South Carolina, US, 2017) firmly confirms the unclosed gaps between theory and practice regarding policies and practices for the Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania. Besides the fact that the Albanian government amended several laws and adopted various strategies to ensure respect for the fundamental rights, including those of Roma and Egyptians in particular, improvement and advancement observed at policy level did not always go hand in hand with the implementation of concrete actions on the ground, says the author, Merita H. Meçe. Tangible results were not always reached. According to her, the coexistence of inclusionary policies with exclusionary and discriminatory practices on the ground left room for further marginalization and exclusion of these vulnerable groups. She concludes that the high number of policy documents and strategies adopted should not be measured as an indicator of success as long as their implementation is weak and unable to close the existing gaps.

As for the treatment of this issue in more theoretical terms, my conclusions rely on the *Policy Success, Policy Failure and Grey Areas In-Between* journal, because of its clear spectrum to identify different levels of effectiveness for a certain social program. This spectrum makes possible the differentiation between the success and failure of public policies. The fact is that policy outcomes are often somewhere in between these extremes, says MC Connell A. The author believes that there is a conflicted success<sup>15</sup> in a certain program, the results of which bring some successes, but accompanied by unexpected and controversial problems. In our case, I would refer this statement to the weak connection of the National Action Plan mechanisms with the respective law, implementation of which did not fully succeed. There are several problems such as the absence of proper databases for the homeless, complicated process for document provision, or the non-consideration of ethnic-based barriers that represent a clear inability to meet the criteria. As a consequence, the outcome consists of partial benefits, but not as widespread or deep as the main objectives of this plan intended to be fulfilled. Benefits of other applicants with a higher income level are accompanied and overshadowed, by damage to the low-income groups (in our case Roma

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<sup>15</sup> <http://web.pdx.edu/~nwallace/PATF/McConnell.pdf>

and Egyptians) that were supposed to benefit in the first place. This fact is likely to generate feelings of unfairness and suffering, which are not far from our reality. Considering these observations and facts, the author of this paper would not classify the related housing programs as a failure, but as a type of program, which is characterized by conflicted successes.

## CHAPTER 3

## 3.1 Analysis of research results and conclusions

The research findings prove that barriers faced by Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania are the product of vague governmental system coordination, which combined with the absence of anti-discrimination measures, leads to social exclusion practices. Principles and objectives set up by the National Action Plan 2015-2020, will not be able to be accomplished for as long as there are serious issues to be taken into consideration by the stakeholders. I would refer this statement to the weak connection of the National Action Plan mechanisms with the respective law, whose observance does not seem to be followed by all the responsible structures. There are several problems observed by three different stakeholders, such as the absence of proper databases for the homeless, complicated process for document provision, and the most important the non-consideration of ethnic-based barriers that represent a clear inability for these marginalized groups to meet the criteria. According to the scientific theories and practices, the high number of policy documents and strategies adopted in a certain social program should not be measured as an indicator of success as long as their implementation is weak and unable to close the existing gaps.

Considering these observations and facts, I conclude that housing programs for Roma and Egyptians in Albania 2016-2020, should not be considered as a failure, but more like programs which are characterized by adjustable gaps. Facilitating conditions for the most disadvantaged groups and holding the local government body accountable, on one hand, ensures an increase in the number of homeless applicants in these programs, while on the other hand helps policymakers to address the potential weaknesses of a social program. Ultimately this contribution will have a positive impact on social development, with a particular focus on the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian minorities.

## 3.2 Potential solutions and recommendations

Housing in Albania needs further attention because it is the main factor that continues to hinder the inclusion of ethnic minorities in society. It represents a fundamental right that everyone should enjoy. Acceptance criteria should be reviewed and determined not only on the basis of social and economic indicators but also on the basis of ethnicity or minority affiliation. Alternative solutions must be considered in order to close the gaps in areas such as accurate data collection and its

registration in a distinct system for widespread use by participating structures administrative procedures; facilitation of acceptance criteria taking into account the data and living conditions of the most needy groups among the potential beneficiaries; provision of legal aid for those who work in informal sectors of the economy and are not able to provide proof of income; adjustments regarding those who do not possess a tenancy contract for i.e. establishment of social landlords or increasing the level of cooperation between the public and private sectors in terms of housing. This regulations can significantly affect the reduction of discriminatory practices. If it is not possible for the Roma and Egyptian families to own the land on which they have settled, local government authorities should build low-cost housing running by them and made available to families in need (both Roma and non-Roma), under specific contractual terms. Preparation, adaptation, and promotion of relevant information on the right of housing and applicable laws by setting out clear criteria and procedures, will foster more applications from the lowest-income households to accessing social housing.

### 3.3 Limitation of the research

Among the downsides of my qualitative research, first of all, is its limited scope, so its findings are not always widely able to be generalized. As previously mentioned, there is not any research on this topic that could help with a clearer picture or accurate data, about the span of housing problems regarding Roma and Egyptian populations in Albania. Secondly, the fact that I also come from the same ethnic background, might have influenced my work in terms of overlooking some issues that might have had a significant role in my research problem. Furthermore, the current situation and restrictions due to COVID-19 limited my research and plan to conduct empirical interviews in the field, in a way that I could only use the available published literature to answer my research questions.

### 3.4 Further research

Regarding further studies and better practices that a researcher can follow on the same topic, I suggest research in the field and interviews with potential beneficiaries that can assist in collecting fresh data from the latest events on this issue. In this way, future researches could follow the case in a closer perspective and write down findings discovered based on their observations, a fact that would help to eliminate or reduce possible types of research bias.

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