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EDITORIAL

2005 – 2015 – the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Europe

Dear readers,

We would like to take the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion' as a starting point for putting the situation of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe in the centre of attention of the current issue of the Thematic Series. The Decade is an initiative adopted by twelve European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain¹) with sizeable Roma minorities. The Decade was initiated at the high-level conference "Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future", hosted by the government of Hungary in June 2003. The conference was organized by the Open Society Institute, the World Bank, and the European Commission, with support from United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Council of Europe Development Bank, and the governments of Finland and Sweden. The Decade is the first joint effort aiming at changing the lives of Roma in Europe. Running from 2005-2015, the Decade serves as an action framework for governments and will monitor progress in accelerating social inclusion and improving the socio-economic status of Roma across Europe. Within the framework of the Decade four priority areas have been defined: education, employment, health and housing and the participating countries had to develop National Action Plans indicating goals to be achieved for the areas mentioned above.

The present issue includes twelve contributions focusing on Roma in Central and Eastern European countries. The issue commences with two articles looking into the situation of Roma in the whole CEE region in the context of the transformations following the collapse of communism (Sławomir Kapralski) and current characteristics of the Roma population in a comparative manner (Anikó Bernát). The following ten contributions provide insights into the problems faced by this most vulnerable minority in Europe, such as discrimination, poverty, unemployment, difficult access to education and other social services, etc. The case-perspective allows for drawing similarities between the countries not only in respect to the precarious living conditions of Roma, but also regarding difficulties in establishing successful policies targeted at combating Roma exclusion and improvement of their life standard. The issue also includes a contribution presenting a comprehensive overview of research into Roma and into Roma related issues undertaken in Serbia (Suzana Ignjatovic).

Editorial team

¹ Slovenia has an observer status in the initiative.

CONTRIBUTION

Sławomir Kaprański¹

Democratization in the Post-communist Europe: a Romani Perspective²

The Roma in the post-communist Eastern Europe

The developments which took place after 1989 in East Central Europe (ECE) have clearly illustrated the fact that the achievement of freedom and liberty by the states of the region does not necessarily correspond with an improvement of the situation of at least some of their citizens. The group which is frequently mentioned as marginalized, victimized and discriminated against in the new ECE, is the Roma population. According to the authors of the Project on Ethnic Relations (PER) Report, "since the beginning of 1990, Roma have suffered more than 45 attacks, resulting in the deaths of twenty Roma and the destruction of over four hundred Roma dwellings". The violence has been especially well documented in the... Czech and Slovak lands and in Romania and Hungary, but it has also taken place in Poland, Bulgaria, and former Yugoslavia" (PER Report, 1992: 7). Using different statistics (as well as a different definition of a violent attack), the authors of an editorial in Prague's English language weekly *Prognosis* estimated that between 1991 and 1993 in the Czech and Slovak lands Romanies were the target of 94 attacks and victims of all 16 of the racially motivated murders reported in that time (*Prognosis*, December 10, 1993: 9).

Of course, the victimization of the Roma is by no means an invention of post-communist Europe. In fact, from its very beginning the history of the Roma among the European people can be described as a continuous history of persecution and violent mistreatment which culminated in the period of the Holocaust and which has contained a very important communist episode: "The Roma have long been the outcasts of Europe and it is sometimes forgotten that they were among the victims of the Holocaust. They were the target of efforts at enforced assimilation by the communist authorities, whose programs all too often destroyed old patterns of culture and social structures without providing coherent alternatives, and left poorly educated, unemployed populations living in deep poverty, segregated, despised by the majority groups, victimized by the darkest prejudices and hatreds, and lacking the group cohesiveness or leadership required to defend themselves against violence, let alone to compete for a place in the sun" (PER Report, 1992: 3).

Violence against the Roma

Different acts of violence directed against the Roma can be divided into three main groups: acts of physical violence aimed at the destruction of the Roma population and individuals; acts and processes resulting in the destruction of the Romani culture; acts of "semantic violence," denying the Roma any distinct identity. In the first category one has to mention destructive mob violence against individual Romanies and their property (resembling very much traditional anti-Jewish pogroms) reported from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine and Russia. In addition to these rather spontaneous outbursts of anti-Roma sentiments, there are organized, racially-motivated attacks on the Roma, carried out by right-wing extremists, neo-Nazi groups and/or "skinheads" (especially in the Czech Republic). The latter category is even more important for these racially-motivated attacks have often resulted in the Roma men and women being actually killed, while during "pogroms" it is mostly the property which is being destroyed. Of course, pogroms and lynching occur not only in ECE countries: they are reported from Spain, Germany and, quite recently from Austria. Sometimes they are even supported by irresponsible public statements by official political figures, statements that can hardly be distinguished from genocidal appeals. For instance, in 1990 the "British Conservative Councillor Tookey states in a public address that she wants to see 'the filthy, dirty Gypsies recycled and dumped in the sea', following a similar public statement by the Mayor of Dartford in Kent that Gypsies should be 'pushed over the White Cliffs of Dover'" (Hancock, 1991a: 24).

However, in the established democracies statements like those quoted above are easily to be criticized and counteracted not only by human rights activists but also by government's officials, whereas in ECE countries one can see, as Nicolae Gheorghe rightly observes, a widespread "governmental reluctance in condemning publicly, in a clear and unequivocal way, the overt violence and the expressed hostility

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² This contribution is a shortened version of the article published in *Polish Sociological Review*, 2008, vol. 163, no. 3, pp. 245-262.

conducive to violence against Roma persons and against the Roma population as a whole" (Gheorghe, 1994a: 23) One has to add to this picture an anti-Roma prejudice and hostility expressed in the media throughout the countries of ECE which often denies the Roma the usual ally in the democratic countries: the independent voice of journalists.

Another outrageous example of the physical violence against the Roma population is the program of forcible sterilization of the Romani women in the former Czechoslovakia. "The communist authorities," Aviezer Tucker summarizes, "in a racist policy similar to the eugenics experiments in the American South, attempted to break what they considered a vicious circle of unemployment, welfare dependency, poverty, high demographic growth and crime through the sterilization of Romany women. Some were sterilized without their knowledge while being hospitalized. Others were pressured to agree, or offered considerable financial incentives by social and health workers, to undergo the operation. Post-communist government officials halted the practice of sterilization without explicit and informed consent. Still, there are reports of continued sterilization of Romany women in Slovakia" (Tucker, 1994: 210).

This practice has quite early been documented by human right activists and the International Romani Union has protested against it to the United Nations Organization (Puxon, 1986: 11), without, however, any significant result. Only in 1987, 1111 Czech and Slovak Romani women have been sterilized, with an open support of the medical authorities. For instance, Jiri Biocek, a senior paediatrician, was reported to say: "A gynaecologist has the right to do this [sterilization] without consent. On the one hand there are human rights, but on the other when you see how these Gypsies multiply you can see that it is a population of inferior quality" (Powell, 1994: 111). Opinions like this found backing on the highest governmental level when in 1993 Vladimir Meciar, then the Slovak Prime Minister called the Roma "socially unadaptable and mentally backward" (Powell, 1994: 111).

The culture of the Roma has been gradually destroyed in both spontaneous and planned way. The modernization of the ECE countries during last 50 years put an end to many activities of the Roma, related to the pre-modern type of social life, whereas:

"the Communist regime put an end to the capitalist enterprise of horse-trading, while orchestras and smithing were forbidden as private businesses. With their old trades gone, the Roma were relegated to the ranks of unskilled labour. In one sense, they retained their nomadic life-style, moving from place to place and town to town, but it was not out of choice. Instead, they moved under societal pressures and were kept at the lowest level of social stratification, gradually losing the defining characteristics of an ethnic group and coming to resemble an urban proletariat. In this sense, whole settlements of Roma became 'rootless' (PER Report, 1992: 14)."

Even this forced nomadic life-style ended up with the ban put on Roma travelling, issued in the communist countries at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of 1970s which lead to the compulsory settlement of the Roma, mostly in the very poor housing conditions. The old culture was thus destroyed without offering conditions for developing a new one. The official program of assimilation failed therefore from the very beginning: without offering the proper conditions any attempts towards assimilating the Roma could result only in marginalizing them. On the other hand the very program of assimilation neither did take into account the existence of the genuine Romani culture, nor did it offer any alternative way of integration or co-habitation of the Roma within the society.

Inequality can be seen as the most important consequence of the marginalization of the Roma. Among its most gruesome aspects one can list the inequality in life expectation, in housing, in employment and in education (Powell, 1994: 106–108). Another result of marginalization is the process of criminalization of the Roma: being left on the margins of a society, without a sufficient maintenance, they become very much vulnerable to the activities considered as being against the existing law. On the other hand, the Roma have been stigmatized as criminals, prior to any evidence, and treated by the police as potential suspects even in cases in which they were in fact the victims. That explains why Romanies often do not report attacks against them: "The police take their testimony," says Bela Edginton, "and then charge the Romanies themselves with a crime" (Lyman, 1994: 5).

In this situation, counteracting the marginalization, inequality, and criminalization, together with the defensive measures against physical violence and destruction of the culture are the most important problems the Romani organizations have to cope with. The most important objectives of their struggle for improvement of the situation of the Roma are equal civil rights, minority rights, political representation, community development, and security. However, in the case of these latter issues, the question can be asked, for whom are these basic human rights to be granted? In other words, Romani elites seem to realize that the most important right for which they should strive is the right to have a commonly accepted and externally recognized self-definition as a group which should be granted consequent rights. Here we are touching upon the third group of the anti-Roma actions which I proposed to call "semantic violence."

I would like to define this term by referring to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic violence" which means "the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate" (Jenkins, 1992: 104; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: xiii). By "semantic violence" I understand persisting attempts to define Romanies externally, in ways which would deny the Roma an ethnic or cultural identity. In other words, the labelling process becomes here an aspect of a discourse of power in which the authorities conceptualize the Roma people in a way which facilitates and "legitimizes" the acts of oppression and physical violation.

The evolution of external definitions of the Roma can be presented as a conceptual development from a "social caste," through an "inferior race," to a "social problem." As a caste, the Roma were defined in social terms and placed in the framework of relations with other groups as "a separate collectivity that inherited an imposed position of inferiority" (PER Report, 1992: 12). Later on, this caste-like status was redefined in terms of racist theories to justify the actual slavery to which Romanies were subjected in many countries because of their allegedly inferior racial characteristics. However, the racial definition was semantically compounded with the social one: first, because it "legitimized" the Romanies' social status; second, because the racial attributes merged with the social ones in a way which resulted in a social rather than a racist/ethnic external identification. Finally, in the post-war realities of communist Eastern/Central Europe, Romanies were officially defined as a social population, and not as an ethnic group, a definition which corresponded with the assimilationist policies of different governments in the region. In Czechoslovakia for instance, "the Roma were labelled a social group with a dying ethnic identity, [with] no culture of their own and...language bordering on slang; therefore, they had no right to a distinct ethnic existence" (PER Report, 1992: 12). In Poland, the situation differed only slightly: according to Andrzej Mirga, until 1989 "the Roma were recognized as people of Gypsy origin, but the Gypsies were considered an 'ethnographic category' rather than an ethnic group" (PER Report, 1992: 12).

One may list two main groups of forces promoting the "social" definition of Romanies. First, such a definition provided governments with a convenient excuse for not granting the Roma those rights that are usually attributed to ethnic groups and for refusing to assume the responsibilities of "host" societies (PER Report 1992: 13).³ Second, the definition in social terms served as a legitimization of anti-Romani state policies. The Roma were defined as a social group not because governmental experts believed them to have any special kind of "social identity," but because they were targeted as a "social problem", a "pathology" with which state institutions had to deal. Such an approach implied that, in the best scenario, any existing ethnic and cultural differences of a targeted group were merely neglected, and in the worst case, transformed into social deviance which should be eliminated (PER Report, 1992: 13).

The breakdown of communism and its consequences for the Roma

The collapse of communism put an end to programmatic governmental efforts to destroy the traditional cultural patterns of Roma, their social structure, ways of life, and economic infrastructure. There is, however, little consolation in this fact for the assimilationist policy employed by communist governments turned out to be very efficient.

To some extent, the collapse of communism has had a positive outcome in allowing Romanies to organize themselves and to find ways of expressing their interests. It has also increased the possibilities for self-definition: in Poland for instance, according to Andrzej Mirga, the Roma have been recognized after 1989 as an ethnic group (although not as a nationality group), while before that date they were generally perceived as a merely "ethnographic category" (PER Report, 1992: 12).

In general, however, the transition towards democracy has influenced Romanies in a rather negative way. First, the transition period, with all the insecurities and difficulties connected with it, has resulted in a well-known scapegoat effect, with the Roma as an easy target to blame. Consequently, at the beginning of the transition process, Romanies were portrayed as black marketeers, becoming rich in an illegal way, and blamed for shortages of goods. Later on, in a "logic" typical of scapegoating, the Roma have become despised as an extremely poor group, spoiling the rosy picture of booming economies that East European governments have tried to present to the West (Gheorghe, 1991: 836–840).

Secondly, the manifestations, often violent, of popular anti-Roma sentiments can now be expressed freely without being counteracted by the state apparatus. One might call this mechanism a decentralization of violence: "Under the Communist regimes," according to the Project on Ethnic Relations Report, "violence against the Roma was fairly well restrained unless it occurred at state

³ This was, however, by no means an exclusively Communist policy: in 1992 the German government refused to recognize the Roma as an ethnic minority in Germany.

direction. Since the revolutions, however, both open discrimination and violent racism have been on the rise. Before, the state dictated social norms and behaviour, and norms were always defined to enhance the stability of the state. Now, the still weak state leaderships bend before popular opinion and, when popular opinion is racist, the state has done little to counter it" (PER Report, 1992: 14–15).⁴

The racist character of the popular opinion has been proved by numerous surveys. One of them, conducted in 1994 in the Czech Republic by the Men, Education, and New Technologies Foundation together with Gabal Analysis and Consulting and sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, indicates for instance that for the Czechs, "when it comes to making a judgment on how a person is viewed, skin color remains the most decisive factor." According to the report, Romanies, the "people with dark skin," are perceived as "an irresponsible and dishonest population inclined to fraud... [who] don't like to work and abuse social benefits" and seventy-eight percent of the interviewed Czechs would favour "strict legislation...explicitly and ethnically directed at the repression of the Romanies" (Lesenarova and Baimbridge, 1995: 6).⁵ In this situation the following opinion of Andrzej Mirga does not come by surprise: "In the view of ordinary Roma people," Mirga says, "the reality of new democracy gave them nothing but a growing sense of insecurity" (Mirga, 1994: 30).

Still another aspect of the situation of the Roma in the post-communist Europe is connected with the raising nationalism in the region. It is, moreover, a peculiar form of nationalism which draws upon the ancient conception of a nation as a community "of people of the same descent, who are integrated geographically, in the form of settlements or neighbourhoods, and culturally by their common language, customs and traditions" (Habermas, 1992: 3). In consequence, the Eastern/Central European version of nationalism has particularly emphasized the idea of an ethnically homogeneous state and the concept of nationality as based on "objective" criteria: commonly shared culture, language, ethnicity, religion (Mommson, 1990: 213–214).

The Roma do not share most of these "objective" criteria. Thus, they are often perceived as "strangers" who endanger the ethnic homogeneity and "strength of the nation." Moreover, in the ECE countries a division between national identity and citizenship has never been successfully made and the eighteenth century concept of the nation of citizens, the nation which "does not derive its identity from some common ethnic and cultural properties, but rather from the praxis of citizens who actively exercise their civil rights" (Habermas, 1992: 3) has never been deeply rooted in the popular thought.

For the Roma it means that they might be excluded from the ranks of co-nationals, which in the case of post-communist countries often means a kind of second-class citizenship or even no citizenship at all, as in the case of many Roma citizens of the former Czechoslovakia who, after the split of their country into Czech Republic and Slovakia, and because of the new citizenship law ended up practically stateless (Leuprecht, 1994: 9).

Roma defensive strategies

As Peter Leuprecht, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, rightly observed, all the strategies which may be used by Romanies to improve their situation have to solve a problem of how successfully obtain two kinds of rights which apparently are contradicting each other: the right to be different (to preserve the separate cultural identity of the Roma) and the right to be the same (to obtain full and equal participation in society) (Leuprecht, 1994: 9).⁶

The first strategy we may list here does not meet the first criterion: it is simply the strategy of total assimilation that "would imply the abandonment of anything like a strong Roma identity for the sake of being incorporated into the dominant society" (PER Report 1992: 19). Even if possible at all, such an assimilation would perhaps secure "the right to be" but it would definitely not preserve any distinct Roma identity. The tendency not to strive for the right to be different is quite popular among some groups of Roma. The German Sinti, for instance, have been trying to obtain recognition as a German nationality group (deutsche Volksgruppe), which would provide them the status of an inherent part of German society, while in Slovakia, only six percent of Roma students would like to be seen as having a different ethnic background than the dominant population (Gheorghe, 1991: 840; PER Report, 1992: 19).

⁴ A notable exception is the Czech Republic, where the state took an actively anti-Roma policy in its new citizenship law (Zoon, 1994; Beck, 1994). However, contrary to the Communist regime of Czechoslovakia with its attempt at forcible assimilation, the post-Communists government of the Czech Republic aims rather at excluding the Roma population from the legal construction of the new Republic's citizenship.

⁵ The results of a more recent survey, conducted by the IVVM Institute, are slightly more optimistic: according to them the negative opinion about Romanies has been expressed by sixty-nine percent of the Czechs ('Gazeta Wyborcza', December 16-17, 1995, p. 17).

⁶ One also may add here the very basic right to be at all, directed against physical extermination, and the right to have an independent self-definition, directed against semantic violence.

The second strategy, contrary to the first one, denies any merits of the right to be the same. It advocates to its very limits the right to be different. It is the strategy of total separation which “implies complete withdrawal from the main community, including language, schools, even territory” (PER Report, 1992: 19). In its radical form, this strategy may consist of appeal for a territorial autonomy, which can often be found in the history of the Roma nationalism. Even the idea of an independent state has existed in Roma history and continues to be advocated by some radicals although it is not accepted by most of the Roma organizations. One of the first attempts towards obtaining a territorial homeland, “Romanestan,” was made before World War II by Janusz Kwiek, the Romani leader in Poland, when he petitioned Mussolini to offer the Romanies a part of what was then Abyssynia. Recently, the most unobstructed exponent of the independent Roma state is Ronald Lee, his aspirations being influenced, among others, by the Quebec Liberation movement (Acton, 1974: 233–234). The official standpoint of the World Romani Congress, however, is that “we must create Romanestan—in our hearts,” a notion which allows its leaders “to retain the emotional connotations of the idea of ‘Romanestan’... without exposing themselves to the cogent arguments against any attempt to set up a second Israel” (Acton, 1974: 234).

The separation would also mean the total acceptance of the external definition of the Roma, the acceptance of the label given them by the authorities. In fact, there are many different groups of Roma and differences between them are sometimes of crucial importance. One has to agree with Leo Lucassen who in his study has contested “the view held by the most tsiganologists that people are termed ‘gypsies’ because they are gypsies, that is, define themselves as such” (Lucassen, 1991: 89). The strategy of separation would in fact mean the acceptance of the external label of “gypsiness” and building the group identity around its negative social perception: a phenomenon called by Lucassen “minoritization.” “The labelling by authorities of certain categories as different, unwanted or even dangerous, not only influences their position in society in a negative way, the power of definition by authorities can even initiate group formation and minoritization. People who at the outset felt no, or only weak ties with one another can be driven towards each other and in the course of time become a minority or project themselves as one” (Lucassen, 1991: 91).

There is however the third possibility which could prove to be viable in avoiding the problems of the two just described and simultaneously able to combine the two types of rights as advocated by Leuprecht. It is a process of political ethnogenesis of the Roma. Following (and slightly changing) the concept of Nicolae Gheorghe, I could say that political ethnogenesis in case of the Roma means a conscious attempt toward achieving the accepted status of a politically organized, non-territorial (transnational), ethnic-national group (Gheorghe, 1991: 831).

Nicolae Gheorghe, advocating the political rather than cultural character of Roma ethnogenesis, stresses the fact that Roma ethnicity should not be perceived as an independent variable. It is, in his opinion, a consequence of political actions taken to secure the existence of the Roma and to provide them with recognition. Of course, this process does not mean an abandonment of ethnic identity. It is rather conceived as an adherence to a different type of nationalism than the ethnic type dominant in Eastern/Central Europe. This new political nationalism means first of all political organization and participation in political life; it strives to create a common arena in which people of different ethnicity could co-operate in solving their problems, without allowing the differences between them to become the predominant issue which would exclude communication. In such a project, “culture moves to politics” (Gheorghe, 1991: 842) the most secure place for cultural difference seems to be the sphere of interaction between equal political agents in which political homogenization protects ethnic heterogeneity.

In other words, the Roma could turn out to be more advanced in their understanding of identity than the societies in which they live. They could become “politically organized people,” following of what Habermas has described as the modern conception of citizenship where a legal political concept, not ethnic cultural, defines identity in the first place. In this sense, to use Gheorghe’s words, the task of the Romani organizations is to build the identity of the Roma people “as a political people in the Greek sense of this term” (Gheorghe, 1994a: 5). That means, once again referring to Habermas, people who are the members of a polity, who share political membership, and whose identity is defined in a legal, not ethnic, sense. In this sense the Roma self-definition as politically organized people resembles very much of what Habermas thinks to be the crucial element of a liberal definition of citizenship. And, since in the final instance citizenship is for Habermas defined in terms of civil rights, one may say that the same rights which define Roma identity define the notion of citizenship in a democratic society.

For Gheorghe, one of the most influential Romani leaders, this conclusion seems to be self-evident: to be “a political people in the Greek sense of the word” means for him “to contribute to the education of our people as responsible citizens of the country where they are living, and to look at how the

governments of these countries are respecting the rights of our people as citizens of these states" (Gheorghe, 1994a: 5).

However, in another statement, Gheorghe developed even broader understanding of the Roma identity as a legal-political construct, which expands beyond the borders of a nation state. "In the present time of an emerging pan-European Rule of Law," he said, "Roma, an European people without a kin-state of their own, are choosing the Rule of Law and Democracy as our main civic identifications and as our 'motherland' " (Gheorghe, 1994b: 14). This idea, which would definitely earn Habermas' admiration, brings us to the next defining element of the Roma strategy: to transnationality.

In the world in which the importance of the nation-state declines and the importance of transnational actors increases, in the world of the "evolving patterns of interdependence, dependency, and global dominance throughout the world system," ethnicity, too, "may be conceptualized as an evolving transnational force" (Stack, 1981: 28). The Roma ethnicity is somehow predestined to be transnational, taking into account the traditionally nomadic lifestyle of the Romanies. In this respect, the Roma tradition could turn out to be very modern, or even post-modern. As Aviezer Tucker observes, "The Romanies' traditional lifestyle combines the pre-modern with the post-modern. The nomadic, unsettled, uprooted, yet artistic and free way of life is at once pre-modern in its inability to adapt to modern industrial society, and postmodern in its disregard of national borders and modern ideologies and value systems" (Tucker, 1994: 209).⁷

The concept of the Roma as transnational people does not mean, however, only freedom of travelling, although this is a very important practical objective of the actions taken by the Roma organizations. It also means a refusal to accept the world of nation states with their ethnic definitions of identity and citizenship, and, instead adhering to the "motherland of European law." On the other hand, however, one of the basic aims of the Romani elites in the area of human rights is to be recognized precisely as a nation, a fact marked symbolically by the attention being paid to national emblems. The first World Romani Congress, held in 1971 near London, adopted the Romani anthem and the national flag, consisting of two horizontal bars, the lower green, the upper blue, with the red, sixteen-spoked chakra-wheel. The next Congress, held in Geneva, addressed a petition to all UNO member states to admit the Romanies "as a distinct nation and to treat them as a national minority possessing equal rights" (Bartosz, 1993: 15). The petition, presented to the NGO bureau of the United Nations in New York, has so far resulted in consultative status for the Romani Union with the United Nations, received in 1979 (Hancock, 1991b: 146; Puxon, 1987: 3).

Conclusions

The main aim of this essay was to show the democratic transformations in the formerly communist countries from the point of view of Roma: the minority which has permanently been discriminated against and marginalized in Central and Eastern Europe. Since communism added its own peculiar flavour to the persecutions of the Roma, one could expect that since its collapse the situation of the Roma has improved. It is, however, much more complicated. The Roma definitely have obtained the right of self-organization and articulation of their interest. "Market economy" has allowed them to legalize the businesses and trades which were to a large degree illegal under the communism as "private enterprises." On the other hand, the collapse of the "planned economy" made the economic situation of the large part of the Roma worse. This is the case of those who were absorbed by the process of "communist industrialization" and found their chance in moving into cities where they become workers in mines or steel factories, obtained an apartment in a block of flats and other social benefits. This is also the case of those who preserved more independent life style but lived in the symbiosis with the communist economy, providing goods and services which were not offered by the communist industry. The first group, consisting mostly of the low-skilled workers, was first to be fired when the big communist plants collapsed or started a difficult process of reforms. The second group lost its economic niche.

The second aspect of the situation of the Roma is connected with the process of constructing or regaining identities by the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. The collapse of communism was followed by the growing nationalist tendencies and development of the extreme nationalist groups which understand national identity rather in ethnic than in civic-political terms. The ideal picture envisioned by those groups is a homogeneous nation-state, a community united by the same ethnic origins. In such a vision there is no place for multiculturalism, for people of clearly different descent who would accept the collective identity as fellow citizens but either would not like or would not be granted

⁷ Tucker's opinion, however, needs to be taken with some reservation, because the Roma tradition has been largely destroyed over the course of the past several decades. One may speak here rather of the 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm, 1983) in which the traditional elements are being re-created in an entirely new context of transnational, legal-political concept of identity.

the status of fellow nationals. In many countries the collapse of communism meant for the Roma the loss of state protection and the danger of being exposed to the attacks – sometimes having clearly racist motivation – of extreme nationalists. On the other hand, democratization in the post-communist countries means also the development of the human rights sector, establishing institutions supervising the situation of minorities and an international control of the standards regulating the majority-minority relations. The Roma do not have a single strategy either. Some of them tend to assimilate since they do not see a chance of “being Rom” in a society which does not accept difference, some tend to improve their situation using the concept of human rights, some attempt at achieving the status of national minority and fight for political representation.

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CONTRIBUTION

Anikó Bernát¹

Roma in Eastern Europe

Roma² are the largest ethnic minority in Europe and perhaps the most vulnerable. Roma can be found in most parts of the world, but particularly in Eastern Europe. An estimated 4 million Roma live in the new EU Member States in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe (CEE and SEE), most of them under conditions of extreme poverty and social exclusion. Moreover, a large number of Roma are living in the old Member States, and the number of Roma is increasing in some of them partly due to immigration from Eastern Europe (particularly in Italy and Spain). In sum, according to Liégeois (2007) approximately 6,6 million Roma live in the EU-27.

Roughly 70% of the Roma in the EU (4,5 million people) live in eight new Member States in Central and Eastern Europe, and nearly 1 million more are estimated in the bordering area of the EU, i.e. from Ukraine to Albania (Table 1). The largest Roma community of around 2 million people can be found in Romania and there are also large Roma communities in other new EU Member States, especially in Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia, the estimated number of people being at least half a million in each of these countries. Overall, some 4 million Roma live in the new EU Member States, the vast majority of them, as indicated below, in deep poverty and in an almost hopeless situation.

In addition, in each of the Eastern European countries the proportion of children is considerably high, 3 to 5 out of 10 Roma are under the age 18, which is much higher than in the majority population; consequently, in general the Roma population is growing in contrast to the majority population in these countries.

Table 1. Number³ and proportion of Roma population in Eastern Europe

Country	Total population (official)	Roma population (official)		Roma Population (estimated)		Roma Children under 18	
	millions	number	%	number	%	Number	%
Albania	3.07	1.261	0.04	90,000–100,000	3.1	631-47,500	50
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.83	8.864	0.23	40,000–50,000	1.2	4,077-20,700	46
Bulgaria	7,93	370.908	4.68	500,000–800,000	8.7	146,880-257,400	40
Croatia	4.44	9,463	0.21	30,000–40,000	0.8	4,684-17,325	50
Czech Republic	10.23	11,746	0.11	175,000–200,000	1.8	5,638-96,000	48
Estonia	1.36	unavailable		1,000–1,500	0.1	unavailable	
Hungary	10.1	189,984	1.9	520,000–650,000	5.9	81,123-249,795	43
Kosovo	2.0	34,000	1.7	45,000	2.3	17,049-22,564	50
Latvia	2.38	8,205	0.35	13,000-15,000	0.6	2,831-4,829	35
Lithuania	3.48	2571	0.07	3,000–4,000	0.1	1,169-1591	46
Macedonia	2.02	53,879	2.69	135,000	6.8	20,782-52,260	39
Moldova	3.39	12,900	0.38	20,000–25,000	0.7	unavailable	

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² The official EU term for Roma is “Roma, Gypsies and Travellers”, but we are using the term “Roma” in this paper, because this denomination is usually used by the Roma community, as a self-assignment, while the term “Gypsy” often used by other people but not Roma themselves and is often considered as a pejorative term by Roma. Traveller communities are living in Western Europe in general, but this paper focuses on Central and Eastern European Roma, therefore it is better to refer to this ethnic group as Roma.

³ Survey and expert estimates of Roma numbers tend to be accepted as being more reliable than official data (from censuses in particular), due to the tendency for Censuses to underestimate the size of disadvantaged minority groups as a result of respondents being reluctant to report their actual ethnic origin.

Country	Total population (official)	Roma population (official)		Roma Population (estimated)		Roma Children under 18	
	millions	number	%	number	%	Number	%
Montenegro	0.67	2,601	0.43	14,000	2.0	1,345-6,984	52
Poland	38.2	12,731	0.03	15,000-50,000	0.1	6,577-16,789	52
Romania	21.7	535,140	2.5	1,800,000–2,000,000	8.8	230,854-819,639	43
Serbia	7.5	108,193	1.44	450,000–500,000	6.3	44,347-194,818	41
Slovakia	5.4	89,920	1.67	480,000–520,000	9.3	39,130-217,582	44
Slovenia	1.97	3,246	0.16	8,000–10,000	0.5	1,506-4,176	46
Ukraine	48.5	47,600	0.11	50,000–60,000	0.1	unavailable	

(Source: OSI 2006a and OSI 2006b)

The disadvantages faced by Roma arise from a complex interaction of interdependent factors, in particular, very low levels of education and employment, severe poverty, poor housing conditions and large families. Moreover, their situation is aggravated by the fact that most of them tend to live in depressed regions where the lack of employment opportunities and basic infrastructure adds to their disadvantages. These are further reinforced by widespread discrimination.

The vulnerable situation of Roma is familiar throughout Europe, and well documented by a number of international organisations⁴, nevertheless, only a very limited number of cross-country surveys attempted to research the situation of Roma in details and with a comparable methodology, and the few researches (UNDP 2002 and 2005) is available only for Eastern and South Eastern Europe. Consequently it is very hard to compare the situation and opportunities of Eastern European Roma to those who live in the old Member States. A comparative and detailed research on the situation of Roma in the whole EU would be fundamental and urgent to get an exact knowledge about all the Roma living in the EU and to identify adequately the mechanisms behind their vulnerable situation.

The picture shown by the figures on Eastern European Roma from the most recent empirical research may, however, be even worse than it might seem. The indicators derived from the most reliable comparable empirical research (UNDP 2005) carried out in eleven CEE and SEE countries in the areas in which Roma most live highlight the gap between Roma and their non-Roma neighbours in all of the countries covered. The situation in all of these countries is considered here rather than only the EU Member States to enable a comparison to be made between the more and less developed countries and the findings for the EU countries to be interpreted within a wider context.

Surveys report (UNDP 2002, UNDP 2005) that the Roma population differs from the majority population in terms of the main demographic trends, in particular, birth rates (higher than average), the timing of marriage (earlier than the average), family structure (larger families and households) and age profile (lower rates of Roma among older age groups and higher rates among the younger cohorts), for example:

- In Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, Roma households have on average 3-4 children, however, the number can be much higher in some cases, for example in poor Roma settlements in Slovakia the average number of children per family is nearly 8.
- The number of children per Roma mother is also higher than that of the majority of women across the region. In Romania, the total fertility rate, i.e. births per woman, for Roma is more than double than for others (2.6 for the Roma and 1.2 for non-Roma). In the Czech Republic, married Roma women have on average 5 children by the end of their reproductive lives (at age 45-49) compared with an average of 2.2 children for other women in the country.
- Large numbers of children and large sizes of family are a corollary of early marriage: In Romania, Hungary and Slovakia at least 4 out of 10 Roma in the 16 to 19 age group are already married and at least 7 out of 10 in the 20 to 24 age group. In Bulgaria, though the proportions are slightly lower, the pattern is similar (33% being married among 16 to 19 year-old and 69% among 20 to 24 year-olds). (UNDP 2002)

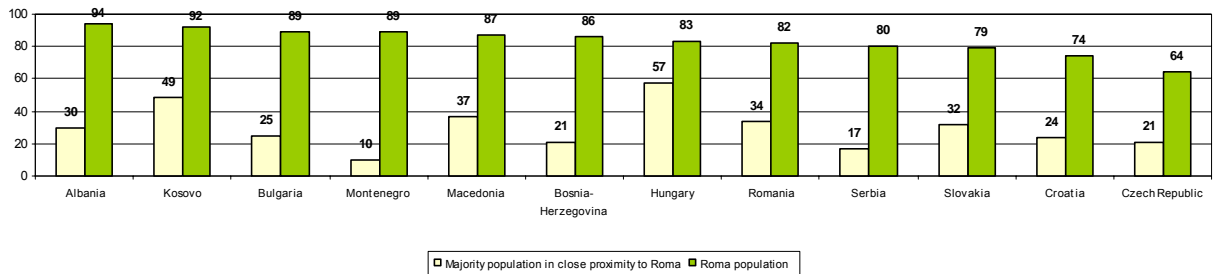
⁴ See, for example: The World Bank: Revenga et al 2002, Ringold et al 2005, European Commission: EU 2004 and 2005, United Nations Development Program: UNDP 2002.

- Parallel to this, there is much evidence that life expectancy, infant mortality and morbidity are significantly worse for Roma than for the majority population in CEE countries (UNDP 2002). For instance infant mortality rates are roughly double the national averages in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, and nearly three times higher in Romania. (Puporka and Zádori 1998, UNDP 2002)

As a result, the shape of the age pyramids for Roma in the Central and Eastern European MSs (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) is similar to the shapes in developing countries (a large number of children and young people and fewer people in the older age groups). It also means that the Roma population, on average, is very young in the region, with a median age of 19 years, while the corresponding figure is 34 years for the total population (UNDP 2002).

The level of education of the Roma in the region is extremely low compared with the EU25-average in general, with the majority population in the candidate countries or with the majority population living in close proximity to Roma: the share of the low educated (primary school as maximum) among Roma is 2 to 9 times larger than among the majority population (UNDP 2005) (Figure 1). Segregation within schools and the education system is a major issue underlying the very low education level of Roma, which is of key importance for their vulnerability in the region as well as for their chances of social inclusion.

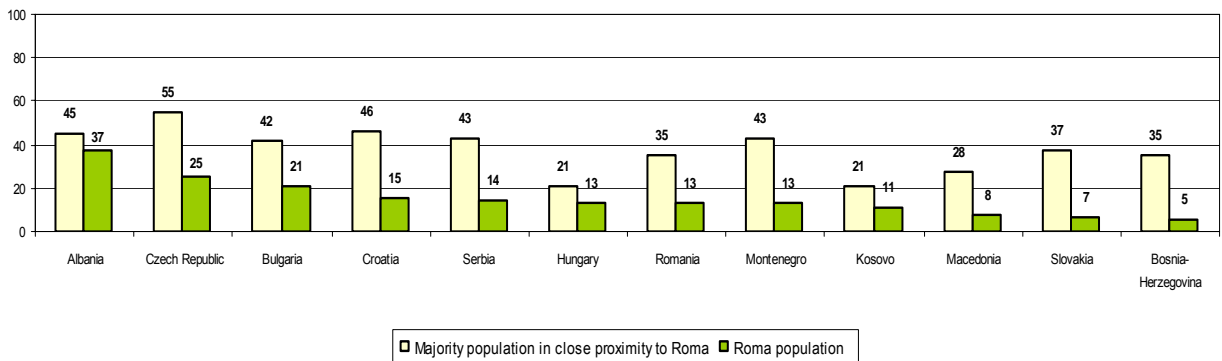
Figure 1. Share of population 15 years old and above with 8 years elementary school as highest attained educational level (% of Roma and majority population in close proximity to Roma)



(Source: UNDP 2005)

The situation in the labour market is similar to that in education. The dataset from the Faces of Poverty survey indicates that activity rates among the Roma population are extremely low in the region: only 1-2 out of 10 Roma aged 15 or over have earnings from economic activity (defining activity to include that in both the formal and informal economy). The situation is better only in the Czech Republic and Albania, where somewhat higher proportions of Roma are in paid employment, though only slightly so (Figure 2) (UNDP 2005).

Figure 2. Share of active earners aged 15 and above among Roma and majority population in close proximity to Roma (%)



(Source: UNDP 2005)

The small share of active earners among Roma leads directly to a lower level of income and poor living standards. Income of under USD 4.30 a day in purchasing power parity terms⁵ can be used as a

⁵ Using USD 4.30/day as an absolute poverty threshold is based on the practice of the UN and UNDP, which suggest this methodology in Millennium Development Goals. For instance see MDG Reports 2004:16. We apply this indicator because cross-country poverty figures for Roma in the countries examined here are available only from UNDP's survey.

measure of absolute poverty. According to the UNDP (2005) survey, the proportion of Roma with income of less than USD 4.30 is the highest in Albania, Kosovo and Romania (at least two-thirds of the Roma in each case), while around half of the Roma have income below this in Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria and the proportion is slightly smaller in Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The smallest proportions are in the economically more developed Central European countries and Croatia (Table 2).

Poverty rate ratio (the share of Roma with poverty-level income relative to non-Roma with this level of income) is the highest in Montenegro and Bulgaria, where eight times more Roma are living under the poverty line than non-Roma, despite the fact they live in the same locality. Wide differences are also evident in the other Balkan countries, while the gap is narrowest in the Central European countries (Table 3). This pattern is similar to that shown by labour market indicators and suggests that disparities in income levels (or labour market conditions) between countries are more important in explaining differences between the situation of Roma and that of the majority population than other factors.

Table 2. Income based poverty among Roma and majority population in close proximity to Roma (percent of the respondents under the USD 4.30 PPP income based poverty line)

	Majority population in close proximity to Roma	Roma population	Poverty rate ratio (poverty rate of Roma/neighbouring majority)
Albania	14	79	5,6
Kosovo	49	72	1,5
Romania	20	67	3,4
Serbia	9	58	6,4
Macedonia	11	52	4,7
Bulgaria	6	49	8,2
Montenegro	4	33	8,3
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3	26	8,7
Croatia	2	11	5,5
Hungary	5	8	1,6
Czech Republic (11 USD)	9	25	2,8

(Source: UNDP 2005)

Various effects results from these basic characteristics, such an increasing number of Roma in these countries and a growing proportion of Roma in the population as a whole, and even more so among the population of working age in the coming decades. However, unless the current level of education of the Roma improves rapidly, much of this additional potential labour force is likely to be unemployable or employable only as unskilled workers with low productivity and low wages.

Almost all studies and researches on the situation of the Roma population highlight the high level of discrimination they face in almost all spheres of everyday life, from education and employment to housing and access to services. The above results in which the situation of Roma is compared to the majority population living close to the Roma also reflect this, as the large gap between the Roma and the majority in all countries and in each question refers indirectly to the presence of discrimination. A recent survey on European minorities shows that Roma are the most discriminated minority group in the EU based on the perceived discrimination by the members of minorities themselves (EU-MIDIS 2009). On average, every second Roma respondent reported that he or she was discriminated against at least once in the previous 12 months, and those who were discriminated against experienced on average 11 incidents of discrimination over a 12-month period. However, 7 to 9 out of 10 Roma, depending on the country surveyed, did not report their most recent experience of discrimination in the last 12 months to any competent organisation or at the place where the discrimination occurred.

From the surveys carried out and the statistical data which have been compiled, the situation of Roma in Eastern European countries is in virtually every aspect of life significantly worse than that of the majority population in the countries concerned, including that of those living in the same neighbourhood or in close proximity to them. At the same time, these differences cannot be attributed to just one or two factors alone, such as discrimination or a generally low level of education among the Roma community.

It is equally the case that regional disparities, economic difficulties of the Eastern European countries and demographic characteristics are also factors underlying the survey findings.

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CONTRIBUTION

Zdeněk Uherek¹

The Roma in the Czech Republic²

In the Czech Republic, the Roma comprise a heterogeneous population with borders that are difficult to define. The majority population and experts in the areas of demography, sociology, ethnology, anthropology and history estimate that there are approximately 250,000 Roma living on the territory of the current Czech Republic, a great majority of whom immigrated to this territory in 1945-1992 from Slovakia, which formed a common state with the Czech Republic until 1992.

The Roma moved to the Czech Republic predominantly from the centre and east of Slovakia, where they lived mainly in the rural milieu with minimal experience with urban life. In the centre and east of Slovakia, they lived in separate settlements or on the margins of rural villages in cottages with the basic hygienic and civilisation standards. Among themselves, they spoke specific dialects of the Romany language and partially mastered Hungarian or Slovakian. They were either entirely illiterate or with minimal education on the level of several forms of elementary or special school.³ They came to the territory of the current Czech Republic either through a voluntary chain migration or were forced into that migration by the closure or removal of the Roma settlements in Slovakia. They were often stimulated to migration by promises of better housing and pay (Uherek, 2004).

In the Czech Republic, the Roma sought job opportunities mainly in large industrial towns where they acquired unskilled jobs and housing in new workers' housing estates or in older buildings of the lower flat categories. On the territory of the Czech Republic, the so-called dispersion policy was implemented on the Roma population. Its aim was to mix the Roma population with the majority population to achieve the fastest possible Roma assimilation. It was assumed that the Roma distributed among the majority population would learn more quickly to communicate in Czech, increase their qualifications and acquire the desired civilisation habits (Haišman, 1999; Víšek, 1999). Under Communism, the study of the Roma culture was conceived especially as a study of the Roma traditional culture and Roma assimilation with a strong paternalistic undertone (Uherek, 2005).

The dispersion and Roma assimilation policy failed. Since the Roma were allotted worse flats and due to conflicts in coexistence with the majority population, they gradually moved together, thus creating quarters with a high concentration of the Roma population which behaves in a specific way from the point of view of the majority population.

Despite the failures of the dispersion policy and the assimilation efforts of the Communist state, a large part of the Roma population currently can read, write and speak Czech, or a Roma ethnolect of Czech. Only a part of them are proficient in the Romany language, but even in this group the knowledge of Romany is often partial and is combined with Czech or Slovak expressions.

The most numerous group of the Roma in the Czech Republic are the so-called Slovak Roma, Rumungri (Hungarian Romani) who used dialects of Slovak Roma in Slovakia. It was a population long sedentarised in Slovakia. This sendentarisation had been taking place already roughly from the sixteenth century. Rumungri currently comprise approximately 80% of the Roma population of the Czech Republic. They are Roma who are losing their original language. At the same time, they very often have a low economic standard. Another part of the Roma population are Olah (Wallachian) Roma who were still nomadic in the second half of the twentieth century and were forcibly sendentarised in Communist Czechoslovakia in 1958. They have retained their language, a specific Olah dialect of Romany to this day, have a strong family coherence and solidarity and an integrated system of laws and obligations based on patriarchal and gerontocratic principles. They form large-family coalitions headed by a 'king'. Thanks to the firm solidarity and family coordination, they do not happen to be in such a serious and critical social situation as some families of the Slovak Roma (Davidová, 1995). Another group living on the territory of the Czech Republic are Sinti, who are the most qualified and

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² This text has been drawn up on the basis of the project "Kulturní identita a kulturní regionalismus v procesu formování etnického obrazu Evropy (2005-2011)" (AV0Z90580513), <http://aplikace.isvav.cvut.cz/researchPlanDetail.do?rowId=AV0Z90580513>

³ For more details see for instance: Davidová 1965 and 1995.

educated of the groups considered to be Roma. They are able to compete in the entrepreneurial sphere and in the labour market and are normally well integrated in the local milieu. Another small group are the so-called Czech Roma who are the offspring of the Roma populations that settled on the territory of the contemporary Czech Republic already before World War II. During the Second World War, this group, just like the Jews, was persecuted and a great part of this population died either in the labour camps in Bohemia and Moravia or in the concentration camps all over Europe, especially on the territory of today's Czech Republic and Poland (Pape, 1997). The Czech Roma who survived the Roma Holocaust are usually mostly assimilated in Czech society or form the Roma elite. Their offspring often marry in mixed marriages with the Rumungri or with members of the majority population.

Whereas an assimilation policy was implemented on the Roma until 1989, a wave of Roma emancipation came after the fall of Communism, which, however, addressed only a part of the Roma population. While Roma social representation, political elite and Roma organisations formed in the Czech Republic, not all Roma claim Roma nationality or ethnicity, and neither do they all claim to belong to Roma political organisations.

Until 1989, when the Communist Party ruled in (then) Czechoslovakia, the laws on compulsory labour service – as all social care of the state for employed persons was – were applied to Roma. The situation gradually began to change after 1989. The Roma did not prove to be able to compete much in the liberal labour market and with the influx of cheap labour force from abroad. As small private businessmen, only a few of them could compete with larger and better established companies, and foreign workers from Ukraine, Moldavia and other countries east of the Czech Republic began to win over them in the labour market as contract-hires (Weinerová, 1994). The result is high unemployment in the Roma population and poverty, illegal work and further pathological phenomena connected with paucity arising from that (World Bank, 2008).

A similarly adverse development can be traced as far as the Roma political emancipation is concerned. In the Communist period, the Roma were not allowed to push their agenda as an independent political subject. They strove for a political form of emancipation after 1989. Whereas in 1990–1992 the Roma political leaders successfully established themselves on the political scene, sat in legislative organs and had corresponding political support, this development changed mainly in the course of 1992 and after the creation of the independent Czech Republic. Roma leaders have lost the support not only of the majority population, but also of Roma and have not been able to compete on the Czech political scene. The result is that the Roma organisations in the Czech Republic are usually not primarily of a political, but rather of a cultural-educational character. In the areas of cultural and educational programmes, the Roma have better chances to raise funds for their organisations and through cultural and educational institutions also enter both local and international social and political networks (Uherek, Pojarová, 2008).

Political attitudes of the Roma communities can be estimated only with difficulty. However, on the basis of limited field probes, we assume that they are often left-wing oriented, have a feeling that the new development after 1989 was unfavourable to them and have given up the opportunity to influence their situation. A large part of the Roma population probably does not participate in elections.

In terms of demographics and health, the Roma communities are considered to have many children and the age of pregnancy with the first child is lower than among the majority population. Age structure is progressive; average age is lower than that of the majority population (Kalibová, 1999: 102-106). According to the results of the research *Determinants of the Health of the Roma Population, 1999–2001* (Determinanty..., 2001) and the research by Sastipen in 2009 (Nesvadbová, Šandera, Haberlová, 2009), the Roma suffer from a higher sickness rate, lower healthy longevity and generally poorer health condition, which is also reflected in the fact that the Roma acquire full- or partial-handicapped pensions almost three times more often than members of the majority population. It is possible, in their case, to record higher incidence of an entire range of illnesses, for instance of tuberculosis, chronic illnesses of the lower parts of the respiratory system, or an increased number of neurotic illnesses. Yet, in the report of the *Determinants of the Health of the Roma Population*, it is claimed that these are diseases affecting the entire population and a disease that would be unequivocally genetically determined or specific in the Czech milieu only for Roma communities has not been found (Determinanty..., 2001).

In terms of the solidarity and coherence of the Roma communities and in terms of their ethnic awareness of the communities, it may be said that the state of the current Roma communities is unstable. In 1991, the Roma could first claim their nationality or ethnic origin in the Population and Housing Census. From the potential 250,000 members of the Roma population in the Czech Republic, about 33,000 people did so (Srb, 1992). In 2001, this number dropped to approximately 11,000 people. The other Roma probably declare themselves mainly as Czechs or Slovaks on the civic principle based

on citizenship or country of origin. They often do not speak of themselves as Roma but label themselves otherwise, e.g. as Czech Slovaks, Gypsies, Italians etc. In specific interactions, especially nuclear or extended family ones, identity is important to them (Langhamrová, Fiala, 2003).

Considering the poor ability of the Roma to compete in the labour market as well as the problems of coexistence with the majority population, the Roma relatively frequently travel to work abroad, or their entire families emigrate primarily to developed countries. Their favourite destinations are for example Great Britain or Belgium. Until 2004, before the accession of the Czech Republic in the European Union, they usually joined migration from the Czech Republic with applications for the granting of asylum (Uherek, 2004). Currently, they act as economic migrants within Europe. However, they have applied for international protection up to now outside of Europe, especially to Canada. However, Canada introduced a visa requirement for them in 2009 because of the high number of applications by citizens of the Czech Republic for asylum.

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CONTRIBUTION

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The Roma People in Romania

The Roma people and Romania form an intertwined pair because of their past and present, in part due to the Romanies' high percentage of the Romanian total population and the duration of their settlement in the territory of present-day Romania. The regions of Wallachia and Transylvania have been considered their European homeland stretching back for many centuries. This fact in conjunction with the linguistic similarity between the terms Romania/Români and R(r)oma/R(r)omi led to mistaking and equating both groups. Since 1990, the country's media and political public have witnessed recurring polemics on the subject², which were seen to be linked with the migration of Romanian citizens to the West; it was then feared that this would be jeopardized by criminal offenses ascribed to the Roma people. This goes along with a delegitimation of the term „Romanies“, which, in the past and present, comprises a very heterogeneous population in Romania amounting to between 535,000 and 1.5 Mio people.³ This heterogeneity finds its expression in socioeconomic, linguistic, cultural and denominational varieties, accompanied by partly diverging societal positions and needs. At the same time, this complexity provides the base for numerous stereotypes stretching as far as the “racial menace”. The following is only an outline of this complex issue. This is followed by a sketch of the differentiation and the history of the Roma people in Romania, including detailed comments on their situation in the times of state socialism. Their current situation is described along the lines of political practice, public perception, social reality and scientific discourse.

Differentiation

Many villages and towns accommodate two or more different communities of Romanies. Every particular group affiliation is connected with sometimes fundamental dissociation efforts by group members. The criteria are multifarious, complementary and overlapping (Mihok, 1999; Burtea, 1994). Historically, it makes sense to differentiate according to the locality and the moment of settlement, supplemented by the criteria of language and denomination. As to the linguistic aspects, the following distinction has to be considered: first, knowledge of the Romani language though the Romani dialects vary significantly, and second, the absorption of a majority language as a mother tongue. Another criterion of assessment involves the occupational group, although this is not a real historical tool since only very few of the Roma people pursue traditional professions. It is equally difficult to differentiate according to the grade of assimilation and social or legal status, even if a socially underprivileged status can be assumed for a majority of the Roma people.

History

It might not be possible to discern when the Roma people first appeared in the territory of present-day Romania. Their presence during the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries can be considered as good as verified (Achim, 1998: 22). Romani settlement in numerous places is documented by the second half of the fifteenth century. Universally valid statements about their social and legal status are hardly possible since they differed between as well as within the historical regions. Romanies were enslaved in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia until the second half of the nineteenth century. Their status as slaves depended on the status of their owners and can be classified into three categories: territorial lords, nobles and monasteries. The majority of Romanies in Transylvania held a status comparable with serfdom that differed according to landlords and the surrounding major population. Due to this clear social demarcation, no eliminatory racism on the part of the Romanian people against the Romanies had emerged until the interbellum period, which is when the first Roma advocacy groups date from. The twentieth century, with the establishment of pro-Fascist regimes in Hungary and Romania which both sided with Germany in WWII, had no consistent policy regarding the Roma people. Romanies served and fought in the armies of both countries but were

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² By introducing the double initial sound in „Rromi“ the danger of confusion shall be prevented. The daily „Jurnalul Național“ has initiated a campaign and a bill on coining the term of „Țigani“ (gipsy) for official denotation: Propunere Jurnalul Național: „Țigan“ în loc de „rom“, 17.03.2009, Available: <http://www.jurnalul.ro/stire-tigan-in-loc-de-rom/propunere-jurnalul-national-tigan-in-loc-de-rom-145427.html> [20 May, 2009].

³ While the 2002 census counted the primary number, social scientists calculated thrice as much. Dumitru Sandu, Roma Social Mapping. Targeting by a Community Poverty Survey. Bucharest 2005, p.9.

equally victims of forced labour, raids and deportations. Romani deportation victims, who were sent to Transnistrian camps, numbered in the thousands. The period of state socialism is especially significant for the present situation of the Roma people (Mihok, 1990). A majority of them were confronted with profound changes in their employment profile and social structure, with dislocation and loss of tradition as well as with boosted assimilation. An assessment of policies towards the Romanies sheds an ambiguous light on Romanian Communism. The Romanies as a collective were exempted from persecution, public defamation and private exploitation, while, at the same time, they were subject to disciplinary measures. There are no proper figures available about the extent of the assimilation. However, in view of the fierce reactions by the majority population against the Roma people after 1989/90, one can assume a high degree of assimilation efforts took place. These policies were no longer desirable in moments of scarce economic resources. The course of the transformation revealed that broad sections of the Romanies had only found access to the bottom level of social hierarchy. They were the last in the supply chain of Romanian society with the least powers of decision and control. Due to their restricted access to acquiring material and spiritual resources, they were largely found to be among the losers of the transformation process in Romania.

Public Perception

This social exclusion, however, needs to be legitimized. The public image mingles old and new resentments. On the one side, the Roma people are considered to be the beneficiaries of the transformation and seen to be getting rich at the expense of Romanian society; on the other side, however, it is hinted that they are underdeveloped in terms of culture and civilization. In combination with an alleged demographic threat emanating from the Roma people, this all results in a diffuse potential danger to Romanian society. Most of the media however neglects society's responsibility for the impoverished Roma people of Romania.

Social Reality

The incipient deindustrialization and the dissolution of collective farms and state-owned enterprises affected the Romanies and the majority population equally. Impoverishment in the urban and the rural space was different. In general, the agriculture-oriented areas must be treated as predominantly disadvantaged and underdeveloped regions with a high risk of impoverishment. Nonetheless, specific features became visible which have led to a substantial aggravation of the situation among the Roma people, compared with that of the majority population. The broad masses of Romanies, earning their living as dependent workers, have been excluded from the official labour market for almost two decades. They, when looking for jobs, must rely on the informal sector, but this sector offers only unskilled labour jobs in agriculture, the building industry and the service sector. The consequences are missing employment rights, no social, health or pension insurances, insecure and insufficient remuneration and, in the end, solidification of the exclusion from the official labour market. A country-wide survey conducted in 2005 brought to light that, among the Roma people, 75 percent are poor, with 50 percent extremely poor (Krauß, 2008). 42 percent of them live in illegal houses with constructional defects and poor facilities. Their homes are on average half as big but occupied by twice as many persons. Moreover, the majority of the Romanies live in disadvantaged areas in terms of economy and infrastructure. These facts correlate with those regarding their education and health situation. The problems in the latter two fields – just to mention lacking educational, medical, constructional and technical equipment, plus missing motivation and widespread corruption – cannot be illustrated by figures. The education level among the Romanies compared with that of the majority population is markedly lower and was even on the decline in recent years. The rates of illiterates and school dropouts make up between one-fourth and one-third of all children required to attend school. Poverty-related diseases are wide-spread and famine is not a singular phenomenon. Thus, it seems to be just logical that the Romanies' life expectancy is ten years lower than that of Romanians. Romanies without any ID documents are faced with particular problems.

Political Practice

The Romanian Government has repeatedly been declared responsible for the deportation and murder of Romanies and has honoured survivors. This, however, is a mere symbolic act with no obligations and consequences for today's political practice. It is the same Romanian President, Traian Băsescu, who welcomes survivors but likewise does not hesitate to say "stinking gypsies", uses defamatory expressions against Romani groups or the Roma people as a whole on several occasions, or accuses them of passivity.⁴ He represents a political class that verbally and practically withdraws from its

⁴ Băsescu: Marea problemă a copiilor romi care nu merg la școală – educația și cultura familiilor, Mediafax 23.04.2008, under <http://www.mediafax.ro/politic/basescu-marea-problema-a-copiilor-romi-care-nu-merg-la-scoala-educatia-si-cultura-familiilor.html?1687;2580021> [23. January, 2009].

responsibility for a part of its citizens. They are unanimous that the Roma people shall be treated as a European problem.

Formally, Romania fulfils all international obligations as to human rights and minority protection. An Anti-Discrimination Council (Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării) was set up. The Romanies are recognized as a national minority and as such are entitled to a seat in the Parliament. In 2001, a ten-year governmental strategy for improving the situation of the Roma people (Strategia Guvernului României de îmbunătățire a situației Romilor) was adopted (Krauß, 2007). Various structures were established, including the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Romani Issues (Grupul de lucru pentru politicile publice pentru romi), ministerial commissions (Comisiile ministeriale pentru romi), the National Agency for the Roma People (Agenția națională pentru romi - ANR), the Offices for Romani Issues at district levels (Birourile județene pentru romi), the school and health mediators (Mediatori școlari, Mediatori sanitari) at local levels and the local experts for Romani issues (Experți locali pentru romi). Eight years afterwards, the progress is utterly insufficient in view of the still existing problems. Individual successful work is being hampered by a lacking power of decision, by overlapping responsibilities, by insufficient financial means and personnel, meagre administrative support and short-run projects. Routine and effective monitoring does not exist.

An efficient minority representation would be of immense importance in such a situation. But the two competing major organisations – the Party of the Roma (Partida Romilor Pro Europa) and the Alliance for the Unity of the Roma People (Alianța pentru unitatea romilor) together with the locally acting Christian Romani Centre (Centrul Creștin al Romilor) – give priority to particular interests. Consequently, the Roma people and their interests are completely under-represented in the local and national decision bodies and processes. This situation cannot be fully compensated by civil society organisations. Here the Soros Foundation with its activities in the field of Romani issues plays a positive and counterbalancing role, though with restrictions as well, because its activities are part of the ones carried out by the World Bank, the European Union and other international organisations.

Science

Despite many current publications, no systematic and interdisciplinary research could be established in Romania. Priority is given to statistical surveys which reflect historical preconditions and development insufficiently. Primary source editions on the persecution of the Roma people under the Fascist dictatorship are to be emphasized. A social history of the Roma people in Romania does not exist. Studies on the period of the state socialism are completely absent. Primarily, individual young scientists deal with the subject in the broadest sense, though the junctions with politics and civil society are permeable. It remains to be seen in what way the Institute for the Study of the Problems of National Minorities (Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale), which was founded in Cluj-Napoca on a political initiative, can establish itself as a centre of subject-specific and thematically sophisticated research.

Résumé

The study and conception of local relations are a precondition in order to comprehend the high degree of differentiation among the Roma people and the causes and consequences of their situation. This goes along with most diverse conditions of an (integration) policy aimed at them. Such an (integration) policy is still inadequate at national and international levels. The first half of the 1990s saw a large part of the Roma people developing towards social exclusion. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, when the redistribution of resources and access to them are completed, they find themselves in social circumstances which let them appear as superfluous economically, politically and socially. This process requires justification by the majority population, and in this the virulence of racism against the Roma people is substantiated.

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CONTRIBUTION

Ion Duminica¹

Roma in the Republic of Moldova. An Ethnic Community Limited in Space and Integrated in Time

Roma have been living in Moldova for more than half a millennium. Almost in every community there are representatives of this nation, every citizen of the Republic of Moldova has heard of the existence of Roma, naturally not having such obvious ideas about other ethnic communities. However, it should be noted that this ethnic group is studied insufficiently and is poorly known, the information available to each individual on Roma often being not only false, but mostly a unilateral call and diverted to the vector of injustice.

Several features in the character and lifestyle of the Roma are susceptible to a certain prejudice, rarely someone decides to approach them and to get to know the objective reality they are facing. This is justified by the Gypsy lifestyle itself. In general, Roma have lived for a long time in isolation and this led to a large extent to their natural way of leading a nomadic life. They imperatively got used to being suspiciously treated by the population, especially by the authorities, thus having to handle discrimination from generation to generation.

The consequences of an almost nomadic lifestyle made the Roma people have no aspirations to some sort of sustainable social and community occupations. A conscious policy and support for civil society, however, would contribute to combating prejudice against Roma population. To this end, it is first and foremost necessary to study Roma history and their culture because only in this way it is possible to overcome the ethnic intolerance and to integrate Roma into modern democratic society.

Roma have been a historical constant on Moldovan territory since the 2nd of August 1414 (Cihodaru, Caproșu, and Șimanschi, 1975: doc. 37, p. 52) when they were officially recorded for the first time in „Țara Moldovei” (the Country of Moldova). Thus, since the second half of the fifteenth century, this population of Indian origin has been one of the most significant in the Moldovan ethno-social landscape by its number, social position and cultural specifics. Considering the historical circumstances, until the twentieth century Roma as an ethnic group, have never expressed their opinion on it, so they didn't wake particular interest to their past. So far there has not been written a chapter on the Roma in the history books of the Republic of Moldova. The last decade of Moldovan society, years of major changes and uncertainties, increasingly requires the rethinking of the national policy regarding ethnic groups in Moldova. In the current political and economic context that Moldovan state is now facing, it is more than ever necessary to have a new vision, new paradigm and new modes of behaviour towards the otherness and towards the disadvantaged. However, this is not an easy task: their adoption requires a certain strategy adjusted to reality, cultural horizon, professional effort, ethics and possibilities of evaluation of the steps taken.

The national composition of the population of the Republic of Moldova, as of the last general census of 5-12 October 2004, reveals that the Moldovans, the majority population, constitute 75.8% of the total population (3,383,332 people), marking an increase of 5.9% compared to the year 1989. Besides Moldovans, there are other nationalities that coexist in Moldova, namely Ukrainians, representing 8.4%, Russians with a share of 5.9%, Gagauzi - 4.4%, Romanians - 2.2%, Bulgarians - 1.9% and other nationalities - 1.0% of the total population of Moldova. Roma represent the most numerous group within the category 'other nationalities' (Polish, Hebrew, Armenian, Azeri, Belarusian, Greek, etc.). The number of people who have declared to be Roma ethnics is 12,268 people, equivalent to 0.36%. This figure, however, is called into question by the leaders of Roma communities who in most cases operate with the number of 100,000-200,000 people. Although according to official data such as the census of 2004 the number of Roma increased from 11,571 in 1989 to 12,268, the exact number of Roma remains unknown to the authorities.

Republic of Moldova is a particular example for multilateral harmonization of interethnic relations and for ensuring the necessary legislative framework for human rights and freedoms. The Moldovan Constitution reinforces the obligation to recognize and guarantee the rights of citizens to preserve, develop and highlight the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious specifics. All citizens of Moldova are

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equal before the law and authorities, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language and religion. During the development of the local democratic process, the Government of the Republic of Moldova developed and implemented complex policies based on a democratic legislative framework meant to increase the socioeconomic integration of Roma, to eliminate discriminatory practices and to preserve their cultural identity.

In order to promote traditional culture of ethnic communities, special institutions responsible for the development and implementation of current legislation from the national policy were created in Moldova: Bureau of Interethnic Relations; Cultural Heritage Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (Center of Ethnology); Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights and National Minorities.

A special role in defending the rights of national minorities is assigned to public ethno-cultural organizations operating at republican and local level. They contribute to the preservation and development of culture, language, traditions and history of ethnic communities from the Republic of Moldova. Currently, the following associations are accredited at the Bureau of Interethnic Relations:

- Public Association "Juvlia Romani" (1997) – Chairwoman: Ecaterina Drosu.
- Ethno-Socio-Cultural-Educational Association „Bahtalo Rom" (1999) – Chairman: Anatol Radita.
- Public Organization "Bare Rom" (2001) – Chairman: Robert Cerari.
- Scientific and Cultural Association "Elita Romani" (2001) – Chairman: Ion Farima.
- Roma Social Movement from Moldova (2002) – Chairman: Dumitru Danu.
- Union of Young Roma from the Republic of Moldova "Tarna Rom" (2002) – Chairman: Marin Alla.
- Social-Cultural Society "Roma Tradition" (2002) – Chairman: Gheorghe Martin.
- Association of Roma from Moldova "Rubin" (2003) – Chairman: Valentin Cebotari.
- Democratic Union of Roma in the Republic of Moldova (2003) – Chairman: Nicolae Arapu.
- United Alliance of Roma (2004) – Chairman: Constantin Farima.
- Public Association "Romani Grup" (2005) - Chairman: Oleg Ciubotaru.

Since 2004, the culture and history of Roma from the Republic of Moldova has become the study object of contemporary science. The following legal acts provided the framework for the development of this research field:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova, no. 51 of 8 October 1993 "On measures to ensure the development of Gypsy culture in Moldova".
2. Decision of Government of the Republic of Moldova no. 131 of 16 February 2001 "On certain measures to support the Roma from Moldova".
3. Law no. 382-XV of 19.07.2001 "On the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and legal status of their organizations" - Article 5 (paragraph 2): "The State shall carry out scientific research on the history, language and cultural fields of the national minorities".
4. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova no. 1453 of 21 December 2006 "On the adoption of the Action Plan for support of Gypsies / Roma in the Republic of Moldova for the period 2007-2010".

Scientific research on the problems of interethnic relations from historical-ethnographic, literary and culturologic point of view is currently carried out at the Center of Cultural Heritage of the Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. Carrying out a basic study on the history and culture of Roma from Moldova will facilitate their social and political integration in the democratic society. Unfortunately, the historiographical "thesaurus" on this issue is still modest in the Republic of Moldova. The first and still the only known study devoted to Roma from Tara Moldovei (the Country of Moldova) was "Sketch on the history, customs and language of Gypsies, known in France as Bohemians", written by Mihail Kogalniceanu (Berlin: Library B. Behr, 1837). Subsequently, there appeared a number of other works addressing only specific issues, thematically or territorially limited, including references to linguistics, ethnography, folklore, anthropology, etc. No fundamental monograph on the history and culture of Roma from the Prut-Dniester area been published in the Republic of Moldova so far. Although the presence of outstanding Roma personalities such as composers, instrumentalists, vocalists, dancers and others has enriched the local folk heritage in the contemporary history of the Republic of Moldova, their biographies are not documented. This gap within local romology led to the initiation of scientific investigations.

A defining characteristic of the Roma population is its diversity. Unlike other groups, they have an "external national homeland" and they live in the most of the European and Asian countries. Each ethnographic group of Roma in the Republic of Moldova has its particular socio-professional, linguistic and cultural characteristics. What unites the Roma and gives them their own identity is actually their lifestyle, which is totally different from the one of other ethnic communities. It is a lifestyle of a community that is socially marginalized and mostly economically poor. However, a unique approach to

Roma poverty will not be functional because the factors of penury can also widely vary. The history of Roma from the Republic of Moldova is characterized by the survival of some ethnic, anthropometric, linguistic traits and cultural patterns over the centuries. Lower social condition, marginality, specific symbiosis with the majority of the population, own lifestyles have been perpetuated until today.

In the era of economic globalization and booming of powerful media networks able to transform the world into a "global village", there appears the danger of ideological and cultural uniformity that will give the "coup de grace" to ethnic communities. However, especially in the contemporary period, the need to be distinguished in order to exist persists more than ever among the multitude of ethnic entities. Today, ethnology is facing the articulation of local with global, where the most of the contemporary societies are already totally integrated into social and economic world order. The need for interdisciplinary approach to social problems arises from the impossibility of a science (including romology) to investigate globally the problems of reality. Current problems of romology are particularly complex due to the progress of human knowledge and close interaction between science, technology, education and society, and solving them requires joint efforts to cope with the unprecedented information explosion.

The Roma community from the Republic of Moldova currently embodies the authenticity paradigm, given that ethnicity is acting in favor of recovering a "wild" culture that, until recently, was wrongfully scorned. The true awareness of a culture is the one through which peoples claim their own area in the global culture. The results obtained by the collaborators of the "Roma Ethnology" Group (located at the Center of Ethnology) enrich and popularize the folk, its historical and cultural heritage represented in 9 ethnographic Roma groups in the Republic of Moldova: „lingurari” – spoon makers (Parcani village, Raciula commune, Calarasi district); „curteni” – courtiers (Ciocalteni village, Orhei district); „ursari” – bear-leaders (Ursari village, Buda commune, Calarasi district); „lautari” – fiddlers (Durlesti city, Chisinau municipality); „ciocanarya” – hammerers (Rascani city); „popesteni” – parsons (Soroaca city); „ciurari” – sieve makers (Chetrosu village, Drochia district); „laesi-catunari” – tent campers (Hancesti city); „laesi brazdeni” – furrow-campers (Cania village, Cantemir district). The geographical location, social relations, traditional occupations specific to these communities have been so far practically unknown to the international scientific community, being tangentially addressed by the local media representatives. Situated at the foundations of the ethnological discipline, the big debates on grace and reciprocity, kinship and ritual, cultural and economic exchanges are still important. The Moldovan Roma community is an ethnic group with unlimited cultural dimensions for a monolocated geographical area. Migration specific to this ethnic group continues and produces a range of socio-economic benefits for indigenous people that have coexisted peacefully with Roma over several centuries. These socio-economic exchanges always occur, but the task of contemporary romology is the concern for traditional cultural continuity confronting the social change.

Despite the fact that Roma in Moldova have impressive folk and musical traditions, an original axiological system and a specific psychological behaviour, the state institutions do not pay enough attention to their social conditions and only a few of them deal with solving problems which Roma are facing in their integration process into Moldovan society. In Moldova, up to now, no newspapers, magazines, books and textbooks in Romani language have been edited and there is no joint Moldovan-Gypsy school with partial teaching of the courses in Romani language, whereas in several European, American and Asian countries various publications are published in this language, through which the young Roma generation is somehow educated. The language, culture and history of Roma groups, dispersed almost in all countries of the world, are studied in several cities and scientific romologic centers like Barcelona, Bucharest, Budapest, London, Paris, Prague, Sofia, etc.

In conclusion, for a better knowledge of the Roma should be promoted. A nation is distinguished from another by its traditions that characterize its lifestyle and its way of thinking. This represents its emblem and pride. Even if the evolution of society influences these traditions and changes them, they remain in the collective mentality of the people as a sign of value and identification. Many economically developed nations regret the loss of traditions annihilated by the contemporary globalization and seek their revival. Roma, people without a state or a government to protect them, have survived for centuries by keeping their traditions almost intact. Even now, in the 21st century, the Roma from the Republic of Moldova have their own rules and laws, such as job hunting for a better standard of living, this being a main characteristic that gives them the status of conservative families who want to maintain ancient traditions. The presentation of these special traditions is intended to be a proof of respect and contribution to a better understanding of Roma ethnics. Those who get to know this ethnic group better will also be able to better understand the problems it faces, and perhaps some of them will also find solutions to improve the situation of this nation with rich historical and cultural thesaurus.

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CONTRIBUTION

Alexey Pamporov¹
Roma / Gypsies in Bulgaria

Introduction

Similarly to the other non-written cultures, the past of the Roma people in Bulgaria is full with white spots and blurred facts. There are some Slavic, Byzantine and Ottoman sources but the information given there is rather disputable because of the exonyms that most of the times cover not a given group but a cluster of groups with similar cultural characteristics. There are different myths and assumptions about arriving of the Roma people on the Balkan peninsula (and in Bulgaria in particular) – varying from Alexander the Great to the Ottoman invasion. However, thanks to the Ottoman tax registers, it is clear that in the beginning of 15th century there were several towns with both Muslim and Christian neighbourhoods of settled Roma population in nowadays Northern Bulgaria. As an attempt to escape slavery in Wallachia and Moldova, in 18th and especially 19th century there was a significant wave of immigrant Roma coming from these two principalities.

The different waves of migration, or so to say the different past, play a significant role in shaping different identities among the Roma population in Bulgaria. If one looks for the six markers of the ethnic community then it is visible that there is not a single, coherent community but rather several different communities:

1. They do not have a common proper name. Different endonyms exist not only in Europe (Roma, Manoushes, Calé and Sinti), but also in Bulgaria, for example: Roma, Rudari, Milet, Tsutsumani, Demirdzhii, etc.
2. They do not have a common mythical origin. The local communities narrate different myths about: Hagar & Ishmael; the Pharaoh; St. Basil the Great; Alexander the Great; Asparukh khan of Bulgaria, or Berke khan of the Golden Horde (Pamporov, 2006)
3. They do not have memories of a common past. They have no common heroes or events and their commemoration. For example most of Roma in Bulgaria do not commemorate.
4. Some elements of a common culture are questionable. They do not have common religion. The customs and daily routines are influenced by local folklore practices to a significant degree. There are four Romany “languages” spoken, as well as some subgroups have Bulgarian, Turkish or Romanian as a mother tongue.
5. There is no sense of solidarity between the linguistic and religion based subgroups. The different Roma communities are endogamous and in general they live segregated from each other in the frame of the neighbourhoods (a kind of ghettos in the ghetto) or in a given settlement.
6. There is no attachment to the homeland. Due to the different mythical origin, some activists claim Indian, Egyptian or proto-Bulgarian origin but most of Roma in Bulgaria consider Bulgaria as their homeland and have no attachment to any other country.

Identity and Subgroups

In the Bulgarian language and traditional folklore culture, as it is in many other European states, the word “Tsigani” (Gypsies) signifies this ethnical group. As a matter of fact, the term “Roma” was used for the first time right after World War Two in the name of the Roma theatre and Romano ilo (Romany voice) newspaper, both established by the Fatherland front in 1946. However, the change in the state policy after 1956 and prohibition of the use of minority languages at public places led to “oblivion” of this signifier. After 1989, the new political ethics gradually implemented the word “Roma” in the official documents. However, in the daily speech one concept just mechanically replaced the other. Thus, the exonym “Tsigani” and the endonym “Roma” are often used as synonyms in the media and in the public sphere. Nevertheless, there are groups and subgroups of that population which prefer to identify themselves with other ethnonyms used only by insiders or labelled by the others. Normally, these groups draw a line between Roma and themselves and deny belonging to Roma population, although quite often they are willing to accept the label “Gypsies”. Based on their language, religion and lifestyle one is able to distinguish five main Roma groups in Bulgaria and few subgroups with preferred other identity.

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1. Daskane Roma

Translated to the letter, today Daskane Roma means both Bulgarian as well as Christian Roma. The word “Das” was used during the Ottoman period to denote “slave” and “servant”. During the time it was related to the Turkish word “Gyaur” (infidel, non-Muslim). Under this label there are about 26 subgroups, speaking different patois of the so called Balkan type Romany dialects. Daskane Roma have prevailing share of the Roma population in North-Western and Central Northern Bulgaria.

Specific subgroups with preferred other identity:

- Gray pigeons

In South-Eastern and Central Southern Bulgaria, there is a group called “Bulgarian Gypsies” by the Bulgarians, “Daskane Roma” by the other Roma groups and “Gyaur Chengenesi” by the Turks. The group members call themselves “Asparukh’s Bulgarians” or “Old Bulgarians” but the surrounding local population most often labels them as “Gray pigeons”, Demirdzhii (i.e. Blacksmiths from the Turkish word “demir” – “iron”). This subgroup lives relatively amassed in the valley of Maritza river. The Gray pigeons prefer endogamous marriages within the group and use to avoid mixed marriages with other ethnic groups in the country, except the Bulgarian – as far as this is their preferred identity. Usually the Gray pigeons are Eastern Orthodox Christians but due to the influence of the Pentacostal movement in some rural areas they are changing their denomination. The curious fact about this group is that in some settlements the mother tongue of the group is Romany but in other settlements the mother tongue is Bulgarian. Despite that, they recognize each other as members of the group and the marriage between Romany and Bulgarian speakers is not an exception but the place of postmarital residence defines the language that is used at home.

- Tsutsumani

In North-Western Bulgaria there is a group of people that the Bulgarians label as “Bulgarian Gypsies” or “Converted Gypsies” and Roma call them “Tsutsumani”. The “Tsutsumani” people are Eastern Orthodox Christians, neither accepted by the Bulgarians as “real Bulgarians” nor accepted by Roma as “real Roma”. Their mother tongue is Bulgarian but there are some words of Romany origin in their patois. Usually the Tsutsumani do not live in ethnically segregated neighbourhoods but dispersed among the Bulgarian population. They are much more integrated than other Roma in that region, for example, the household size, the level of education and unemployment rate are the same as for the Bulgarians in that region.

2. Horahane Roma

Horahane Roma means both Turkish as well as Muslim Roma. Under this label there are about 36 subgroups, speaking different patois of the so called Balkan type Romany dialects, partially influenced by the Turkish language. Horahane Roma have prevailing share of the Roma population in North-Eastern, South-Eastern and Central Southern Bulgaria.

Specific subgroups with preferred other identity:

- Millet

On Turkish “millet” literary means “a nation/ people”. In the provinces where predominantly Horahane Roma reside, there are some people who call themselves “millet”. They are called “Turkish Gypsies” by the Bulgarian and “Millet çingenesi” (“people’s Gypsies”) by the Turks in the country. The other Roma groups have ambiguous attitude towards the Millet people. Some accept them as Roma but others consider them Turks. The mother tongue of the Millet is Turkish. However, in some settlements the elders use Romany as “a secret language” and in other settlements the local Millet patois consists of a small set of Romany words.

- Agoupti

This people live in the Rhodopes mountain range. They call themselves, and are also called by the others Agoupti, which is a dialect form of Egyptians (the same as the English word “Gypsies”). In the mid 20th century they were classified by the Bulgarian ethnography as Gypsies due to a folklore song which defines a female Agoupti character as “a black Gypsy woman”. The Agoupti are good example of a group change of language and ethnic identity. In the mid 20th century they had Egyptian identity and local Bulgarian dialect as a mother tongue. In the late 20th century they already speak Turkish and pretend being Turks during the population census in 2001. Most probably, similarly to the case of the Millet people, a determinant factor in this case is their belonging to the Islam confession. The elders of Agoupti use Romany as a secret language.

3. Calderashya

The name of this group comes from the Romanian word “caldera” (a cauldron) and it relates to their traditional male occupation in the near past – coppersmith. Because of their craft and regardless of the state regulations, they travelled across the country until 1975-76. Unlike the most of the other Roma

groups, Calderash people do not live in segregated neighbourhoods, but dispersed among the Bulgarians. In the period after 1989 in the districts of the three biggest cities of Bulgaria (Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna) some micro-quarters of kindred Calderash families appeared which number up to 10-12 houses. There are about 16 subgroups of Calderash people sharing some clan features and structure. The Calderash speak a patois of the so called Northern (or "New") Wallachian type Romany dialects that are under strong influence of the Romanian language. Although most of the Calderashya around the world are Roman-Catholics, in Bulgaria they are Eastern Orthodox. The Calderash Roma are the most endogamous group in Bulgaria and there are strict rules of prestige marriage between the subgroups (clans) based on the bride price.

4. Kalaydzhes

In different classification of the Romany groups living in Bulgaria, the Kalaydzhes subgroup is placed as a part of Daskane, Horahane or Kalderashya. It is due to the fact that Kalaydzhes living in North-Eastern and South-Western Bulgaria are Muslim, but the Kalaydzhes living in South-Eastern and Central Southern Bulgaria are Orthodox Christians. The Kalaydzhes living in North-Western Bulgaria have a record of a Muslim past (such as Muslim names of their ancestors), but they do not follow the Islam rites and customs. On one hand the common feature among the different Kalaydzhes groups is the traditional male occupation – tinsmith (hence the name of the group from the Turkish "kalay" – "tin"). On the other hand, all Kalaydzhes speak a patois that belongs to the so-called Southern (or "Old") Wallachian type Romany dialects. Despite these two similarities, there are no marriages between the different Kalaydzhes subgroups. Moreover, the Kalaydzhes from the South-Eastern and Central Southern Bulgaria are also extremely endogamous. They practice bride price and have developed a bride market system on annual basis.

5. Ludari (Rudari)

In the rural areas of Central and Eastern Bulgaria there are groups of people labelled by the others as Romanian Gypsies. According to the local patois, the members of the group call themselves Ludari or Rudari. Because of their traditional occupations, they are known among the surrounding population also as Kopanari (whittlers) or Mechkari (bear-trainers), which corresponds to the self-labels Lingurari (spoon makers) and Ursari. During the 2001 census, the Ludari used to identify themselves as Romanians, Wallachians or Bulgarians, however, never as Roma. Usually the elders are ready to accept that they are Romanian Gypsies because the words "tsigan" and "tsiganka" mean "husband" and "wife" (this is the meaning of the "rom" and "romi" in the Romany language). The mother tongue of the Ludari group is the Romanian language. Although the Ludari people live in segregated neighbourhoods, they do not differ from the local Bulgarian population as far as the level of education, employment rate and household size are concerned.

Language

There is a common language network of Romany dialects and patois with similar grammar and morphology, which gives opportunity to Roma people around the world to communicate with each other about basic things as food and family life. At the same time, the main dialects significantly differ in their phonetics and vocabulary due to the impact of the surrounding populations and often some Roma groups, even in a small country such as Bulgaria, use Bulgarian or Turkish as a lingua franca. In Bulgaria, there is no standardization of the main dialects or of the written system. Therefore, the attempts for implementation of the Romany language in the Bulgarian school system are rather unsuccessful. Moreover, significant part of the people who are labelled by the others as Gypsies do not in fact have Romany, but Bulgarian, Turkish or Romanian as a mother tongue. The data about the mother tongue (defined as language most spoken at home) shown in the table 1 illustrates how complicated is the question about the language use of Roma people in Bulgarian considering the identity issue. In the given table the first column shows the language used, the second shows the data coming from the census 2001. The third and the fourth columns show data from the survey (N=1800) carried out in 2007, representative about the segregated Roma neighbourhoods in Bulgaria which are unofficially stigmatised as "Gypsy ghettos". The column "self identity" indicates proportion of language use at home for those people who claimed Roma identity during the survey. The column "outside label" indicates proportion of language use for all the people living in the segregated "Roma" neighbourhoods, regardless of their self identity declared.

Table 1. Proportion of Roma by language most spoken at home

Mother tongue	Census 2001	self identity, 2007	outside label, 2007
Romany	86.2 %	60.7 %	38.7 %
Bulgarian	7.0 %	25.3 %	28.8 %
Turkish	6.5 %	5.4 %	24.0 %
Romanian	0.1 %	0.0 %	0.4 %
Not indicated	0.1 %	8.5 %	8.1 %

(Sources: National Statistical Institute, 2001; Open Society Institute, 2007)

Religion

Unlike Bulgarians or Turks with clearly defined religious affiliation, the Roma population is divided between three religions: Eastern Orthodoxy, Islam and Protestantism (mainly Pentecostal and Adventist denominations). The data on religious affiliation (table 2), in the same way as the language use, shows that the religion is also a complicated issue concerning the identity.

Table 2. Proportion of Roma by religion

Religion	Census 2001	self identity, 2007	outside label, 2007
Eastern Orthodox	48.6 %	45.2 %	41.1 %
Roman Catholics	0.3 %	1.5 %	0.9 %
Protestant	6.6 %	10.0 %	6.6 %
Muslim	27.9 %	15.2 %	29.9 %
Other	0.5 %	1.4 %	1.0 %
Non religion	16.1 %	26.8 %	20.4 %

(Sources: National Statistical Institute, 2001; Open Society Institute, 2007)

Population size

According to the census data (table 3), the size of the Gypsy population (as it is officially labelled during the censuses) grew in parallel with the size of the entire Bulgarian population until the middle of the 20th century. Therefore, the proportion of the Gypsies in the total population stayed stable, amounting to around 2.5% (table 1). Unfortunately, the data about the ethnical identity of the population after 1956 was biased due to the political context of the totalitarian regime and until 1992, and it is not reliable.

Table 3. Population size and proportion of Gypsies in the total Bulgarian population according to the official censuses, 1900-2001

Census year	Gypsy population size	Proportion of Gypsies in the total population
1900	89,549	2.4 %
1905	99,004	2.5 %
1910	122,296	2.8 %
1920	98,451	2.0 %
1926	134,844	2.5 %
1934	149,385	2.5 %
1946	170,011	2.4 %
1956	197,865	2.6 %
1965	148,874	1.8 %
1975	18,323	0.2 %
1992	313,396	3.7 %
2001	370,908	4.7 %

(Source: National Statistical Institute, 2004, pp. 126-127)

In parallel with the censuses, for the sake of the state management, the local communist party committees and the Ministry of the Internal Affairs (MIA) were gathering ethnic identity information, classified as “confidential” or “secret” reports. There is some data already non-classified and available today which is presented in the table 4.

Table 4. Population size and proportion of Gypsies in the total Bulgarian population according to MIA, 1959-1989

Year	Gypsy population size	Proportion of Gypsies in the total population
1959	214,167	2.74 %
1976	373,200	4.26 %
1980	523,519	5.96 %
1989	576,927	6.45 %

(Source: Pamporov, 2006a)

On the basis on this data, when the population census in 1992 registered 313,396 persons with Gypsy/Roma identity, some experts and scientist started to argue that the census underestimated the population size and a whole sequence of expert assessments was done. The first publication defined the number of Gypsies to be 800,000, however, in fact the researchers had no clear methodology and used only “observations and considerations” (Marushiakova and Popov, 1993: 94). In 1994, the French researcher Jean-Pierre Liégeois published data about the Gypsy population in some European countries where the population size for Bulgaria was given as between 700,000 and 800,000 of people (Liégeois, 1994). Unfortunately, he also neither explained his methodology, nor indicated his source, but probably he obtained the data from his Bulgarian collaborators. In the following year, Ilona Tomova (Tomova, 1995) made an estimation, which indicated much lower population size between 577,000 and 600,000 people, which is closer to the MIA’s data. The last expert estimation before the next census in 2001 was given by Donald Kendrick. He suggested 750,000, which is, in fact, the mean of the Liégeois’ estimation (Kendrick, 1998). When the census 2001 registered only 370,908 persons, the experts reacted in different ways to the data. Some of them increased the number of the Roma population to 900,000 (Denton, 2003), neglecting the statistical evidence and following their own logic. Other authors merged the previous estimations, increasing the gap between the lower and higher assessments, and put the number of Roma population between 500,000 and 800,000 (McDonald, 2006), which is rather confusing because the gap is more than a half of the lower estimate. The third group of the authors used the number 580,000 (Bogdanov and Angelov, 2006), i.e. simply rounding Tomova’s lower esteem, without explaining why after 11 years of population development the estimated size of population did not change.

Even if we assume that the use of MIA data base is relevant and acceptable, the number of 800,000 Roma in 1993 based on it is still preposterous. It means that the natural increase of the Roma population should be about 9.5-9.7% per year, which is a serious overestimation of the fertile contingent and intensity of births. If we use the number 576,927 as a base of the estimation, there are three possible criteria for building up a correct estimation of the Roma population (Pamporov, 2006). Even if the census is not an exhaustive survey, it is at least a representative one as far as the persons with strong Roma identity are concerned. Therefore, one can build the increase indicators on it. The first possible rate is the increase of the number of people with Roma identity declared about the period 1992-2001: 18.4% in 10 years. The second possibility is the growth of the people with Romany as a mother tongue declared for the same period: 5.6% in 10 years. The third possibility is the annual increase of the people with Roma identity in the period 2001-2003: 19.4%. According to those calculations, the number 800,000 could be reached not earlier then 2007. Table 5 shows the estimation about year 2010 based on the same indicators. The last column is a population forecast based on the 2001 census date and the annual increase of Roma population 2001-2003.

Table 5. Estimation of the size of Roma population in Bulgaria about 2010

year	Based on MIA data 1989			Census 2001 based
	Increase by Roma identity	Increase by Romany	Annual increase	Annual increase
2010	846,072	674,041	861,152	440,928

(Source: additional calculation based on: Pamporov, 2006b)

Integration of Roma

The Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005–2015) started five years ago by a declaration, signed in Sofia on February 2, 2005. There are twelve countries currently taking part in: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain. All of these countries have significant Roma minorities, and the Roma minority has been rather disadvantaged, both economically and socially. The Decade focuses on the priority areas of education, employment, health, and housing, and commits governments to take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming. Unfortunately, the action plans aimed at integration of Roma in their national societies and often disregard the extremely important internal disintegration of the Roma subgroups.

In the case of Bulgaria, the state government and the local municipalities have to build at least five different strategies of integration as far as the main culture specifics – such as the language and the religion – are concerned. However, if one looks at the aims of the Decade – education, employment, health, and housing – then one has to stop considering only “Roma” but rather all the populations living in the segregated neighbourhoods giving them an opportunity to self-identify in different ways. Otherwise we are in paranoid situation in which the Roma activist movement denies the right of the “others” to label someone as a Gypsy, but in the same way they constantly use those estimations in order to increase the importance of their non-inclusion issue.

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CONTRIBUTION

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Research on Roma in Serbia: Studying Roma and Studying "Roma issues"

The change of policy context introduced "Roma issues" to the agenda. After year 2000 (the October 5th Revolution), reforms in public policy followed the political overhaul in Serbia. New concept enabled getting on the agenda many unrecognized issues, participatory approach and cooperation of stakeholders in policy development. It was driven partly by external financial aid, expertise, imported international agendas, and supported by the internal reforms of the public sector and rise of civil society. Scientific and policy research production on Roma population has been expanding since 2001. We outline *main lines in academic research on Roma in Serbia and influence of public policy on academic agenda*.

Trends in academic research on Roma

Research production on Roma in Serbia can be classified by many criteria. According to *research subject/topic*, there are several clusters of studies. Many research items deal with relations between "external" factors and Roma population. More specifically, these surveys explore attitudes of general (majority) population towards Roma, acts of discrimination in formal institutions and accessibility of public sector services to Roma. Second cluster of questions covers characteristics of Roma population: socio-demographics, education, culture, human rights, economic status, health and psychological issues. The third group of subjects are methodological and epistemological issues. They are discussed in demographic research, but also in romology studies. It should be noted that multidimensional or comprehensive research projects usually deal with many aspects of Roma lives (usually including the aspects of socio-demographics, education, culture, and health), however, there are also one-subject studies. The first type of research is commonly published in collections or special issues of journals. As for data sources, the researchers usually use empirical evidence provided by the official statistics (census, vital statistics, household surveys), quantitative surveys and qualitative research carried out by the researchers themselves for the purpose of that particular survey.

According to the above criteria, we discuss below in more detail the research on Roma. As briefly noted before, one direction of research focuses on social and institutional "external" factors influencing Roma, e.g. discrimination by public institutions and attitudes of general population. The other type of research projects are those dealing with characteristics of Roma population: 1. socio-demographics, 2. culture and identity, 3. education, 4. economic status and employment, 5. health and psychological issues, and 6. legal status and human rights. We discuss briefly all the mentioned research topics, along with key results and issues.

There are not many research projects focusing exclusively on Roma population. There are no projects dealing with Roma population on the list of research projects financed by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development (program 2006-2010). Papers on Roma have been published as part of various research projects (most of them in demographic projects). The only project aiming to explore Roma population and Roma issues is the Commission on Research of Life and Customs of Roma at the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts – SANU. This Commission was established in 1989 and key activities of the Commission include conferences, lectures, and publishing papers on various aspects of Roma population. For the last ten years, two collections of papers were published, the first one in 2000 and the second in 2007. The collection from 2000 has a title corresponding to pre-2000 political correctness standards: *Cigani/Roma in the Past and Today*. The 2007 collection is named *Social sciences on Roma in Serbia*. Both collections are based on the series of conferences organized by the Commission. The research topics of the 2000 collection include social status of Roma, language, education, housing and settlements, and culture and tradition. The other collection from 2007 focuses on similar research subjects: e.g. social status of Roma population, education, media and demographic and ethnic characteristics.

Attitudes of majority population toward Roma have been tackled in studies of ethnic/social distance, stereotypes and political orientation. The focus has been somewhat changed recently and these topics are usually incorporated in projects dealing with health, discrimination at public institutions, legal status, employment etc. There are few surveys of social distance and stereotypes as major

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research themes. A study of social distance and stereotypes of Roma children was carried out by Francesko, Mihic, and Kajon. It was conducted in a setting of a primary school among schoolchildren (Francesko, Mihic, Kajon: 2006). The findings indicate higher level of social distance towards Roma than to other groups. The researchers did not find significant differences between children who attended school with Roma and those who did not (Francesko, Mihic, Kajon, 2006). Similar subject is explored by Jelena Micevic who carried out a study of similarities in teachers and children's discrimination attitudes towards marginal groups (Micevic, 2006). No significance was found in attitudes of teachers and schoolchildren regarding Roma students (the findings are different for other marginal groups). These two studies are only applied to specific school population, and large public opinion research representative for general population should be also taken into account² (studies of ethnic distance by B. Kuzmanović).

Socio-demographic characteristics of Roma population have been presented in papers of Nada Raduški. The author deals with methodological issues in research on ethnicity and demographic change in Roma population (Raduški, 2003; Raduški, 2007). Raduški analyzes some relevant demographic characteristics of Roma population in Serbia. According to Census from 2002, Roma account for 1.44% of population in Serbia. This means that they are one of the largest ethnic minorities, along with Hungarians (3.9%) and Bosniaks (2.1%). Nada Raduški discusses the issue of underestimating the size of Roma population in previous censuses, and increase of population from 1991 to 2002 (Raduški, 2003; Raduški, 2007). This issue of ethnic self-identification of Roma and its manifestation as “ethnic mimicry” also is recognized in other countries with large Roma population (Ringold, 2000). Another demographic characteristic of Roma population is delayed demographic transition. Roma population has high birth rate (10.3), compared to 10.3 for general population; low mortality rate (7.3) compared to general population (13.6), but high specific mortality rates per cohorts. Roma population has high natural increase of population (16.2) and very young population, the average age being 27.5 (Raduški, 2003).

Culture and identity are common research subjects in *ethno-anthropological studies* of Roma. Jelena Čvorović explores the process of tradition development (Čvorović, 2006), and Todorović and Đorđević explore the sepulchral aspects of Roma culture (Todorović and Đorđević, 2001). Majority of studies of culture are small-scale studies of specific characteristics of Roma in some regions of Serbia. A unique collection of papers *Kultura Roma* from 2002 (Culture of Roma, special issue of the review *Kultura*) presents several case studies of local Roma settlements in Serbian cities, religion of Roma, cultural policy, cultural identity, literature, etc. Some aspects of culture and identity have been incorporated in studies of demographic and economic dimensions of Roma population. One of these issues is *language* of Roma. According to the 2002 census, approximately 78% of Roma identified Romani language as their mother tongue, which does not correspond to their national identification (Raduški, 2003). Raduški points out that difference between ethnic and linguistic identification is due to partial ethno-cultural integration, similar to that of religious identification, namely Roma assimilate with local dominant characteristics of majority population. Hence their language identification and religious affiliation are changing. Roma from Central Serbia are dominantly Orthodox (48.7%) and Muslim (19.7%), and large majority of Roma from Kosovo are Muslims (Raduški, 2003; Raduški, 2004). There is another topic that has been recently introduced to the research agenda – *romology studies*. Đorđević and other researchers of the “Niš (town) school of romology” argue for epistemological foundation of romology studies, as well as the institutionalization of romology in higher education curricula (Đorđević, 2005; Đorđević, 2009). Romology is defined as “study of Roma”, and it should be an interdisciplinary discipline, based on primarily on ethnological approach and incorporating historical, linguistic and other aspects. Besides the very well established and recognized “Niš school of romology”, there are also other endeavours to institutionalize romology in Serbia, such as, for example, a pilot-program of romology at the University of Novi Sad.

Education has become an increasingly important research subject for researchers of Roma population. There is research of *aspirations and attitudes* of Roma parents and their children towards education (Tovilović et al., 2009). Aleksandar Baucal explored *mathematical and language literacy* among Roma schoolchildren (Baucal, 2006). Another cluster of research deals with *education theory and policy*, introducing new concept of individualized approach to education of Roma children (Arsenović-Pavlović, M. 2006). Education issues are addressed in a study of Raduški from a *demographic perspective* (Raduški, 2009). Raduški presented key indicators on education, based on

² Research studies of social and ethnic distance from the nineties: Kuzmanović, B. (1994). Socijalna distanca prema pojedinim nacijama. In M. Lazić (ed.) Razaranje društva: Jugoslovensko društvo u krizi 90-tih. Beograd, Filip Višnjić; Golubović, Z., Kuzmanović B., & Vasović M. (1995). Društveni karakter i društvene promene u svetlu nacionalnih sukoba. Beograd, Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju i Filip Višnjić; Kandido-Jakšić, M. (1999). Ethnically mixed marriages and social distance towards members of some ex-Yugoslav nations. Sociologija, 41, 103-124.

the Census (2002). Roma have the highest illiteracy rate among all minority groups in Serbia. Illiteracy rate is 19.7% in Roma population and 3.4% in general population of Serbia. Education attainment level of Roma is lower compared to general population. Almost two thirds of Roma have not finished primary school, and less than 10% finished secondary education or higher levels of education. As expected, indicators show even lower education attainment if gender is taken into account. Around 71% of women have not finished primary education.

Economic dimension is approached from a macro-level and micro-level perspective. In *macro framework*, the official statistical data are used in analyses of economic status of Roma. Raduški draws on the 2002 Census data, and argues that Roma population has lower rate of economic activity (32.8%) compared to general population (Raduški, 2003). From the perspective of the *micro level* research, Cvetković analyzed economic culture of Roma discriminating between two clusters of dimensions: 1. local characteristics of Roma groups in three towns of Southern Serbia (business ethics, education level), 2. opportunities and obstacles arising from contextual factors, such as local economy and industry (Cvetković, 2003). Đorđević et al. carried out a case study of Roma on the "flee market", analyzing both economic and culture dimension (Đorđević, Živković and Todorović, 2002).

Health issues are addressed in several surveys. Boganović et al. compared mortality in Roma and non-Roma population (Bogdanović, 2007). The study confirmed that mortality is higher among Roma population compared to general population, and also morbidity structure is significantly different. There is a recent study of mental problems of Roma who are internally displaced persons (Kron, 2006). Health issues of Roma population are also addressed in general studies of social marginalization and health. Researchers deal with health deterioration of groups at risk, for example, groups with mental and health issues – HIV, mental disorders, prisoners, Roma etc. (Šagrić, 2007)

Legal status and human rights of Roma population have been recognized as an important research topic after 2000. Two issues are urgent today: citizenship rights of Roma who are either internally displaced persons from Kosovo and integration of returnees from the EU (due to the process of repatriation). Jakšić explored these issues focusing on obstacles in getting the legal documents and discrimination by formal institutions and regulations (Jakšić, 2005). This topic of research is very often connected to policy oriented studies. We will discuss this issue in the concluding part of the contribution.

Academic research on Roma and policy context

Addressing relevant issues for Roma population in Serbia brought about policy development in many areas: education, health, employment, political empowerment, and improvement of legal status. In the case of education, a number of programs based on affirmative action were implemented. As far as health insurance policy is concerned, Roma are entitled to health care services in public health system. Crucial change occurred in 2002 when citizens of Roma nationality acquired the status of national minority. In 2005, Serbia joined the Decade for Roma Inclusion. In the following years the action plans were developed in the fields of education, employment, health care, and housing. The National Council of Roma Community was established according to the Law on National Councils (adopted in 2009). In April 2009, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the comprehensive Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia. Political participation and transparency of Roma non-governmental sector are addressed in current agendas. There are some improvements in political empowerment and participation. This also includes formation of political parties of Roma, activities of NGOs and media established by Roma (OSCE, 2008). The above improvements should be evaluated in positive manner, although there are difficulties on the implementation side. We are not going to discuss further these policies. We turn to another issue: how public policy influences academia in this particular case of research of Roma and Roma issues?

In theories of public policy development, relations between scientific/academic agendas of sociology and policy/political agendas have two directions: the science influences government agenda, but this process is reciprocal and flows in other direction, too (Weiss, 1993). This applies to sociology, but it is true for any social science dealing with subjects relevant for political intervention. One process is *getting issues of academic research on the policy agenda*, and the other means *incorporating policy agendas in academic research*. In the line of our discussion, we focus on two points of academia-policy relations related to research on Roma population and Roma issues.

Roma issues in Serbia have been addressed in many policy studies conducted as parts of projects run by international organizations (WHO, UNDP, OSCE) or developed on the national level (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper). Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between policy oriented and academic research on Roma. Besides these two sorts of research, there is a sort of "mixed" type of research. This is not a surprise, since many academics are involved in policy research on Roma

issues. In this case, research evidence provided for practical or policy purpose is also used in academic papers. Data from policy research are used as secondary data for more detailed analysis.

Regarding the *empirical evidence in academic research*, there are not many research studies designed exclusively for the purpose of academic agenda. Academic papers are relying on the official statistics, and researchers usually draw on research evidence from policy fieldwork. Providing the amount of research production in various policy domains of Roma issues, policy development is, or it could be, much more evidence-based compared to academic work.

There seems to be convergence in defining the research subject. The question arises whether it is possible to distinguish between research on Roma and Roma issues. This tendency is common in dealing with any other research subject when it becomes recognized as a policy issue and gets on political agendas. Here we can only identify several policy issues that influenced academic research. For example, attitudes of non-Roma population towards Roma have been studied for decades in social science. Recently, discrimination of Roma by formal institutions (public administration offices, health centres, schools) has been introduced as new research direction. Finally, the issues of legal status of Roma IDPs and returnees, and violations of human rights, have been driven directly by current policy agenda.

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