

**ROMANI WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT  
ON POLICY-MAKING PROCESS: A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY OF MACEDONIA AND SERBIA**

By

Idaver Memedov

Submitted to  
Central European University  
Department of Public Policy

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Public Policy

Supervisor: Professor Viola Zentai

Budapest, Hungary

2008

## **ABSTRACT**

Over the last couple years the position of Romani women became much more visible and the issues of the Romani women started to be articulated in much clearer way, mainly as a result of the growing number of Romani women's activists who decided openly to speak about the issues which they face. These Romani women that did not fear of being excluded or condemned by the Romani community are actually the pioneers of the Romani women's movement.

There is lack of information about the Romani women's movement and lack of research on how to address the issues that Romani women face. Although there is a literature that recognizes and addresses the existence of the Romani women's issues, still until now comprehensive research has not been yet done on this topic. For that reason I decided to devote my study on the examination of the Romani women's movements in Macedonia and Serbia and how these movements impact the policies that affect the position of Romani women.

## **ASKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to express my thankfulness to my supervisors Viola Zentai and Andrea Krizsan for their support and valuable input for writing this paper. In addition, I would like to thank all the individuals I interviewed during the empirical research for providing important insight about my research.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ASKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENT .....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE – INTERSECTIONALITY AND ROMANI WOMEN.....	4
1.1 The concept of intersectionality .....	4
1.2 Intersectional discrimination and its meaning .....	7
1.3 Intersectionality and Human Rights .....	8
1.4 Romani women at the intersection of gender and race .....	12
1.5 The situation of Romani women in Macedonia.....	15
1.6 The situation of Romani women in Serbia.....	18
CHAPTER TWO – ROMANI MOVEMENT VS. ROMANI WOMEN’S MOVEMENT .....	21
2.1 Evolution and Development of the Romani movement .....	21
2.2 Evolution and development of the Romani women’s movement .....	28
CHAPTER THREE – ROMANI WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IN MACEDONIA AND SERBIA .....	33
3.1 Background of the Romani women’s movement in Macedonia.....	35
3.2 Background of the Romani women’s movement in Serbia .....	37
3.3 Naming and framing the Romani women issues .....	39
3.4 Providing information and testimony .....	40
3.5 Drafting legislation and policy .....	41
3.6 Monitoring of the implementation of the international human rights norms .....	43
CONCLUSION.....	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	48

## INTRODUCTION

Roma are recognized as largest minority and the most vulnerable group in Europe. There are number of studies which highlight that Roma are constantly subject of racial discrimination, social exclusion and extreme poverty, making them Europe's most vulnerable and marginalized group. The situation of Romani women is far worse because they face multiple forms of discrimination in their everyday life as a women and members of the Romani community. Specifically, Romani women as part of the Roma minority are subjected to same forms of oppression which Romani men face. However Romani women are also exposed to gender discrimination, domestic violence, and patriarchal oppression imposed by Romani tradition. In this context Angela Kocze argues that "Romani women living in Europe are on the one hand targeted by majority racial hostility, and on the other hand, oppressed by their own patriarchal community." (Press statement, 2003).

Although the Romani women face much more issues than Romani men, still the issue of Romani women never was emphasized by the Romani movement. According to Azbija Memedova:

"After long years of (Roma) civil and political movement, unfortunately, the absence of the gender perspective is still all too evident. Gender issues remain very under-emphasised in human rights discourse about Roma. I deeply believe that when one genuinely believes in the human rights cause, he or she should recognise (and address) every violation of the rights of the human being, man or a woman." (ERRC, 2004).

Over the last couple years the position of Romani women became much more visible and the issues of the Romani women started to be articulated in much clear way, manly as a result of the growing number of Romani women's activist who decided openly to speak about the issues which they face. These Romani women that did not fear of being excluded or condemned by the Romani community are actually the pioneers of the Romani women's movement.

There is lack of information about the Romani women's movement and lack of research on how to address the issues that Romani women face. Although there is a literature that that recognize and address the existence of the Romani women's issues, still until now comprehensive research has not been yet done on this topic. For that reason I decided to devote my study on the examination of the Romani women's movement and how the movement impacts the policies that affect the position of Romani women. Specifically, I will examine the Romani women's movements in Macedonia and Serbia. For the examination of the Romani women's movement in these countries I will use the analytical tool developed and used by Keck and Sikkink (1998) and Sikkink (2002) for the evaluation of the success and failure of the transnational (women's) networks and try to answer to the following questions: how they name, frame and put to the agenda the Romani women issues, how they providing information and testimonies, participate in drafting legislation and policies as well as dissemination of existing international human rights law, monitoring of their implementation and facilitating litigation. My methodology of collecting data is based on analyses of secondary sources and on semi-structured interviews.

I begin this study with a literature review on the concept of intersectionality which describes the effects of the intersectional discrimination, which is essential for an understanding of the magnitude of the human rights violation that Romani women are facing today. Moreover in this chapter I describe the position of Romani women first in general and then I analyze the particular problems that Romani women face in Macedonia and Serbia. In the second chapter I analyze evolution and development of both the Romani movement and Romani women's movement. Although the main aim of this chapter is to discuss the development of the Romani women's movement in Europe, it is necessarily to explain how actually Roma in general started to organize in Europe because understanding of the

evolution and development of Romani movement explains how and why the Romani women's movement emerged.

In the last third chapter I examine in detailed the impact of the Romani women's movement on policy making process at domestic level. This is the chapter where I locate most of my contribution to this study.

# CHAPTER ONE – INTERSECTIONALITY AND ROMANI WOMEN

This chapter is devoted to the concept of intersectionality and intersectional discrimination as well as recognition and inclusion of the intersectional discrimination within the human rights framework. This is essential for an understanding of the magnitude of the human rights violation that Romani women are facing today. In addition the explanation of this concept is crucial for understanding of the reasons how and why the Romani women's movement emerged. Following this I will analyze the situation of Romani women in the context of two countries: Macedonia and Serbia.

## *1.1 The concept of intersectionality*

The concept of intersectionality was first time introduced and investigated by the Afro-American feminist scholars in United States of America. According to Susanne V. Knudsen (2006) at the beginning the concept of intersectionality was mainly focused on the examination of intersection of gender, race and class. However the concept later also integrated other social categories such as disability, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation (Knudsen 2006). The concept of intersectionality addresses the multiple forms of oppression which some disadvantage group such as disable, black or minority ethnic women are facing. According to Knudsen (2006) the concept of intersectionality provides explanation on how different social and cultural categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, disability, class interlock. In addition Julissa Reynoso emphasizes that (2004, p.64) “the concept of intersectionality has been defined as the oppression that arises out of the combination of various forms of discrimination, which together produce something unique and distinct from any one form of discrimination standing alone.”.

One of the most prominent Afro-American feminist scholars who introduced and investigated the concept of intersectionality is Kimberle Crenshaw. In her background paper

for the expert meeting on the gender-related aspects of race discrimination she defined intersectionality as:

“... a conceptualization of the problem that attempts to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axis of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create background inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and the like. Moreover, it addresses the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these axes constituting the dynamic or active aspects of disempowerment.” (Crenshaw, 2000).

In her work, Crenshaw has developed Black feminist criticism of the antidiscrimination doctrine, the feminist theory and antiracist politics for the marginalization of Black women (1989, p. 139-167). According to Crenshaw (1989) the antidiscrimination doctrine today operates on the single-axis framework analysis which treats race and gender as mutually exclusive categories and therefore it distorts Black women’s experience. She argues that existing antidiscrimination law “erases Black women in the conceptualization, identification and remediation of race and gender discrimination by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privilege members of groups” (1989, p. 140). In these privilege members of groups she includes white women and black men.

Crenshaw provides very strong support of her criticism of the antidiscrimination law through the analysis of court decisions in which Black women claimed to be victim of sex and race discrimination. Specifically, her analysis demonstrates that judges based on existing antidiscrimination law refuse to take in consideration the fact that Black women are facing multiply forms of discrimination which can be similar to both white women and Black male experience but very often specific only for Black women (1989, p. 139-150). For that reason Crenshaw argues that the antidiscrimination doctrine should broaden its discourse through adoption of the intersectional approach, in order to include and address the intersectional discrimination which Black women’s experience and to provide effective remedies (1989, p. 139-150).

In addition Crenshaw provides very strong criticism of feminist theory and Black liberation politics. In her opinion (1989, p.154) values of the feminist theory derive from white racial context and this theory in its analysis of patriarch and sexuality overlooks the impact of color on women's experience. For instance Karen Dugger (1996, p. 49) in her study of the effects of race on gender-role attitudes found that exclusion of the women of color from feminist analyses provides "distorted understanding of the forces structuring women's experience of and attitudes toward gender". As a consequent the feminist theory analysis is narrowly constructed and it articulates only the voice of privileged white women (Crenshaw 1989). In this context Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar (2001, p.19) emphasis that "the perception white middle-class feminists have of what they need liberating from has little or no relevance to the day to day experience of the majority of Black women in Britain ...".

Similarly, Crenshaw criticizes the Black liberation politics for the marginalization and exclusion of Black women. Specifically, she argues that the gender dimension in antiracist politics is often ignored because of the priority which the Black community gives to the fight against racism (1989, p. 62). As a result the public policy discussions about the needs of the Black community is overwhelmed by racial issues and often the issues which Black women are facing in their everyday life are left out of the agenda (Crenshaw, 1989). Moreover there some authors such as Shahrazad Ali who are justifying the subordination of the women through the domestic violence as a means for the Black liberation (Crenshaw, 1991).

Rape is another example of subordination of the Black women which is ignored and vilified by the Black community. One of the prominent cases is the Mike Tyson rape case, in which the rape survivor Desiree Washington was condemned by the Black community including Black women and constantly pressured by challenging her credibility (Crenshaw, 1991). In this context Crenshaw (1991, p.1275) points out that the rape is very particular

issue for the Black women for two reasons: “first, because of the extent to which they are consistently reminded that they are the group most vulnerable to sexual victimization, and second because most Black women share the Afro-American community’s resistance to explicitly feminist analysis ...”.

For the above mentioned reasons Crenshaw (1989) urges feminist and anti-racist movements to extend their analysis through adoption of the intersectional approach, which means inclusion of the both race and sex in their analysis. Moreover, she underlines that the feminist and anti-racist movements should adopt the bottom-up approach in combating discrimination. In other words, the fight against discrimination should be focused on the most disadvantaged groups in society because that will ensure also benefit for all other disadvantaged groups (1989, p. 167).

### ***1.2 Intersectional discrimination and its meaning***

In the literature the term intersectional discrimination is not the only term which used to describe situations where some individuals suffer discrimination on several ground in a parallel ways. There are also other term in use such as multiple discrimination, double marginalization, multidimensional discrimination, double discrimination, interactive discrimination, intersectional subordination, multiple disadvantage, cumulative discrimination and triple discrimination (Makkonen 2002).

According to Timo Makkonen (2002, p.10) generally all these different terms refer to three different situations and all of them enter within the broader scope of intersectional discrimination. The first situation is when someone is facing discrimination on several ground, but in a way in which discrimination takes place on one ground at a time. For example that is the case with disable woman who can be discriminated against on the basis of her gender in accessing some job position and she can also suffer discrimination based on her

disability in situation when the public building is not accessible for her. Makkonen (2002) calls this multiple discrimination because of its mathematical connotation e.g. gender + disability.

Second type of situation is when “discrimination on the basis of one ground adds to discrimination based on another ground to create an added burden.” (2002, p.11). According to Makkonen this is called compound discrimination. For instance this is situation of racially subordinated man who cannot access some job positions because they are available only for women and other work is available only for privileged men (Crenshaw, 2000).

The last type of situation is when several grounds of discrimination intersect with each other simultaneously and generate specific type of discrimination, which is called intersectional discrimination in narrower meaning (Makkonen 2002). This specific type of discrimination affects the most vulnerable groups such as minority women or disabled women. According to Makkonen (2002) in some situation minority women can be subjected to particular types of racial discrimination such as forced sterilization which cannot be experienced by minority men.

### ***1.3 Intersectionality and Human Rights***

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are the fundamental principles of all democratic national constitutions today. Moreover all important international human rights treaties such as the Universal Declaration for Human Rights (articles 2 and 7), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (articles 2 and 26), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 2) and the European Convention on Human Rights incorporate the principles of equality and non-discrimination as a cornerstone of the international human right law. All of these treaties prohibit discrimination on several grounds such as racial and ethnic origin, sex, religion, socioeconomic position and

etc. In addition, there are international human rights treaties such the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women which are exclusively dealing with elimination of discrimination based on race and gender and promotion of equality.

The inclusion of the principles of equality and non-discrimination within all important human rights treaties as fundamental principles of the international human rights law and adoption of treaties which specifically deal with elimination of discrimination is a significant step forward in protection and promotion of human rights of all human beings. However none of these international treaties take in consideration that some disadvantaged groups of people can face discrimination on several grounds in parallel way and simultaneously. In this regard Makkonen underlines that the international human rights treaties are focused either on several grounds of discrimination such as race, sex, disability and religion, which are treated separately or they are focused on one specific ground (2002, p.1). Makkonen highlights that none of the human rights treaties take into consideration that some individuals who belong to several disadvantage groups can suffer specific forms of discrimination; this is recognized as multiple or intersectional discrimination (2002, p.1).

In spite of the fact that international human rights treaties are focused either on several grounds of discrimination which are treated separately or are focused only on one specific ground, intersectional discrimination is recognized by many women's rights activists as an important issue that affects enjoyment of women rights. As an outcome of this development, the discussion about intersectionality, which earlier was only part of the academic discussion, became also part of the human rights discussions.

The first step forward toward recognition of the fact that some women are not facing discrimination solely on the basis of gender, but multiple forms of discrimination based on

race, ethnicity, class, ages, disability, and language was made of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. More precisely from this conference emerged the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in which was articulated the most important elements of the intersectional approach (Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2008). Specifically in the Beijing Declaration there is provision which requires from the governments to:

“Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people; ... (UN, provision 32)”

In addition to this the General Assembly in June 2000 adopted the Outcome Document which reaffirms the Beijing Platform for Action and made special recommendations for the elimination of racially motivated violence against women (OHCHR, 2001).

The next important step in recognition of intersectionality of discrimination in women's lives was the adoption of the general recommendation 25 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2000 which refer to Gender related dimensions of racial discrimination (Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2008). Specifically the CERD in this recommendation recognizes that the racial discrimination affects women in a different way and to a different degree than men because some forms of racial discrimination “may be directed towards women specifically because of their gender, such as sexual violence committed against women members of particular racial or ethnic groups in detention or during armed conflict; the coerced sterilization of indigenous women ...” (CERD, article 2). Moreover the CERD (2000) acknowledges that it is essential in examination of the racial discrimination to be integrated gender perspective and requires from State parties in their reports to provide disaggregated data of gender and race/ethnicity.

Specific forms of discrimination against women have also been acknowledged by other United Nations human rights bodies such as the Special Rapporteur against racism, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Representative on interlineally displaced persons which have noted the intersection of race and gender and have begun to integrate the intersectional approach in conducting their researches in some countries (OHCHR, 2001). Furthermore, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has also started to incorporate the intersection of gender and race in its reviews of the national reports submitted by the States parties regarding the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (OHCHR, 2001).

In addition to this a number of conferences and seminars also have played significant importance in recognition of intersection of gender and race. For instance on the Expert Group Meeting on Gender and Racial Discrimination organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in November 2000 in Zagreb, Croatia, the impact of intersectionality on enjoyment of women rights was deeply analyzed and addressed. Moreover the Expert Group called on the governments and the United Nations human rights system to develop intersectional methodology, which will help to identify intersectional discrimination against women and girls, and to establish appropriate mechanisms for remedies and redress (DAW, 2000).

Similarly at the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and other Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa in 2001, part of the discussion was devoted on gender, race and ethnicity (Bunch, 2002). Charlotte Bunch

during her speech (2002, p.112) underlined that “[t]he vast majority of women in the world experience at least some intersecting realities of discrimination – of gender oppression with at least one or more other factors such as race and class”. In addition Bunch (2002) highlights that it is crucial to understand how gender and race are intersecting because that will assist us to understand how other social constructed categories affect gender oppression and will help adequately to address all forms of human rights violation which most of the women experience and to seek remedies for them.

Although intersectional discrimination has to some extent been recognized and addressed by the international human rights bodies in the last decade there is still lack of action on national level. According to the OHCHR (2001) there are only few national laws and policies which specifically deal with equality rights for women who are victims of intersectional discrimination. However it is very important that today the effects of the intersectionality are acknowledged and addressed by many human rights nongovernmental organizations and international human rights bodies as mentioned above. In other words it is of significant importance that intersectional discrimination is acknowledged as serious violation and treat of human rights and it part of the agenda of many international human rights institutions. It is matter of time when this issue will also become part of the states policy agenda. In the next section I will show in which ways the intersectional discrimination affects the Romani women in general.

#### ***1.4 Romani women at the intersection of gender and race***

Roma are recognized as largest minority and the most vulnerable group in Europe. The number of Roma in Europe is estimated between eight and ten million. They live all over the Europe, but the vast majority of Roma live in Central and Eastern Europe. There are number of studies which highlight that Roma are constantly subject of racial discrimination,

social exclusion and extreme poverty, making them Europe's most vulnerable and marginalized group. The Roma minority in Europe are denied equal enjoyment of basic human rights such as right of education, employment, housing and health care. These facts are also recognized by the international organization such as the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU). According to Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the CoE:

“Today the Roma are still subjected to discrimination, marginalisation and segregation. Discrimination is widespread in every field of public and personal life, including access to public places, education, employment, health services and housing. The Romani community is still not regarded as an ethnic or national minority group in every member state, and thus it does not enjoy the rights pertaining to this status in all the countries concerned.” (2002, Doc. 9397 revised).

In addition the UNCEF (2007) study on Romani children in South and East Europe highlights that the vast majority of Roma in this region are living in extreme poverty and excluded from the society, while states policies, institutions and individuals are remaining overwhelmed of prejudices and stereotypes against Roma.

The situation of Romani women is far worse because they face multiple forms of discrimination in their everyday life as a women and members of the Romani community. Specifically, Romani women as part of the Roma minority are subjected to same forms of oppression which Romani men face. However Romani women are also exposed to gender discrimination, domestic violence, and patriarchal oppression imposed by Romani tradition. In this context Angela Kocze argues that “Romani women living in Europe are on the one hand targeted by majority racial hostility, and on the other hand, oppressed by their own patriarchal community.” (Press statement, 2003).

Gender roles in the vast majority of Romani community are determined by the patriarchal norms and are clearly divided along patriarchal structure (Refugee Women's Resource Project, Asylum Aid, 2002). In this context Sabina Xhemajli (2000) underlines that

the role of Romani woman in the family has remained same as it was five hundred years ago and it is determined by the Romani tradition which requires her to look after the children and to maintain the household. The Romani man is the head of the family and main decision maker in the family, and he is always ready to use harsh punishment against women when something is wrong in the family.

Furthermore Xhemajli (2000) points out that the Romani woman from her early childhood is imposed to the strict patriarchal norms, which requires from her to learn how to cook, clean and take care for the family in order to be good wife. In addition she points out that the early marriages without girl's consent and virginity test are still part of Romani tradition. As a result of early marriages many girls are deprived of education since they have to drop out of school. Nicoleta Bitu (1999), in her report about situation of Romani women in Europe, stresses that the social role of Romani woman and men in Romani community is precisely defined by the Romani tradition and it is very difficult for woman to break out this role, since she has to face disrespect from her family and community.

Additionally, Romani women also face specific forms of violation that are not experienced by Romani men, such as coercive sterilization. The cases of coercive sterilizations of Romani have been registered in many European countries such as Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Norway and Sweden. For instance in Norway coercive sterilization of Romani women was part of the assimilation policy of the state until 1970's. According to the report of the Ministry of Social and Health Affairs between 1930 and 1970 Norway illegally sterilized more than 300 Romani women. Similarly in Sweden between 1935 and 1975 more than 63 000 people were sterilized from which 95 per cent were women. However the total number of sterilized Romani women is still unknown (Government Office of Sweden, 2007).

In Czechoslovakia between 1970 and 1990 the coercive sterilization was used as a part of the state policy to reduce Romani women's birth rate (ERRC, 2003). However this practice continues also after dissolution of Czechoslovakia. The European Roma Rights Center (2003) in its report underlines that "there is a serious issue in Slovakia of racially-based contraceptive sterilisations of Romani women, taking place absent acceptable -- and in many cases even rudimentary -- standards of informed consent.". Similarly the practice of coercive sterilization was also discovered in the Czech Republic and Hungary.

The best way to illustrate the position of Romani women is to use the traffic intersection metaphor developed by Crenshaw (2000). In this metaphor the different axes of power such as race, gender and race symbolize different roads, which form the social, economic and political terrain. In this terrain, Romani women are often position in the space where racism, gender, poverty, patriarchy and Romani culture are intersecting. As a result of this intersection Romani women are facing injuries by heavy flow of trafficking in the same time from all of these directions. Crenshaw (2000) highlights that these "[i]njuries are sometimes created when the impact from one direction throws victims into the path of oncoming traffic ...". In the next two sections I will analyze in more details the situation of Romani women in two countries: Macedonia and Serbia on which I focused my research.

### ***1.5 The situation of Romani women in Macedonia***

According to the last census (2002), in Macedonia live 53.879 Roma, or they comprise 2.6 % of the total population in the country. (State Statistical Office, 2002). However, there are some unofficial sources, which indicate that number of Roma in Macedonia is much higher, between 80.000 and 135.000 (European Roma Rights Center, 2005). The vast majority of the Roma in Macedonia live in extreme poverty and inadequate housing and living conditions. According to official data 88.8% of the Romani population in

Macedonia is living below the poverty line which in comparison to the national poverty rate (30.2 %) is nearly three times higher. In addition official data shows that the unemployment rate among Roma is 70%, which is double the national unemployment rate (Roma Education Fund, 2007).

The position of Romani women in Macedonia is far worse because of the intersectional discrimination which they face based on their gender and their ethnic background. The discrimination against Romani women is present in many different fields such as education, employment, health care and housing. Moreover women are discriminated within the Romani community and the family and they are very often victims of domestic violence. There is lack of desegregated official data on gender and ethnicity. This create obstacle for defining the real problem that Romani women face and for undertaking concrete policies which will adequately address the Romani women's issues in Macedonia (ERRC, 2005).

According to the Shadow report on the implementation of CEDAW prepared by the Roma Centre of Skopje, Network Women's Program and European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC, 2005) and its partner organization, the Romani women in Macedonia are highly discriminated in accessing education, health care and employment. Moreover they are excluded from the public and political life and often victims of domestic violence (ERRC, 2005). Specifically this report (2005, p.3) reveals that the significant number of Romani women in Macedonia live in dysfunctional relationship with their partners “[a]s result of isolation, high level of poverty and a lack of support from responsible institutions ...”. In addition the shadow report highlights that the Macedonian government has failed to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination law which will provide protection against intersectional discrimination.

In relation to discrimination in the field of education this report point out that from a total of 237 interviewed women 143 or 60 % have experienced discrimination in the education system (ERRC, 2005). The interviewed women reported that they were most frequently discriminated against by their teachers (40%) and their parents who favored Romani boys (29%) (ERRC, 2005). This clearly illustrates the double burden which Romani women bear as a result of their gender and ethnicity and their disadvantage position in regards to Romani male as well as to non-Romani male and female.

The ERRC's report indicates that 166 women out of 237 interviewed or 70 % reported that they have been victims of domestic violence (2005). The most frequently perpetrator is reported to be the husband in 120 cases. Among other reported perpetrators are mentioned members of the husband's family and own parents. Most of the cases of domestic violence remain unreported because of lack of trust to institutions and fear of being condemned by the community. In this context the UNICEF's report stresses that "[t]he Roma community and family still take on the role of protection of women, which indicates a perceived insecurity and distrust of the police and public authorities who should protect them." (2007, p. 25). Moreover the ERRC's report (2005) underlines that in 20 cases in which Romani women reported domestic violence out of 34 cases, Romani women said that they were subject to racial prejudice and degrading treatment by the police and in only five cases the police undertook concrete action to protect them.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2006) in its concluding comments regarding implementation of the Convention on the elimination of Discrimination again women (CEDAW) in Macedonia also expressed its concern about the vulnerable and marginal situation of Romani women in Macedonia especially in the fields of the education, health care, employment and political participation. Thus the Committee

(2006) urges the Macedonian government to undertake effective measures which will guarantee Romani women enjoyment of human rights and equal access to education, health care, employment, public life and political participation. Moreover, the Committee (2006) underlines the importance of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and obliges the government in its next report to provide information for the Decade's projects directed at Romani women.

### ***1.6 The situation of Romani women in Serbia***

According to the last census (2003), 108.193 Roma live in Serbia or they comprise 1.44% of the total population in country. However, the unofficial sources estimate that this number is much higher, in the range of 450 000 - 500 000 (Roma education Fund, 2007). The country assignment report prepared by the Roma Education Fund (2007) indicates that the poverty rate among Roma minority is much higher than among non-Romani population in the country. In particular this report highlights that Romani women and children are among the groups which are especially vulnerable to poverty. Moreover the World Bank report on poverty and social exclusion of Roma in Serbia (2005, p. 26) underlines that “[i]n Serbia significantly more Roma are out of work than non-Roma, with particularly pronounced discrepancy for women.”.

The Shadow report on implementation of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women prepared by the ERRC and the Romani women NGOs from Serbia Bibija, Eureka and Women's Space (2007) highlights that Romani women in Serbia is face multiple and/or intersectional discrimination in accessing education, health care, employment, housing as well as in accessing public services. For instance in relation to the education the Romani women in addition to the general problems that Romani children face such as segregation and placing of Romani children in the schools for students with special needs they also face barriers imposed by the traditionally subordinate position of women such as lower

expectation for Romani girls to be educated and obligation to take care about the household from early ages (ERRC, 2007).

Furthermore, this report highlights that governmental policies and laws which address the general problems of Roma in Serbia are not sufficient to address the specific problems and needs of Romani women (ERRC, 2007). The lack of desegregated official data on gender and ethnicity is also serious obstacle in addressing the problems that Romani women face.

Romani women in Serbia also are very often victim of domestic violence. According to Vera Kurtic (2003) the research conducted by her organization Women's Space in the Romani settlement in town Nis in the Southern part of Serbia demonstrates that all women who were interviewed have suffered psychological abuse and 96% of them have been also victims of physical abuse within the family. The remaining 6% of the interviewed women stated that they have been slapped in the face by their husbands but they do not consider that as a domestic violence. This research also reveals that the husband is not the only perpetrator of violence against woman but also other members of the family such as father-in-law and mother-in-law.

Similarly like Macedonian Romani women, the Serbian Romani women are also reluctant to report cases of domestic violence because of distrust to the police and fear that they will be stigmatized by their community and when they seek for police assistance the police do not react appropriately (ERRC, 2007). According to the Shadow report (ERRC, 2007) shows that out of 63 women victims of domestic violence only 10 asked assistance from the police, however only in four cases police reacted effectively.

The Romani women's health condition in Serbia is worse than that of majority population because of the high poverty and inadequate housing condition as well as of their

subordinated position within the Romani community (ERRC, 2007). Additional obstacles that Romani women face in accessing health care are lack of identity documents and/or health insurance. According to the Communication on the Situation of Romani Women in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (2007) prepared by the executive council of AP Vojvodina 76% of total number of women interviewees stated that they have medical examinations only when they are sick, while others do not visit doctor at all. This only confirms the fact that the health care and protection is a luxury for the Romani women from the Serbia.

The analysis of the Romani women's position in Macedonia and Serbia demonstrates that there are a lot of similarities that result from the intersectional discrimination against women. Moreover the analysis has shown that this discrimination is not properly addressed by both Macedonian and Serbian authorities. The lack of desegregated official data by gender and ethnicity is one of the main obstacles in addressing the real issues which Romani women face in both countries. The common features of Romani women situation in both countries are the lower level of education and higher rate of unemployment in comparison to Romani male and non Romani male and female, poor health care, low level of representation in the political and public live and that they are often subjected to domestic violence.

## **CHAPTER TWO – ROMANI MOVEMENT VS. ROMANI WOMEN’S MOVEMENT**

This chapter is devoted to evolution and development of both the Romani movement and Romani women’s movement. Although the main aim of this chapter is to discuss the development of the Romani women’s movement in Europe, it is necessarily to explain how actually Roma in general started to organize in Europe because understanding of the evolution and development of Romani movement explains how and why the Romani women’s movement emerged. We have to bear in mind that Romani movement women’s in Europe is very specific and unique. The specificity of this movement derives from the intersectional discrimination that Romani women face, which are not addressed either by the Romani or the Feminist movement. The emergence of the Romani women’s movement is very big victory in the fight to protect and promote Romani women’s rights in Europe.

### ***2.1 Evolution and Development of the Romani movement***

The roots of the Roma ambition for equal status as well as for civil liberation can be traced back in 19 centuries within the Ottoman Empire when the idea of creation their own language, education and churches emerged (Marushiakova and Popov 2004). Romani activism that was influenced through the nationalist movement of the majority population appeared at the end of nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century particularly in the Central and Eastern European region. As a result different conferences were organized in various countries in Europe in this period i.e. Germany (1872), Romania (1934), Hungary (1879) and Bulgaria (1906) that demand equal rights for Roma (Guy, 2002).

The fact that the idea of equality emerged first among Roma living in the Balkans countries under the Ottoman Empire explains why in the first half of twentieth century many Romani organization appeared in this region (Marushiakova and Popov 2004). In Bulgaria,

Romania, Yugoslavia and Greece in the 1920's and 1930's, different Romani organizations were created and some of them had their own journals devoted to Roma. These organizations, formed separately from the state, aimed to challenge the existing state policy. Roma wanted to achieve equality within new national states on the basis of safeguarding specific characteristic of their community (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004). However, in the period after the Second World War, Roma were politically represented inadequately. (Guy 2002, p.19)

After the 1950s and 1960s, in Eastern Europe the pressure on Roma to be assimilated was very strong, thus the movement for developing wider Romani organization was overtaken by the Western European countries, but under the headship of Romanian, Hungarian and Polish Roma living in France (Guy, 2002). This new kind of international unity of Roma was determined in the 1960's and 1970's when a number of the Romani organizations appeared in the Western Europe that were searching a way for their union (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004). In this period, although humbled, still important efforts were made by Roma to challenge stigmatization and marginalization that they face (Vermeersch, 2002). Subsequently, these new driving forces lead not only to the establishment of several unprecedented organizations but also to the First World Roma congress in 1971 when anthem and flag and the term Roma were adopted (Guy 2002). This is considered as the first phase in the long movement for the global acknowledgment of Roma (Guy 2002). During all of this period of the development of the international Romani movement in the literature does not exist any information about the Romani women and the issues which they faced in that time.

After the First congress that was seen as the first steps for the establishment of the international Romani movement, Romani activists constantly attempted to define the interests

of Roma in all the places where they lived and to require from the states to give the Roma status of national minority (Vermeersch, 2002).

During the Second congress in 1978, the International Romani Union (IRU) was set up (Guy, 2002). In this period relation between International Romani movement and India was very dynamic and Indian delegation attended the Second Roma congress in 1978 (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004). This congress started to work toward acceptance of the International Romani Union (IRU) within the international organizations and it affirmed India as a Roma “mother country” (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004). However, the activities of IRU after the Third Roma congress in 1981 were almost stopped. By the end of the Cold War there were no any events except a congress in Sarajevo devoted to Romani language and culture (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004).

According to Marushiakova and Popov (2004) the first steps of the expansion of Romani movement were mostly influenced by the policy of ex-Yugoslavia (, 2004). Specifically, the Romani delegation from ex-Yugoslavia was financed by the state and also was the most active and the most numerous in the first three congresses and thus predominant in the IRU leadership (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004). One of the tasks of the congress was to “spread the example of Yugoslavia all over the world as a model state in its Roma policy” (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004 p. 80). However, influence by the Yugoslav country on the International Romani Movement finished in the 1990 with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, which coincided with the Fourth congress held in Warsaw (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004).

The Fourth congress was the essential step in the further development of the Romani movement (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004 p. 81). Particularly, for the first time significant number of Roma from Eastern Europe participated to this event which boosted the International Romani movement with new energy. These new developments within the

Romani movement also symbolized shifting of the center of the Romani Movement to the Central and Eastern Europe, from where actually the idea of equal rights for Roma started (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004 p. 80). After the Fourth congress, Roma received broader acknowledgment by the international organization. The Romani elite from Central and Eastern Europe who appeared during the communist period had also significant input on this progress (Guy, 2002). According to Mirga and Gheorghe (1997, p.4) this elite was the “thin strata of Romani intellectuals, party activists, and a middle-class, a by-product of the state's coercive educational measures”.

Although the process of Romani mobilization started earlier, still the Romani mobilization got advance ground only in the last decade of twenty century (Vermeersch, 2002). The collapse of communism as well as the process of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe provided fertile environment to expand the “mobilization efforts” of the prior phase (Vermeersch, 2002). At international and state level, agents of the Roma so called “traditional elite of the Romani community” became much more involved and active in the Romani movement (Guy 2002). This recent mobilization of Roma can be compared to the “earlier regional nationalist movements”, however the difference is not only the time-length but also diffusing allocation of Roma between and within the states in which they live (Guy 2002, p. 20). One of the primary missions for many Romani activists was achieving unity regarding the most serious issues that burdened all Roma from Central and Eastern Europe, such as poverty, discrimination as well as high unemployment (Vermeersch, 2002).

Ethnic awakening and mobilization within Romani society also was are results of explosion of the aggressive anti-Romani activities after collapse of the communism. One of the indications of the response on anti-Romani activities is fast development of Romani NGOs (Mirga and Gheorghe, 1997).

According to Peter Vermeersch (2001) since the beginning of 1990's the international NGO's working in the field of human rights and minority issues formed very strong advocacy network around the Romani issues in Europe, which had huge impact on governments approach towards the problems that Roma face in their countries. Particularly, he (2001) argues that these advocacy networks were taken very seriously by the domestic governments because the actors of these networks were seen as credible representatives of the international community. Moreover, increasing interest of the human rights advocacy networks around Romani issues played also important role in developing and boosting of the Romani activism in the domestic level, because these advocacy organizations were seen as very good alliance and tool for acquiring equal status and rights for Roma. At the same time these advocacy organizations help renewing the international Romani movement which almost stopped with its activities in the end of 1980s (Vermeersch, 2001). Romani political elite succeed in using the support of these networks and to raise the Romani issue at both domestic and international level. As a result of these efforts today the Romani issue is recognized by many international and national institutions (Mirga and Gheorghe, 1997).

In spite of the division among Roma, the Roma managed to put aside the diversity and to form national and international umbrella of organizations. Moreover the media also had a big role in rising awareness among Romani people (Mirga and Gheorghe, 1997). Romani elites are still fighting for the unison inside the Romani movement and they are searching to build across borders by putting accent on the common interest and problems that Roma face in whole Europe (Mirga and Gheorghe, 1997).

Today 18 years after the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, although marginalization and discrimination against Roma exist, there are some positive developments as result of the work of the Romani movement. Today the Romani position is catching the

attention of all of those who defend minority rights as well as of the international organizations dealing with human rights who harshly scrutinized governments from this region (Vermeersch, 2002). While until 1990s states were mostly creating policy for Roma and they were mostly objects of those strategy, today Roma and the Romani organizations can be seen often as a legitimate governmental collaborators and have right to be heard (Mirga and Gheorghe, 1997). In addition, regional international organizations such as the Council of Europe and European Union also responded to the Romani activists by promoting idea that Roma as a “transnational European minority” which should take advantage of particular European protection forms (Vermeersch, 2002). One of the most significant developments is that since the end of the twentieth century time the treatment of Roma more and more develop into one of the “key elements in screening EU applicants”(Vermeersch, 2002).

The Romani movement was successful in advancing a number of international decisions as well as recommendations adopted by the international organization such as Council of Europe and United Nation human rights bodies. In addition across Europe, in the last several years the Romani movement is becoming more organized and there is growing number of Roma who are in the decision-making position at the local level, while thousands are involved in the public life either by volunteering in NGOs or representing their communities (Barany, 2001).

There is no doubt that in the past decade there were some positive developments at the domestic level such as appearance of a stronger Romani movement as well as adoption of national plans and strategies with the purpose of improving Romani position in Europe. The Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) launched by nine state governments from Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Republic of

Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro) with the support of many international and non-governmental organizations, is formal recognition of the fact that the Romani situation in Europe is alarming and there is urgent need for state action and regional cooperation in order to ensure integration of Roma into mainstream society. Moreover, the very recent first European Union Summit for Roma organized by the European Commission demonstrates that EU is concern and takes responsibility for improving of the situation of Europe's larger minority.

According to Dimitrina Petrova (ERRC, 2001) the Romani movement is unique and there is no other apparent precedent in the world to this movement. She underlines that the Romani movement has at least three different components: the first one is human right component i.e. Romani rights movement, which often is associated with the Romani movement, the second one is identity building and the third one is related to the Romani political participation. All three components are to some extend controversial, however Petrova believes that human rights component is the least controversial because among all the different factions within the movement there is consensus about the importance of the protection and promotion of Roma rights (ERRC, 2001).

Although the Romani rights movement was successfully addressed the racial discrimination which Roma face, still it failed to address the gender discrimination of Romani women face, which intersects with racial discrimination. According to Alexandra Oprea (2003) Romani NGOs and feminist organizations in Europe failed to address the issues that Romani women face. Although the Romani NGOs are successful in addressing racism against Roma in Europe, they failed to address the impact of patriarchy on Romani women's rights. The feminist organizations in Europe do not take in consideration the impact of racism when they address gender subordination (Oprea, 2003). In other words the both movements

treat race and gender as mutual exclusive categories and thus marginalize Romani women. Therefore the Romani rights movement was contested by the Romani women's activist who created a new stream of the Romani movement called Romani women's rights movement. In the next section in more details I will demonstrate how and why the Romani women contest the Romani movement.

## ***2.2 Evolution and development of the Romani women's movement***

Romani women are participating within the Romani movement from its early beginning. According to Ostalinda Ovalle (2006) Romani women have supported the Romani movement from 1960 when Romani people started to organize themselves in the civil society in order to advance their situation. Nevertheless, Romani women were never seen equal to Romani men. They were and still are marginalized within the community but also within the Romani right movement as a result of the strong patriarchal custom in the Romani community (Ovalle, 2006).

There is lack of information regarding activism of Romani women before 1990s (Peric, 2006). However from the available information we can conclude that some Romani women played important role in the development of the Romani movement in their countries. For example in Serbia three Romani women were directly involved in the process of establishment of the first Romani organization and one of them was part of the management of organization (Rozalija Ilic in Peric, 2005). Although some Romani women were active within the Romani movement, they remained silent in addressing the specific problems that Romani women face in their everyday life (Peric, 2005). Certain problems such as domestic violence and patriarchy were not publicly discussed in that period (Peric, 2005).

The roots of the Romani women's movement can be traced from the broader search for Roma rights by both Romani women and men (ERRC, 2006). However the leaders of

Romani rights movement entirely ignored the particular issues that Romani women face and expected to fight for equal rights for Romani men and not to ask anything for themselves (Ovalle, 2006). The evolution of the Romani women's movement is in the fact response to the Romani men leaders' lack of awareness about the problems that Romani women face and their consideration of the Romani patriarchal traditions as a part of Romani culture and identity (ERRC, 2006). As Sabina Xhemajli (ERRC, 2000) states:

"I am absolutely in favor of the idea that we should preserve our language and culture and pass it on to our children. I am, however, not in favor of preserving our traditional relationships, relationships that oppress the personalities of other people. I refuse to accept traditions that imprison people and do not allow them their freedom."

Romani women, in their first steps to dispute the ideas of existing practices as a part of Romani culture, were often criticized and ignored by Romani men (ERRC, 2006). According to Tania Branigan (the Guardian, 2004) Romani men's reaction to the Romani women's movement was varied some of them were applauding to it, while others dislike "such outspokenness" and were afraid that expression of a difficult problem would separate the Romani community.

According to Tatjana Peric (2005), the existing women's NGOs were mostly established in the 1995 and most Romani women's activist faced many difficulties in addressing certain women issues. For instance a Romani woman who found the first NGO in Vojvodina stated that the often antagonists of the NGO were Romani men who thought that the consequence of the women's activism will be "collapse of marriage" while some other Roma questioned the "Romaniness" of women's activists who condemn some practice within the community that is harmful for Romani women (Peric, 2005).

How the Romani men see Romani women's issues can be best illustrated through the critical response of one of the Romani leaders Martin Demirovski to Xhemajli's article which describes the patriarchy and discrimination of Romani women within the Romani

community. Specifically, Demirovski criticized Xhemajli for dividing Romani people into Romani men and women and gay and lesbians, instead of focusing more on the global issues and discrimination that Roma face. Moreover Demirovski advised her to give priority and to work together toward resolving the issues that are burden for all Roma. He suggests that only after improving the general situation of Roma in the society they can put efforts on addressing issues that exist within Romani community. At the end of his response Demirovski reminds Xhemajli that non Romani people see her first as a Gypsy not as a woman (ERRC, 2000).

Although at the beginning some Romani men were defending the marginalized position of Romani women within the community, after some time they changed their strategy and decided to be quiet on this issue (Ovalle, 2006). According to Enisa Eminova (Government office of Sweden, 2007) some of male leaders started discussion with Romani women only because they were afraid that Romani women would be manipulated by west feminists.

By addressing their particular issues, Romani women overcome the obstacles that divide public sphere in which Romani men put their interest and the private domain in which subordinated Romani woman position is defensible and unbreakable by the tradition (Ovalle, 2006). Romani women were in this way redefined and widened the Romani movement and it is not any more the right of Romani men against majority but about the rights of everybody (Ovalle, 2006). In addition, by addressing women's issue, the importance of the rights of other disadvantage groups in this community, like Romani children's rights, has increased (Ovalle, 2006).

According to Isabela Mihalache the first activities at the international level in relation to Romani women's issues are noticed in 1994 when the First Congress of Roma from the EU

was held in Seville, Spain. Specifically this congress adopted a special Manifesto on the situation of Romani women in Europe, which underlines the necessity for empowerment of Romani women and fight against discrimination and patriarchy. After the Congress in 1995 the Council of Europe organized hearing of Romani women (Mihalache, 2003). According to Mihalache (Mihalache, 2003) the fact that the hearing was organized by the Steering Committee for the Equality between Women and Men of the Council of Europe showed that there was new integrated approach toward Romani issues within gender equality agenda and not within the particular Romani programs.

In addition to this, in 1999 Open Society Institute organized international conference on Romani women's issue where Romani women exchanged their experience and ideas. This conference was followed by the various meetings in New York, Ohrid, Budapest and Durban where Romani women discussed different issues that they face such as coercive sterilization, domestic violence, women trafficking and early arranged marriage etc (Mihalache, 2003).

One of the most positive examples of organizing and empowering of Romani women on the international level was the establishment of Roma Women's Initiative (RWI) in 1999 which was part of the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute. RWI aimed to advance "the human rights of Romani women by empowering Romani women's activists in Central and Eastern Europe, in particular young Romany women's leadership" (European Roma Information Office, 2006 p.3). Moreover RWI played very significant role in rising of awareness about the Romani women's issues and advocacy for policy changes at local, national and international level (European Roma Information Office, 2006).

Peric (2005) underlines that in general, the Romani women's movement strongly influenced by the international element and there is a regular exchange of thoughts and

practices at the international meetings. As a result of this development, the advocacy for the Romani women's issues is gaining ground at the international level (Peric 2005).

It is obvious that mobilization of Romani people to struggle for their rights that was organized even before 1989 brought some outcome: It raised awareness among international community the human rights abuse that Roma face and also the particular Romani situation was generally acknowledgment and particular provisions adopted. Also, within the Romani rights movement there started mobilization of the of Romani women which is escorted by the attempt to define their social position as well as their identity (Bitu, 1999). In the next chapter I will continue with analyzes of the Romani women's movement in the context of Macedonia and Serbia which are my research's focus.

## **CHAPTER THREE – ROMANI WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IN MACEDONIA AND SERBIA**

In this chapter I will examine the impact of the Romani women’s movement on policy making process but in the context of two specific countries: Macedonia and Serbia. For that purpose I conducted four semi-structured interviews with prominent Romani women’s activist from Macedonia and Serbia. For the examination of the Romani women’s movement in these countries I will use the analytical tool developed and used by Keck and Sikkink (1998) and Sikkink (2002) for the evaluation of the success and failure of the transnational (women’s) networks.

According to Keck and Sikkink (1998) transnational networks impact the politics on several different levels. Specifically transnational networks are simultaneously working on defining problems, persuading decision makers and wider public that there is need for action (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). In addition they work on providing solutions of the problems and participate in the monitoring process (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Having in consideration all these levels in which these networks take part, Keck and Sikkink (1998) and Sikkink (2002) identify several stages by which we can evaluate the effectiveness of the transnational networks: name, frame and interpret the issue, providing information and testimonies, drafting legislation and policies as well as dissemination of existing international human rights law, monitoring of their implementation and facilitating litigation.

Sikkink (2002, p.42) underlines that “[n]etworks call attention to issues, or even “create issues” by using language that dramatizes and draws attention to their concerns.”. In addition, these networks are reinterpreting or frame the issues in order to attract the attention of the wider public and put the issues on the policy agenda (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

According to Sikkink (2002), cases of female genital mutilation and violence against women are very good examples of agenda setting through successful framing of issues.

Transnational advocacy networks also provide information and testimonies which otherwise would not be available to the public, in order to convince the decision makers and public for the need to take action (Sikkink, 2002). According to Keck and Sikkink (1998) advocacy networks use four strategies in persuading policy makers to take action. The first strategy is information politics, which means generating quickly credible information that can be use for convincing of policy makers. The second is symbolic politics, which means using symbols, stories, actions that are connected to the situation upon which networks are making call for action. The next is leverage politics or involving of other powerful actors, which can make pressure and have influence on policy makers. The last strategy is accountability politics, which means making pressure on powerful actors to comply with policies and principles stated before.

Transnational advocacy networks are also sometimes engaged in drafting legislation and policy. According to Sikkink (2002) the members of advocacy networks have on many occasions played the important role in drafting legislation and without their participation the adoption and essence of these legislations might fail. He illustrates in the cases of Declaration of the Rights of the Child, international legal rules against torture and the optional protocol to CEDAW.

In order to ensure states compliance with the existing international norms, transnational advocacy networks play important role in publicizing these norms, in monitoring of their implementation as well as in facilitating litigation at domestic and international level (Sikkink, 2002). According to Sikkink some NGO's dedicate a large amount of time and sources to publication and dissemination of the existing international

legal instrument for protection of human rights in order to inform and to raise the awareness about these norms and possibilities to initiate procedure in case of their disobedience by the states.

Keck and Sikkink (1998, p. 3) underline that networks "... promote norm implementation, by pressuring target actors to adopt new policies, and by monitoring compliance with international standards ... they seek to maximize their influence or leverage over the target of their action.". According to Sikkink the Women's groups play important role not only in publicizing of the CEDAW, but are also engaged in writing of shadow reports for its implementation in respective countries. Furthermore some transnational advocacy networks get involved in facilitating domestic and international cases in order to demonstrate that some of states do not obey the international human rights law and thus ruining states' reputation on compliance with international human rights law.

### ***3.1 Background of the Romani women's movement in Macedonia***

The first Romani women's organizations in Macedonia were established in the first half of 1990's. According to my interviewee Azbija Memedova, one of the most prominent Romani women's activist and manager of the Roma Center of Skopje, the first Romani women's NGO's in Macedonia were established in 1992 and 1993, however she pointed out that in that time most of their activities had humanitarian character and these NGO's did not touch upon the real problems that Romani women face. From Memedova's point of view at the early beginning of Romani women's activism in Macedonia, the Romani Women's organizations emphasized much more the social aspect of the problems that Romani women face than the human rights violation aspect. Therefore she concluded that the early beginning of the Romani women's activism in Macedonia can be characterized as a quietly and timidly in addressing the problem of human rights violation.

According to Memedova, the first real efforts openly to speak about the Romani women's rights in Macedonia was undertaken by young Romani female student who form the informal group "Young leaders" in 2001. Specifically this group addressed the sexual taboos and virginity cult within the Romani community through development of the project called "Virginity project: Freedom to choose", which raised the awareness about this issue and the right of everyone to choose whether or not will follow this tradition. After the successful implementation of this project in Macedonia this young group of Romani students shared their experience with other Romani women from the Central and Eastern Europe, who also initiated the same project in their countries.

According to my interviewee Enisa Eminova, Romani women's activist, crucial role for the development of the Romani women's movement in Macedonia played the Roma Women's Initiative (RWI) which is was part of the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute. She pointed out that through this program many Romani women from Macedonia were trained and had opportunity to develop their capacities. Similarly, Memedova pointed out that the RWI program for strengthening of Romani women's activists and support of the development of Romani women's NGOs was essential for the expansion of the Romani women's activism in whole Central and Eastern Europe. As a result of this program, many Romani women from the region go through same training programs and therefore there are many similarities between Romani women's activism.

Today, after more than 15 years of Romani women's activism in Macedonia, Memedova still refrains from using the term Romani movement. Several times during our interview she highlighted that in Macedonia Romani movement still do not exist but only Romani women's activists which are working on the issue of Romani women. She explained that most of Romani women's NGOs, like all other NGOs in the region, are donor driven

organizations. As a result today they are working on a range of issues that Romani community face and do not have clear strategy how to deal with the problems that Romani women face. Moreover she emphasized that the existing Romani women's network established somewhere in 2000, is no longer active because there are no new ideas and there is not sufficient funding. Memedova concluded the efforts for common action exists but are not structured and they are not long term action but ad hoc activities. As a result in the last couple year there is decreasing tendency of the Romani women's activities in Macedonia. Similarly during the interview Eminova was quite skeptical about current situation and activities of the Romani women's NGOs in Macedonia. She pointed out that the Romani women's movement should do not be driven by the Romani women's NGOs but from the ordinary Romani women who are facing many difficulties in their everyday life.

### ***3.2 Background of the Romani women's movement in Serbia***

The Romani women's movement in Serbia, like in Macedonia, started to develop in the 1990s. According to my interviewee Rozalija Ilic, one of the prominent Romani women's activists and executive director of the Roma Information Center, the development of the Romani women's movement in Serbia started somewhere in 1995 when many Romani women began to establish Romani NGOs. Ilic stated that in 1996 for the first time was established an informal group of Romani women's network composed of 15 NGOs from different cities from Serbia and Montenegro which was working on human trafficking issues. Later on this network extended its work on education as well as on empowering of Roma women. Ilic pointed out that this informal network she considered as the first biggest gathering of Romani women from Serbia, after the individual initiatives undertaken by NGOs, to address more seriously the issue that Romani women face.

My another interviewee Marija Demic, Romani women's activist working for the Center for Minority rights, the Romani women's movement in Serbia derived from the Romani movement in Serbia. Specifically during the 1990s most of Romani women's activists worked in the Romani NGOs which primarily were addressing the general issues that Romani minority in Serbia face. However she pointed out that two Romani women's NGOs "Bibija" and "Women's Space" in that period were the most active in addressing the issues that Romani women face.

In addition, Demic noted that the real development of the Romani women's movement in Serbia started in December 2004 when the Romani women's NGO "Bibija" organized seminar on which was developed the Strategic plan of the Romani women's network for five year. This strategy outlined the organizational structure of the network, its mission and aims as well as strategy how to fulfill those aims. In this seminar 14 Romani women's activists participated from different Romani women's NGOs and NGOs which have programs dedicated to the improvement of the position of Romani women in the society. My interviewee Ilic also considers this event as a new higher stage of the development of the Romani women's movement, with clear strategy for further action of the movement.

Ilic noted during the interview, like Romani women's activists from Macedonia, the importance of the RWI for the development and empowerment of the Romani women's movement in Serbia. In particular she emphasized that without the support of this program today they would not be able successfully to address the issues which Romani women face. Moreover she underlines the significance of the international conferences as a tool for dissemination of knowledge and good practice that very much impact the work of the grassroots organization and in the same impacted the development of the Romani women's movement.

### *3.3 Naming and framing the Romani women issues*

The Romani women's activists from both countries have similar understanding of the Romani women's issues, namely they underline that Romani women face multiple or intersectional discrimination based on gender and race. This is also evident from the Shadow reports on the implementation of the CEDAW in Macedonia and Serbia prepared by the Romani women's NGOs and the ERRC. Particularly both shadow reports emphasize that the position of Romani women is far worse than position of Romani men because of the multiple and/or intersectional discrimination against women based on their gender and their ethnic background which prevent Romani women in accessing education, employment, housing, adequate health care as well as accessing other public services (ERRC, 2005) and (ERRC, 2007).

According to my interviewee Ilic in Serbia Romani women's NGOs framed the problems of Romani women at two levels: first are the general problems that the Romani community faces and the second level are the specific problems which Romani women face within the community as a result of the patriarchal tradition. Similarly Demic stated that the issues of Romani women in Serbia are seen as result of the double discrimination which Romani women face and thus the NGOs are trying to address both the problems within the community which are connected with the Romani tradition and the problems that are common for both Romani men and women.

In Macedonia my interviewee Memedova argued that the issues that Romani women face today can be framed in different ways, such as dependency of women or low level of education. However from her point of view the main problems is that Romani women still do not have right to choose, namely if they had opportunity to choice among several options at this moment we would not have to address many of issues. Memedova stressed out that the

platform joint action for promotion the social status of Romani women in Macedonia from 2006 is the first common document in which 20 Romani women's NGOs and Romani women's activist from Macedonia framed the main problems that women face.

The RWI had very important role in defining the issues that Romani women face. According to Eminova within the RWI program for the first time the problems of Romani women were addressed as problems of the intersectional discrimination which term through different training programs and conferences remained in use when are identifying the problems of Romani women and thus today this term became part of the terminology used by many NGOs. However Eminova pointed out that many NGOs are still not able to clearly identify the problems caused by the intersectional discrimination against Romani women and in many cases these NGOs do not make difference between basic terms such as women and gender equality.

### ***3.4 Providing information and testimony***

The Shadow report on the implementation of the CEDAW from 2005 prepared by the Roma Center of Skopje in partnership with the ERRC and the RWI and the financial support of the UNIFEM was one of the first efforts to provide solid information about the situation. This report is based on the comprehensive field research conducted by young Romani women from Macedonia and underlines the major violation of human rights that Romani women face in their everyday life (ERRC, 2005). According to Memedova this report is the only comprehensive document that provides information about the vulnerable position of Romani women and their marginalization in the society.

Similarly, in Serbia, the Romani women's NGOs Bibija, Eureka and Women's Space in the partnership with the ERRC and support of the OSI Public Health Program in 2007 prepared the Shadow report on implementation of the CEDAW in Serbia. This report is

mostly based on research conducted by six Romani women and it contains detailed information about the situation of Romani women in field of education, health care, housing, employment and participation of women in the public and political live (ERRC, 2007).

In Serbia there are also some regional studies on the position of Romani women such as the research on the situation of Romani women in the autonomous province Vojvodina conducted in 2006 by the Office for Roma inclusion, which is regional governmental body, in cooperation with the Association of Romani students and Romani Researches. This research highlights the abuses of human rights of Romani women in the fields of education, employment, family and social status as well as the health care of Romani women with special accent on the reproductive health.

The Romani women's NGO Women's Space from the South Serbia in 2006 published report about the situation of Romani women from this part of Serbia in which information and testimonies of the human rights violation of the Romani women are presented through storytelling. In this report are included the testimonies of young Romani girls and older Romani women as well as the testimonies of well educated Romani women and women without any formal education (Women's Space, 2006). This is very interesting way of making visible the life of Romani women and the problems which they face from their own and from majority community.

### ***3.5 Drafting legislation and policy***

According to my interviewee Memedova the first policy document which was produced by the Romani women's activists in Macedonia is the Platform for Joint action for promoting the social status of the Romani women in Macedonia as a follow up initiative to the recommendation of the CEDAW committee for the improvement of Romani women's position. This platform briefly describe the position of the Romani women in the society

recalling the Shadow report on the implementation of the CEDAW and provides specific policy recommendation to the Macedonian government in the spheres of equality and human rights of women, political participation, economy, social policy, health care, education, family violence and media presentation (Roma Center of Skopje, 2006).

Another important policy document which was created through participation of the Romani women from Macedonia is the Action plan for the improvement of the position of the Romani women which was adopted by the Macedonian government in January 2008. This action plan contains very concrete and measurable goals in the fields of education, employment, health care, human rights and political representation which should be implemented during the period of two years 2008-2010 (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 2008). According to Memedova this action plan was adopted as a result of the recommendation given by the CEDAW committee for the improvement of Romani women position, however she underlines that the government have not provide funding for its implementation.

The first policy document developed by the Romani women's NGOs in Serbia is the Strategic plan of the Romani women. According to Demic this plan also contains detailed recommendation to the Serbian government for the improvement of the position of Romani women in the field of education, employment and social security, health care and domestic violence. This strategic plan was followed up with the action plan for the improvement of the specific position of Romani women which was prepared in 2005 by the Romani women's network. This action plan was develop with the purpose to become part of the action plans for the implementation of the Decade of Roma inclusion which were adopted by the Serbian government in 2005. In spite of the fact that all organizations, that are part of the network,

strongly lobbied for the adoption of the action plan for the improvement of the specific position of Romani women still this action plan is not approved by the Serbian government.

The Romani women's NGOs in Serbia also took active role in the drafting of the National action plan for women in Serbia. According to Vera Kurtic (2007) in 2005, the Council for gender equality sent invitation to the NGOs in Serbia to take part in the drafting of the National action plan for women which was adopted as a result of the commitment of Serbia to the obligations undertaken by its signature of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In the drafting process of this action plan actively were involved three NGOs: Women's Space, Bibija and Roma children's centre (Kurtic, 2007).

### ***3.6 Monitoring of the implementation of the international human rights norms***

The implementation of the CEDAW is the first attempt of the Romani women's NGOs in the both countries to report on the implementation of the international human rights norms. Using the possibility to prepare shadow report on the implementation of CEDAW, the Romani Women's NGOs in Macedonia and Serbia highlighted the failure of their governments to undertake the necessary measures that would enable Romani women to enjoy the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the CEDAW. The important fact which should be taken in consideration is that the international non-governmental organizations/foundations such as the ERRC and the OSI played important role in developing of these reports and disseminating of their findings.

According to my interviews Memedova, the shadow report was the only comprehensive document in Macedonia which assessed the implementation of concrete human rights instrument regarding Romani women's rights. Similarly in Serbia, according to Ilic and Demic the Shadow report on CEDAW is the only and the most successful initiative

that outlines the violation of the international human right norms and advocates for improvement of the position of Romani women.

## CONCLUSION

The development of the concept of intersectionality shed light on the issues which the most marginalized groups, such as Romani women, face in their everyday life. Today the intersectional discrimination is not only a theory. The effects of the intersectionality are acknowledged and addressed by many human rights nongovernmental organizations and international human rights bodies as an issue that cause serious human rights violations. In the case of Romani women the intersectional discrimination based on the gender, race, poverty and the patriarchal tradition cause deprivation of Romani women from the rights to education, employment, health care and housing and is also perceived as one of the reasons for the Roma women exclusion from the public and political participation.

Specifically, the analysis of the Romani women's position in Macedonia and Serbia reveals that this group of women shares many similarities because of the intersectional discrimination they are exposed to. The figures from the both countries show that Romani women have lower level of education and higher rate of unemployment in comparison to Romani male and non Romani male and female. Moreover they have poor health care, low level of representation in the political and public life and often are subjected to domestic violence.

Although the Romani rights movement successfully addressed the racial discrimination that Roma face, still it failed to address the gender discrimination that Romani women face, which intersects with racial discrimination. As a result of this failure the Romani women started to organize themselves in Romani women organizations that started address the problems that Romani women face in their everyday life.

In the last chapter I examined the Romani women's movement in two countries: Macedonia and Serbia. My investigation demonstrates that the Romani women's movements

in Macedonia and Serbia have their own successes and failures in addressing Romani women's issues. However these movements in the same time are very similar because they followed the same path in their development as a result of the impact which international organizations such as the OSI and the ERRC had on their development.

One of the biggest differences which I observed during my research is related to the organizational structure of the movements. Specifically my research showed that Romani women's movement in Serbia has much more organized structure than the movement in Macedonia and involves Romani women's activists from different part of the country which is very important element of one movement because it enables them to spread more quickly the information and to address the problem of the Romani women at different levels.

The Romani women's movement or activism in Macedonia is composed of highly professional individuals such as Memedova and Eminova, whose work had also impact to the development of the international Romani women's movement. However these individuals are not capable to lead and develop by themselves the Romani women's movement in Macedonia. I do not want to minimize the effectiveness of the movement in Macedonia, in contrary, I consider this movement as very effective and successful having in regards that there is not real cooperation and coordination of the activates that Romani women's NGOs implement like in the case of Serbia where exist functional Romani women's network.

Participation of the Romani women's NGOs in the policy making process in both countries is very limited. However my research demonstrates that the Romani women's NGOs from Macedonia were much more successful in using the policy window that was open after the submission of the CEDAW report and the Recommendation of the CEDAW Committee. Namely these organizations used the Committee's pressure on Macedonian

government to convince the domestic policy makers to adopt the Action plans for improvement of the position of Romani women in Macedonia.

Although in both countries, Roma women are not well organized in addressing and lobbying at the national level for their rights still their existence is crucial in rising awareness and in convincing the public and the decision makers about the need that the Roma women situation has to be urgently improved.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amos, V. and Parmar, P., 2001. Challenging Imperial Feminism. *In*: Bhavnani, K. ed *Feminism and Race*. Oxford University Press, 17-33.

Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, 2007. *The Communication on the Situation of Romani Women in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*. The executive council of AP Vojvodina.

Branigan, T., 2004. *Divided we fall* [online]. The Guardian. Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/jul/22/gender.uk1> [Accessed 10 September 2008].

Barany, Z., 2001. Romani Electoral Politics and Behaviour. *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority issues in Europe*, Autumn 2001, 1-13.

Bitu, N., 1999. *The Situation of Roma/Gipsy Women in Europe*. [online]. Roma Women Association Romania. Available from:

[http://www.romawomen.ro/reports\\_pages/the\\_situation\\_of\\_roma\\_gypsy.htm](http://www.romawomen.ro/reports_pages/the_situation_of_roma_gypsy.htm) [Accessed 20 June 2008].

Bunch, C., 2002. Human Rights at the intersection of Race and Gender. *In*: Raj, R. ed *Women at the Intersection: Indivisible Rights, Identities and Oppressions*. Center for Global Women's Leadership, 111-119.

Center for Global Women's Leadership. *Background Briefing on Intersectionality* [online].

Center for Global Women's Leadership. Available from:

<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/bkgdbrfintersec.html> [Accessed 23 June 2008].

Crenshaw, K., 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No.6: 1241-1299

Crenshaw, K., 1989. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracists Politics*. University of Chicago Legal Forum: 139-67

Crenshaw, K., 2000. *Background paper for the expert meeting on the Gender-Related Aspects of Race Discrimination* [online]. World Conference Against Racism Available from: [http://www.wicej.addr.com/wcar\\_docs/crenshaw.html](http://www.wicej.addr.com/wcar_docs/crenshaw.html) [Accessed 29 June 2008].

Division for the Advancement of Women, 2000. *Gender and racial discrimination Expert Group Meeting* [online]. Division for the Advancement of Women. Available from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/genrac/> [Accessed 29 June 2008].

Dugger, K., 1996. Social Location and Gender-Role Attitudes: A Comparison of Black and White Women. In: Chow, E et al, ed. *Race, Class & Gender Common Bonds, Different Voices*. Sage Publications, 32-52.

European Roma Information Office, 2006. *An overview of the work on Roma of international organizations and networks*. [online]. European Roma Information Office. Available from: [http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/pdf/FS28\\_Roma2\\_EN.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/pdf/FS28_Roma2_EN.pdf) [Accessed 21 August 2008].

European Roma Rights Center, 2007. *Written Comments of the European Roma Rights Centre, Bibija, Eureka and Women's Space Concerning Serbia For Consideration by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its 38<sup>th</sup> Session*. [online]. Budapest, European Roma Rights Center. Available from: <http://www.errc.org/db/02/4F/m0000024F.pdf> [Accessed 3 August 2008].

European Roma Rights Center, 2005. *Joint Submission Shadow Report On the Situation of Romani Women In the Republic of Macedonia* [online]. Budapest, European Roma Rights

Center. Available from: <http://www.errc.org/db/01/97/m00000197.pdf> [Accessed 3 April 2008]

European Roma Rights Center, 2003. *Coercive Sterilisation of Romani Women in Slovakia* [online]. European Roma Rights Center. Available from: <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1680> [Accessed 21 June 2008].

European Roma Rights Center, 2006. *Romani women's rights movement* [online] European Roma Rights Center. Available from: <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2750> [Accessed 21 August 2008].

Government Office of Sweden, 2007. *Our Voices Heard* [online]. Government Office of Sweden Available from: [http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/general/report\\_romaconf\\_sweden\\_031207\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/general/report_romaconf_sweden_031207_en.pdf) [Accessed 21 June 2008].

Guy, W., 2001. Romani identity and post-Communist policy. In: Guy, W. ed *Between past and future the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. University of Hertfordshire Press: 3-33.

Makkonen, T., 2002. *Multiple, Compound and Intersectional discrimination: Bringing the experience of the most marginalized to the fore* [online]. Institute for Human Rights Åbo Akademi University. Available from: <http://web.abo.fi/institut/imr/norfa/timo.pdf> [Accessed 15 June 2008].

Marushiakova, E. and Popov, V., 2004. The Roma – *A Nation without a State? Historical Background and Contemporary Tendencies*. In: Streck, Bernhard (ed.): *Segmentation und Komplementarität*. Halle, 71–100.

Memedova. A., 2004. *Romani Men and Romani Women Roma Human Rights Movement: A Missing Element* [online]. European Roma Rights Center. Available from: <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1850&archiv=1> [Accessed 10 September 2008].

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 2008. *Action Plan for Romani women* [online] Skopje.

Available from:

<http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/akcionen%20plan.pdf> [Accessed 3 April 2008]

Mirga, A. and Gheorghe, N., 1997. *The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy* [online]

Project on ethnic relation. Available from: [http://www.per-usa.org/1997-2007/21st\\_c.htm](http://www.per-usa.org/1997-2007/21st_c.htm)

[Accessed 5 September 2008].

Mihalache, I., 2003. *Romani women's participation in public life* [online]. European Roma

Rights Center. Available from: <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1359> [Accessed 21

August 2008].

Keck. E.M. and Sikkink. K., 1998. *Activists Beyond Border*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Ithaca and London:

Cornell University Press.

Knudsen V. S., 2005 Intersectionality - A Theoretical Inspiration in the Analysis of Minority

Cultures and Identities in Textbooks. In: E. Bruillard, *Eighth International Conference on*

*Learning and Educational Media, October 2005 Caen*. The International Association for

Research on Textbook and Educational Media, 61-77.

Kurtic. V., Zorbic. A. and Manic. M., 2006. *Roma women's Network: Together we can South*

*Serbia*. Women's Space.

Kurtic. V., 2007. Romani women in the Decade of Roma inclusion. Women's Space.

Parliamentary Assembly, 2002. *Legal situation of the Roma in Europe* [online]. Council of

Europe. Available from:

<http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/workingdocs/doc02/edoc9397.htm>

[Accessed 25 June 2008].

Peric, T., 2005. At the Crossroads: Human Rights of Romani Women in South East Europe.

*Journal for Politics, Gender, and Culture*. Vol. 4, No. 1/2, 129-163.

Petrova, D., 2001. The Romani Movement: what shape, what direction?. *Roma Rights*, No.4, 18-19.

OHCHR, 2001. *Gender Dimensions of Racial Discrimination* [online]. UN Available from: <http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/wcargender.pdf> [Accessed 21 June 2008].

Oprea, A., 2003. The Erasure of Romani Women in Statistical Data: Limits of the Race-versus-Gender Approach [online]. *EUMAP*. Available from:

<http://www.eumap.org/journal/features/2003/april/romastats> [Accessed 10 September 2008].

Ovalle, O., 2006. *Roma Women: Struggling for equality* [online] Said it remember this. Available from <http://www.saidit.org/archives/jun06/rememberthis.html> [Accessed 25 August 2008].

Roma Center of Skopje, 2006. Platform for Joint action for promoting the social status of the Romani women in the Republic of Macedonia.

Refugee Women's Resource Project, Asylum Aid, 2002. *Romani women from Central and Eastern Europe* [online]. Refugee Women's Resource Project, Asylum Aid, Available from: <http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/data/files/publications/30/Romani%20Women%20from%20Central%20and%20Eastern%20Europe%20A%20Fourth%20World.pdf> [Accessed 21 June 2008].

Reynoso, J., 2004. Perspectives on Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Other Grounds: Latinas at the Margins. *Harvard Latino Law Review*, Vol.7, 63-74

Social rights Bulgaria, 2003. PRESS STATEMENT: Romani woman addresses European Parliament. [online]. Social Rights Bulgaria <http://www.socialrights.org/article300.html> [Accessed 21 June 2008].

Roma Education Fund, 2007. *Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions – “Advancing Education of Roma in Macedonia”* [online]. Budapest, Roma Education Fund. Available from: <http://romaeducationfund.hu/> [Accessed 25 March 2008].

Roma Education Fund, 2007. *Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions – “Advancing Education of Roma in Serbia”* [online]. Budapest, Roma Education Fund. Available from: <http://romaeducationfund.hu/> [Accessed 25 July 2008].

State Statistical Office, 2002. *Census of population in the Republic of Macedonia* [online]. Skopje, State Statistical Office. Available from: [http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga\\_13.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga_13.pdf) [Accessed 21 March 2008].

Sikkink, K., 2002. Transnational Advocacy Networks and the Social Construction of the Legal Rules. In: Dezalay. Y and Garth. B., *Global Prescriptions: The Production, Exportation and Importation of a New Legal Orthodoxy*. The University of Michigan Press, 37-64.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2000. *General Recommendation No. 25: Gender related dimensions of racial discrimination* [online]. United Nations [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/76a293e49a88bd23802568bd00538d83?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/76a293e49a88bd23802568bd00538d83?OpenDocument) [Accessed 29 June 2008].

The World Bank, 2005. *The Poverty, Social exclusion and Ethnicity in Serbia and Montenegro: The case of Roma* [online]. The World Bank. Available from: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTROMA/Resources/SAM\\_Roma\\_Poverty\\_Discussion\\_Paper.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTROMA/Resources/SAM_Roma_Poverty_Discussion_Paper.pdf)

UN,1995. *Beijing declaration* [online]. United Nations Available from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/beijingdeclaration.html> UN [Accessed 21 June 2008].

UNICEF, 2007. *Romani Children in South East Europe: The challenge of overcoming centuries of distrust and discrimination* [online] Geneva. Available from: [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/0703-CEECIS\\_ROMA\\_en.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/0703-CEECIS_ROMA_en.pdf) [ Accessed 17 June 2008].

Vermeersch, P., 2002. *Romani Political Mobilization in Central and Eastern Europe. European yearbook of minority issues: 2001/2*. European Center for Minority Issues

Vermeersch, P., 2001. *Advocacy Networks and Romani Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*. [online]. European Center for Minority Issues. Available from: <http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/Focus11-2001Vermeersch.pdf> [Accessed 17 August 2008]. .

Xhemajli, S., 2000. Everything we don't want to hear!. *Roma Rights*, No.1, 28-38.

### **Interviewes:**

Interview with Enisa Eminova

Interview with Azbija Memedova

Interview with Rozarija Ilic

Interview with Marija DEmic