

The Political Integration of the Roma in Multicultural Societies The Cases of Macedonia and Serbia

**By
Marina Vasić**

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Supervisor: Professor Lea Sgier

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ABSTRACT

Roma, as the largest and most disadvantaged European minority, are one of the hardest cases of social and political integration. The work of scholars on ‘multicultural citizenship’ provides a possible framework for integrating disadvantaged groups within the wider society. It explains three components: a proper categorization- status of national minorities, active participation from the groups and the input from the international community (pressure on national governments to implement certain affirmative action).

This work takes into consideration two former Yugoslav republics (Macedonia and Serbia) that show different results in political integration of Roma. Macedonia, as an ethnically unstable country, serves as an exemplar case where the Roma are substantially integrated in society. The minority has a developed civil sector, with numerous non-governmental organizations. Romani political parties actively participate in the elections from the time when Macedonia was recognized as an independent country. In contrast, Serbia (as a less ethnically unstable country) shows less successful results in dealing with cultural diversity. Even though the group has obtained the status of national minority, the effects of this provision did not contribute to political integration. Roma prove to have their political parties and organizations but somehow the outcomes of parliamentary elections do not go in favor of political integration of the minority.

Even though Macedonia and Serbia have arisen from the same communist-ideology, their paths did not follow the same direction. The burden of other factors (authoritarian regime, ethnic conflicts) made Roma integration in Serbia rather poor. Because of these factors, Serbia started very late to transform its political system, which resulted in negligence towards cultural diversity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEE- Central and Eastern Europe

DPA- Democratic Party of Albanians (Albanian: *Partia Demokratike Shqiptare*)

DPPRM- Democratic Progressive Party of Roma in Macedonia (Macedonian: *Демократска Прогресивна Партија на Ромите во Македонија*)

DSR- Democratic Forces of Roma (Macedonian: *Демократски Сили на Ромите*)

DUI- Democratic Union for Integration (Albanian: *Bashkimi Demokratik për Integrim (BDI)*, Macedonian: *Демократска унија за интеграција*)

DUR- Democratic Union of Roma (Macedonian: *Демократска Унија на Ромите*)

OPE- United Party for Emancipation (Macedonian: *Обединета Партија за Еманципација*)

OSF- Open Society Foundations

PCERM- Party for Full Emancipation of Roma (Партија за Целосна Еманципација на Ромите во Македонија)

PIR- Party for Integration of Roma (Macedonian: *Партија за Интеграција на Ромите*)

RIO- Roma Initiative Office

SDSM- The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (Macedonian: *Социјалдемократски сојуз на Македонија*)

SRM- Union of Roma in Macedonia (Macedonian: *Сојуз на Ромите во Македонија*)

VMRO-DPMNE- Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization- Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (Macedonian: *Внатрешна македонска револуционарна организација-Демократска партија за македонско национално единство*)

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism has become one of the most important concepts of dealing with diversity of cultures since the collapse of communism. Most scholarly work (Giddens 2009, Kymlicka 1996, 2007; Parsons, 1965) discusses multicultural citizenship as a way to integrate minority groups (national/ ethnic minorities; immigrants, indigenous people) within wider societies. The literature also conceptualizes ‘oppressed’ or disadvantaged group and situates them in the wider context of ‘struggles for recognition’ (Fraser 2003, Habermas 1994, Szalai, 2002). In order to be ‘present’ (Phillips, 1995) in society and enjoy equality of rights (Marshall, 1950), disadvantaged groups needed to overcome status subordination (Fraser, 2003). The work of scholars on ‘multicultural citizenship’ (Kymlicka 1996, 2007) provides a possible framework for integrating disadvantaged groups within the wider society. It explains three components: a proper categorization- status of national minorities, active participation from the groups and the input from the international community (pressure on national governments to implement certain affirmative action).

Roma, as the largest European minority, are one of the hardest cases of social integration. Because of their diverse culture and nomadic way of life, their presence is noticeable all across the continent. Under communism, they had been identified as an ethnic group, without having any special rights or legacies for improving their status. The group had no need to declare its identity and struggle for exceptional position within societies. With the emergent era of multiculturalism, the status of Roma started to change. Over the last two decades, many European countries have adopted special provisions to support Roma inclusion, usually starting with categorizing them as an officially recognized “national minority”. On the other hand, the international community has pressed national governments to adopt special mechanisms for

integrating this minority within the wider societal structure. When it comes to implementation of such mechanism though, some countries have shown more positive results than others (Müller, Jovanović, 2010).

Thus, this research takes into consideration Macedonia and Serbia where Roma, as an ethnic group, took a path of inclusion within newly established multicultural societies. The cases are chosen within the specific Yugoslav context, as countries whose values were exclusively built on communist grounds. These countries have undertaken certain measures for integrating Roma minority in the societal community. Nevertheless, the process and effects of the implemented measures do not demonstrate the same results. The research takes into consideration a specific period from the dissolution of the federation (1991) to 2012. This time-frame encompasses the specific measures that the cases have taken into account in terms of the Roma integration.

Macedonia serves as an exemplar case where the Roma are substantially integrated in society. Going from the bottom-up level, the minority has a developed civil sector, with numerous non-governmental organizations; Romani political parties actively participate in the elections from the time when Macedonia was recognized as an independent country (1991). Moreover, they have been constantly voicing their interests within the legislative body. This fact contributes to the importance of capturing descriptive representatives within parliament. In this respect, the minority has achieved considerable status at the government level, where numerous Roma are actively working in administration, as deputy ministers and even as ministers without a portfolio.

The contrasting results of the Roma political integration are similar in other Yugoslav republics¹ (Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Nevertheless, this research examines Serbia rather than the other former republics for two reasons. First, there is a higher percentage of Roma residing in Serbia than other former republics.² This fact also facilitates data collection for the research. Second, other countries have neither the relevant mechanism for including Roma within the mainstream society, nor have the Roma shown some level of political organizing. While Macedonia demonstrates a substantial level of inclusion, Serbia shows less successful results in integrating Roma within the mainstream society. Even though the group has obtained the status of national minority, the effects of this provision show no substantial results. Roma prove to have their political parties and organizations but somehow the outcomes of parliamentary elections do not go in favor of political integration of the minority. This fact would not be extremely puzzling if these cases did not share a common perspective and similar provisions under the communist regime. Macedonia, a smaller and less ethnically homogeneous country, with a complex constellation of other minorities, has succeeded in properly including the Romani minority within its societal structure. On the other hand, Serbia, which is more homogenous (less burdening relations among other minority groups), has failed to demonstrate similar results. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the interests of Roma are not put on the agenda of the mainstream Serbian parties. Even with this constellation, the results are often seen as less motivating. This could indicate that Roma in Serbia are rather misrecognized and incapable of “peer-to-peer” politics (Fraser, 2003) that could contribute to their integration.

¹ Official data for the Roma (2005), according to the Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015: Bosnia and Herzegovina (0.2%); Croatia (0.4%); Montenegro (0.4%); Serbia (1.4%); Slovenia (no data available).

Moreover, the Serbian case underlines that the matter of “group mirroring” within the legislative (Pitkin, 1967) is not seen as important.

This thesis aims at showing why multiculturalism, as a way of integrating minorities, demonstrates better results in Macedonia than in Serbia. Furthermore, it seeks to underline reasonable explanation(s) for better Roma integration in the first and worse integration in the second case. In this manner, this work tries to demonstrate what influences and builds an efficient model of political integration of the Romani minority. The first hypothesis is that cultural diversity of the country significantly influences integration. Societies that deal with a higher level of cultural diversity tend to show more positive results in social integration of the Roma. Power sharing between majority and the most dominant minority can produce certain provisions for extending rights to other minorities. Especially these rights help other minority groups to reach the status of full citizenship (Parsons, 1965) and better political integration. The second hypothesis that I propose highlights electoral engineering. Proportional representation exclusively supports minority representation. Other electoral provisions can negatively impact electoral outcomes for minority groups. The third hypothesis indicates the importance of international assistance in Roma integration. The Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) has been the most important affirmative action for empowering the status of Roma. Thus, it is expected that this action had the most important impact on political integration of Roma.

Many comparative studies have been done about the Roma from Central and Eastern Europe. Eben Friedman (2005, 2005) has done analysis on Roma, focusing on Western Balkans. Some Romani scholars have discussed the issue of integration. They focused on active participation and representation in society as a ‘pathway to progress’ (Müller, Jovanović, 2010). Needless to say, Roma substantially lack adequate political organization (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013),

which hinders the voicing of their interests. Communism has significantly impacted the expression of Romani identity, which furthermore resulted in a weak sense of belonging to the group (Friedman, 2002).

One of the crucial components of social inclusion lies in improving the political status of the minority. Therefore, the Western Balkan countries are an example where opportunities for the political integration of Roma have arisen from either inter-ethnic conflicts or different mechanisms and rights for including Roma into societies. As the post-communist countries show, the Roma form a specific type of party that is active only before the elections (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013). The Roma representatives are often seen as ‘symbolic’ figures within the legislature because their position does not say much about their actions (Ibid, 2013).

Unlike other minorities in Europe, the data on the Roma is not easily accessible, for different reasons. First, their demographic dispersion makes an accurate statistical recording difficult. Also, the Roma substantially lack identity documents, which hampers understanding of their actual accurate number. Second, there is a high trend of severe hostility and ignorance towards the Roma in their resident countries. Because of this, Roma usually declare themselves as part of other minority groups.

This research gives a significant contribution to the field of political science, because it deals with minority politics, political history and political sociology. Nowadays, the issue of Roma integration is one of the mostly debated. Several comparative analyses on Roma integration have been on Central and Eastern Europe, comparing Macedonia with Albania, Hungary and Slovakia. However, there is a gap in analyzing the phenomenon in the cases of former Yugoslav republics. The possible outcome of this research would be to set a ground for inquiring into other former

republics (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Montenegro) and status of the Roma within these societies.

The present work is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter illustrates the main theoretical concepts, relying on the discussions of Will Kymlicka, Nancy Fraser, Anne Phillips, Iris Young, Talcott Parsons and many more. The chapter finishes with a brief discussion about Romani integration within societies. The second chapter explains the methodology used for this research. The analysis is based on a collection of various types of information (official information, secondary literature, interviews). The third chapter (analysis) starts with an explanation of the general context of Yugoslavia and status of the Roma in post-Yugoslav settings. The chapter contains two subchapters (Macedonia and Serbia) that analyze three categories: 1) Definition of minority groups: Extending the rights for minorities; 2) Development of Roma political parties and their mirroring within the legislature; 3) The involvement of the International Community (Decade of Roma Inclusion in the two cases). The final chapter of the thesis summarizes findings and concludes the discussion.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theories that discuss social integration in general and political integration in particular. It starts by explaining Will Kymlicka's idea of multicultural citizenship and components that are of crucial importance for such status. Further on, this chapter tries to find appropriate conceptualization for the groups that have been socially excluded. On these grounds, further discussion develops around the framework of social and political integration and stages that this framework encompasses. Along the line of the discussion, the most influential scholars are: Will Kymlicka (1996, 2007), Anne Phillips (1995), Iris Young (2000), Hanna Pitkin (1967), Jane Mansbridge (1999, 2003), Talcott Parsons (1965), T. H. Marshall (1950). The chapter finishes with a discussion of various scholars about the Roma integration.

1.1. Theoretical concepts

After the collapse of communism, most countries had to deal with integration of culturally diverse groups. Multiculturalism³ as a sociological concept was not much known and little practiced in Eastern Europe as it was in the West. This is why the work of Eastern scholars does not really come across the concepts of multiculturalism. It was not before Will Kymlicka that this concept became widely promoted in the work of contemporary theorists. In his book "Multicultural Citizenship"⁴, he discusses conditions under which culturally diverse groups were engaged into the process of integration. Political integration of such groups is an integrative part

³ Multiculturalism, or plurality of cultures, is a concept discussed mostly within the field of sociology. It demonstrates how diversity of cultures get embedded within different societies (Giddens, 2009);

⁴ Kymlicka, 1996;

of the same process. Components of equal citizenship are discussed by Talcott Parsons (1965), whose main concepts came from the famous work of T. H. Marshall⁵. Parsons proposes three components of citizenship: civil, political and social rights. The author (1965: 715) conceptualizes that inclusion is “the processes by which previously excluded groups attain full citizenship or membership in the societal community”. Based on this, civil rights are rather seen as empty without equal opportunities for all citizens. Therefore, in such a case, they are just formally given. Examples are brought from numerous countries and underline that opportunities for Roma could never be identified as equal. This is because of high degrees of discrimination and stereotyping that still hamper Roma people`s opportunities in employment, education, housing and health. Their political rights are also often *de facto* limited, which decreases the possibility for political organizing and forming of Roma elites. The factors that seem to be in favor of Romani integration are: the general context of liberal democracy, political culture of the country, political history and the influence of the international community (Fraser, 2003). In Kymlicka`s (1996) perspective, the extent of diversity of one multicultural society is the crucial factor that could influence the inclusion. What could matter here is the actual scope of diversity between minority cultures: countries that allow for cultural diversity tend to pay greater attention to issues of equal treatment. Countries with a higher degree of cultural homogeneity, on the other hand, are usually more exclusionary of minorities.

As Kymlicka deals with structurally disadvantaged groups, this research relies on some of his concepts. However, the main weakness of his work is that he pays less attention to Roma than to other groups. This raises several issues with defining disadvantaged groups. Anne Phillips (1995:40) explains the concept of ‘oppressed groups’ and states that the way of living and

⁵ T. H. Marshall wrote a famous piece “Social Class and Citizenship” in 1950. He discusses three types of rights: civil, political and social.

cultural diversity of every group should be entirely respected. Every group that faces disrespect towards its cultural identity should be treated as “oppressed”. The same author also indicates the ambiguous nature of political equality. Namely, Phillips (1995: 36) indicates that there is a substantial difference when the group is treated as equal and when it is exactly the same as society in general. It could not be said that all the groups have an equal treatment in the society. But what matters here are the circumstances under which an ‘equal’ treatment is applied. In support to this, Iris Young (2000) discusses oppressed groups need a stronger support from public policy-makers in order to successfully overcome social exclusion. Therefore, many countries adopt special measures to include previously excluded social groups within the wider society.

On these grounds, Phillips (1995:40) discusses the politics of recognition and states that some groups often feel oppressed if their cultural diversity is not recognized as of equal value with the wider society. Romani people in some multicultural societies have demonstrated higher level of struggle for social recognition. Examples are still in a small number, but it is important to mention that they exist. Nancy Fraser (2003:27) explains the concept of ‘misrecognition as status subordination’ as a part of the struggle for recognition. The concept of recognition is an important component of societal integration. A group is socially recognized if it gets to the full participation in societal processes. Misrecognition implies the status of social subordination that significantly constrains disadvantaged groups to fully participate in social life (Fraser, 2003: 27). To redress past injustices, a group needs to overcome subordination by improving its status and strengthening the possibility to play an active role in the society. In favor of this, Phillips (1995:32) states that equality in participation implies a certain extent of political equality. Equal participation is in question when participants do not possess necessary resources to interact with

others. As well as this, a lack in political equality alarms systematic absence of particular groups as a ‘self-evident failing of democracy’ (Phillips, 1995: 32).

With an identification of socially excluded group, Will Kymlicka (1996, 2007) tries to make a framework for integration by imputing several components. In this respect, multicultural societies encompass three components of successful integration. First, socially excluded groups should have a proper categorization. Namely, Kymlicka proposes a categorization of national minorities as a starting ground for implementing three sets of rights (Marshall, 1950). The multicultural state is seen as a place where smaller cultures coexist together with the mainstream culture and form ‘national minorities’ (Kymlicka, 1995: 11). Following Kymlicka, ethnic and national minorities do not belong in the same category. While national minorities encompass a wider scope of rights and freedoms (that Marshall and Parsons were widely discussing), ethnic groups do not have much power to influence societal processes. His work explains that the concept of ethnicity is attached exclusively to immigrants who do not seek to set up a parallel society (while rejecting assimilation within wider society). Instead, by integrating into societies, immigrants somewhere rather enrich than change the culture of the majority.

Kymlicka (2007) explains that potential incorporation of different types of minorities depends mostly of the background and historical patterns of certain countries. Western democracies propose three types of minorities: indigenous people, sub-state minorities and immigrant groups (Kymlicka, 2007: 66-71). However, the problem with Kymlicka’s conceptualization is in inability to find a proper category for Roma. This minority does not belong to the indigenous people that were restricted to territorial and cultural rights. There is also a misfit with the conceptualization of the sub-state minorities. Namely, those groups are identified as “being left on the wrong side” as a consequence of certain agreements (usually after wars and ethnic

conflicts). Nowadays, there are many examples for these categories: Hungarians in Serbia and Romania or Albanians in Macedonia. The common ground is that each of the mentioned sub-state groups belongs to a certain country (Hungary/ Albania). For these minorities, it is of crucial importance to keep their culture and traditions and to be equally treated in comparison to the majority citizens. Nevertheless, giving a wider scope of rights to these groups can endanger stability of the country in which they currently reside. In this context, another example could be drawn from the case of Albanians that reside either in Macedonia or in Kosovo. In both countries, this minority went into serious conflict with the majority. The third category that Kymlicka proposes identifies immigrant groups that inhabit a certain country without requesting special rights. As noted before, these groups do not construct a parallel society, but they rather keep essential values of their culture. Finally, a substantial weakness of this categorization is that Roma do not match any of the proposed contexts. Several explanations could be drawn from this. First, Roma minority does not belong to any of its resident countries. The Roma minority originally had come from India, and their presence on the European continent is nevertheless current. This implies that none of their hosting countries is their mother-land.⁶ However, it could be said that Roma are certainly a part of their resident countries but just as a second class citizens. This status does not give them much space to proclaim a wider scope of rights that is needed for their successful integration. As well as this, Roma have been always identified as a peaceful minority, without bringing any kind of threat to stability of the country. This further implies that categories of the sub-state minority and indigenous people cannot be properly used for conceptualization. At the end, Roma could be identified as immigrants, because of the current “trend” of asylum

⁶ Nowadays, many debates were held about stateless nature of the Roma. Historical facts underlines that Roma belong to the heritage of India, and that their presence in Europe is an outcome of their nomadic and travelling nature.

seeking into the Western countries. Nevertheless, this work tries to avoid this conceptualization, and rather focus on Roma who permanently reside in countries in the CEE region.

The second component for integration underlines international community as an influential factor of integration (Kymlicka, 2007:19). Unlike for other socially disadvantaged groups, Roma could hardly be categorized as national minorities. Having in mind the structurally disadvantaged position of the Roma and the lack of political will of national governments to include them socially and politically, the international factor has played a substantial role. As Kymlicka (1995: 96) points out, a successfully integration of disadvantaged minorities within the society, primarily requires a strong effort at overcoming prejudices and discrimination. Not only does this require the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, but also significant changes in the ways in which they are represented at various levels (schools, media, government documents, etc.). In this context, the international community⁷ has paid much attention to the status of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. Kymlicka shows that the International Community put a significant pressure on national governments to push them towards making more efforts for the integration of the Roma. In 2005, the most significant initiative⁸ was launched by European governments, called the “Decade for Roma Inclusion 2006-2015” (often simply called “Roma Decade”). The Roma Decade as a form of affirmative action is a political commitment of National governments to improve the social integration of Roma and their socio-economic status. It is supported by the main International Organizations⁹ in overcoming past injustices toward the Roma population in

⁷ I would name the entire scope of International organization as “International community”. Here enters: European Union, United Nations, Council of Europe, etc;

⁸ The initiative of the “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015” will be discussed throughout the work;

⁹ The international partner organizations of the Roma Decade include: the World Bank, the Open Society Foundations, the United Nations Development Program, the Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Roma Information Office, the European Roma

twelve European countries. The focus of the Decade is put on the group of countries that were previously under communist regimes. Kymlicka (2007:200) states that Western Europe has put a strong pressure on the CEE governments for integrating the minority into the society. Their aim was to prevent the same minority to migrate to their territory. Most of the post-communist states did not consider Roma as a legitimate part of the country because there was no adequate categorization for them. In order to start including them into societies, the concept of ‘national minority’ required certain modifications.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, when former republics started proclaiming independence, the European Commission requested the establishment of the special status for regions where minorities were in a majority. This implied that countries had to assign a special autonomous status for some parts of the country. In Serbia, the status of autonomous province was assigned to Vojvodina (North) and Kosovo (South). This provision helped Hungarians (Vojvodina) and Albanians (Kosovo) to obtain a higher scope of rights. According to this change, the understanding of the term ‘national minority’ got modified. The International Community made such pressure mostly for security reasons, preventing occurrence of potential turmoil. They clearly stated that adequate treatment for minorities is of crucial importance for regional stability. Nevertheless, this somehow misfit with the Roma issue.

The minority has been constantly identified as peaceful and not engaging in any kind of ethnic conflict. Therefore, in this case it is less plausible to claim that international peace and stability would be threatened by the Roma. As Kymlicka (2007:200) identifies, these justifications could not be equally accepted for this case. The OSCE’s High Commissioner on National Minorities underlined that because of non-threatening character of Roma to the wider stability, their issues

and Traveler Forum, the European Roma Rights Centre, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). More info at: <http://www.romadecade.org> (Last access: 15/05/2013)

have to be addressed better within the human right organizations (Kymlicka: 2007: 220). Furthermore, the estimations state that this minority indeed requires a sort of international protection in overcoming various kinds of stereotypes and discrimination. They are identified as the most disadvantaged layer of the society, often burdened with serious racial prejudices and political marginalization. Therefore, it seems plausible to claim that international community, led by the European Union, have used the case of Romani disadvantaged position, as a “carrot on the stick” strategy for post-communist countries. In order to fulfill the conditions for the accession into the EU, countries were expected to find suitable mechanisms for advancing the status of Roma. On the other hand, the EU show little effort for improving the status of Roma in the EU’s member-states (e.g. Spain, Greece, Italy), even though the entrenched forms of discrimination has been present there. Thus, the need for outside assistance for the post-communist countries highly emerged, because of the fear of potential spillover into the Western context.

Moreover, the human rights perspective does not seem to be of the primary importance. Rather, it appears that international community was concerned with the unwelcomed and large number of Roma migrants aiming towards better living and working conditions. Therefore, the EU put an effort in finding the most suitable institutional mechanisms for monitoring state policies towards Roma (Kymlicka, 2007:220). One of the most feasible mechanisms was to extend the terminology and make the definition of ‘national minority’ more inclusive and less strict in categorization. From this prospect, it was obvious that the necessity for the state governments to include Roma into the ‘national minority’ framework largely emerged. Even though Roma belong to the group of stateless minorities, national governments widely started to categorize them as a national minority.

Finally, the process of political integration also depends on the minority group as well. As they struggle for recognition, minorities need to be politically organized in the form of parties. They need to be active participants in the processes of the country. From active participation comes political representation (Phillips, 1995; Kymlicka, 1996). The way disadvantaged groups voice their interests mostly depends on the model of political representation. When it comes to active participation, the members of national minorities should not face discrimination in exercising their fundamental political rights. The concept of ‘active participation’ (Kymlicka, 2007: 240) implies that citizens have the freedom to give a vote to the candidate/party of choice, to engage in advocacy and run for office. But the circumstances from the communist period are a substantial drawback for the Roma: in the Yugoslav period, identities other than “Yugoslav” were strictly oppressed and their exercise forbidden. As a consequence, no data were collected regarding the Roma. The lack in identity documents prevents the Roma from properly exercising political rights. Not only does active participation require the action of voting or running for office, but also some degree of actual representation within the legislature. Furthermore, according to Kymlicka (2007:241), ‘active participation’ implies that participation should have a certain effect. On the other hand, what defines representation is that representativeness of each member of the group makes an assembly truly representative as a whole. In the contemporary world, the necessity of representation can hardly be refuted, because citizens cannot be present at all legislative decisions or decision-making bodies whose actions affect their life. Interests are much dispersed and numerous, but also cross-cutting between groups. Therefore, it appears highly difficult to define a group when it comes to representation. Kymlicka (1995:138) extends this and continues: “The claim that minority groups are not fully represented in the legislature, therefore, seems to presuppose that people can only be fully ‘represented’ by someone who shares their gender, class, occupation, ethnicity, language, etc.” This implies the existence of

‘mirror’ or ‘descriptive’ representation as an attractive model for the wide scope of disadvantaged societal groups. However, this model has its positive and negative sides.

The crucial notion of ‘descriptive representation’ states that representatives are in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent. This does not mean that representatives share only physical characteristics but also *experience, preferences* and particular *perspective*¹⁰ (Phillips, 1995: 137). Social perspective is especially important because it entails a specific point of view about certain social processes that group members share among them. Representation by the members of the group gives more confidence that interests will be adequately presented in the legislature. According to Mansbridge (1999: 629), it is expected that these representatives will be more loyal to their electorate. This is particularly important for ‘disadvantaged groups’,¹¹ such as national or ethnic minorities. The matter of descriptive representation is enhanced in at least four contexts in which disadvantaged groups gain advantages. Jane Mansbridge (1999: 628) addresses these contexts, and she explains that: “individuals who in their own backgrounds mirror some of the more frequent experiences and outward manifestations of belonging to the group”. These four¹² contexts operate on two different grounds when considering substantive representation of interests- on the one hand it enhances the substantive representation of interests by improving the quality of deliberation. On the other hand, it promotes goods that are unrelated to substantive representation (Mansbridge, 1999).

¹⁰ The term ‘perspective’ is also used in other circumstances. It could be inferred that one does not have to be physically equal to its constituency, but still to be seen as an adequate representative. As long as there is a shared perspective, visible characteristics could be neglected for a moment. I would argue that representation could be considered as acceptable, if the representative is entirely familiarized with the conditions in which constituency live.

¹¹ It could also be inferred for the representation of women, but with the remark that one cannot be completely certain in claiming that women can be labeled as other minorities. However, the interests of women are neglected to the high extent and thus seen as underrepresented group. Therefore, the “mirror” representation is usually directed towards women interests, as well.

¹² The four contexts are: group mistrust, uncrystallized interests, historical subordination and low de facto legitimacy (Mansbridge, 1996:628).

However, this model has been opposed by many scholars for several reasons. According to Iris Young (1997: 354), physical similarities say little about representative's action. Having one mentally-disabled person in the legislative body does not guarantee that the interest of that particular group is substantively represented. In line with this, interests of different groups are constantly overlapping, which explains away the unnecessary role of the 'mirror' representation. One of the crucial arguments against descriptive representation comes from Hanna Pitkin (1967:72) in her "Concepts of Political Representation". Namely, she argues that one of the essential features of having a descriptive representative is the underlined problem of action. Identifying descriptive representation as the "standing for" something or someone absent, she argued that there is no activity involved in the process of representation (Pitkin, 1967:81). The most common criticism of descriptive representation explains away the capability of descriptive representatives to perform a substantive representation of interests. If we take into consideration mentally-disabled persons, their presence within the electorate does not assure representation of their interests. There is no justification for declining non-descriptive representatives if they are more capable of promoting interests of the electorate. This criticism rests on the confusion of two forms¹³ of descriptive representation- microcosmic and selective. The first form is achieved by the randomizing process of selection¹⁴. Pitkin (1967: 73) addresses the issue with microcosmic representation, arguing that selection by lot would be best calculated to produce a microcosm of the entire constituency. Nevertheless, there is a strong likelihood that choosing the members of the assembly at random from the population would produce less talented, uncommitted and incapable legislators. On the other hand, selective groups acquire higher extent of descriptive

¹³ Jane Mansbridge describes these forms in her article: "Should Blacks represent Blacks and women represents women" (Mansbridge, 1999).

¹⁴ The further terms used for the purpose are either "selection by lottery" or "controlled random sample".(Pitkin, 1967)

representation from the institutional design than they would be able to get from the existing electoral systems. This form operates¹⁵ in a way to bring proportions of certain groups in the legislature closer to the percentage in the population. As long as both forms are considered, there is a gap in understanding which group is to be considered for representation and what are the chances in producing skilled and talented representatives. Moreover, the dilemma of group selection raises further implications on the account of descriptive representation. The tendency towards essentialism is one of greatest costs of the selective descriptive representation (Mansbridge, 1999: 637). It somehow appears natural that each group requires a representation by its members. Anne Phillips (1995: 53) captured this importance, commenting: “*With the best will in the world, people are not good in imagining themselves in somebody else’s shoes*”. Essentialism presupposes that there is a specific nature that binds each member of the descriptive group together, sharing a common interest. This is a dilemma due to the reason that their interests (in general) are continuously dispersed as interests of any other group. The argument would perfectly fit within the realm of an ethnic/national minority representation. It is mostly the issue of trust when issues of a minority group are in question.

1.2. On Roma Integration

The Roma minority is the largest and most marginalized of all culturally diverse groups in Europe. The minority numbers approximately 12 million people with the highest concentration¹⁶

¹⁵ Mansbridge discusses two versions of “selective form”- drawing geographical district lines and setting aside number of seats for members of specific descriptive group (Mansbridge, 1999).

¹⁶ According to official data from 2005, Roma are mostly concentrated in Romania (535,140), Bulgaria (370,908), Hungary (205,720), Serbia (108,193), Slovakia (98,170) and Macedonia (53,879). Unfortunately, the countries do not have updated data, and the estimated number of Roma population is much higher than it is presented: Romania (1,500,000), Bulgaria (638, 162-815,313), Hungary (520,000-650,000), Serbia (250,000-500,000), Slovakia

in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Macedonia (Jenne, 2000: 189). Nevertheless, these countries cannot provide reliable data for the minority. This lack in official documentation significantly hampers social inclusion of the Roma for at least two reasons. First, state officials are unable to target a group that is discriminated against without obtaining the most accurate data about the group. On the other hand, the national governments need more reliable data to preserve culturally diverse groups such as the Roma.

Central and Eastern Europe were for a long under communism, which presupposed equality for all under the same circumstances. Especially this equal treatment for all citizens rather went in line with assimilation than integration of marginalized groups (mostly ethnic minorities). This destiny somewhat befell the entire Roma community across the CEE region. After the collapse of communism, Romani communities succeeded in establishing a stronger political voice and struggle for their rights. This could be traced from several perspectives. First, the post-communist period brought possibilities for establishment of independent organizations and political parties that were constantly demanding recognition from the government. This is due to civil rights and freedoms that took place after the years in crisis (Molnar, Schafft; 2003). Having this in mind, ethnic groups were given an opportunity to express freely their identity, which previously was not the case. Nevertheless, even under these new circumstances, Romani groups still face severe exclusion. One of the explanations could be found in socio-economic dislocation, which just emphasized scapegoating and reinforcement of stereotypes and prejudices (Jenne, 2000). This resulted in an inability to defend own interests against the governments that were in many cases showing open hostility towards the Roma. Nevertheless, after 1989 and massive migration of

(320,000-380,000), Macedonia (135,490). Source: "No Data-No Progress", Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015; Roma Initiatives, Open Society Foundation, June 2010. Available online: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/no-data-no-progress-20100628.pdf>;

Roma throughout Europe, external organizations made a significant impact on the governments' behavior in favor of the status of Roma. Namely, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) launched a number of initiatives to investigate and monitor the status of Roma in the region. Once the minority became aware of the international support, the negotiation with their home governments became easier (Jenne, 2000: 190). Furthermore, this gave a power to Romani elites in expressing group demands more effectively. It also resulted in heightening of organizational capacity, basing it on the group identity.

However, there are at least two factors that largely burden this. It could be argued that the socio-economic position of Roma within the wider society is significantly different than it is in the cases of other minorities. Moreover, the fact that the Roma minority do not have a motherland (except for historical claims about India) is what highly reinforces this problem. Because Roma have been rather perceived as second class citizens, it appears extremely hard for them to enter the elite circles and engage deeper in high politics. The status of subordination hinders any possibility for enhancing the societal position of the Roma. This implies that the Roma have small chances to properly voice their interests and negotiate with the government. This significantly aggravates their odds to overcome entrenched discrimination and scapegoating. Communism has significantly impacted the expression of Romani identity, which furthermore resulted in a weak sense of belonging to the group (Friedman, 2002). Needless to say, Roma substantially lack adequate political organization (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013) that hinders voicing of their interests. Some of the scholarly work has focused on the active participation and representation in the society as a 'pathway to progress' (Müller, Jovanović, 2010). The fact that Romani politics is poorly organized within the state realm just makes this process of integration and recognition harder. What has an influence here is the character of the liberal democracy,

political culture, political history and the engagement within the International realm. Therefore, the post-communist countries demonstrate that Roma form specific type of parties that operates only before the elections (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013). The Roma representatives are often seen as ‘symbolic’ figures within the legislature because their position does not say much about their actions. Thus, what Roma truly lack is a capable leadership that could demonstrate substantial representation of interest (Ibid, 2013).

Chapter 2: Methodology

This thesis has been modeled in a form of qualitative research. It is not written as a parallel comparison, but as an analysis of one major case. The second case has been taken into account to contrast existing model of the first case. This chapter presents the kind of data collected for examination. It also discusses analysis of the interviews and limitations of the research.

2.1. Data collection

To present how Roma are integrated in the society, the research refers to written and interview data. Analysis is based on various types of information collected in a period of one year (May 2012- May 2013). The written data refer to: official information (The Constitution, peace agreements, state reports) and secondary data sources (books, academic journals, Internet search). The interview data refers to interviews conducted to obtain information about the cases.

Official data give an insight into the legal provisions extracted from the Constitutions (1991, 2002), Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001) and Legal provisions on national minorities: The *Law on Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities of Serbia* (2002); *Law on the National Council of National Minorities* (2009). The advantage of collected secondary data lies in a quality of study and arguments of the most influential researches in the field. The period of the Yugoslav dissolution (1991) and Roma integration within the multicultural societies (Macedonia and Serbia) are studied using mainly secondary data sources. The work of the key scholars discussing break-up of Yugoslavia was accessed from the Library of the Faculty of Political

Science in Belgrade (May-August 2012). Some of the literature¹⁷ was found in the courses “*Political Sociology*” (Orlović, 2008) and “*Foreign policy of Serbia*” (Simić, 2008). These data were necessary to enhance understanding of the specific Yugoslav context regarding minority groups.

The literature on the status of Roma was accessed from the CEU Library and CEU on-line catalogues (September 2012- May 2013). A significant contribution to the literature came from the readers¹⁸ of one of the courses held by Professor Julia Szalai: “*Sociological Approaches to Race and Ethnicity: Roma in Central Europe*”, and referred to (e.g., Jenne 2000, Molnár&Schafft 2003, Fraser 2003, Parsons 1965, Szalai 2002, Yogesh 1999). In order to look into the scholarly work on political representation, the research refers to concepts of Anne Phillips (1995), Hanna Pitkin (1967), Iris Young (1997, 2000), Jane Mansbridge (1999, 2003). The literature is accessed within the course¹⁹ “*Political representation*” held by Professor Lea Sgier.

Secondary sources specifying Roma integration are studies using mainly database of the Open Society Foundations (henceforth: OSF). OSF, in cooperation with the department of Roma Initiatives Office (henceforth: RIO), has numerous published works on Roma issues. One of the recently published books named “*From Victimhood to Citizenship- the Path of Roma Integration*” was launched within the framework of RIO OSF. The book launch²⁰ was organized in a form of a debate between the key writers and contributors to the work.

Significant literature on Roma integration was obtained from one of the interviewees, Eben Friedman. For the purpose of this research, Mr. Friedman shared some of his works with the

¹⁷ The literature belongs to the readings, which were parts of the course requirements within the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade.

¹⁸ The course took place in winter semester 2012/2013 within the Nationalism department at the CEU;

¹⁹ The course was held in winter semester 2011/2012 within the Political Science department at the CEU;

²⁰ The book launch took place in one of the offices of RIO OSF, on 9th of May 2013. The key speakers on the event were: András Biro, Nicolae Gheorghe and Željko Jovanović. The moderator was Rita Izsák.

thesis's author. The most relevant materials for this research were found in Mr. Friedman's work: "*Roma Integration in Slovakia and Macedonia- Comparative analysis*".²¹ Another book that was used for the research was "*Electoral System Design and Minority Representation in Slovakia and Macedonia*". It gave a significant contribution to the understanding of electoral mechanisms regarding the Roma. Another piece of writing that Mr. Friedman shared is "*Political Integration of Roma in post-communist Macedonia*". This work gives an adequate overview of the main steps of Roma Integration.

There are two types of interviews conducted for the purpose of the research. There are three unsystematic and mostly exploratory interviews made to point out the key issues of Roma integration in Macedonia. Some of the respondents also commented on the process in Serbia. The first respondent was Mr. Edis Hasan, the consultant of the Minister without Portfolio in the government of Macedonia. This respondent was of the great importance because it gave a significant insight about the Rom parties in Macedonia. The second interviewee was the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Labour and Social policy in Macedonia, Mr. Ibrahim Ibrahimi. It was also important to have an interview with the Deputy Minister because the author was not allowed to conduct an interview with the Minister without Portfolio Mr. Neždet Mustafa. The interview with Mr. Ibrahimi contributed the discussion about the Roma Decade. The third exploratory interview was conducted with Mr. Senad Mustafov who is a Country facilitator in the Roma Education Fund in Skopje. Mr. Mustafov shared his opinion about the provisions adopted within the Roma Decade.

The second round of interviews was conducted with three respondents in a form of in-depth semi-structured interviews. The first interviewee was Mr. Redžep Ali Čupi, who is working

²¹ This work is done in Macedonian language. The full title is: "*Интеграција на Ромите во Словачка и во Македонија, компаративна анализа*."

Directorate for Promotion and Development of the Languages in the Education for the Ethnic Minorities, Ministry of Education and Science in Skopje. The second interviewee was Mr. Eben Friedman, an academic researcher who has been analysing Roma issues in both countries- Macedonia and Serbia. Most of his academic contribution is based on Macedonia. Nevertheless, he is also knowledgeable about the Roma issues in Serbia. The last respondent was Mr. Željko Jovanović, the current deirector of the Roma Initatives department at the Open Society Foundations in Budapest. The interviewee contributed to the discussion about the Serbian Roma integration and periods that were crucial for the minority in Serbia. The reponces of the second interviewee (Friedman) were used in both cases- Macedonia and Serbia. The author made this choice because of the substantial input that Mr. Friedman put in analysing both countries. These interviews were analyzed in accordance to main concepts suggested from the theoretical chapter.

2.2. Limitations of the analysis

There are two limitations of the research. First, theoretical framework suggests that international factor significantly impacted the status of minority groups. The author of the research takes only Roma Decade as an influential factor, which shows no substantial results at the end. Moreover, the Decade begins in 2005 which seems less appropriate because the analysis starts with the period when the Decade was not even planned.

Another limitation comes from the interviews. Exploratory interviews were conducted only in the first case (Macedonia). The author assumed that another set of exploratory interviews was not necessary for Serbia. While analyzing the cases, it appeared that some interviews were also important for the second case (Serbia).

Chapter 3: The Political Integration of Roma in post-Yugoslav Macedonia and Serbia

This chapter discusses the political integration of Roma in two post-Yugoslav states, Macedonia and Serbia. First, it explains the general context of Yugoslavia and position that Roma enjoyed after the collapse of the federation. This chapter is divided into two main sub-chapters that analyze two cases. Each of these sub-chapters encompasses specific discussion.

Macedonia and Serbia once belonged to Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The events of 1989 did eventually also led to the dissolution of the Yugoslavian federation in 1991, when most of Yugoslav republics²² continued on separate paths. While Serbia, together with Montenegro formed the (so-called) Third Yugoslavia, Macedonia declared its full independence²³ in 1991. It could be said that, in both cases, multiculturalism started to be present from the moment of dissolution.

Like in other CEE countries, until the early nineties, communism prevailed as a leading ideology. Equality among the citizens was one of its core values, which implied no advanced recognition of certain groups. Because of the complex character of Yugoslavia, the categories²⁴ were defined as: nations (or peoples), nationalities (or national minorities) and ethnic groups (Friedman, 2007, 9). Because of their stateless nature and nomadic way of life, Roma were

²² Yugoslavia (1945-1991) was made of six republics: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia.

²³ After the referendum, Macedonia declared its independence on the 8th of September 1991 (Simić, 2008)

²⁴ According to Friedman (2007, 9), the first category corresponds to people who belong to the majority and do not have a state other than Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (the six constitutive units); the second belongs to the citizens who have a state, outside the federation (Hungarians, Romanians, Turks, Rusins and Ukrainians); the third category encompasses people who lack in sufficient concentration, national categorization, self-awareness and practice a sort of nomadic life (e.g. Jews, Vlachs and Roms).

included into the third group. The state gave many credits to equality in order to achieve higher level of unity between the citizens. This had at least two impacts on Roma. First, they saw no advantage in declaring neither their ethnicity nor identity in front of the state. The negative side of this constellation implies that many minority groups have weakened their identity ties. They lost a great deal of language proficiency, cultural and traditional practices. Today, the results of this are seen in the lack of self-awareness and a sense of belonging to the group. On the other hand, Roma enjoyed the same scope of rights like any other group within the country. This was especially present under the regime of Josip Broz Tito²⁵, when citizens gained substantial advantages of economic arrangements (minimal wage was guaranteed for all Yugoslav citizens) and good international reputation of Yugoslavia (Interview Jovanović, Appendix). The federation was “an excellent place to live in, and all culturally diverse groups did not have to struggle for any kind targeted rights, because these were guaranteed for all.” (Interviews Jovanović, Friedman; Appendix)

When communist political structures were replaced by more liberal discourse, former Yugoslav republic faced a new multicultural setting. Along the line, the essence of political culture substantially shifted from the communist to democratic values and principles. The post-Yugoslav republics were left unprepared in front of incoming process of democratization. Therefore, the consolidation of democracy did not show same results in every segment of life. In cases of Macedonia and Serbia, the starting point of democratization was not the same. While Macedonia was struggling for its international recognition, Serbia was deeply involved into the severe turmoil in Bosnia. Even though, the country did not have an active role in the war, its

²⁵ Josip Broz Tito was a ruler of Yugoslavia for almost 40 years (Simić, 2008);

presence had a serious impact on the further societal development²⁶. As well as this, the former case started with progressive democratic reforms, while the later kept with a strong nationalistic discourse that substantially prevented consolidation of democratic principles. In such situation, the status of Roma was significantly worsening. Not only did the legally unrecognized status constrain them in demanding rights, but they also experienced severe discrimination and marginalization. Nevertheless, the engagement of international community impacted this process, by pressing the governments to implement suitable mechanisms for minorities. In this manner, national governments had to include the Roma into the category of national minority. International community believed that extending the rights for Roma would contribute to their social and political integration (Kymlicka, 2007). While Macedonia categorized Roma as ‘national minority’ already in 1991, Serbia failed to do so until 2002. The status of national minorities meant a wider scope of rights for culturally diverse groups. As it was in Marshall’s (1950) categorization of rights, the national minorities gain civic, political and social rights, which contribute to the status of full citizens within the wider society.

Even though, both countries have a multicultural character, their culturally diverse groups did not have the same treatment in Macedonia as they had in Serbia. There are several factors that influenced this treatment: the pace of democratization and the outcomes of ethnic conflicts. While Macedonia started with democratic transition in the first years of independence. Serbia, on the other hand, had to pass through dramatically long transitional period that lasted until the breakup of the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milosevic. It was not until the regime change in 2000 (October 5th), when Serbia undertook drastic measures for the implementation of democratic

²⁶ Serbia was long under the burden of sanctions, which substantially prevented it to impose more radical reforms in the society. As well as this, the authoritarian regime slowed down the democratic reforms until 2000. With the fall of the authoritarian regime, this year brought substantial democratic reforms.

values. As well as this, one of the crucial drawbacks for the case was in 1999, when the country was deeply involved into the war in Kosovo. In this period, international forces interfered in the turmoil and undertook severe action²⁷ against the country that substantially mobilized all important processes. The outcome of this process did not bring any substantial changes for minority groups in Serbia. Their status was, in fact, worsening. For Roma, these events were even more disadvantageous due to the large number of immigrants who fled Kosovo. Because of these specific circumstances, their actual number could not be captured because of the lack in personal documentation. Therefore, the state officials could not adequately target this group, because they obtain reliable data of their numbers. In terms of political integration, Romani parties exist in a great number. However, they usually operate right before the elections. Poor presence of these political actors, in between the elections, makes them a less important political factor (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013). In terms of representation, the number of Romani representatives demonstrates numerically poor results. It was not before 2007 that Romani representatives entered the parliament for the first time. However, their presence within the legislature is rather ‘symbolic’ (Pitkin, 1965) and does not demonstrate any substantial outcome.

On the other hand, Macedonia was a witness to a similar scenario with its ethnic groups. Namely, the juncture point for the country was in 2001, when ethnic conflict erupted between Albanians and Macedonians. While Serbia did not address special rights and provisions for its minorities after the conflict in 1999, Macedonia has empowered the status of minorities with the set of provisions that came as an outcome of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. These provisions have significantly enriched the rights of Roma, assigning special measures for their societal

²⁷ The Kosovo war started in 1998, and has continued with a severe bombing of Serbia. These happenings took place on the 24th of March, 1999 and lasted until the 15th of June. The Serbian infrastructure was destroyed, the government and national parliament entirely almost paralyzed. It took almost 10 years for Serbia to recover from the outcomes of this war (Simić, 2008: 195);

inclusion. In this manner, Kymlicka (2007) explained the concept of ‘targeted rights’, assigning them to the specific group of people. These rights serve to empower the status of citizenship for some groups. The Agreement in Ohrid was especially designed for this purpose- to target certain communities²⁸ in Macedonia. The outcomes of these arrangements resulted in the high rate of employed Roma in public administration and in the other governmental branches. Nevertheless, the Agreement did not have any impact on the representation of Roma within the Macedonian Parliament. However, the number of Romani representatives is much higher²⁹ than in any other former Yugoslav republic. Development of Romani parties is also higher than in other republics.

The involvement of international community is traceable in both cases. Until 2005, the countries from the Western Balkan demonstrated extremely poor results in dealing with Roma issues. Thus, international authorities launched an affirmative action to overcome the subordinated status of the Roma. The action is called ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion’ and lasts until 2015.

The following subchapters provide more substantial discussion about these cases. Based on the theoretical conceptualization, the subchapters are divided into three sections that explain the level of political integration of Roma in the cases of observation.

3.1. The model of Roma integration in Macedonia

Macedonia is among the first countries that seceded from Yugoslavia. It could be said that the process of democratization went in a good direction, renouncing the residues of the communist

²⁸ The term “communities” is used in the Agreement to target the most numerous ethnic groups in Macedonia, without an indication of their legal status (national/ethnic minorities). In this manner, the creators of the Agreement wanted to equalize all minority groups in the country. More info at: http://faq.macedonia.org/politics/framework_agreement.pdf (Last access: 20/05/2013);

²⁹ In Croatia, there is one representative that represents the interest of even twelve minority groups; In the Parliaments of Montenegro, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina there are no Romani representatives.

past. Macedonia was one of those multi-culturally and ethnically divided societies that needed to find suitable mechanisms to deal with its minorities. Roma are one of the four largest minorities in Macedonia, numbering 53,879³⁰ people or 2.6% of the overall population. Unlike in other regional countries, Roma successfully found a path for reaching the status of citizenship in Macedonia. They substantially benefited from various legal mechanisms (mostly from the Constitution) that recognized them as a national minority. This was an important step into reach the equality in front the majority. Nevertheless, it was not before the severe ethnic-conflict in 2001 that helped Roma to significantly improve their status. This conflict resulted in upgrading rights for ethnic Albanians, which resulted in advancing position for other minorities in the country. Roma also benefited from the conflict because their status as national minorities was previously recognized. As Kymlicka (1995) indicates, the proper categorization of minorities significantly empowers the status and decrease the burden of misrecognition. The Roma embraced certain scope of rights that facilitated their path towards the societal integration.

The model of Roma integration in the Macedonian society is different than in the other countries of the region. The country of 2 million inhabitants, with a complex ethnic structure, has succeeded to integrate almost all ‘communities’ within its society. In this respect, Roma have been constantly represented in the legislature by the members of community. The state has established a special Ministry for coordinating the Roma inclusion. According to the last state report³¹ in 2011, Roma numbered 1304 people, currently employed in the institutional organs. This number is significantly higher than in the previous year, when 576 Roma were employed

³⁰ According to the official data from 2005, Roma account 2.6% of the total population. Source: “No Data-No Progress”, Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015; Roma Initiatives, Open Society Foundation, June 2010. Available online: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/no-data-no-progress-20100628.pdf>;

³¹ Annual report; National attorney, Republic of Macedonia; Skopje 2011

within the numerous state authorities. Also, since 1990, Romani minority has formed five political parties that actively participate in elections. Furthermore, the Macedonian Parliament (Sobranie) has been capturing members of the minority ever since the country became independent. This means that Roma have been constantly present in the legislature for twenty years. This is still hardly imaginable in any other regional country. Nevertheless, it is still puzzling how Roma achieved this high level of integration.

Neither is the presence of Romani representatives a new trend nor an ad-hoc situation, but a complex model that has been evolving at least fifteen years. It appears worth of inquiring the variables that contributed to political integration of the minority in the country. Furthermore, it seems that political representatives are not just pawns that *stand for* (Pitkin, 1965) their constituency, but also perform the action that contributes to the substantial representation of their interest. Even though Macedonian electoral design somehow hampers minority representation (because of the number of constituencies and closed lists), Roma have been succeeding in entering the legislature from the very onset of independence (1991). One of the explanatory factors for this occurrence is the fact that Macedonian Roma has a self-governing municipality, Shuto Orizari, which is a unique case where Roma are actually in majority. Main political actors (parties) come from this municipality and substantially aggregate votes for parliamentary elections.

Moreover, the main stages in the hierarchy of decision-making are held by the members of the Roma minority group. *Table 1* demonstrates the structure of decision-making bodies, which Roma currently occupy. This shows that Roma have a place within the Macedonian government (Minister without Portfolio- a coordinative body for the Roma Decade). On the Ministerial level, Roma are present within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (a working body of the Roma

Decade). The Ministry also presents a Decade Implantation Unit. The level of Local government demonstrates several local Roma Decade teams with numerous Roma officers. Finally, as the table indicates, Roma civil society encompasses NGO Networks and Roma Information Centers. According to the table, results are visible and measurable, at least on the institutional level. High number of employed Roma within the state branches could indicate the status of full citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995). Roma, as a hard case for every regional country, do not have capacities to achieve this level of integration without a proper assistance of the state authorities. Nevertheless, in Macedonia, there is also a substantial influence of other minorities. The ethnic conflict in 2001 resulted in a higher scope of rights for most of the minority groups. Dominance of one minority group has clearly resulted in extending the scope of rights for other groups. Thus, the level of the integration depends on the character of multicultural society and power sharing between other minority groups (Interview Ali Čupi, Appendix). There is no similar example when one of the disadvantaged groups contributed from such power sharing as it was in Macedonia.

Government	Minister without Portfolio (Roma Decade National Coordinator)	
	Coordinative Body	
Ministries	Working Body	Minister of Labor and Social Policy
		Decade Implementation Unit
Local Government	Local Roma Decade Teams	
	Roma Officers	
Roma Civil Society	Roma NGO Networks	
	Roma Information Centers	

Table 1: institutional arrangement for the Roma resulting from the current public policies³²

³² *Chronic Deception: A Brief Analysis of Roma Policies in Macedonia*; Nadir Redzepi; January 2011; Online source: <http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/General%20Resources/Chronic%20Deception%20A%20Brief%20Analysis%20of%20Roma%20Policies%20in%20Macedonia.pdf> (Last access: 27/01/2013)

The analysis is divided into three categories. The first represents a discussion of the status of national minorities and what kind of impact it had on Roma. It encompasses two in-depth interviews, which serve to enrich the dialog with literature. It also includes another three exploratory interviews that serve as background information. The third category presents a discussion about international involvement in the process of political integration.

3.1.1. Defining minority groups: Extending the rights for minorities

Redžep Ali Čupi, Romani activists and current director of the Directorate for Promotion and Development of the Languages for the Education of Ethnic Minorities, indicates that Macedonian Roma has significantly empowered their position in many fields. He discusses that Roma are not ‘oppressed’ in a sense that their cultural rights are neglected (Interview Ali Čupi, Appendix). However, they could be rather characterized as ‘marginalized’ because their social and economic status is significantly lower than in comparison to other minorities. Eben Friedman (Interview Friedman, Appendix), an expert on Roma issues for Easter Europe, indicates that cultural diversity of Roma has been respected from the start of independence: the specificities of the Roma culture were of an equal value with other minority groups at that time. In the sense, Phillip’s (1995:40) conceptualization of ‘oppressed’ groups does not really apply to the Macedonian Roma

There are two crucial moments in the recent Macedonia history that significantly contribute to identification of the Roma as a societal group. Both of these periods are discussed by the respondents and the literature on Romani integration in Macedonia. The first moment was 1991, when the new Constitution of Macedonia officially recognized the Roma as a national minority-

it was the first Constitution in the world to do so (Müller, Jovanović). Redžep Ali Čupi states: “This was a unique provision, due to the fact that Roma were mostly perceived as travelers and nomadic people who do not hold any kind of rights.” (Interview Ali Čupi, Appendix) The minority needed to empower its status (achieved by the new and unique categorization) which gave an opportunity for the ‘peer-to-peer’ politics (Fraser, 2003:30). Therefore, as opportunities were officially equalized (Parsons, 1965) for Roma as for any other minority, their rights found a suitable ground for implementation. In this manner, the category of ‘national minority’ was an integral part of ‘targeted rights’ (Kymlicka, 2007) that are directed towards advancing certain disadvantaged societal groups.

The second crucial period for advancing status of the Roma was in 2001, when the Ohrid Framework Agreement was adopted to end the ethnic conflict between Macedonians and Albanians. The agreement substantially extended the rights and freedoms for national minorities. Because the Roma were previously identified as a national minority in 1991, this provision was equally referring to them. Being affected by the war in Kosovo (1999), the country got involved in a serious armed conflict between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in February 2001. The conflict lasted until August 2001, when representatives of two sides signed the agreement in Ohrid. Roma significantly benefited from the conflict and have strengthened basis for implementation of wider scope of rights (Interview Ali Čupi, appendix). The respondent pointed out that power sharing between majority and the most dominant minority (Albanians) resulted in special provisions for the status of “other”³³ minorities (Ibid, appendix). Article 4 of the Agreement guarantees the presence of minorities in the political sphere indicating “non-

³³ Macedonian government adopted fifteen changes to the Constitution in November 2001. The changes are mostly referred to the minorities: Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and Serbs.

discrimination and equitable representation”³⁴. Moreover, it is specially guaranteed by the Article 4.2 that “Laws regulating employment in public administration will include measures to assure equitable representation of communities in all central and local public bodies and at all levels of employment within such bodies, while respecting the rules concerning competence and integrity that govern public administration.” Eben Friedman highlighted the outcomes of these Articles to the status of the Roma. He explained that these legal provisions have imposed a proportional distribution of the places within the state authorities. In this manner, Roma entered into several Ministries³⁵ and public administration (Interview Friedman, Appendix). Also, the outcome of public policies addressed the ‘Ministry without Portfolio’ especially for Roma. Socially excluded groups need support from public policies in order to overcome their disadvantaged position (Young, 2000). However, based on the responses from the interviews, this position is rather ‘symbolic’ (Pitkin, 1965; Phillips, 1995). It demonstrates no substantial contribution to Romani community.

3.1.2. Development of Roma political parties and their mirroring within the legislature

The democratization of the Republic of Macedonia created a space for political integration of its minorities within the multicultural society. Roma parties started to emerge since the independence of the country (1991). From 1990 to today, the minority has formed all in all eight political parties. The constant presence in the political life of the country indicates the importance of these Romani parties as ‘peer-to-peer’ actors in mainstream politics (Fraser, 2003). However,

³⁴ http://faq.macedonia.org/politics/framework_agreement.pdf (Last access: 22/05/2013);

³⁵ One of the most influential Ministries is the Ministry of Labor and Social policy, where the Roma occupy a place of the Deputy Minister and Coordinator for Projects. Also, there are many Roma employed as public administrators (Interview Ibrahim, Appendix).

it could be argued that being present and having a substantial action on the decision-making process are two different notions. This is what Phillips (1995:36) indicates as one of the ambiguities in her '*Politics of presence*'. Namely, there is a difference when the group is treated as equal and when it is an exact resemblance of society. Eben Friedman discusses this issue by saying that Roma political parties "bring a great deal of votes for the mainstream parties"... "But, apart from that, they are not perceived as dramatically influential political factor between two elections" (Interview Friedman, Appendix). Romani political parties have been participating in the political process since 1991. This is easily traceable by looking into the structure of the Macedonian Parliament in the past twenty years. As Kymlicka (2007:241) previously indicated 'active participation' implies that participation of the groups should demonstrate a certain effect. In the case of Roma, the outcomes are more than visible. Furthermore, their constant presence in the legislature changes the general image of the Roma in the region.

The text bellow presents descriptive data about the Romani political parties. *Figure 1* gives the time line of development of the Romani parties from 1991 to 2006. The text resumes with a discussion about political representation of the Roma from 1991 to 2011. Table 2 demonstrates presence of the Romani representatives in seven election terms.

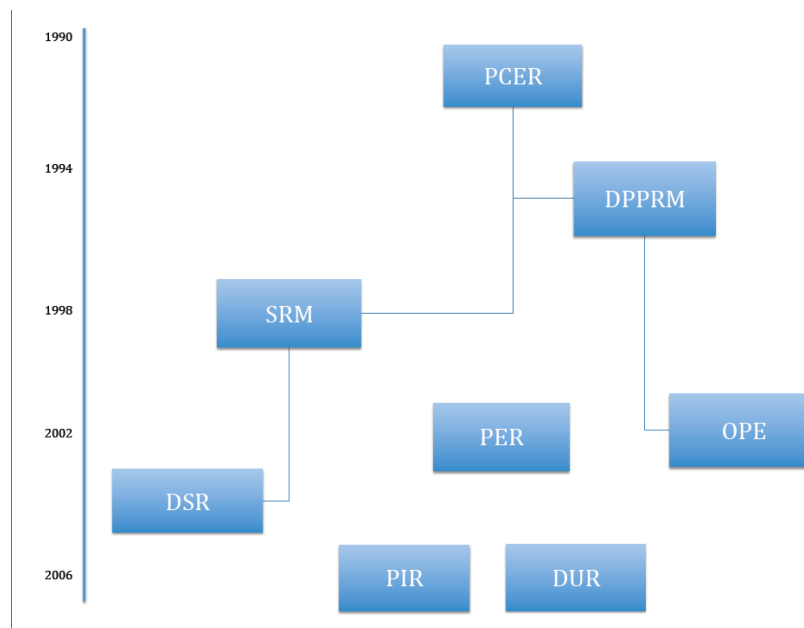


Figure 1: Development of Romani parties from 1990 to 2006

Note: Names are presented in abbreviations

1991. The first years of independent Macedonia brought surprising results in many ways. Thus, this period presents the crucial period for political organization of the Roma. The first Romani political party in Macedonia, "Party for Full Emancipation of Roma" (henceforth: PCERM), was founded in 1991 by Mr. Faik Abdi. Two of his first collaborators were Mr. Neždet Mustafa and Mr. Šaban Saliu, who were appointed as general secretaries of the party. As it will be noted in the text bellow, both of these political actors will eventually form new political parties. This will significantly destabilize the unity among the most important Romani politicians. In the same year (1991), independent Macedonia held its first elections. On the behalf of PCERM, Faik Abdi was elected as a Member of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.³⁶ For the Roma electorate, it was the beginning of successful mirroring within the legislative branch. It

³⁶ More information on: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=3D515E1DA2319B44871AB2AB83AA3761> (Last access 30/04/2013);

was hardly imaginable in that period, that a member of Romani community would succeed to win a seat in Sobranie. This fact put the Romani issues back on the agenda of Macedonian politics. Nevertheless, the proceeding years demonstrated certain disagreements among the party's members. This later resulted in a formation of the new Romani party "Democratic Progressive Party of the Roma in Macedonia" (henceforth: DPPRM)³⁷. The president of the party was one of the closest partners of Faik Abdi- Mr. Neždet Mustafa.

1994. Surprisingly, in the next election term, Romani electorate showed a great deal of alliance. This resulted in the presence of two parliamentary members in Macedonian Sobranie³⁸. Mr. Faik Abdi again won a seat in the legislature, but now accompanied by another member, Mr. Amdi Bajram. The next term again brought disagreement between the leadership of PCERM. Therefore, in 1998 the third Romani political party "Union of Roma of Macedonia" (henceforth: SRM) emerged from PCERM. The former member of PCERM was now a president of the new party (Mr. Amdi Bajram). This meant that the initial Romani party (PCERM) broke into several streams. All of these new parties were founded by the former members of the first Romani party.

1998. Mr. Amdi Bajram won a parliamentary seat for the second time on behalf of his newly established party³⁹. In the mandate 1998 – 2002, the leading coalition of VMRO-DPMNE⁴⁰ won the elections and formed a coalition with the DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians). Macedonia in 1998 changed the electoral design from majoritarian to mixed electoral system. From all the minority parties, SRM was the only one which achieved to win a seat in the Parliament. Amdi

³⁷ More information on: <http://vlada.mk/clenovi/nezdet-mustafa> (Last access 30/04/2013)

³⁸ More information on: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=FC90D9689809BC4EBB2563F21D8312E5>

³⁹ More information on: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=20EE8BBFE4829E44A805F5F607473002>

⁴⁰ VMRO- DPMNE (Macedonian: Внатрешна македонска револуционерна организација – Демократска партија за македонско национално единство) - Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization- Democratic Party For Macedonian National Unity.

Bajram, the leader of the party was the first and still current leader of the party. The party was in the opposition and this was a great success for the party and for the Romani electorate⁴¹.

2002. The next several terms were accompanied with extremely contradicting party coalitions. In the 2002 elections, Macedonian party- SDSM⁴² created the government with the largest Albanian party in Macedonia- DUI⁴³. This coalition has also included minority parties other than Albanians. In the same year, another Romani party emerged ("Party for Roma Unity"), with the president Mr. Alil Mevail.⁴⁴ This party firstly appeared at the local elections in 2005 in the municipality of Tetovo. Even though, the party entered to the electoral competition, it did not succeed to enter the Parliament. In the same year the party of Mr. Neždet Mustafa (DPPRM) was renamed into "United Party for Emancipation" (OPE)⁴⁵. Together with the party of Amdi Bajram (SRM), the renamed party of Neždet Mustafa successfully won the seat in Sobranie. Nevertheless, the difference between the two parties was that the party of Mr. Amdi Bajram has independently entered into the electoral competition. When SDSM created the government, Mr. Amdi Bajram decided to join the winning coalition. Therefore, in the term 2002-2006, Macedonia had two Roma representatives within the same coalition that governed the country.⁴⁶ In words of Edis Hasan⁴⁷ (Interview Hasan, Appendix), Mr. Amdi Bajram and Mr. Šaban Saliu were actors of the media scandal in 2003. The outcome of this conflict was the emergence of a new political -"Democratic Forces of Roma" (henceforth: DSR). The new party was led by Mr.

⁴¹ Friedman, Eben, "*Explaining the Political Integration of Minorities: Roms as a Hard case*" University of California, San Diego, (2002);

⁴² SDSM (Macedonian: Социјалдемократски сојуз на Македонија)- The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

⁴³ DUI- Albanian: *Bashkimi Demokratik për Integrim(BDI)*, Macedonian: Демократска унија за интеграција;

⁴⁴ More information on: <http://www.mia.mk/mk/Inside/RenderSingleNews/96/99282258?pageID=5> (Last access: 27/12/2012);

⁴⁵ More information on: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=BF120A9A3A563549B20216BF4E4AB342> (Last access: 27/12/2012);

⁴⁶ More information on: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=C7D00FA6B4FBED43B1564535ABF52411> (Last accessed: 27/12/2012);

⁴⁷ Mr. Edis Hasan is an advisor of the Minister without Portfolio- Neždet Mustafa;

Šaban Saliu.⁴⁸ In 2006 two new Roma political parties were established. In the same year, Mr. Bajram Berat registered the "Party for Integration of Roma"⁴⁹ (henceforth: PIR) while Mr. Adem Arifoski from Prilep formed the "Democratic Union of Roma" (henceforth: DUR)⁵⁰

2006. In the elections in 2006, again VMRO-DPMNE won the elections and created the government with the help of the Democratic Party of Albanians. VMRO-DPMNE created a coalition with several minority parties. The leader of the Union of Roma in Macedonia, Amdi Bajram decided to change the coalition and joined the coalition that VMRO-DPMNE created, while Neždet Mustafa's party remained with the coalition that SDSM created. In 2006 Macedonia again had 2 representatives in the parliament but from different coalitions.⁵¹

2008. Nevertheless, after only two years (2008), the government had to dissolve the Parliament, due to civil disobedience. On the early elections in 2008 both of the Roma political parties joined the coalition that VMRO-DPMNE created. VMRO-DPMNE won the elections and created the government with the help of the Democratic Union for Integration. All of the Roma parties joined the ruling coalition that VMRO-DPMNE created.⁵²

2011. Early elections brought certain changes in the governing coalitions. PCER negotiated for a coalition with SDSM, while all the other Roma parties took part in VMRO-DPMNE's coalition. The coalition of VMRO-DPMNE eventually won the elections and thus created the government for the next mandate until 2015. In this mandate, two Roma representatives from

⁴⁸ More information on: <http://sobranie.mk/?ItemID=C9BA51DC1EA407429324F2340E61E67F> (last accessed: 27.12.2012)

⁴⁹ More information on: <http://pir-mk.blogspot.com/> (last accessed: 27.12.2012)

⁵⁰ More information on: <http://www.netpress.com.mk/mk/vest.asp?id=4685&kategorija=7> (last accessed: 27.12.2012)

⁵¹ More information on: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=071CC8D16057A44599D1717A6C867A46> (last accessed: 27.12.2012)

⁵² More information on: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=49C0D93849BD41449EDC0E0159A0718E> (last accessed: 27.12.2012)

different parties joined different coalitions. While Amdi Bajram from SRM joined the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE's, the second Romani representative (Samka Ibraimoski) from PCER became a part of the opposing coalition.

	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2008	2011
Roma	1	2	1	1	2	1	2

Table 1: Presence of the elected Romani representatives (1991-2011)

From 1990 until the elections in 2002, the Macedonian electoral system operated as a two-round majoritarian system with single-member districts. Between 1998 and 2002, the country even introduced a mixed-system. Out of 120 mandates, 85 were elected by the majority-runoff system in the single-member districts, and the remaining 35 mandates by the newly introduced fixed-list PR (Friedman, 2005: 386). After the adoption of the *Law on Elections of Deputies to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*⁵³ in 2002, the past electoral system was entirely replaced with the pure proportional system. Unlike the previous two electoral designs, which were imposed by the incumbent party, the final one got in place as an outcome of international negotiations. Eben Friedman explains that this solution was primarily supported by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Interview Friedman, Appendix). Presently, Macedonia is divided into six multi-member constituencies, each of which elects twenty deputies. As Pippa Norris (1997) explained, proportional systems are designed to

⁵³ Službeni vesnik na Republika Makedonija (2002b) Zakon za izbor na pratenici vo Sobranieto na Republika Makedonija, *Službeni vesnik na Republika Makedonija*, 42.

accurately reflect the composition of electorate. Redžep Ali Čupi puts this into debate and states that “this electoral design does not give legitimacy to the parties of communities”... “It is favorable only for the incumbent parties in Macedonia.” Furthermore, the constellation is somewhere unfavorable for Roma because it disperses votes of Roma within the districts where Roma are the minority. Parties which are concentrating to one electoral district hardly can achieve significant results in the election process. That is how many favorable parties from the local self-government could not elect a representative (Interview Ali Čupi, Appendix). In line with this, Pippa Norris (1997) indicates that district magnitude plays an important role in representing numerous social groups. In this manner, incumbent party has a motivation to produce more balanced party lists. The problem arises when parties present closed lists with a fixed order of candidates.

Either way, the presence of Romani parties within the Assembly is still higher than in some regional countries. Furthermore, one of the favorable circumstances for the Macedonian Roma is the municipality Shuto Orizari, where Roma constitute a majority of the population⁵⁴. This municipality is unique for being the only in the world that has a Roma mayor, Roma administration and Romani language in the official use. The first mayor was elected in the fall of 1996, with 9000 votes out of 12,330 registered voters (Thelen, 2005: 197). The former mayor is today`s Minister without portfolio (and the leader of OPE), Mr. Neždet Mustafa. Furthermore, he also occupies the position of the National Coordinator on the Roma Decade and the National Roma strategy in the Republic of Macedonia. Thus, it could be concluded that this development is extremely important for the position of the minority. Furthermore, most of Romani parties originated from the municipality of Shuto Orizari where they capture the majority of voters. This

⁵⁴ The Roma from the municipality Shuto Orizari make up to 80% of the population. The literature on Romani issues identify the municipality as a ‘social phenomenon’ (Thelen, 2005: 195)

fact significantly contributes to the understanding how Macedonian Roma succeeded to integrate within the political system. The social phenomenon of Shuto Orizari is a unique case of successful Roma aggregation within a certain multicultural society.

3.1.3. The involvement of the International Community (Decade of Roma Inclusion in Macedonia)

Decade of Roma Inclusion, as an affirmative action that aims at overcoming past injustices against the Roma, did not demonstrate substantial effect on the process of political integration in Macedonia. According to Redžep Ali Čupi, social and economical situation of the Roma did not change much (Interview Ali Čupi, Appendix). From July 2011 to June 2012, Macedonia held the presidency over the Decade. Like in other member states, in compliance with the conclusion from the first Steering committee of the Decade, Macedonia had an obligation to nominate a National Coordinator among the ministers from the Government. The place was given to the Minister without portfolio, Mr. Neždet Mustafa, who coordinated the implementation of the National Strategy for the Roma. Furthermore, the country had to appoint a certain Ministry that will have a task to coordinate and implement activities that have been set forth in the National Action Plans. Before the Decade's starting point, in December 2003 Macedonian Government appointed the Minister for Labor and Social Policy and the Vice Prime Minister for the position of National Coordinator; whereas the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy was responsible for coordinating activities between the line ministries appointed for the implementation of the National Action

Plans. Further developments occurred at the beginning of 2004, when the National Coordination Body⁵⁵ was established in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

At the beginning of 2005 when the Decade officially started, the Government adopted the National Strategy for the Roma. According to the Macedonian Decade Action Plan, in 2008 the government appointed a Minister without Portfolio responsible for the implementation of the Roma Decade. Because Mr. Neždet Mustafa was of the Roma ethnicity, the most important postulate of the Decade: “from the Roma to the Roma” was fulfilled. This is important for at least two reasons. On one hand, it gives a legitimacy of the groups to stand for their interests (Mansbridge, 2003). On the other hand, it decreases the status of subordination (Frazer, 2003). However, from the perspective of Macedonian Roma, the position of the Minister without portfolio does not mean much for their every-day life. “If you ask the Roma what is this Ministry for, they would not know what to answer you!” (Interview Friedman, Appendix) According to Hanna Pitkin (1965), physical characteristics of the representative do not say much about his action. Thus, the existence of this Ministry could be seen as ‘symbolic’ for at least two reasons. First, Roma were given this place as a part of the affirmative action. Macedonian government had to find a mechanism to include the Roma into decision-making process for the Decade. Therefore, after 2015, “this Ministry might not even exist in the Macedonian government.” (Interview Friedman, Appendix) Secondly, the fact that there are no special responsibilities of the Minister without portfolio implies that his position is simply ‘symbolic’ (Phillips 1995; Pitkin 1965).

According to the deputy Minister of Labor and Social Policy (Interview Ibrahim, Appendix), the Decade is highly important step for the future inclusion of Roma into society. The official

⁵⁵ The National Coordination Body was comprised of representatives from the line ministries and Roma NGOs.

aims of the Decade underline four⁵⁶ fields that need further improvement. Education is still one of the most successful fields, improved by the numerous projects⁵⁷ within the Decade. Still, the focus is put on the graduate and post-graduate Romani students. Today, there is a number of 250 Roma enrolled in the university. However, the respondents do not agree that this was the outcome of the Decade. After obtaining the special rights for minorities in 2001 by the adoption of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, Macedonian Roma made a significant progress in many fields. One of those was certainly education. By 2005, Macedonia had numerous educated Roma who were able to engage in writing such an important document as it was the Nation Strategy. Deputy Minister, Ibrahim Ibrahimi, states that National Strategy for the Roma was firstly made by the Macedonian government (Interview Ibrahimi, Appendix). As Decade was actually made for the Roma, the fact that non-Roma wrote the Strategy encountered negative reactions. It reflected potential inability of Roma to write own policies. Thus, the group of Romani experts within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy became involved in the process of writing the Strategy. Completed in these manners, the strategy was the only one which was adopted by the Macedonian Assembly. Since 2005, it remained unchanged.

⁵⁶ Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Policy, Mr. Ibrahim Ibrahimi, states that Roma need empowerment in four main social contexts. Because of the low rate of educated Roma, the Decade has directed most of the projects towards overcoming educational gap of the Roma. He connects low rate of employment with educational gap and claims that low education almost exclusively presupposes high rate of low-skilled workers. Third and fourth context are directed towards improving housing and health. Poor living conditions can substantially endanger human health. (Interview Ibrahimi, Appendix)

⁵⁷ According to the National Coordinator for Macedonia in Roma Educational Fund, Senad Mustafov (Interview Mustafov, Appendix), there are several scholarship programs for the Roma within the Action Plan for Education. One of the most important programs is Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program that brings together students of different profiles (from social to natural sciences).

3.1.4. Comments

The analysis implies that Roma were never categorized as ‘oppressed’ within the Macedonian society. In contrary, they were always included in the main processes of the country. Their categorization of ‘national minority’ was addressed even in the first years of independence (1991). This significantly facilitated their political integration. This might be the outcome of progressive pace of democratization that Macedonia demonstrated in that period. Either way, the country showed respect towards cultural diversity of its citizens.

To support this, data demonstrates that main Roma political actors were present in the mainstream politics from the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Even though they are not substantially important political factor, their presence within the legislature brings different perception about the minority. Electoral designs did not change much the final outcome- Roma were present in the Macedonian Parliament, under the three electoral provisions. In support to multicultural citizenship, this analysis highlights that higher level of cultural diversity tend to show more positive results in social integration of the Roma. Power sharing among other groups substantially facilitated Romani integration. The provisions that came from the Ohrid Framework Agreement substantially extended rights and freedoms for all culturally diverse ‘communities’ in Macedonia.

The international factor did not play a major role in integrating Roma. Constitutions from 1991 and 2002 demonstrate effort of the National government to include Roma within the wider society. Even though they are members of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, their political integration did not depend much from the International factor (at least not in that sense).

International factor played an influential role in guaranteeing provisions of the Ohrid Agreement, but had no substantial role in the affirmative action.

3.2. The model of Roma integration in Serbia

Like in most of the countries from the region, Roma minority in Serbia is poorly integrated within the wider society. Transitional changes that Serbia has gone through in the past twenty years made an impact on many social spheres. It was not before the break-up of Yugoslavia and the turmoil⁵⁸ in 1999, that Serbia had to introduce both political and economic changes. Under the socialist regime, ethnic minorities had no need to declare their origin, because ‘equality’ was largely promoted everywhere (Atal, 1999). The consequence that arose out is the lack of reliable data⁵⁹ concerning the number of Roma that resided the country. As neoliberal forces took on an economic approach, the break of socialism made some serious changes within the political realm. The inequalities became more visible and redistribution of goods went rather within than between classes (Atal, 1999). The previous status of redistribution of the goods resulted in the status of subordination in many spheres (Fraser, 2003). The country was one of the rare cases that continued to have a communist regime after 1990s. This impacted all societal spheres and significantly prevented country to implement new values. Anti-regime forces had no influential power to stand against the authoritarianism of Slobodan Milošević. Thus, political reality of Serbia could be perceived as unstable and unpredictable, considering the fact that political composition of the mainstream society was chaotic until 2000. Residues of the communist past prevented Serbia to accept values of multiculturalism. The empirical evidence demonstrates that

⁵⁸ By “turmoil” I shall refer to Kosovo war and the general situation in the country in 1999.

⁵⁹ Open Society Foundation.2010. *No Data – No Progress*, OSF online publication;

changes happened just after the dissolution of the authoritarian regime. These developments seriously impacted the status of Romani minority. It resulted in severe negligence in many important life spheres. If status of the Roma is taken as an indicator for accepting multiculturalism, then it could be concluded that substantial effort was not made until 2002 with the categorization of ‘national minority’.

Roma live throughout Serbia. Out of the general population (7 million), Roma number more than 108.000⁶⁰ people. The ethnic composition of the country to some extent shows complexity. There are approximately fifteen⁶¹ minority groups, residing in different parts of the country. In comparison to Roma, other groups are usually located in a specific region. In this respect, (e.g.) Hungarians, Slovaks and Rusins mostly live in Vojvodina (Northern Serbia); Sandžak Muslims live in the South-Eastern part of the country; Albanians are mostly in the South, near to the border with Kosovo; etc. In contrast, there are 593⁶² Romani communities in Serbia. They are spread throughout the country, but they are mostly concentrated around the capital, in Western Serbia, Vojvodina and in few municipalities in the South. It should be highlighted that all these regions, where Roma reside, have a different ethnic and religious structure. Thus, Roma are not united even in the religious sense. The affiliation depends on the region in which Roma live. In the Northern part (Vojvodina), Roma are either Catholics or Christian Orthodox. This is a direct

⁶⁰ The official number is published in the report of the Open Society Foundation, Department of Roma Initiatives. “No Data-No Progress; Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015; Roma Initiatives, OSI, June 2010.”

⁶¹ Nationalities are counted based on the percentage that they occupy in the country. For this purpose, the list of fifteen is in accordance with the minorities that are over 0.3% of the general population. Source: Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u 2002, Stanovništvo-nacionalna ili etnička pripadnost, knjiga 1, (2003) Beograd: Republički zavod za statistiku.

⁶² Data collected from the results of the social research of the Romani communities in Serbia. Jakšić, Božidar & Bašić, Goran (2002). *Roma communities, living conditions and possibilities for Roma integration in Serbia; Results of the social research*. Ethnicity Research Center, Belgrade;

influence⁶³ of Hungarian, Slovak and Serbian culture. Because of the homogeneity of Serbian culture and tradition in the Central and Western Serbia, Roma are exclusively Christian Orthodox. However, the Southern Serbia is populated by Sandžak Muslims and Albanians. Roma who live in this part have accepted Islamic traditions and customs. This implies that different religious affiliations presuppose different traditions (Hancock, 2002).

The model of political integration of Roma in Serbia is less successful than in the case of Macedonia. Because of the complex geographical composition, higher level of aggregation is hardly achievable. The extreme dispersion of Serbian Roma complicates their political organization and hence aggregation of interests. After systematic transformations in 2000, the government started to put substantial efforts on Roma integration within the wider structure. The category of ‘national minority’ includes a higher scope of rights and freedoms for all minority groups in the country. Officially, Roma have obtained such set of rights but exercising these rights still remains an issue. The minority does not have equal opportunities⁶⁴ in the society. There is a high degree of discrimination in every social sphere, from education to employment. Roma are seen as dirty, uneducated, low-skilled workers who do not possess enough intellectual capacity to reach higher societal levels (Interview Jovanović: Appendix). Because of these stereotypes, the equality of chances does not apply to Roma. The civil rights are rather seen as empty without equal opportunities for all citizens (Parsons, 1965). Therefore, in such a case, they are just formally given. Their political rights are also often *de facto* limited, which decreases the possibility for political organizing and forming of Roma elites.

⁶³ Hungarians and Slovaks share the same religious affiliation (Catholicism); Serbians are exclusively of the Orthodox religion.

⁶⁴ Roma in Serbia / [Translated by Dragan Novaković]. n.p.: Belgrade: Press Now; 2003, n.d. CEU Library Catalogue, EBSCO host (Last access: 23/05/2013);

The effect of Roma parties in Serbia is rather poor, even though there are a significant number of registered parties. The parties do not possess any influential role in the political processes in Serbia. Because their financial resources are limited, Romani parties usually operate only before the elections (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013). Furthermore, Roma parties come from different regions of Serbia where interests of Roma significantly vary. Before the elections in 2007, there were several attempts to unite Romani parties from all the regions where Roma reside. This did not demonstrate substantial results. Interests of Roma are usually represented by members of other groups. This situation can progressively endanger the identity of certain minority. Representation of a certain group by either majority or any other minority causes distrust within the group (Mansbridge, 1999: 641). It demonstrates that minority does not see itself as an equal actor to voice own interests. Furthermore, representation by others constructs a social stigma that certain groups are simply incapable of voicing their own issues. Up to date, Roma were present in the legislature only twice (2007 and 2012). Statistically, the situation is not very alarming, especially if other former Yugoslav republics (except Macedonia) are taken into account (Interview Jovanović, Appendix). What matters here is the extent to which Roma interests are represented. This reinforces the fact that descriptive representatives are rather seen as pawns whose physical characteristics accurately resemble the wider electorate (Pitkin, 1967:81).

3.2.1. Defining minority groups: Extending rights for minorities

Željko Jovanović, the current director of the Roma Initiatives department at the Open Society Foundations in Budapest, discusses the legal status of Roma in Serbia (Interview Jovanović, Appendix). He identifies the minority as ‘marginalized’ in a sense that wider society highly neglects their cultural diversity. The respondent rather uses the term ‘marginalized’ than ‘oppressed’ due to the fact that no Roma were killed by the majority. He compares this with events in Hungary, where several Romani families were brutally killed. Friedman (Interview Friedman, Appendix) indicates that the minority could be considered as ‘oppressed’ due to the negligence of their rights, that were guaranteed by the status of ‘national minority’. Since 2002, *The Law on Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities*⁶⁵ officially recognizes Roma as a national minority. This law states that: “Attention shall be paid to the national composition of the population, appropriate representation and competence in the language spoken in the territory of the relevant body or service”.⁶⁶ By applying the law, national minorities were given a possibility to elect National Councils for the purpose of exercising self-government rights. This was a significant step towards a better social inclusion of the Roma. Moreover, it gave space for improving measures of political integration, because of provisions that guaranteed direct communication with the government and National Assembly (Müller, Jovanović; 2010).

⁶⁵ The official document is available on the Web link:

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/archive/documentation/refugees/SaMsocialrights/law%20on%20minorities.pdf> ;

⁶⁶ Article 21, Law on Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities of Serbia (Web link available:

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/archive/documentation/refugees/SaMsocialrights/law%20on%20minorities.pdf>);

In 2003, together with other fifteen minority groups⁶⁷ in Serbia, Roma elected the first National Council. In order to regulate the mandate and election procedures of the National Council, Serbian Parliament passed the *Law on the National Council of National Minorities*⁶⁸ in 2009. According to this law, National Council was required to establish a minority media, to propose candidates for the National Education Council, and to initiate and monitor the implementation of laws and regulations in the areas of culture, education, and official use of language and script (Müller, Jovanović; 2010:33). By adding these functions, National Councils became the primary body for representing interests of minorities in law and policy-making. The body was assigned the right to submit proposals from its jurisdiction to executive and legislative authorities. According to Željko Jovanović (Interview Jovanović, Appendix), the purpose of these Councils was to give special rights to Roma in order to empower their subordinated social position. However, the main accent of the Council was put on preservation of cultural heritage. The most important engagements were around the standardization of the language and establishment of the Romani media (radio and TV stations). As Kymlicka (2007) discussed, these kind of legal provisions are made to support the social inclusion of previously marginalized groups. However, it seems that these mechanisms rather serve the interests of other minorities than those of Roma. Eben Friedman (Interview Friedman, Appendix) connects this with the recent history of authoritarianism in Serbia and states that Roma are still weak and unprepared to

⁶⁷ The first Council to begin with activities was Hungarian National Council. After, fourteen Councils started with their activities. This body was assigned for: Hungarians, Rusins, Romanians, Croats, Slovaks, Bunjevci (South Slavic community), Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Roma, Bosniaks, Germans, Egyptians, Greeks, Macedonians and Vlaxs. Online source: http://www.kas.de/upload/auslandshomepages/serbien/Gojkovic_pred.pdf (Last access: 23/05/2013);

⁶⁸ The official Web link of the law:

http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/ekspertske%20misije/protection_of_minorities/law_on_national_councils.pdf (Last access: 10/04/2012);

voice their own interests. Their level of education is still lower⁶⁹ in comparison to other minority groups.

Unlike Macedonia, Serbia has no legal provisions that would guarantee a minimal or proportional presence of the national minorities within state structure. According to informal (and unverified) sources⁷⁰, only six Roma are currently employed in the national state institutions. Better situation is in Vojvodina, the Northern part of the country. Because of the higher scope of rights for Hungarian minority, Roma also succeeded to get into the office in some of the state authorities (Interview Jovanović, Appendix). Cultural diversity in Vojvodina is on a high level, because most of the minority groups reside in this region⁷¹. Thus, it could be said that the extent of cultural diversity substantially influenced the integration of Roma.

3.2.2. Development of Roma political parties and their mirroring within the legislature

The period after 1990 addresses reconstruction of political pluralism, electoral design, basic human rights and freedoms. From this point, electoral law went through serious changes for almost two decades. From the first multiparty elections in 1990, representatives were elected with the majoritarian two-rounded system, which went still much in favor of the leading Socialistic party of Slobodan Milošević. The composition of the Assembly did not significantly change,

⁶⁹ Jakšić, Božidar & Bašić, Goran (2002). *Roma communities, living conditions and possibilities for Roma integration in Serbia; Results of the social research*. Ethnicity Reseach Center, Belgrade;

⁷⁰ Data were obtained from an informal conversation with one of the employed Roma from the Office for Human and Minority Rights. Based on this, there are four Roma in the Office, one in the Ministry of Health, and one in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

⁷¹ Out of fifteen national minorities, nine groups reside in Vojvodina reside 6 groups: Hungarians, Rusins, Rumanians, Roma, Bosniaks, Croatians, Bunjevci, Ukrainians and Germans. Online source: http://www.kas.de/upload/auslandshomepages/serbien/Gojkovic_pred.pdf (Last access: 23/05/2013);

because the electoral system continued to produce single-party structures. Proportional system has been operating since the regime change in 2000. Thus, the National Assembly elects 250 members through a closed-list proportional representation system to serve 4-year terms. Parties compete in one, nationwide district. There is a five percent threshold to enter the parliament. However, there is a natural threshold (the total number is divided by the number of seats) for political parties representing coalitions of national minorities.

Roma political parties are hardly seen as equal actors in Serbia's political processes. The reason for this claim is that parties were not present in the legislature until the elections held in 2007 (Orlović, 2008). According to data from the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, there are seven registered and active Romani parties in Serbia. Documentation of the Ministry also demonstrates a list of previously active parties that failed to extend their registration in 2010. Based on this document, until 2010, there were even 22 registered Romani political parties. After the parties failed to re-register, they were deleted from the Serbian register of political parties. Željko Jovanović (Interview Jovanović, Appendix) explains that Roma parties in Serbia do not have financial resources that would support their activities. He states that he was previously a member of one party that was involved in the demolition of the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević. Since the regime changed, the party ceased to exist. "This is a usual destiny of every Roma party in Serbia. There are maybe only two Roma parties that succeeded to continue with their activities." (Interview Jovanović, Appendix) Besides permanent financial resources, there is a problem with leadership (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013). In the case of Serbian Roma, there are a few Roma leaders that succeeded on the political scene in Serbia. One of them is a current member of the Serbian Parliament.

The first and most successful party was established in 2003 by the current MP, Mr. Srdjan Šain (Roma Party). In 2004, Mr. Tomislav Bokan founded Roma Democratic Party, which has been loosely visible in Serbian politics. Another party emerged in 2005 (United Party of Roma) in the Southern Serbia, with the leader Ramadan Demirović. Before the parliamentary elections in 2007, Mr. Ferhad Saiti founded the Roma party “Unity”. Nevertheless, this party also showed no substantial effect at the elections. In 2009 and 2011, another two parties emerged- “Democratic Left of the Roma” and “Union of the Roma from Serbia”. The only party that has had certain influence in Romani politics was the Roma Party of Srdjan Šain. As will be pointed out in the proceeding text, this leader was never an independent candidate in the elections. Nevertheless, he has succeeded to enter the parliament in two terms (2007 and 2012). Table 3 shows the presence of Romani representatives in the Serbian parliament.

	1990	1992*	1996	2000	2003	2007	2008*	2012
Roma	/	/	/	/	/	2	/	1

Table 2: Number of the Romani representatives in the nine elections in Serbia

*Note: * anticipated elections*

To ensure minority representation, Serbia has introduced a lower *threshold*⁷² for minority parties in order to enter the parliament. The threshold for mainstream political parties for parliamentary elections is 5% of the total vote cast; there is a natural threshold for parties of national minorities. Total number of seats in the parliament is divided by total number of votes. This method of affirmative action was first introduced at the parliamentary elections in 2007(Müller, Jovanović; 2010). In that precise moment, the action helped Roma enter the

⁷² The threshold for minority parties is lower (3%) than the threshold for mainstream parties (5%).

legislature. Based on this change, the 2007 parliamentary election brought two seats for Roma representatives in the Assembly. The first belonged to the “Roma Union of Serbia” and won 16995 votes⁷³ (0.42% of total votes), and the second one from “Roma party” with 14568 votes (0.36% of total votes). Even besides the natural threshold for minorities, the same success did not happen in the next term, which was in the early parliamentary elections⁷⁴ in 2008. In the latest elections in 2012, the representative from “Roma party” succeeded to enter to the legislature while in coalition with the winning Serbian Progressive Party.

As Phillips (1995) discussed proportional system is the most appropriate for minority representation. It might be debated that having a proportional design with a single-member district goes in favor of minority groups (Norris, 1995). However, Roma people in Serbia do not benefit from such electoral design. There are two explanations for this. First, Roma are extremely dispersed throughout the country without having high concentration on one place. Thus, their votes also get dispersed. Secondly, Roma minority has the highest concentration around the capital city, but these are mostly refugees from Kosovo who do not hold any personal documents. This is one of the mayor issues that Roma face, and it is a significant drawback for their social and political integration (Interview Friedman, Appendix). Even when a member of the community gets elected to the parliament, his position is simply ‘symbolic’ (Pitkin, 1965). As Kymlicka (2007:241) previously indicated ‘active participation’ implies that participation of the groups should demonstrate a certain effect. The effect of the representation of Roma in Serbia is rather unnoticeable, though the number of Roma representatives is higher than in (e.g.) Bosnia or Croatia. However, there are no substantial improvements as a result of having a Roma

⁷³ Taken from the Web site: Institutes for Studies in Political Economy; Web link available: http://www.ipe.or.at/?art_id=46 (Last access: 10/04/2012);

⁷⁴ Parliamentary elections were conducted again shortly after the formation of the government in 2007. But, because the Prime minister dissolved the government just after few months of being in the office, elections were held again in 2008;

representative in the legislature (Interview Jovanović, Appendix). Following Iris Young (1997: 354) we could understand that the simple *presence* of minority representative in the legislature is not yet a guarantee that these representatives will also act in favor of the minority nor that the minority's interests cannot be represented also be representatives who do not belong to it. Jovanović says: "I do not see any problem in having a non-Roma representing the interests of the minority, as long as the interests are properly represented." (Interview Jovanović, Appendix) Today, Roma community in Serbia has a representative because of his position on the electoral list of the incumbent party. Nevertheless, he does not have a community to support him, in other words he was not elected because of Roma votes (Interview Jovanović, Appendix).

3.2.3. The involvement of International Community (Decade of Roma Inclusion in Serbia)

Decade of Roma Inclusion, as the most important affirmative action for Roma, has encompassed⁷⁵ Serbia as well. The country held presidency over the Decade from July 2008 to June 2009. Unlike in Macedonia, the role of the National Coordinator for the Decade was not given to someone belonging to Roma community. On the contrary, a non-Roma was designated for the highest hierarchical position in regards to the Roma Decade. It was a Deputy Prime Minister- Božidar Đelić that was present on steering committees and conferences within the affirmative action. Lower positions were given to Roma though, mostly identified as part of Serbian “Romani elite”. The inability to appoint a National Coordinator of Romani origin appears to present a problem, taking into account other countries’ National Coordinators⁷⁶ of the Decade are taken into account. This could also be an indicator of their poor integration within the society. Furthermore, it somehow addresses that stereotypes have not yet been overcome.

As Müller and Jovanović (2010: 43) noted, in order to fill the gap in Roma representation on the International level, the Serbian government established two mechanisms to involve Roma civil society in consultations and in the co-ordination of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. One of these, the *Council for the Improvement of the Position of Roma and the Roma Decade*⁷⁷, is an inter-ministerial body in charge of coordinating and monitoring implementation of the Decade Action Plans and the National Strategy. The second mechanism operates through the working groups in the ministries that deal with the implementation of the Decade Action Plans and the

⁷⁵ Twelve countries participating: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain.

⁷⁶ Majority of Decade’s members have Roma representatives on the International level, and similar percentage of Roma population within the country.

⁷⁷ This council meets twice per year. Official document and more information is available on the Web link: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/83547> (Last access: 10/4/2012);

National Strategy for Roma. The aim of these working groups is to propose priorities and mechanisms on the annual level, for allocating financial resources.

However, the effects of the Decade so far seem to be very poor in Serbia. The Decade officially covers four important fields that need to be improved in regard to Roma. However, the most improved is certainly education. This is mostly done through various scholarship programs that Roma Education Fund is providing, as part of the Action Plan of the Decade (Interview Friedman, Appendix). In this manner, there is a possibility for empowerment of the minority. However, it has been previously indicated that Roma generally lack competent leadership (Biro, Gheorghe and Kovats, 2013). This results in less stable political parties and organizations. Moreover, what also contributes to the issue is the fact that new generations of educated Roma do not want to engage in politics (Interview Jovanović, Appendix).

International community has made a special program for Roma, to have internships within European Institutions. Roma Initiative Department, within the Open Society Foundations, has made an initiative to support young Roma graduates in their professional development. Namely, they offer internship within the European Commission as a part of the strategy for Roma integration in the twelve member countries. However, the number of Roma interns from Serbia is significantly lower than from other countries. “This action equally assigns Serbia as any other member country of the Decade, but the results are rather poor.” (Interview Jovanović, Appendix) The opportunities are substantially equal for Roma as for any other citizen who seeks professional upgrade on the institutional level. Nevertheless, this surprisingly does not show significant results.

3.2.4. Comments

The analysis shows that Roma in Serbia could be rather categorized as ‘marginalized’ minority in a sense that their cultural diversity is not respected. For this reason, Serbian national authorities established special self-governing bodies as official representatives of the fifteen minority groups, including Roma. As Phillips (1995) and Pitkin (1965) indicated, some of these self-governing bodies tend to have a more symbolic role within the social structure. This is the case of the Roma Council, as one of the respondents presents, because it demonstrates no substantial results of its work. However, certain differences are visible in the more culturally diverse region of Serbia, where Roma are better integrated in the society.

The analysis further demonstrates that residues of the previous regime significantly impacted the integration of the minority. Certainly, historical events did not have a negative influence only on the Roma but also for the stability of the entire society. Political activism (Kymlicka, 2007:241) of Roma is rather poor, with low outcomes and poorly organized political parties. Representatives are seen as symbolic figures that entered the parliament on account of the mainstream Serbian parties. Even though Serbia introduced electoral system that goes in favor to minority representation, their presence within the Parliament is not higher. Therefore, what matters here is high level of dispersion of the minority throughout different regions.

International factor did not play a substantial role in integrating Roma, because the entire scope of legal provisions have mostly come from the government. However, Kymlicka (2007: 199) states in his work that pressure on national authorities have been made as a “carrot on the stick” strategy for potential members of the European Union. It might be said that Serbia needed to solve the issue of the Roma integration in order to fulfill one of the requirements for the

accession. Nevertheless, Serbia has more salient issues to solve in order to become a candidate in the European Union. When it comes to the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the results show no substantial improvement of the Roma status. Although the affirmative action has had many programs for empowering the minority, many opportunities have not been used.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this work was to show why multiculturalism, as a way of integrating minorities, demonstrates better results in Macedonia than in Serbia. Furthermore, it seeks to underline reasonable explanation(s) for better integration in the first and worse integration in the second case.

The findings show that cultural diversity matters when it comes to Roma integration. This could be seen from the outcomes of the 2001 ethnic conflict in Macedonia, when four minority groups significantly benefited from the Agreement that ended the civil war. In the case of Serbia, differences could be seen in the culturally diverse Northern region of the country, where nine (out of fifteen) minorities live. In more homogeneous parts of Serbia (West, Central and East), Roma are poorly integrated within the wider society.

Electoral engineering for minorities indicates that proportional design exclusively operates in favor of minority representation. However, in case of Macedonia the electoral design does not play a major role, when it comes to Roma representation. The country changed three electoral designs, and the level of Roma representation did not significantly change. High level of aggregation in the municipality of Shuto Orizari has had positive impacts for Roma representatives. In contrast, Serbia has had all the possibilities for better Roma representation. There is a natural threshold for minorities, which is introduced as an effort from the government to include these groups in the decision making processes. One interesting fact about the Serbian electoral design is that the country has a proportional single-member district system. When it comes to Roma in Serbia, this is unfavorable in a sense that they are not exclusively concentrated

in one place. In contrast, they show high levels of dispersion throughout the country. Ironically, Roma refugees from Kosovo are highly populated around the capital, but their lack of identity documents hampers their possibility to actively participate in elections.

International community demonstrated significant influence on state authorities to improve legal status of Roma throughout the CEE region. In case of Macedonia, international assistance is visible also in managing the ethnic conflict. Because of these provisions, Roma obtained higher set of rights. In terms of the Decade, it could be said that there was an impact on Roma political integration. The existence of the Ministry without portfolio, which is the main coordinating body within the Decade, demonstrates substantial difference in comparison to the regional countries. Even though, this position is rather symbolic, it changes the image of Roma throughout the region. In the case of Serbia, the effects of the Decade are less significant. The fact that the coordination was led by a non-Roma reinforced the stereotypes of Roma as being less capable to represent their own interests.

Apparently, multiculturalism (as a way of integrating minorities) cannot work in every country. Historical perspective makes certain patterns for minority integration. Roma, in contrast to other minority groups in Europe, have more substantial obstacles in terms of integration. This is due to higher level of stereotypes and discrimination that prevent attempts of the minority to be successfully integrated within the wider society. Even though Macedonia and Serbia have arisen from the same communist-ideology, their paths did not follow the same direction. The burden of other factors (authoritarian regime, ethnic conflicts) made Roma integration in Serbia rather poor. Because of these factors, Serbia started very late to transform its political system, which resulted in negligence towards cultural diversity.

APPENDIX

Interviews in Macedonia

Five interviews were conducted in Macedonia (Skopje) from 23rd to 28th of May 2012. All five speakers have spent a great deal of time working on Romani issues from various perspectives. Therefore, it was necessary to observe the situation from several angles in order to obtain clearer picture. The perspectives are: legal provisions in favour to Roma in Macedonia, involvement of Roma political parties, education of incoming generations, interior politics and the impact of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The speakers were contacted one month in advance and they have shown willingness to share information with the interviewer. The first interview was conducted in the office of the Ministry of Education in Macedonia; the second, third and forth were conducted in some of the capital`s restaurants; the last interview was done in the office of the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Politics.

Interviewees

23rd of May: **Redžep Ali Čupi**, Directorate for Promotion and Development of the Languages in the Education for the Ethnic Minorities, Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje. Mr. Ali Čupi has finished legal studies, and thus appeared to be relevant speaker about the political and legal transitions that Macedonia went through in past two decades. As well as this, his current position in the Ministry of Education allows him to speak more about the Decade of Roma Inclusion and importance of policies on education. He began the interview by explaining the period of independence and adoption of the new Constitution in 1991. When it comes to Roma minority, these legal provisions impacted their status within the wider society. As well as this, he explains

the evolvement of pluralistic party system and support towards ethnic parties. Next, he gives an insight into the critical situation in 2001, when ethnic conflict between Macedonians and Albanians occurred. Based on the Ohrid Framework Agreement, several minority groups gained wider scope of social and political rights. At the end, he gives an insight about the importance of being integrated within multicultural society. Mr. Ali Čupi defined Roma as less oppressed in comparison to other cases, when Roma do not enjoy any kind of specific rights. He also shares his thoughts on electoral provisions that go in support towards minority representation. The respondent finishes with discussing the Decade of Roma Inclusion stating that social and economic situation of the Roma did not change much.

The second interviewed was *Mr. Eben Freedman*, who currently works in the Roma Education Fund in Skopje, as an advisor on Policy Development. The respondent has a background in political science and several years of experience on analysing Roma integration within the CEE countries. It is important to indicate that Mr. Friedman is not of the Romani origin, but as a researcher has been actively involved in Roma issues. Because of the rich experience on the matter, the respondent also answers the questions about the Serbian Roma. He explains the long history of authoritarian regime in Serbia as the reason for poor development of the Roma civil society. Moreover, he indicates that Macedonian civil sector was not under the burden of authoritarian regime (after the break up). Thus, the Macedonian society could easily benefit from the process of democratization. Mr. Friedman discusses the nomenclature of the Roma working in the government. He concludes that some of the positions are viewed as symbolic and less understandable for the ordinary citizens. Nevertheless, he considers that these positions are still valuable for the status of Roma. The respondent underlines the lack of

aggregation as one of the crucial drawbacks for the Serbian Roma. The advantage of the Macedonian Roma is municipality Shuto Orizari, when Roma are in majority.

The third interviewed was *Mr. Edis Hasan*, currently working as an advisor to the Minister without Portfolio- Neždet Mustafa. The respondent talks about evolvement and coalitions of the Roma political parties. Hence, he underlines the successful examples of Romani elite that found its place within various state branches.

The forth interviewed was *Mr. Senad Mustafov*, who currently works as the Country facilitator in the Roma Education Fund Skopje (originally situated in Budapest). With the background in law, he makes a further explanation about the agreement from 2001, and the scope of rights that Roma obtained. Further on, he explains the process of education and evolvement of the “Roma elite” in Macedonia. In his opinion, the agreement signed in Ohrid (2001) and the effort in advancing education made a contribution to the inclusion of Roma into society.

The fifth interviewed was the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Politics, *Mr. Ibrahim Ibrahimi*. Having in mind that the Ministry was significantly involved in the process of inclusion of Roma in Macedonia, and a partner in coordinating the Decade of Roma Inclusion, Mr. Ibrahimi was the right person to talk with about the issues of minority inclusion and international representation. He gives an insight into the mechanisms and bodies that are involved within the Decade.

Topic guide

In-depth interviews were conducted with three respondents. The topic guide was built in such a way to capture the main theoretical concepts. The topic guide has three sections, accompanied with a number of intervening questions. The first explores status of the Roma and legal

provisions adopted for empowering the Roma rights. Next section examines chronological development of parties and their presence within the legislature. The last section deals with the Decade of Roma Inclusion and its impact on Roma in two cases.

Interview(s) in Serbia

19th of May 2013: The case of Serbia was covered by the interview conducted with Mr. Željko Jovanović. The respondent is the current director at the Roma Initiatives department of the Open Society Foundations in Budapest. The author decided to contact Mr. Jovanović, because of his indispensable contribution to Roma issues. The interviewee originally comes from Serbia but has built his career within the international perspective. The interview was conducted in Arena Plaza in Budapest. The interviewee starts with defining the status of Roma in Serbia, underlying that they have been extremely marginalized by the wider society. He discusses the poor visibility of the Roma parties and explains their symbolic position in the Serbian politics. Moreover, Mr. Jovanović finds Roma representation poor in terms of substantial representation of interests. He explains the symbolic contribution of National Council to the Roma integration. The Council deals mostly with cultural right which has no substantial effect on the political integration. He concludes with discussing the role of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The effect of the affirmative action is far too small on the process of the Roma integration.

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