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Roma Graduate Preparation Program

**Roma minority in the 2021 Slovak National Census: A survey of the factors
contributing to revealing or concealing Roma self-identification**

FINAL THESIS

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, the undersigned Mikulas Lakatos hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where proper acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree on nondegree program, in English or in any other language. This is a true copy of the thesis, including the final version.

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this thesis is to uncover the factors that contribute to revealing or concealing Roma self-identification in the 2021 Slovak National Census. In order to answer this question, I developed an online survey which helped me gather quantitative data on some of these reasons. The survey has been hosted on Google Forms and it has been designed specifically for purpose of this final thesis. The online survey consisted of a total of 13 questions. None of the questions were open. The survey was applied to a Roma community of high diversity from the south-west region of Slovakia, in the Bajc – Vlkanovo village of the Nitra self-governing region, on the 24th of April 2021. The community is populated by different Roma sub-groups (Romungro and Vlacheske Roma) with different native languages (Hungarian, Slovak, Romanes) and socio-economic backgrounds. In order to be part of this research, the respondents had to meet the following criteria: be minimally 18 years old, being associated with Roma and being a citizen of the Slovak Republic.

The first most important finding of this research, shows that Slovakia's Roma communities are strongly impacted by the negative social attitudes, opinions, and stereotypes, concerning their ethnicity, cultural background, and way of living. All these factors mixed with respondents' personal shame of publicly declaring themselves as persons of Romani background. In addition, respondents showed that they are concealing their identity when feeling the fear from being verbally or physically attacked and discriminated against. Another important finding is the fact that representatives of the research sample commonly share multi-ethnic self-identification. Significant percentiles of them identify as citizens of dual ethnic belonging, such as: Hungarian, Slovak, Roma, and its combinations.

Keywords: *2021 Slovak National Census, Roma Communities, Multi-ethnic Self-Identification, Roma Pride, Stigma and Discrimination*

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INTRODUCTION

'If you want to be proud of yourself, then do things in which you can take pride.'
Karen Horney

National censuses around the world are important for every country and its communities. The findings of this 'public survey' on a national level work as a nation's imaginary mirror, in which the country can see its progress or stagnation. Usually once in ten years, most of countries of the European Union organize their national censuses. Beside of 'traditional' data collection aimed at nation's citizens numeration, households counting, employment data assessment or other statistical information evaluation, citizens have a right to declare their ethnic belonging or the language they consider as their native.

In Slovakia, the census has a direct connection with the laws regulating minority rights, such as public language usage and education. If members of a minority in a municipality have more than fifteen percent in two consecutive censuses, the targeted minority will have the opportunity to communicate in official places in their native language or to request lingual interpretation support in official communication with state institutions. Listing of the positives of Roma self-identification in national census, can be continued with the fact that, according to the results of the census, for example the volume of support for the cultural development, support for solutions in the socio-economic field, education or health care is also calculated for national minorities (Urad splnomocnenca vlady SR pre romske komunity, 2021).

The main focus of this paper is the difficulties that arise when gathering data regarding Slovakia's multi-ethnic Roma community. Since data gathering about Roma ethnicity is very difficult, there are so many versions of Roma population estimations. These estimations are also influenced by the fact that the Roma ethnic group is resistant to being part of statistics for strongly justified reasons. Roma scholars, Roma leaders, and Roma advocates give an entire list of possible explanations for the low self-identification of Slovakia's Roma communities.

ROMA PRIDE AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Elena Gallova Kriglerova from the Slovak Research Center for Ethnicity and Culture states that: “the reasons why the Slovak Roma communities do not declare their identity has its origins in the period of socialism, when they were not recognized as an official minority; they live in Slovakia, so they consider themselves Slovak” (SME, 2011). Tomas Hrustic (2021) from the National Democratic Institute in Slovakia, thinks that Slovakia’s Roma communities are a strongly stigmatized group. This fact lays an important role in their self-identification, as he says: “many of them prefer to officially declare themselves to belong to a different nationality, most often Slovak and Hungarian”. Hrustic (2021) also thinks that the number of Roma who will declare their ethnicity will increase for several reasons among which the fact that “over the past ten years the quality of developed Roma related public policy has improved, and the number of elected Roma deputies and mayors in municipalities has increased” (2021).

In her paper “Why Roma do not Declare their Identity – Careful Decision or Unpremeditated Refusal?” Covrig separated the reasons of low self-identification of Roma communities into the following categories: present and past experience about self-identification as Roma, Roma attitudes towards the state, ethnic belonging and others. Firstly, she claims that “the Roma have been especially sensitive about data collection of any kind since it was used against them by the Nazis during World War II’. This attitude still resonates towards Roma communities, since we can see that the states still misuse the ethnic data (e. g. sterilization of Roma women in Czechoslovakia). Secondly, she stated that “the Roma do not trust the state’s census because of their experiences with discrimination, segregation, and violence’ Many Roma hide their identity out of fear of discrimination (para. 5). As a third reason for low self-identification of the Roma community there is the trust in state institutions: ‘they do not trust the state and its agencies” (para. 7). In addition, ‘many Roma do not identify themselves as being Roma’ which means that they do not associate themselves with a Roma group anymore, and finally Covrig (2004) states that Roma ‘do not see the benefits of being counted’ (para. 6).

According to academic research, and state policy plans aimed at uncovering the real reasons of low participation of the Roma communities in national censuses around Europe's member states, we are conscious about this issue in a global context. International findings inform us about the cases and effects of the Roma communities' non-participation in the census of the in a very general and broad manner. At this point we must take into consideration various already existing data evaluation specifics, such as: the years of the research, Roma sub-group affiliation, level of education, financial background, country of origin, and others. The use just of this data is impossible, Slovakia's Roma communities consist of different sub-groupings, with different cultural and social self-identification., such as dual ethnic self-identification – Slovak, Hungarian, language – Slovak, Hungarian. This multi-ethnic identity existence is impacted by customs, traditions of other national minorities in Slovakia mostly by Hungarian, Czech minority, or by the majority population. This is the reason why we are currently experiencing 'data shortage', in Slovakia it is not possible to find any relevant sources for the real reason of Roma communities' low involvement in national census survey. There is no reliable data collected directly from targeted communities. This knowledge makes even more relevant this final thesis and its focus, which attempts to substitute the lack of information on Roma settlements low participation in the national census in Slovakia.

Europe's countries, including Slovakia, do not have a homogenous ethnicity or economic layer. Diversity and variety of citizens' ethnicity on the one hand enriches our communities or influences our commonly shared point of view of a strong Europe. Slovakia is a country with different national ethnic minorities, socio-economical strata, and different public needs. This is the reason why, I would like to devote this final thesis to Slovakia's ethnic minorities, especially to raise attention to Roma communities, and to use the opportunity for evaluation and finding visualization on the most problematic aspects of the Roma communities' participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census.

Slovakia's Roma communities are still affected by social discourse on the so called 'Roma issue', which paralyzes lives of thousands of the community members. Social intolerance, acceptance of diversity and inclusion, very often ends up with 'hiding' ethnicity defense mechanism among Roma people.

This invisibility on the one hand allows them to function, work, study, participate in common matters, but on the other hand weakens their need to be publicly accepted as people with minority ethnicity and cultural difference. *The main aim of this final thesis is to collect quantitative data on the factors that contribute to revealing or concealing Roma self-identification in the 2021 Slovak National Census.*

The writing process and the data collection is happening at the same time with the ongoing census. I believe that is currently this is the appropriate moment to conduct this type of research, because there has been a wave of information and advertisement about the importance of declaring our ethnicity. This timing creates a perfect research ground for examination of the factors of Slovakia's Roma community's low self-identification in national census surveys.

The first section of this final thesis will focus on providing the reader with the most important changes in the Slovak National Census between the 2011 and 2021 from the perspective of the involvement of national and ethnic minorities. The second section will talk about the currently shared academic knowledge on strengthening and weakening factors of Roma self-identification and public pride. The third section speaks about the phenomenon of the dual, multi-ethnic self-identification of Slovakia's Roma communities and its impacts on their 2021 Slovak National Census. The literature review chapter of the thesis will focus on the analysis and visualization of the most important factors strengthening and weakening Roma self-identification, based on research conducted by using the quantitative research method (online survey in 2021). The paper's aim is also to develop policy recommendations aimed at strengthening Slovakia's Roma community's proud ethnic self-identification.

METHODOLOGY

The main goal of this thesis is to uncover the factors that contribute to revealing or concealing Roma self-identification in the 2021 Slovak National Census. In order to answer this question, I developed an online survey which helped me gather quantitative data on some of these reasons. The survey has been hosted on google forms and it has been designed specifically for purposes of this final thesis. The online survey consisted of a total of 13 questions. None of the questions were open. These 13 questions were separated to 5 work sections. The first sections' questions were developed for demographical data collection, such as respondents' age, sex, and social status. The second section's aim was to receive information on respondent self-identification. The third sections were to collect data about respondent's participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census. The fourth section's task was to uncover the possible reasons, strengthening and weakening factors for those who declared that they do not participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census. Section six's task was to uncover the possible reasons, strengthening and weakening factors of those who participated in the 2021 Slovak National Census. The complete survey is found in the annex of this final thesis.

The survey was compiled based on my knowledge of the available literature and publications of various kinds, especially sources dealing with Roma participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census. The electronic survey was distributed to the respondents in person on an audiovisual device (tablet) directly in their community. Filling the survey also took place in the form of a guided interview, where I asked the research participants the questions of the survey directly, and then marked their answers in the survey, especially for respondents with low literacy.

The survey was applied to a Roma community of high diversity from the south-west region of Slovakia, in the Bajc – Vlkanovo village of the Nitra self-governing region. The community is populated by different Roma sub-groups (Romungro and Vlacheske Roma) with different native languages (Hungarian, Slovak, Romanes) and socio-economic background. In order to be part of this research, the respondents had to meet the following criteria: be minimally 18 years old, being associated with Roma and being a citizen of the Slovak Republic. The research survey was completed by 21 respondents; all completed surveys meet the requirements of data assessment. The community has been selected on a convenience basis and I am aware that it will not be representative for the whole Roma community.

ROMA PARTICIPATION IN THE SLOVAK NATIONAL CENSUSES

This section provides the reader with general information about the process, regulation and aim of the Slovak National Censuses. This section consists of two sub-sections, the reason of this sectioning is emerging from the need to describe the biggest changes between the content, questions of the previous 2011 Slovak National Census and the currently ongoing 2021 Slovak National Census. From the perspective of Slovakia's national, ethnic minorities opportunities, rights to indicate their national, ethnic self-identification or the languages what they are considering as their natives.

2011 Slovak National Census

The Slovak Census is carried out every ten years. In the last census of 2011, for the first time in history, the inhabitants of the Slovak Republic had the opportunity to choose, whether they would like to fill in the census forms in paper form or in electronic form. This small tool of modernization in public data assessment made the whole process much more accessible for everybody, especially for the citizens living abroad the country borders.

The 2011 Slovak National Census in comparison with the currently ongoing 2021 Slovak National Census, can be considered as less 'minority oriented'. The last national census' section aimed at uncovering the citizens nationality, consisted just of one question. Which means that the citizen had no opportunity to indicate his or her dual ethnic self-identification. This statistical issue caused a huge dilemma between those which shares dual or multi-ethnic identity. One of the mostly affected groups of citizens in this case were the Roma communities, huge percentile of them decided to indicate as their nationality, ethnicity as Slovak or Hungarian (publicly more positively considered nationalities in Slovakia). Owing to what, they were able to maintain very often their positions in society or their workplaces. Personally self-identify 'just' as a citizen of Roma ethnicity is still for many of Slovakia's Roma communities a huge challenge, because they are publicly and they consider their Roma ethnicity as 'weaker' one in comparison with other nationalities, ethnicities. This can be presented as one of the main supportive reasons for maintaining the dual, multi-ethnic self-identification possibility in national censuses around the world.

The Slovak governmental or non-governmental institutions do not have any official data about real, negative, unsupportive factors which somehow affects Roma communities around Slovakia in declaration of their Roma ethnicity. This lack of data, information about the statistical numeration of the Roma communities persists as 'gap' between the state institutions and the communities themselves. Even though the Slovak Government run campaign which aim to mobilize the Roma communities in census participation as citizen of Roma ethnicity the campaign was not effective. This lack of communication between state institutions and Roma communities, and the cold attitudes towards the Roma communities, based on public consideration, creates the following impact: Roma are afraid that ethnicity will appear on their ID or in national databases, Roma are skeptical on the impact of nation census and they believe that: 'the only aim of the census, is just financial capital building of third person on Roma ethnic declaration' or the fear from some sort of negative, unknown public danger from self-identification (Urad splnomocnenca vlady SR pre romske komunity, 2021).

Current statistics of the Slovak Statistical Office, about the size of Roma population reveal that, there are four times less Roma, than qualified estimations suggest. For example, the Atlas of Roma Communities which is an internal document of Office of Slovak Government, lists only 105,000 registered citizens of Roma ethnicity, compared to an estimated 450,000 as was reported by the Office of Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities (Urad splnomocnenca vlady SR pre romske komunity, 2019).

Table 1. Slovak Ethnic Minorities (sex and complete list based on National Census of 2011)

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Hungarian	220 672	237 795	458 467
Roma	53 721	52 017	105 738
Ruthenian	16 571	16 911	33 482
Ukrainian	2 926	4 504	7 430
Czech	13 091	17 276	30 367
German	2 526	2 164	4 690
Polish	1 132	1 952	3 084
Croatian	599	423	1 022
Serbian	492	206	698
Russian	627	1 370	1 997
Jewish	390	241	631
Moravian	1 664	1 622	3 286
Bulgarian	601	450	1 051

(Slovak Statistical Office, 2011)

As it can be seen in **Table 1.**, the Slovak Statistical Office during the National Census of 2011 counted 53 721 males and 52 017 females, a total of 105 738 people whose self-identification is Roma. This official data presented by the Slovak Statistical Office, is opposed by 'Eduma' (Roma NGO in Slovakia) which says that, in Slovakia live more than 440,000 Roma citizens. From the beginning of the Slovak national census campaign aimed at supporting Slovakia's Roma communities in self-identification, 'Eduma' representatives claimed that: 'the lack of self-identity and a weak personal respect, very often lead to inferiority complexes about public self-expression as Roma's' (2021, p. 1).

2021 Slovak National Census

The aim of the Slovak National Census of 2021 is to obtain interconnected, reliable, comparable, and unique data and information on the state of society, its demographic, socio-economic and cultural structures, the living conditions of the population and their housing. In addition, for every inhabitant of the Slovak Republic, there is an opportunity and obligation to contribute to the creation of a comprehensive picture of the demographic and social situation and living conditions of the population (Statistický úrad SR, 2021).

One of the biggest changes in 2021 Slovak National Census, after the amendment of the National Census Law in 2019, represents the census questions concerning the second ethnicity of Slovak citizens. This means that a person can state his or her ethnicity which can be Slovak, Hungarian, Roma, etc., and then a person can, but does not have to indicate another, so called 'second ethnicity'. This novelty of the law, allowed the Slovak Census Law to be in line with the census methodology of the surrounding countries such as: Czechia, Hungary, etc. (Ravasz, 2021).

The 2021 Slovak National Census in its online form took place in the period of 15.2. - 31.3.2021. Online counting in 2021 census made possible to achieve a very high participation of Slovak citizens in the national census. Based on preliminary data almost 80% of Slovakia's population used the opportunity to be counted online. The online participation represents the first stage of the 2021 Slovak National Census. Because several groups of Slovak citizens still have no access to internet connection, the Slovak Statistical Office decided to set up the second stage of the census data collection, in the form of assisted citizens counting. The assisted census will take place from 3 May 2021 to 13 June 2021, over a period of 6 weeks. The assisted census is intended for residents who could not count themselves even with the help of a related person. These are mainly digitally excluded residents, elderly residents, as well as residents living in residential care facilities or those from marginalized communities (Statistický úrad SR, 2021). After finalization of the data gathering from both options of participation in 2021 Slovak National Census, the Slovak Statistical Office will focus on data analyzation, visualization, and publication. This step represents the third and final stage of the 2021 Slovak National Census.

MULTI-ETHNIC IDENTITY OF ROMA COMMUNITIES

The change of the National Census Law puts at advantage those who live with mixed-ethnic identities, since the law allows them to declare two ethnic identities. For the Roma this means that they do not have to leave out their minority ethnic self-identification. For many Roma citizens it is important to maintain their second ethnic identity, based on which they can fully benefit from their rights as a minority within a minority. Language makes things even more complicated. According to Abel Ravasz, the former Plenipotentiary of Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 'The mother tongue of the Roma is very often not Romanes. According to estimates, up to half of the Roma may not use Romanes at home, but rather Slovak, Hungarian, and other languages, this the reason why it is not as easy for them to choose an ethnicity as for most of us' (2021, para. 3).

The opportunity to declare dual ethnicity in 2021 Slovak National Census has both supporters and opponents. One of the openly anti 'dual ethnicity' fighters in national census is Gyorgy Gyimesi, member of the Slovak Parliament from 'OLaNO' party, who is also one of the representatives of the Hungarian minority in the Slovak Parliament. Gyimesi states that: 'data relating to the second ethnicity would be difficult to interpret' and 'that the Statistical Office is not ready to process the collected new data'. In addition, he says that 'the Slovak legal system counts only one ascribed nationality' (uj szo, 2021). However, this statement has no relevance based on the Slovak National Census Law, which says that the declaration of the second ethnicity is a legitimate act.

Just two weeks before starting the online form of the 2021 Slovak National Census, Slovakia experienced several institutional attempts aimed at blocking the dual ethnic self-identification. The Statistical Office of Slovak Republic published an official statement on official page of the Slovak Statistical Office, that they are considering the option of deleting the question about second ethnicity in the national Census.

This situation brought about widespread social discussion carried out among political and civil representatives of Slovak Roma communities. Andrea Buckova, Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Roma Communities and member of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Supported the maintenance of dual ethnicity. In a press conference she asked Mr. László Bukovszky, - the chairman of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups and the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities - to convene a committee meeting or to announce a 'per rollam' procedure (electronic voting) about deleting or maintaining the second option of ethnic declaration in 2021 Slovak National Census: 'I am pleased that Mr. Bukovszky, responded today to my call, and I call upon other members of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups to vote. Today I was able to vote in favor of preserving the option of second ethnicity declaration in 2021 Slovak National Census said Buckova (SME,2021) Many of actors participating in the Census Movement acknowledge Andrea Buckova's contribution, and they think that her clear political message strongly supported the movement, and 'saved' the opportunity of stating the second ethnicity in 2021 Slovak National Census (SME, 2021).

After few days of political pressure from politicians, Roma NGOs, Roma activists and pro-minority public which aimed at maintaining the possibility of dual ethnicity declaration, the Slovak Statistical Office, shared this final statement on their official page: 'the questions aimed at uncovering information about the second ethnicity of Slovak citizens, will maintain in the national census survey' (Slovak Statistical Office, 2021).

Veronika Vanochova and Michelle Kubistova, Roma activists, talked about importance of participation of Slovakia's Roma communities in census of 2021, and they argue as follows: 'The Roma minority in Slovakia needs more attention and targeted solutions. For further policy preparation and its implementation, aimed at Roma community's development in general, it is necessary to know how many Roma live in Slovakia' (dennik n, 2021, p. 1).

Participation of Roma communities in 2021 Slovak National Census, and in any other public action where they can practice their rights and citizen obligations it is both relevant and important. However, the process of participation of Slovakia's Roma minority on commonalities, is very often full of obstacles. This is the reason why public awareness and community support must have its fundamental significance.

I have discussed how Slovak National Censuses especially the last one in 2011 and the currently ongoing 2021 census, contributed to self-identification of Slovakia's Roma communities. Three main sections of this final paper clearly states that Roma self-identification has its importance, and specificities. Based on currently existing sources it is possible to declare that Roma self-identification is strongly affected by existing strengthening and weakening factors, which affects citizens of Roma ethnicity in public self-identity expression. This knowledge is also strengthened by the knowledge that many Slovakia's Roma communities identifies themselves as citizens of multi-ethnicity, which significantly impacts they willingness, and public self-identification's determination. In the following *section I will present the findings of my field research, to answer my research question: Which are the factors that contribute to reveling or concealing Roma self- identification in the 2021 Slovak National Census?*

RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondents' demographics

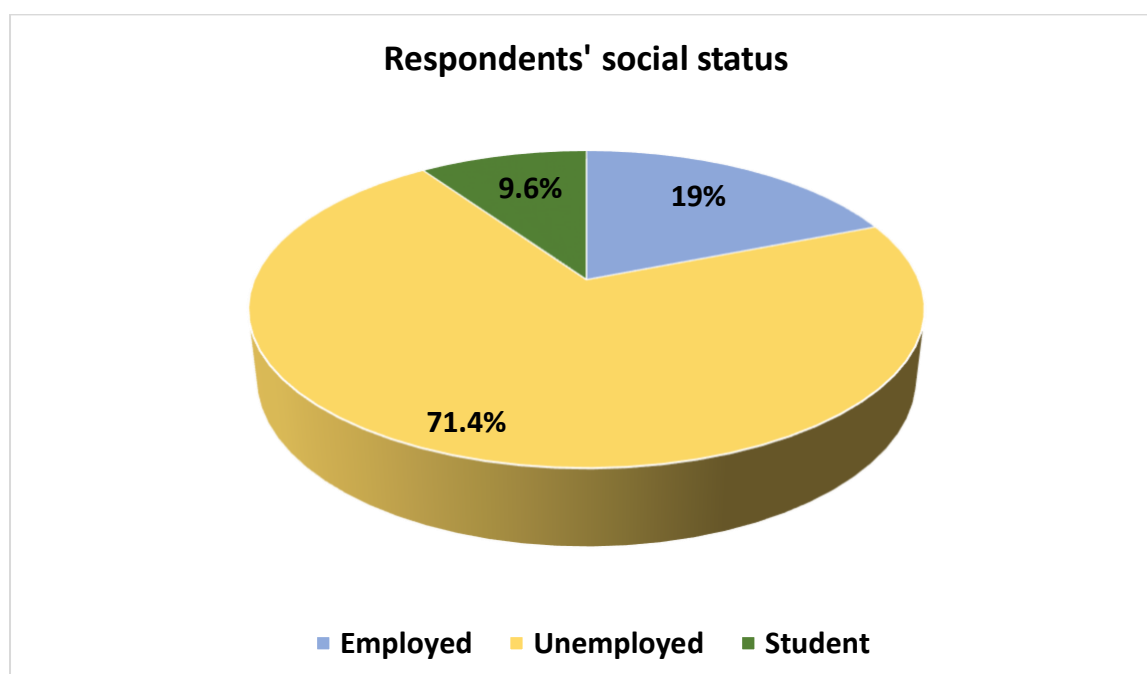
As Table 2. illustrates, the online survey was completed by 21 respondents. Three of the respondents stated that they belong to the 18 – 30 years age group, 13 of the respondents picked the 31 – 60 years age group as their choice, and five of the involved respondents declared 61 and more year's age group as the group of their belonging. In terms of gender the survey had an almost equal number of male and female respondents: 11 male and 10 female.

Table 2. Age range of the involved respondents

Age	Sex	18 – 30 years	31 – 60 years	61 and more years	Total	
Sex	Female	2	6	2	10	100%
	Male	1	7	3	11	
Total		3	13	5	21	

As figure 1. illustrates 71.4% (15) respondents stated that they are unemployed, 19% (4) of the respondents are employed, and 9.6% (2) are students.

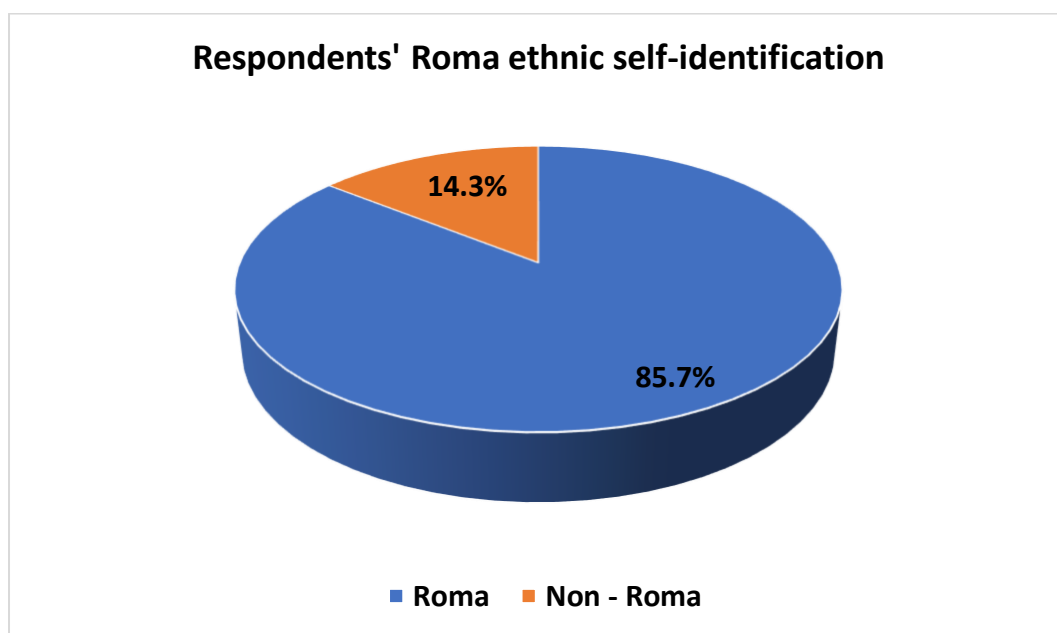
Figure 1. Respondents' social status



The ethnic self-identification of the respondents

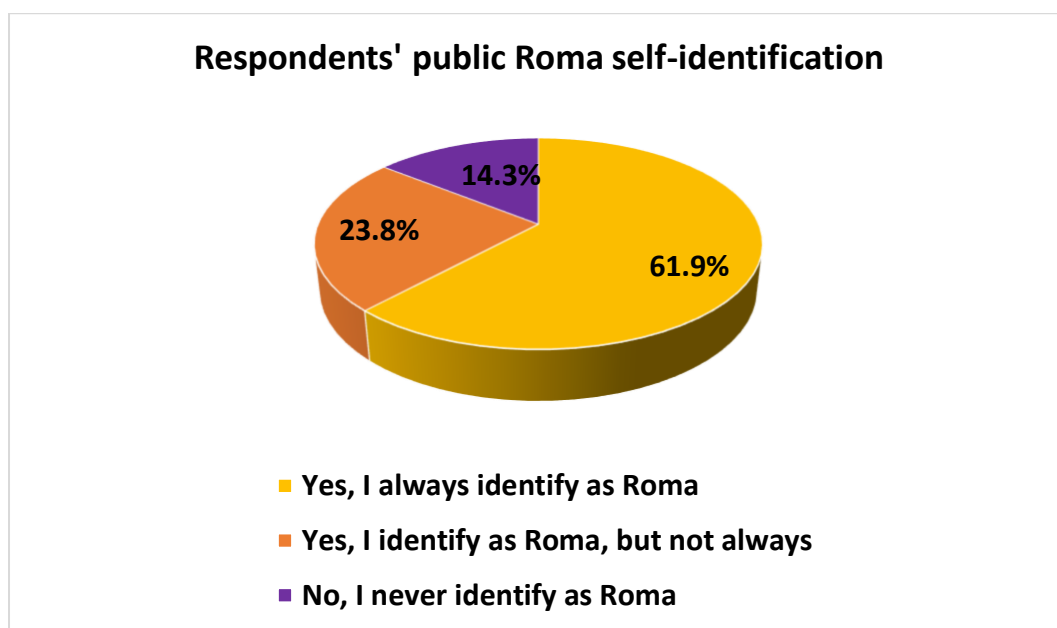
When I asked the respondents about whether they identify as Roma, 85.7% (18) personally identify as citizens of Roma ethnicity, and 14.3% (3) declared Non – Roma ethnic belonging. (See figure 2.)

Figure 2. Respondents' Roma ethnic self-identification



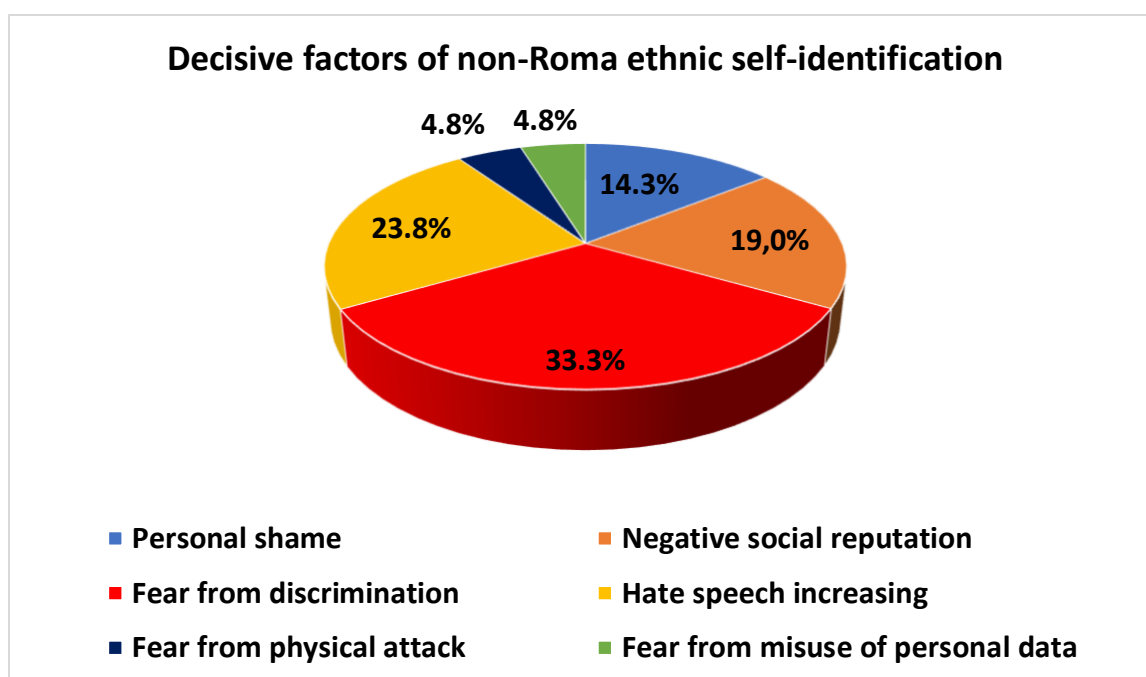
As figure 3. Illustrates, 61.9% (13) of the respondents publicly identify as citizens of Roma ethnicity on all occasions of social interaction, 23.8% (5) of the respondents publicly identify as citizens of Roma ethnicity, but not on all social interactions and 14.3% (3) said that they never identify as citizens of Roma ethnicity independent of the matter of social interaction they are involved in.

Figure 3. Respondents' public Roma self-identification



As figure 4. demonstrates, 33.3% of the respondents declared that one of the most decisive factors of their non-Roma ethnic self-identification in the 2021 Slovak National Census, is the fear from possible forms of public discrimination. In addition, 23.8% of all respondents mentioned the increasing hate speech toward Roma people, and 19.0% of them referred to the negative social reputation of Roma communities. Fewer percentages of about 14.3% declared that the most decisive factor in their non-Roma ethnic self-identification is the feeling of personal shame to be a person of Roma ethnicity. Last but not least the fear from physical attacks and the fear of personal data misuse, represents equal percentages of about 4,8% each. The data about shows that the Roma community in Slovakia is still strongly affected by the existing prejudices and injustices, which impacts their willingness of public self-identification as persons of Roma ethnicity.

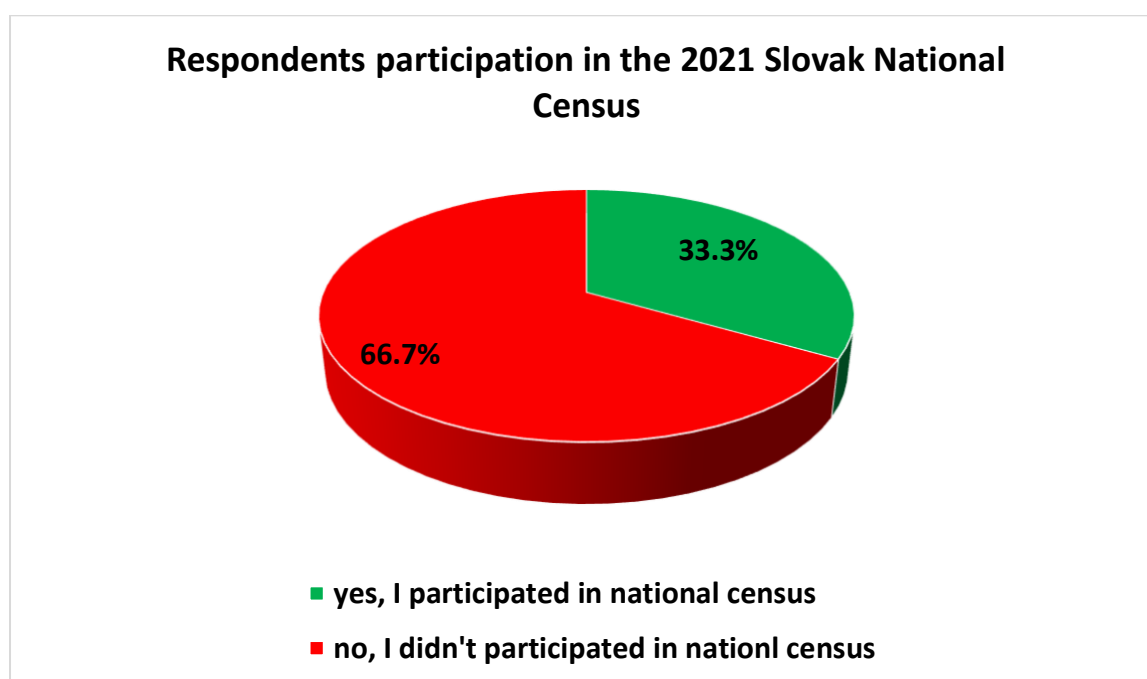
Figure 4. Decisive factors of non-Roma ethnic self-identification in the 2021 Slovak National Census declared by respondents



Participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census

Figure 5. shows respondents' participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census. It was revealed that 66.7% (14) of the respondents did not participate in the 2021 Slovak National Census, whereas 33.3% (7) of the respondents participated. The community from the research sample lives in a rural area, mostly without internet connection, and according to the fact that the 2021 Slovak National Census started as an online census, this might affect their participation.

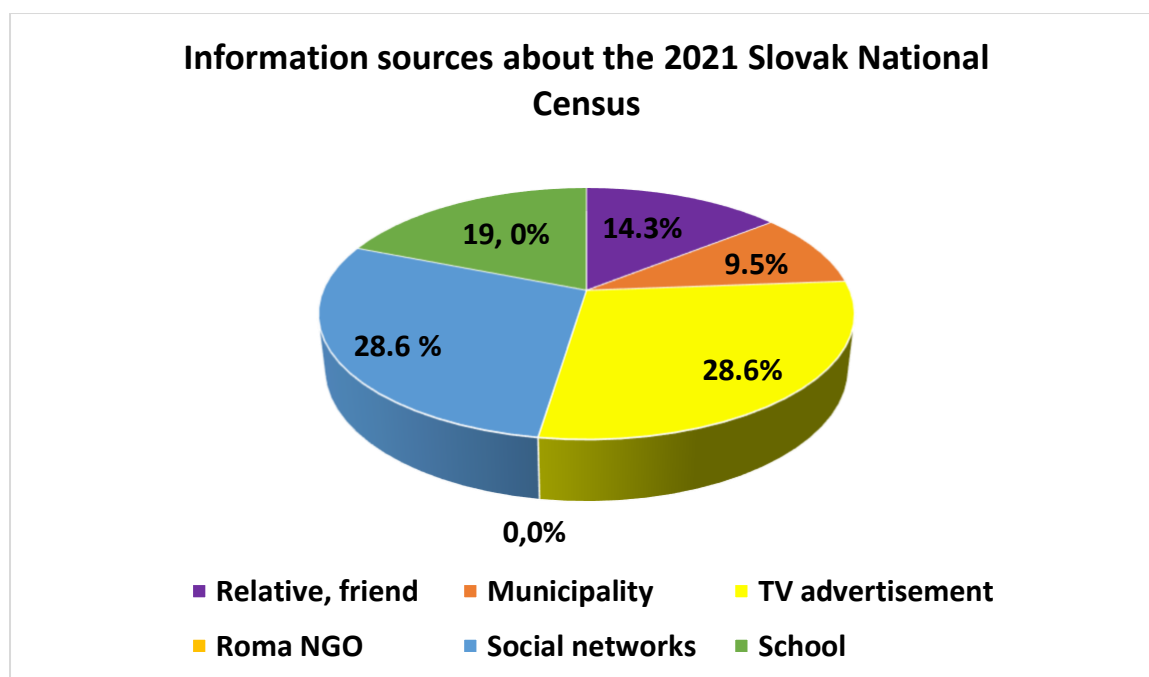
Figure 5. Respondents participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census



When asked what the main sources of information about the 2021 Slovak National Census are, 28.6% of respondents indicated TV advertisements and another 28.6% got informed trough social networks. In addition, 19.0% of respondents stated that they were informed about the census in schooling institution whereas, 14.3% of the respondent mentioned their relatives, friends. Interestingly enough, 9.5% of the respondents stated they were informed about the 2021 Slovak National Census by the activities of Roma non-governmental institutions (see figure 6).

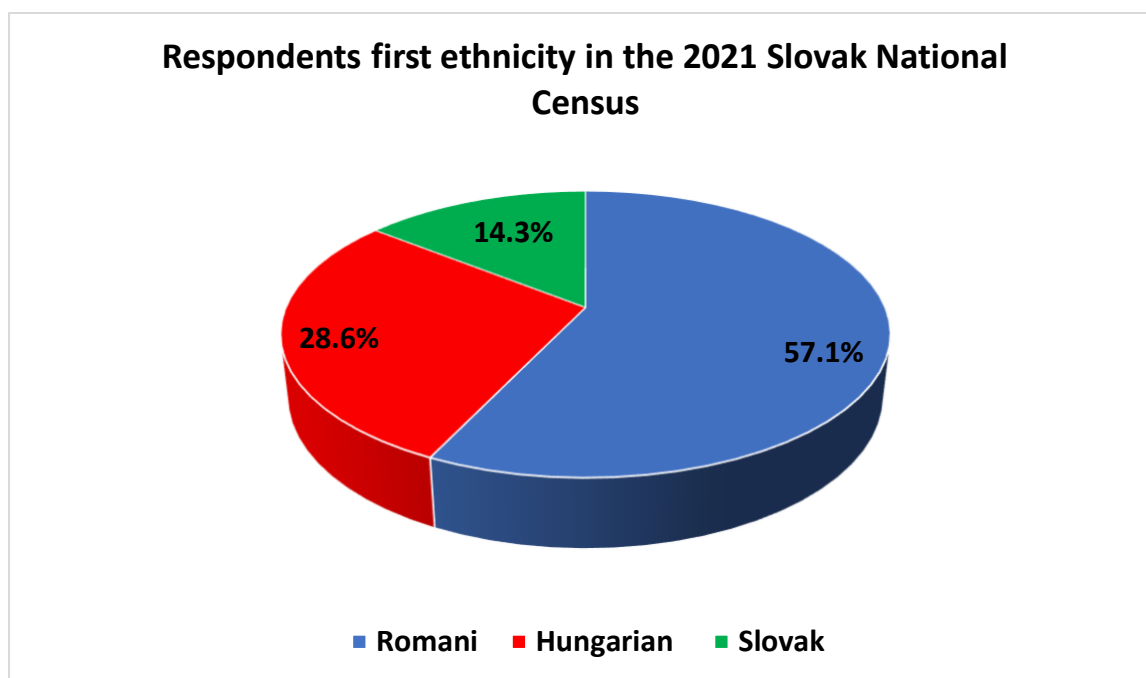
Even the Slovak Government strongly supported the participation of the Roma communities in the national census (through billboards, posters, information materials about the census in Romanes), we can see that Slovak Roma NGOs had a limited contribution to this campaign. Based on findings of this research, it can be stated that one of the most effective tools for informing the Roma communities are TV programs, advertisements.

Figure 6. Information sources about the 2021 Slovak National Census



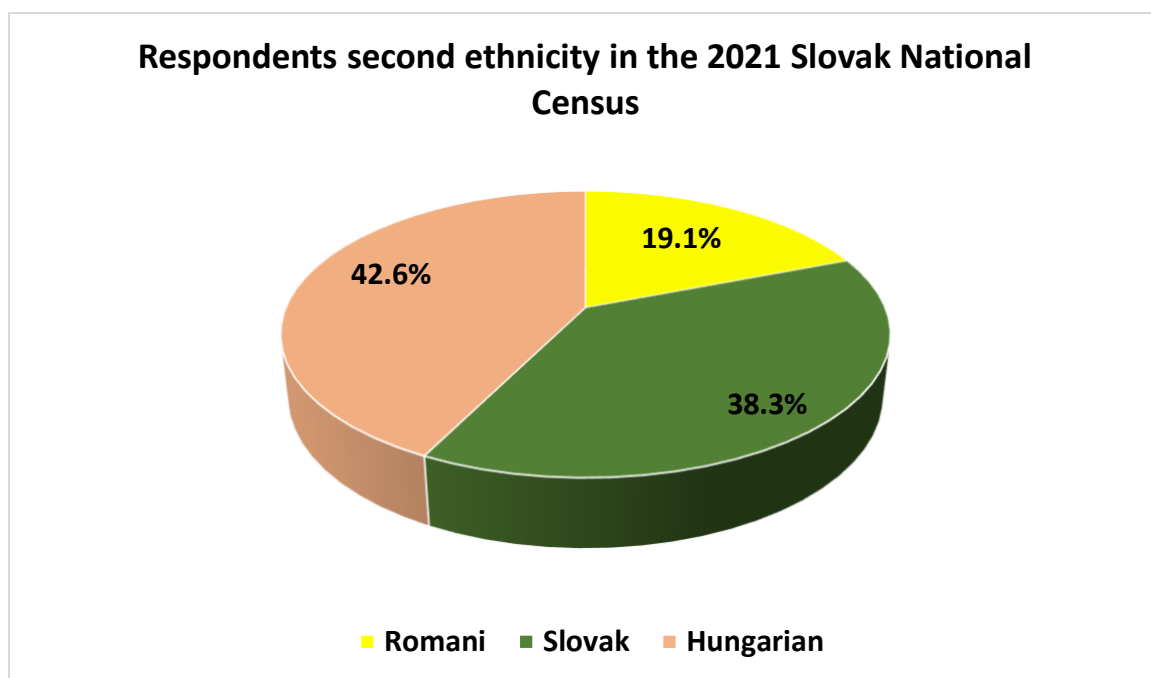
As figure 7. below shows, 57.1% of the respondents shared Romani as their first ethnicity, 28.6% Hungarian and 14.3% Slovak. In Slovakia many of Roma community members share multi-ethnic self-identification, which is mostly affected by using languages of another national minorities (Hungarian, Slovak) as their native language. This finding can be explained by the fact that in this region (south-west of Slovakia) the Roma ethnic group mainly consists of Hungarian Roma sub-group.

Figure 7. Respondents first ethnicity declared in the 2021 Slovak National Census



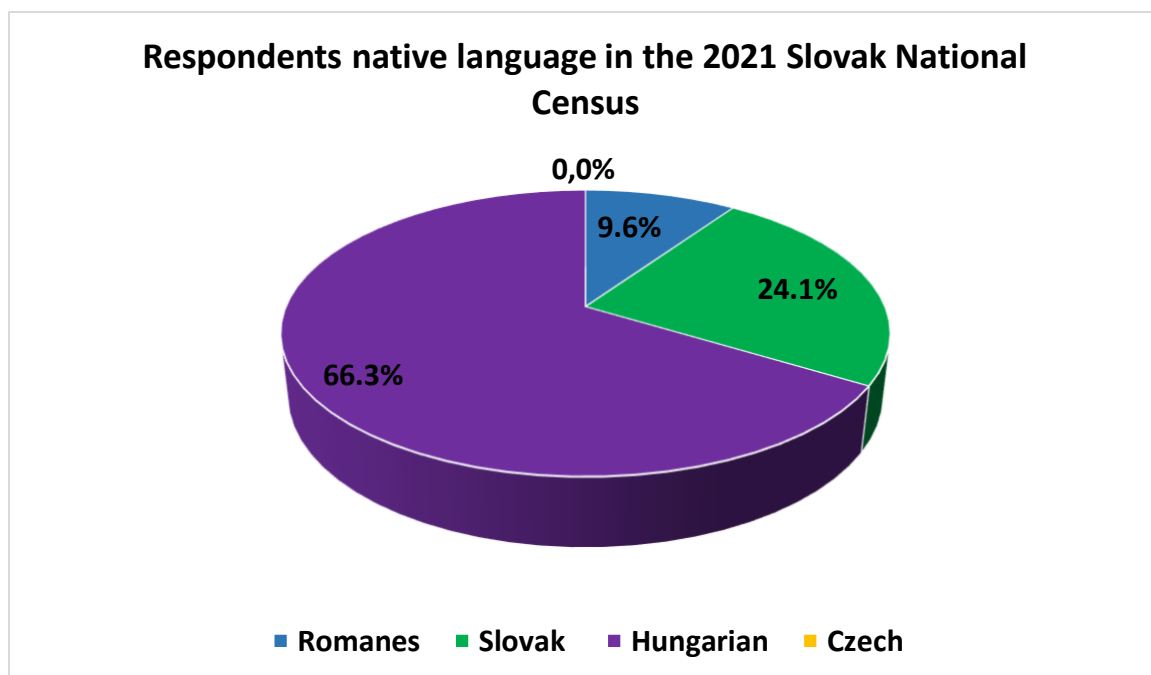
As figure 8. demonstrates respondents declared their second ethnicity in the 2021 Slovak National Census as follows: 42.6% Hungarian, 38.3% Slovak and 19.1% Romani. This finding shows how important it is for the respondents to share also the Hungarian ethnic identity. This can be explained by the fact Roma families were told that if they do not identify also as Hungarians, they will lose specific opportunities for Hungarian minorities such as: education in their minority language, etc. In some communities Hungarian Roma mayors manipulated their inhabitants by saying that if inhabitants do not declare themselves as Hungarians, the community will lose all the financial support received by European and national institutions, dedicated for minorities.

Figure 8. Respondents second ethnicity declared in the 2021 Slovak National Census



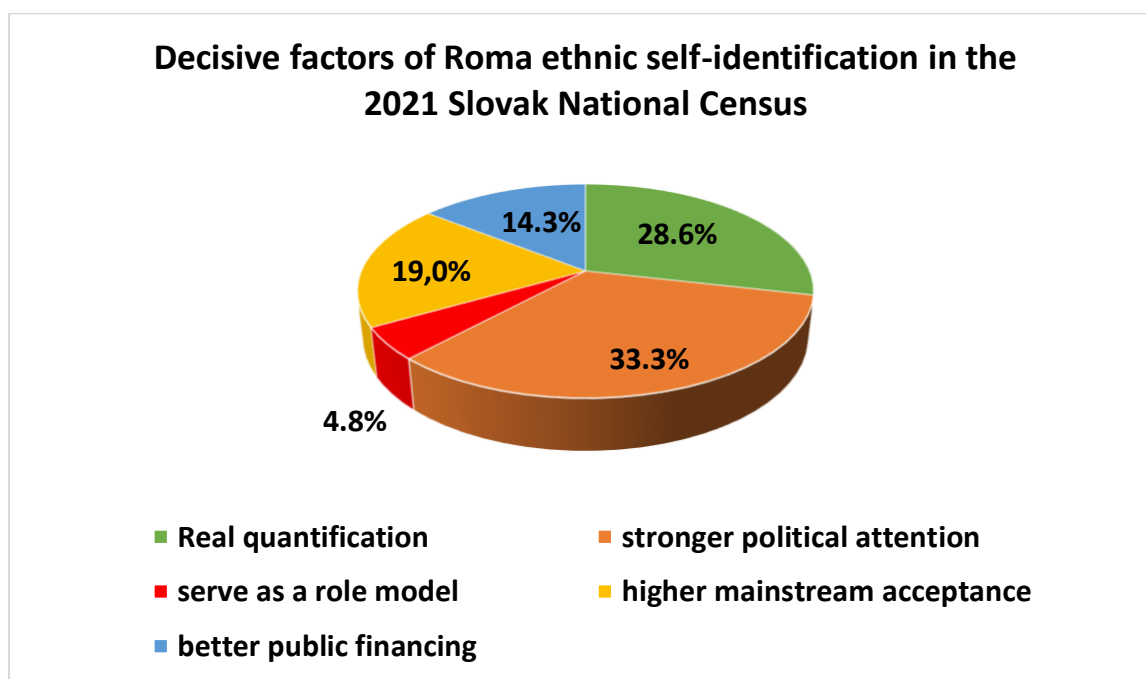
Most of the Respondents declared Hungarian as their native language in the 2021 Slovak National Census, that is 66.3% of the respondents. The remaining of the respondents declared Slovak, as their native language 24.1%, and 9.6% of the respondents declared Romanes as their native language, and none of the respondents stated the Czech language, (see figure 9.).

Figure 9. Respondents native language declared in the 2021 Slovak National Census



As figure 10. demonstrates 33.3% of respondents consider as decisive factor of Roma ethnic self-identification, the fact that declaring oneself as Roma will bring stronger political attention on issues concerning the Roma community. For 28.6% of the respondents the declaration of Roma identity meant an opportunity to achieve real quantification of Slovakia's Roma communities. Moreover, 19.0% of respondents stated that with their participation in 2021 census, they would like to achieve higher mainstream acceptance of the Roma ethnic population in society. About 14.3% of the respondents shared that a Roma self-identification, would contribute to achieve the common aim of obtaining better public financing of the Roma ethnic minority. Finally, just 4.8% of the respondents picked the option, to serve as a role model for other members of the Roma communities in Slovakia. This data speaks about the fact, that for Slovakia's Roma community members is much more important the progress of the community in general, than the Roma

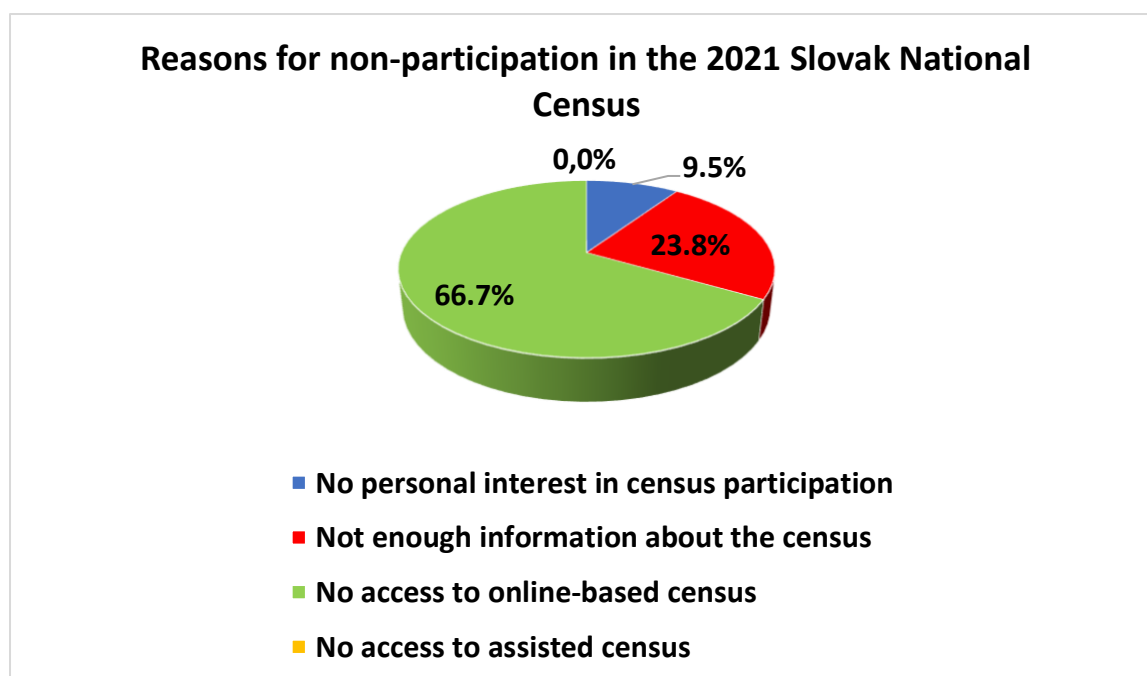
Figure 10. Decisive factors of Roma ethnic self in the 2021 Slovak National Census declared by respondents



Non-participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census

When asked why they did not participate in the census, 66.7% of respondents stated that the reason of their non-participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census is the lack of access to online-based census, and the opportunity to become counted electronically, (see figure 11.). Lower percentages of 23.8% reasoned their non-participation in the current census, due to the low personal information about the 2021 Slovak National Census. About 9.5% of respondents shared that they have no personal interest in census participation. One of the biggest challenges according to finding of this data, is the fact that there is a large number of Roma communities, which have no access to audio-visual devices and internet connection. Without this technology, they were not able to participate in the online version of the national census. The second important finding is that the community members are not well informed about the whole meaning and the process of the 2021 Slovak National Census, and many of them do not see the real and important reasons of their personal participation. This problem is caused mainly by low communication between the Roma communities and local municipalities.

Figure 11. Reasons for non-participation in the 2021 Slovak National Census



CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The participation of all citizens in national censuses is extremely important. The involvement of different national or ethnic minorities in the so-called nation's 'biggest research' concerning citizens' national, ethnic self-identification, native language, or information on their career is much more important than it sounds. Positive change in public issues, according to which a society could achieve collective progress, must always rely on data, evidence, and lessons of the past. Evidence and data are especially important for minorities such as the Roma, since governments across the Europe are working on policies aimed at the world's Roma communities' development. This is the main reason why this research aimed to collect quantitative data on the factors that contribute to revealing or concealing Roma self-identification in the 2021 Slovak National Census.

The first most important finding of this research, shows that Slovakia's Roma communities are strongly impacted by the negative social attitudes, opinions, and stereotypes, concerning their ethnicity, cultural background, and way of living. All these factors mixed with respondents' personal shame of publicly declaring themselves as persons of Romani background. In addition, respondents showed that they are concealing their identity when feeling the fear from being verbally or physically attacked and discriminated against. Another important finding is the fact that representatives of the research sample commonly share multi-ethnic self-identification. Significant percentiles of them identify as citizens of dual ethnic belonging, such as: Hungarian, Slovak, Roma, and its combinations.

According to the survey results of this research the following policy recommendations emerged. These policy recommendations can be considered as a foundation for achieving stronger willingness of the Roma self-identification in the remaining phases of the 2021 Slovak National Census.

- ⇒ Taking into consideration that certain respondents were not enough informed about the process and the importance of the 2021 Slovak National Census, it is paramount for municipalities to implement community-based programs, aimed at reciprocal communication between the municipality and different ethnic minorities, about public issues, events and about the importance of citizens participation in these activities

- ⇒ Since many of the inhabitants of the community I was researching do not speak Slovak, it is important that relevant state institutions (such as: Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Communities, Slovak Statistical Office, but also municipalities) to produce and distribute national campaigns, advertisement materials etc. about events such as elections, censuses to the ethnic communities in languages of their preference (Romanes, Hungarian and other)
- ⇒ As the results of this research uncovered, a significant amount of the respondents is afraid to declare their identity because of the fear being physically or verbally attacked. Since these attitudes are existing due to the fact that communities do not know each other, there is a need to implement activities aimed at Slovakia's multi-ethnic communities' collective tolerance and acceptance development on national level
- ⇒ Taking into consideration that a significant amount of the community members participating in this research did not participate in the online phase of the census, and also of the fact that they are afraid of giving their personal data to a non-community member based on the fear of the data misuse, the Slovak Statistical Office should involve representatives of minority communities in the process of data gathering
- ⇒ As the findings of this research reveal, many of the respondents share multi-ethnic identities and at the same time not all of them always reveal their Roma belonging, because of shame, stigma and fear of discrimination, there is a need to make the primary and secondary schooling curriculum more inclusive in the Slovak Republic, by increasing Roma representation in textbooks and including lectures dealing with ethnic minorities and multi-ethnic self-identification
- ⇒ When asked what the main sources of information about the 2021 Slovak National Census, only 9.5% of the respondents stated they were informed about it by the activities of Roma non-governmental institutions. In addition, even though the Slovak Government strongly supported the participation of the Roma communities in the national census, we can see that Slovak Roma NGOs had a limited contribution to this campaign. Because of this, in the next phases of the census there should be a much stronger cooperation between the Slovak Government and the Roma NGOs when it comes to national censuses

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Research Survey

27. 5. 2021 Rómovia v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku: Faktory ovplyvňujúce verejnú saba-identifikáciu rómskej národnostnej menšiny / Roma minority in the 2021 Slovak National Census: A survey on the factors contributing...

Rómovia v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku: Faktory ovplyvňujúce verejnú saba-identifikáciu rómskej národnostnej menšiny / Roma minority in the 2021 Slovak National Census: A survey on the factors contributing to revealing or concealing Roma self-identification

Milý / á respondent / ka !

Volám sa Mikuláš Lakatoš som študentom odboru Medzinárodných interdisciplinárnych štúdií na Stredo-európskej univerzite (Central European University) v Budapešti

Chcel by som Vás poprosiť o spoluprácu pri vypracovaní mojej záverečnej práce. Ktoorej cieľom je dôkladne zmapovať faktory, ktoré pozitívne a negatívne ovplyvňujú rómsku komunitu Slovenska vo verejnej seba-identifikácii vo sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku, a to konkrétne v lokalitách Vášho obydli. Účasťou na prieskume pomôžete získať ucelený prehľad informácií o aktuálnych faktoroch ktoré ovplyvňujú Vašu komunitu v rozhodovaní o seba-identifikácii ako Róma/Rómky.

Vyplnením dotazníka vyjadrujete súhlas s účasťou vo prieskume. Vaša účasť je dobrovoľná a anonymná. Účastníkom prieskumu sa môže stať osoba staršia ako 18 rokov. K individuálnym údajom v tomto dotazníku nebude mať prístup žiadna tretia osoba. Vaše údaje sú dôverné a slúžia iba pre účely tohto prieskumu.

Za vašu spoluprácu a čas Vám vopred ďakujem.

Mikuláš Lakatoš

Dear respondent !

My name is Mikuláš Lakatoš and I am currently a student of the International Interdisciplinary Romani Postgraduate Preparation Program (RGPP) at the Central European University in Budapest.

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27. 5. 2021 Rómovia v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku: Faktory ovplyvňujúce verejnú saba-identifikáciu rómskej národnostnej menšiny / Roma minority in the 2021 Slovak National Census: A survey on the factors contributing...

I would like to kindly invite you to contribute to my final research project for my studies. Thorough this online survey I hope to get a better understanding about the factors that affect the Roma community of the Slovak Republic in public self-identification as citizen of Roma ethnicity in the national census of 2021.

By completing this online survey, you agree to participate in the survey. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. By participation in this survey you are stating that your age is 18 or more. Any Individual, personal data of this survey will be not presented to any third person and subject.

Thank you for your participation.

Mikuláš Lakatos

Demografické údaje / Demographic data:

1. Váš vek / your age:

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

☐ 18 - 30

☐ 31 - 60

☐ 61 a viac / 61 and more

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2. Vaše pohlavie / your sex:

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ žena / female
- ☐ muž / male
- ☐ iné / other

3. Váš sociálny status / your social status :

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ zamestnaný / employed
- ☐ nezamestnaný / unemployed
- ☐ študent / student
- ☐ Iné: _____

Národnostná seba-identifikácia / Ethnic self-identification

4. Je Vaša národnosť rómská / Do you belong to Roma ethnic group?

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ áno / yes Preskočiť na 6. otázku
- ☐ nie / no

5. Vystupujete v spoločnosti verejne ako Róm, Rómka? / Do you publicly present yourself as a person of Roma ethnicity?

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ áno, vždy / yes, always
- ☐ áno, avšak nie vždy / yes, but not always
- ☐ nie, nikdy / no, never

Sčítanie obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku / Slovak National Census of 2021

6. Zúčastnili ste sa sčítania obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku ? / Did you participated in national census 2021 in Slovakia ?

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ áno / yes Preskočiť na 9. otázku
- ☐ nie / no Preskočiť na 7. otázku

Neúčasť v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku / No participation in Slovak National Census of 2021

7. Aké sú príčiny Vašej neučasti v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku? / What are the reasons of your not participation in Slovak National Census of 2021?

Začiarknite všetky vyhovujúce možnosti.

- ☐ nezaujím sa o význam a priebeh sčítania obyvateľstva / I was not interested in participating in national census
☐ nedisponujem dostatkom informácií o sčítaní obyvateľstva / I do not have enough information about national census
☐ nemám prístup ku elektronickému sčítaniu sa / I did not had access to online-based participation in national census
☐ nemám prístup ku asistovanému sčítaniu / I did not had access to assisted participation in national census
☐ nevidím význam v sčítaní obyvateľstva / I do not see any relevance in the census

Iné: ☐ _____

8. Ktoré z uvedených faktorov považujete za nepodporujúce, v rozhodnutí prihlásiť sa ku svojej rómskej národnosti na Slovensku v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021? / Which of the following factors contributed to your decision not to declare your ethnicity in the Slovak National Census of 2021?

Začiarknite všetky vyhovujúce možnosti.

- ☐ hanbím sa uviesť moju národnosť / I am ashamed to declare my ethnic identity
☐ negatívna verejná mienka o rónoch / the negative social reputation about Roma communities
☐ mám strach z diskriminácie / I am afraid not to be discriminated against
☐ nenávisťné prejavy voči marginalizovaným Rómom / increasing hate speech towards marginalized Roma communities
☐ mám strach z fyzického napadnutia / I am afraid to be personally attacked
☐ bojím sa o zneužití mojich osobných údajov / I am afraid of use of my personal data

Iné: ☐ _____

Účast v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku / Participation in Slovak National census of 2021

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9. Z akých informačných zdrojov ste sa dozvedeli o práve prebiehajúcom sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku? / From what information sources did you learned about the ongoing census of 2021 in Slovakia?

Začiarknite všetky vyhovujúce možnosti.

- ☐ rodinný príslušník, známy / relative, friend
☐ obecny, mestský úrad / municipality
☐ TV reklama, program / TV advertisement, program
☐ sociálne siete / social networks
☐ rómske občianske združenie / Roma NGO
☐ škola / school

Iné: ☐ _____

10. Akú národnosť ste si uviedli pri sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku (uved'te prvú uvedenú národnosť) / What ethnicity did you declared in the census of 2021 in Slovakia (as the first nationality)?

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ Róm, Rómka / Romani
☐ Slovák, Slovenska / Slovak
☐ Maďar, Maďarka / Hungarian
☐ Iné: _____

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11. V sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku, využili ste možnosť uvedenia si aj druhej národnostnej príslušnosti? Ak áno uveďte akej? / Did you used the option of declaring the second ethnicity in Slovak census of 2021? If yes, which ethnic belonging?

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ Róm, Rómka / Romani
☐ Slovák, Slovenka / Slovak
☐ Maďar, Maďarka / Hungarian
☐ Iné: _____

12. Aký je Váš materinský jazyk, ktorý ste uviedli v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021 na Slovensku? / What is your mother tongue that you stated in the Slovak National Census of 2021 census?

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ☐ Rómčina / Romanes
☐ Slovenčina / Slovak
☐ Maďarčina / Hungarian
☐ Čeština / Czech
☐ Iné: _____

13. Ktoré z uvedených faktorov považujete za podporujúce, v rozhodnutí prihlásiť sa ku svojej rómskej národnosti na Slovensku v sčítaní obyvateľstva 2021? / Which of the following options you are considering decisive for you declaring your Roma ethnicity in Slovak national census of 2021?

V každom riadku označte iba jednu elipsu.

	záujem zlepšiť verejnú mienku o rómochoch na Slovensku / to better reflect the exact statistical enumeration of Roma community	zvyšší politický záujem o problémy Rómov / I would like to achieve higher political attention on Roma issues	chcem byť vzorom pre svoju komunitu / I would like to be a role model for my community	chcem aby Rómovia boli viac akceptovaní majoritnou spoločnosťou / I would like to achieve higher mainstream acceptance of Roma communities from majority population	chcem zvýšiť známy počet Rómov na Slovensku / I would like to support the enumeration of the slovak Roma communities	chcem dosiahnuť lepšie verejné financovanie Rómskej komunity / I would like to achieve better public financing of the Roma communities
veľmi dôležité / strongly important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
viac-menej dôležité, somewhat important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
menej dôležité / less important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vôbec nedôležité / not important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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