The aim of this paper is to present the Roma people and their status in Southeast Europe; since they are the largest and most heterogeneous ethnic minority of the region. We are focusing on the Post-Yugoslav countries, Albania, Romania and Bulgaria. Hungary is not integrated organically to the studied countries, however for the easier comparison; we took the data of the Hungarian Gypsies into the analysis.

The Roma people are not a homogeneous community, the religion, the language and the historical background both could differentiate them. Some ethnic groups who are attached the Gypsies also wish to distinguish themselves from the Romanies. The phenomenon of "preferred identity" can be observed within the Roma communities, which means that they do not identify themselves as Roma to avoid discrimination; and because of the assimilation (linguistic, religious and cultural) and "social progress" (especially in the more educated social layer).

The socio-economic inequalities are increasing among both the Roms and the rest of the population; and within the Roma population as well. There are people in each country who live under or fall below the poverty line; however this process is much more intense and more drastic amongst the Roma population.

This paper also aims to shed the light on the current situation of the Romani people living in the Balkans. For the sake of the objective we found important to present the history of the Roma in each country. We carried out a comprehensive analysis of the Hungarian and foreign literature, therefore, to the maximum extent possible, we tried to get to know previous studies of those researchers as widely as possible; who live in the countries concerned. Mainly based on the UNDP Roma Survey 2011, we compared the Roma population of each country; we discuss the causes of the differences in the various statistical data; we reveal the disparities of the labor market data, language usage, living conditions and educational data, which can be observed in every country examined.

Keywords: Gypsies, Roma, Roma community, Balkan, Southeast Europe, UNDP survey, comparative analysis

Outline of Article

Introduction
The schematic overview of the history of the Romani people, Gypsy ethnic groups in the examined countries

Brief introduction of the Roma communities in each country
Comparative analysis of the situation of the Roma, mainly based on the survey carried out by UNDP in 2011.

Conclusion

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1 We use the term Roma, Romani, Rom and Gypsy in turn in the study, as synonyms; because there is no international "consensus" for the more appropriate term.
Introduction

Looking at the situation of the Roma people in the Balkans, there is no country that could not be in the center of interest for some reason. Southeast Europe is the most heterogeneous area of Europe ethnically and religiously. The significant proportion of certain ethnic groups does not live within the borders of a given country, but apart from a few exceptions; they often live scattered throughout four or five countries. The different history, ethnicity and religion defined the political values and behavior of the countries in a special way; which is still can be seen in some countries, e.g. the orientation and diversification of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Illés, 2002:46). This fragmentation is determining the situation of the Roma population of the region as well.

\[ \text{Figure 1. The number and share of Romani people (Gypsies) in Europe.} \]
\[ \text{Source: Kocsis-Bottlik in Földgömb (2012)} \]

The Romani people are opened to the surrounding (social) environment, both religiously and linguistically; therefore neither the religion nor the language are significant factors in the forming of their identity (in contrast with other ethnic groups of the Balkans). They are living in diasporas; their ethnic blocks can be identified with difficulty, and these ethnic blocks are also increasingly diverse. Their socio-cultural frameworks differ mostly from the other European ethnic groups: principally the main grouping factor is their social and geographic peripheral situation. They connect(ed) with difficulty, or could not connect at all in the processes of European nationalization (Bottlik, 2012).

Based on the census data of the countries, nearly 4 million Roma live in the region; while the World Bank survey shows that 15 million Romani people live in the area,\(^2\) however different sources give different numbers and proportions. Gypsies can be found in every country of Southeast Europe, but in very different numbers and proportions. The most of the Roma live in Romania and Bulgaria.

\(^2\) Together in Central and Southeastern Europe.
but several hundred thousand Gypsies live in Serbia and FYR Macedonia as well. Three-quarters of the world’s Roma population could be found in the central and eastern parts of Europe, and in Southeast Europe. They make up significant part of total population in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania with 9-11 percent. In terms of the absolute numbers, Romania has the biggest Roma community, where their estimated numbers is between 1.5 and 2 million - or even above this (M. Császár, 2009).

Because of the different religion, language and historical background; some ethnic groups who are attached the Gypsies also wish to distinguish themselves from the Romani. The phenomenon of "preferred identity" can be observed within the Roma communities, which means that they do not identify themselves as Roma to avoid discrimination; and because of the assimilation (linguistic, religious and cultural) and "social progress" (especially in the more educated social layer). A good example for this phenomenon is that during a survey, three Macedonian brothers both have different nationalities on their own admission: Roma, Albanian and Balkan Egyptian (Marushiaikova et. al., 2001). The population census data throughout the centuries cannot give the exact numbers of them. In the (Post-)Yugoslav state(s) in the given census data they could be identified as Albanians, Yugoslavs, Muslims, "other ethnic group" or "unknown ethnic group".

The majority of the Romani people still live in rural, peripheral areas, although the number of Roms living in cities is increasing, where they take up the deprived neighborhoods. However this phenomenon strengthens the same population exchange process, which can be experienced in the rural areas. During the socialism most of them gave up their wandering, nomadic way of live and their traditional crafts as well. Regrettably, the majority of the Roma population is unemployed and depends on different aids, state and local government subsidies.

The inequalities are increasing among both the Romani people and the rest of the population; and within the Roma population as well. There are people in each country who live under or fall below the poverty line; however this process is much more intense and more drastic amongst the Roma population. For that reason positive correlation can be observed between the underdevelopment and backwardness of the given region, area, city, neighborhood and the ratio of local Roma population. Hungary is not integrated organically to the studied countries, however for the easier comparison; I took the data of the Hungarian Gypsies into the analysis.

Materials and methods

The aim of my study is to shed the light on the current situation of the Romani people who are living in the Balkans. In my opinion it is important to know the memorable moments of the history of the Roma in each country, in addition their current status; since some of the historical events still determine the state of the Roma communities and their attitude to the majority. For this purpose, I carried out a comprehensive analysis of the Hungarian and foreign literature. Geographical, historical, economic, and social studies were analyzed. We made an attempt at to get to know the work of the researchers living in the countries observed as extensively as possible.

During the demonstration of the general characteristics of the studied countries, I relied on the statistical data of the CIA World Factbook, the IMF and the Kosovo Agency of Statistics.

To survey the accurate number and rate of the southeast European Roma population, different statistics are available. For this reason, in addition to the official statistical (census) data of the studied countries; I also took into account the estimates of researchers and research institutes. After the evaluation of the data, I presented the "the most widely accepted", most commonly used estimates. Due to my subjective judgment, these data are closer to the upper limit of the estimates.

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3 In addition to the geographical concept, the definition of the Balkans nowadays clearly reflects political, cultural, civilizational and moral contents not just in Southeast Europe, but also in Western Europe. (...) For example between the First and Second World Wars, when the international reputation of Hungary in the West touched bottom; the American, British and French press and political literature ranked Hungary as a Balkan state. After the Second World War and especially after 1956, this classification was essentially eliminated. In the German literature the definition of Southeast Europe is still in use, which also includes Hungary. However it does not make too much sense to carry on a prestige discussion about the question. It can be said that Hungary, Croatia (and Slovenia, which country is not included to the study) as much as part of Central Europe as part of Southeast Europe (Illés, 2002:21).
The comparative analysis mainly based on the UNDP Roma Survey 2011. The survey carried out by UNDP interviewed more than 1000 Roma and non-Roma households living in or close to Roma communities in 12 countries of Central and Southeastern Europe. The survey collected basic socio-economic data on household as well as individual household members and perception data of selected adult members from each household. Kosovo was not included in the survey. The data sets are available for everyone in MS Excel and SPSS files (the link can be found later in the study). In the pursuance of data evaluation, I took into account only the data of the examined countries. Due to the source files, the calculations and the making of diagrams were performed by MS Excel and SPSS software. Thanks to the UNDP survey of 2004 - which was published in 2005 - I could carry out a comparative time-series analysis. The map of Figure 15. was created by QGIS (Quantum GIS) software.

The comparative analysis take notice of labor market data, language usage, living conditions and educational data as well. As the UNDP survey is examining small sample areas, the conclusions drawn from the statistics do not necessarily reflect perfectly the situation of Roma in Southeast Europe, but in my opinion we can get acquainted with the actual conditions with good approximation.

The history and the names of the Romani people in Southeast Europe

The uncertainty of the Gypsies origin is indicated by the different names of the ethnic group, which is also the result of the cultural diversification of the Romanies - certain Gypsy ethnic groups deliberately distinguished themselves from one another, due to the different historical, religious etc. conflicts (e.g. the opposition of Romungro and Beás Gypsys in Hungary) – vide Figure 2.

The English-speaking countries call the Romanies Gypsies, since they considered the Romanies originated from Egypt (Egyptus). In many countries, the Gypsies often were named after country, from which they migrated from: the Dutch call them unger (Hungarians), the Swedes name them tatern (Tatars), and the Finns call them mustalainen (Blacks).

The Gypsies call themselves Roma, which means man, husband. Since the change of the regime, the literature often refers to the ethnic group with term "Roma minority" and "Roma people". However, the surveys and statistical data about the Roma minority in Hungary, almost invariably use the term "Gypsy"(Hablicsek, 2007:7).

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4 Despite the fact that the Romani people have been living in Europe for many centuries with us, until recently no one could say with any certainty that who the Roms actually are, where they had come from, how many of them there were before. The history of the Romanies is often covered by mystery, which was usually created by the Roma themselves (Mitrović, 2001). Certain Gypsy ethnic groups had split, right before they reached Southeast Europe; thereafter, from a cultural aspect, they often adapted to other ethnic groups who surrounded them, so no single "Roma myth" subsisted, which is shared by all Roma.

5 In the previous centuries, The Romani people were named Egyptians in several European countries (from this name originates the Gypsy name as well). However, examining the language of the Gypsies and the origins of certain words, it can be stated that the ancestors of the Romanies had never been in Egypt during the migration period, since words of Arabic origin cannot be found in the Romani language. At the same time, they have a very different status in Kosovo and Macedonia, where an ethnic group called the Balkan Egyptians are forming a minority de jure (vide the chapter of the introduction of the Romanies by country).
Country | Gypsy ethnic groups
--- | ---
Albania | gabeli, gift, jevg, katali, kurbat, madžup
Bosnia and Herzegovina | gabel, gurbet, burgudzija, cerhari, čurari, dasikane roma, džambazo, grebenar, horohane roma, jerylja, kalajdžija, kelderas, kopanar, lovari, romi, tsigani rudar, zlatar
Bulgaria | băjăs, venditka roma, burgudzsija, cerhari, čurari, dasikane roma, džambazo, grebenar, horohane roma, jerylja, kalajdžija, kelderas, kopanar, lovari, romi, tsigani rudar, zlatar
Croatia | băjăs, venditka roma, burgudzsija, cerhari, čurari, dasikane roma, džambazo, grebenar, horohane roma, jerylja, kalajdžija, kelderas, kopanar, lovari, romi, tsigani rudar, zlatar
Hungary | beás, cerhari, csurari, drizdari, gurvari, kelderas, lovari, masari, romungro, sinti
Kosovo | arli, aškali, egypcani
Macedonia | arli, aškali, gurbet, džambazo, egypcani
Montenegro | čergari, gabelji, gurbet, kovači, madjupi
Romania | băjăs, bradžitor, čurari, džambaš, ferar, florar, karamibar, khelderaš, kheretuno rom, lakatuš, lavutar, lovari, pejptanar, pletoš, potkovar, rudar, salahor, sitar, spoitoar, ursar, vânzator, vatraš
Serbia | arli, băjăs, beli cigani, džambazo, gurbet, khelderaš, lovari, mečkar, romungro, ursar

Figure 2. Gypsy ethnic groups in the studied countries. Source: self-collected sources and self-edition.

Several theories have been published about the origin of the Romani people of the Balkans. The most widely accepted theory is the Theory of the Indian origin. According to that, the Romanies left the northwestern part of the Hindustan Peninsula in more migrant waves between the 9th and 14th centuries, due to less well-known reasons. Then they came to Southeast Europe in the 11th century, through the territory of the Byzantine Empire; and after that, they reached Western Europe in the 13-14th centuries (Kocsis, 2002).

Figure 3. The hypothetical route of the Romani migration from India to Europe. Source: Kenrick, D. 2007

Other theories suggest that the Romanies arrived to the peninsula from an area, which is being geographically closer to the Balkans. This theory is supported by the language, the religion and the
lifestyle heritages. According to this conception, the Gypsies had established closer contact with the Western European culture for the first time during the Crusades.

The Romani language could evolve along the historically important trade routes, and was able to take over new words and phrases. A large number of Greek and Persian words had been taken into the Romani vocabulary over the centuries, but upon closer examination on the different Romani dialects, these words of foreign origin can be found in the single dialects in different ratio.

Roma could migrate to the western part of Europe from the beginning of the 13th century. Some people claim that they might have reached the surroundings of the Carpathians as the slaves of the Mongols. After other historical sources, those Gypsy slaves, who had been liberated from the Crimean Tatars, become the captives and slaves of the Romanians. Until their liberation in the middle of the 19th century, they had been called as “kistatárok” (“minor Tatars”) (M. Császár, 2009:144).

Great number of Romanies moved out from the Balkans on the grounds of the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. By other theories, they went to the Western Christian state to spy on them on behalf of the Turks. On the other hand, researchers suggest that they fled from the Turks and wished to migrate to more peaceful areas. 15th century historical descriptions mention a mountain called Gyppen and its surroundings, called Little Egypt, near Medon in Greece. This placed was called Little Egypt, because either the Gypsies were derived from Egypt, or the name of the place existed earlier and it was used as the designation of the Romani tribes. By 1509, the number of houses, where Gypsies lived of the above mentioned Gypsy settlement, reduced from 300 to 30, which makes the theory of fled likely (Heiczinger, 1978 cited by M. Császár, 2009:144); which later turned into coexistence.

The Muslim and Christian Romanies often become victims of the population exchanges (between Greece-Turkey, Bulgaria-Turkey, Yugoslavia-Turkey); and they fled to the West because of the several wars. The Ottomans made distinction between the Romanies by the religious background, which was reflected in their economic situation and living condition: the non-Muslim Romanies (the Dhimmi) had to pay Haraç (or Harac) tax to the Ottoman state, while the Muslim Romanies could serve and music in the court of the nobles (Cardillo, 2009:11-12). Because the Ottomans were unable to settle down the nomadic Gypsies by force, the taxes were paid collectively by the Romani people after the statue of Mehmed II, the Conqueror in 1475 (Marushiakova-Veselin, 2011).

At the end of the 20th century

During the time of socialism, the Gypsies were lived in relatively better living conditions. The communist parties actively collected Roma party members, hereby also to forward their integration (Barany, 2000).

As the impact of the change of the regime, which took place in each of the Southeast European states; from the early nineties, due to the intensification of the socio-economic problems, the peripheral situation of the Roma population had been increased onwards.

Insomuch as they always were the “marginal” workers in the society, which was declared as “employed as a whole”, so after the appearance of the crisis/crises, they were the first ones who lost their job. They were the prime endurers of the curtailment of the social system and the privatization process, since they gained almost nothing or nothing during the re-privatization. The Gypsy workers of the collective farms were left out from the privatization of the agricultural lands in practice, since they had not have own lands previously (Illés, 2002:157-158,166).

The political restructuring of Southeast Europe, which has already taken place after the change of the regime; and the ethnic conflicts that surrounding this phenomenon – mostly the breakup of Yugoslavia and its effects – also impaired the Romanies in Southeast Europe, and their peripheral status has been increased, too.

6 This speculation may be able to be supported by that in some Balkan countries, especially in Macedonia and Kosovo, the Romani people are known as egyipcani, who consider themselves descendants of Egyptian immigrants and traders.
Brief introduction of the Roma communities in each country

Albania

By the official census data, the number of Roma in Albania is not more than 8000 people, however their number is supposed to be around 100 thousand. The difference between the official and the “real” data could be explicable with the fact that the majority of the Romanies also speak Albanian, and like the great mass of the society, they are also practicing the Islamic religion. Therefore instead of Roma, they declare themselves Albanian, as occasion serves by official surveys. During the Ottoman rule, there was not discrimination against them in particular. They practiced usually the traditional Roma crafts and played music for living. (Vide supra the section about the Ashkali and Balkan Egyptians in the chapter of Kosovo).

After Albania gained independence (1912), the Roma population has been more and more drifting to the periphery of the society. For example, around 1920, it had become forbidden to the Romanies to dance in public places in exchange for donations (Kenrick, 2007:53). At the time of the Italian rule, neither the Italians treated them as equals with the Albanians. After the Second World War, Albania belonged to the anti-Yugoslavian part of the communist countries. By 1961, the relation of Albania, led by Hoxha; also broke down with the Soviet Union. Finally in 1978, Albania lost its last ally, China. As a result, one of the world’s most isolated countries had been created which had no allies. In the country there were not recognized minorities, and each people in the country were registered as Albanian.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the ethnically divided Bosnia and Herzegovina (48% Bosnak, 37.1% Serb, and 14.3% Croat) with nearly the population of 4 million people; according to several sources about 80 thousand Romanies live in. Nevertheless, it is not inconceivable that their numbers could be many times higher than it is officially estimated. The Roma community neither in this country is homogeneous, namely their mother tongue could be Romani, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian as well. Compared to the small linguistic differences of the South Slavic languages, the religious diversification is a bigger difficulty. Most of the Romanies of Bosnia and Herzegovina are Muslims, but smaller proportions of them are Roman Catholics and Serbian Orthodoxes. Like in other Balkan states, the Gypsies of the country migrated to the current territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the centuries-long Ottoman rule, and had converted to Islam along with other ethnic groups. They live scattered all over the country, and they can form nowhere a larger ethnic conglomerate.

During the Bosnian War, the Gypsies support formally neither party. Between 1992 and 1995, the Romanies also appeared in the detachments of the Serbs, the Croats and the Bosniaks. At the time of the war, several thousands of Roma people fled to Germany and the neighboring states, and did not return since (Kenrick, 2007:26).

As far as I am concerned, the literature which studies the status of the Bosnian Romanies, is incomplete and not up to date, which is related to the fact that the government has failed to make significant steps for the integration of the Roma in the recent years. This situation could be explained by the economic problems and ethnic diversification of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Roma people characteristically live in the periphery of the society.

Bulgaria

The first bigger migration wave of the Romanies to the territory of the medieval Bulgaria is dated to the 13-14th century. At the time of the Ottoman Turkish conquest, at the end of the 14th century,

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7 The ethnic conflicts of Bosnia and Herzegovina strengthened the religious conflicts amongst the Roma ethnic groups, too. However it is not uncommon that Romanies who have different religions, visiting each others' churches or mosques; by this they implement some kind of “religious universality”. This phenomenon can be observed in those parts of the country, which were spared by wars, where the cohesive power of the local people rises above the religiously divided society.
subsequent Roma groups have reached the medieval Bulgaria and they also settled down. At first, the followers of the Christian faith were the majority compared to the followers of Islam. Thereafter, the majority of the Gypsies converted to Islam, so the Muslims became the majority. Due to the conversion, the Gypsies were not persecuted in the territory of the Ottoman Empire - in contrast to the Western European countries - and they were neither slaves, like in the vassal states of the Ottoman Empire, e.g. in Wallachia. Great majority of the Romanies worked in the agriculture and practiced their traditional crafts at this time (Marushiaikova-Veselin, 1997).

In the second half of the 19th century, another mass migration took place, when other Gypsy ethnic groups settled down within the borders of the current Bulgarian state. This wave of migration is called the "Kelderas invasion", which began after the slavery of Gypsies was abolished in Wallachia and Moldavia, after 1856.

The relations between the Bulgarians and Romanies during the birth of the new Bulgarian state were not unidirectional. Although some cases are known, when the Christian Gypsies took part in the Bulgarian national liberation movement; and some of them also supported the Russian troops in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. On the other hand, there were also examples, when the Muslim Gypsies cooperated with the Ottoman authorities; moreover, during the April Uprising of 1876, they participated in the reprisal against those Romanies, who had been fighting on the Bulgarian rebellion side (Njagulov, 2009:2).

The researches distinguish several groups and subgroups of the Roma ethnicity, within the borders of the Bulgarian state, which evolved after 1878. Regarding the lifestyle, settled (Jerlija) and nomadic groups (Cerhari) of the Gypsies can be separated. The previous ones – who are the majority – are descendants of those Romanies, who settled down during the conquest of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. However, some of them have retained their semi-nomadic lifestyle in the independent Bulgarian State. The nomadic Romanies, whom the Kelderas and other subgroups belong to; are descendants of those who migrated from Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, in the second half of the nineteenth century. They had nomadic lifestyle until 1958. A special subgroup is the group of the Rudars, who also settled in during the so-called "Kelderas invasion", but unlike the majority, they speak a dialect of the Romanian language. Depending on that, which religion is practiced by the particular ethnic group, two subgroups can be distinguished: the Christian or “Bulgarian Gypsies” (Dasikane Roma) and the Muslim or “Turkish Gypsies” (Horohane Roma). In addition to the previous examples, the Roma population can be diversified in Bulgaria by the traditional crafts, the financial situation and the geographical origin (Njagulov, 2009:3).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, every Muslim in Bulgaria was considered as Turk; but a trend had become increasingly dominant that the Turkish population should be separated from the rest of the Muslim population and they should be registered as a substantive ethnic group. The religious conversion of the Romani people in this manner reduced the number of Turks statistically (Köszegi, 2009:3).

Based on the official population census, the ethnic composition of the population of Bulgaria, which is nearly 7 million people, is 76.9% Bulgarian, 8% Turk and 4.4% Roma. The number of the Roma in Bulgaria, according to the 2011 census is 371 thousand people; but it is very likely that the number is even bigger, because like the Turkish and Macedonian minorities, the Gypsies were forced by the Bulgarian authorities to change their names, to learn the official language; and if they were Muslims, they had to abandon their faith and convert to Orthodox religion. It is difficult to determine their numbers, because some of them pretend to be Muslim and/or Turkish on the questionnaires. In contrast, the “Western organizations” such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates the proportion of Roma from 10 to 12% that comes out at 700000 to 800000 people. The native languages of Roma in Bulgaria are the multitude dialects of Romani language, Bulgarian, Turkish or a dialect of the Vlach or Romanian language.

Croatia

The first historical record of the Gypsies in the territory of the present-day Croatia is originated from 1362. The record is about the arrival of two Rams to Dubrovnik. There are very contradictory estimates about the number of Roma people in Croatia: according to the last census only 9463 Roma live in the country, although some estimates put their numbers over 40 thousand. During the Yugoslav
Wars, thousands of Romani people fled from the territory of today’s Croatia, due to they supported the Serbs\textsuperscript{8} because of the previous historical events (historical persecution by the Croats)\textsuperscript{9} and their religion – the Gypsies in Croatia practiced the Serbian Orthodox religion while the Croats were/are Catholics. Most of them still have not returned to the former place of residence. Characteristically, they settled down in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (where the Croatian Gypsies fled during the Second World War), or emigrated to the West.

Compared to other countries in an unusual way, in addition to the survey of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, the Pastoral Committee of the Croatian Bishop’s Conference also conducted its own survey. According to this survey, one sixth of the Roma are Muslim; they live mostly in the surroundings of Međimurje, Osijek-Baranja County (Osječko-baranska županija), Sisak-Moslavina County (Sisačko-moslavačka županija) and Zagreb. Significant proportion of the Romanies in Croatia is Bǎjǎs (Forray-Szegál, 2002).

The Croatian Constitution and the Minority Law passed in 1991, give equal rights to all ethnic minorities, and above a certain number, they may be able to have members in the parliament as well. The number of Romanies does not reach this number, so they have no representative in the parliament. The experts believe that the well-to-do Romanies are assimilating; they classify themselves as Croats; while often some of the poor Croats declare themselves as Roma to get social assistance. The living and housing conditions of the Romanies are usually worse than the Croatian average, significant proportion of them lives in Gypsy settlements. (However, a solution proposed by the government, to move the Romanies to the villages of the expelled Serbs, was rejected) (Forray-Szegál, 2002).

\textit{Kosovo – The Ashkali and Balkan Egyptians}

According to the official statistical data, probably 8800 Romani people live in Kosovo, but actually their number is at least double. In 1991, it was estimated that there were about 150 thousand Romanies in the present-day Kosovo. Pristina already had Romani-language radio programs and newspapers in 1983. In 1986, they had their own program in the local TV (Kenrick, 2007:142) (see below the causes of the population decline). On the whole, we could say that before the change of the regime, Kosovo was one of the "cultural strongholds" of the Roma in the Balkans.

Hereinafter, I would like to delineate two ethnic groups who are related to the Roma (or they are Romani, too?)\textsuperscript{10} They live in Kosovo and Albania, and due to the Kosovo War, they have populous groups in Macedonia and Montenegro as well. They are the Ashkali and Balkan Egyptians.

The Ashkali (Hashkali, Aškaliye, Ασχαλίτες) and the Balkan Egyptians (Jevgs, Gjiupci, Egijptjant) are Albanian-speaking (de jure recognized) ethnic minorities. They could be "Albanised" Roms or Turks, or descendants of other ethnic groups, but still there is no consensus among them regarding their origin (Marushiakova et. al., 2001; Zemon, n.d.).

The Ashkali name originates from the Turkish as word (Marushiakova-Veselin, 2001c). They believe that they arrived to the Balkans from Iran during the fourth century, so they are the eldest ethnic group in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. By other assumptions, they came from Italy or the Palestinian city of Ashkelon. They suggest that they worked as blacksmiths and craftsmen at the time of the Ottoman Empire. They are mostly Muslims (Zemon, n.d.).

Prior to the Kosovo War of 1999, they were registered as Albanians. Nevertheless, at the end of the war, the ethnic tensions in the region took a tragic turn, as the Albanian population accused the Roms by that, they collaborated with the Serb militias, so they expelled them (Živković, 2001). Most of them have become refugee in Vojvodina, Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro. This persecution went hand in hand with violent acts, relocation and discrimination; and with the significant declension of the living conditions of those Romanies who stayed in Kosovo or came back later. Some researchers think that both the Albanian and Serb politicians forget all about the impacts of the Kosovo War which affected the Romanies, and about the atrocities which they had to suffer (Đorđević, 2001). That is why

\textsuperscript{8} Even so some Serbian militias considered the Gypsies as enemies: in 1991, Serbian soldiers burned down the Roma-populated quarter of Torjanici village (Kenrick, 2007:53).

\textsuperscript{9} The Ustaša Movement regarded all the Romanies, Gypsies and Orthodox Serbs as enemies (Kenrick, 2007:53).

\textsuperscript{10} This question should be decided by the reader after the reading of the subsection; because there is neither commonly accepted scientific declaration about their origins nor their relationship to one other.
many Roma fled from Kosovo and did not return; and neither the status of those, who stayed in Kosovo; has been not resolved yet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of resettlement</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beograd</td>
<td>30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bujanovac</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kragujevac</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraljevo</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niš</td>
<td>20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prokuplje</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodina</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vranje</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>124000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4. Number of the Kosovan Roma refugees by the place of resettlement. Source: Živković, 2001:533*

Today, both the above-mentioned group of people is a separated sub-ethnic group in Kosovo. Their number is not more than a few thousand: together the Romanies, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptians make up 20-30 thousand people.

The Ashkali "created" their own identity in 1999, to distinguish themselves from the group of Roma who supported the Serbian side during the war. The first Ashkali political party was established in 2000, by the leadership of Saber Rrahmani. From the beginning, they stood for the split of Kosovo (Marushiakova-Veselin, 2001c).

*Figure 5. The flags of Albania and the Ashkali people. Source: Wikipedia*

The "Association of Egyptians" was founded in 1990, in Ohrid, Macedonia. The Albanian Muslims keep count of them as Albanised Gypsies, although they consider themselves as descendants of Egyptian immigrants. Today in the Republic of Macedonia, the Balkan Egyptians are an officially recognized separate ethnic group; they have political influence on representative and cultural organizations in Kosovo and Albania.

Despite the increasingly intense debate about the identity of Balkan Egyptians, most of the researchers go on record that those who are called today as Egyptians, are actually Gypsies; who are trying to earn a much more "respected" identity to get rid of the "Gypsy stigma". Although this principle has remained dominant in the social sciences, some experts have tried to find historical evidence of the presence of the Egyptians in the Balkans, to explore a possible relationship between an early migrate wave of the Egyptians and the pending question about the origin of the Balkan Egyptians. The presence of Egyptians in the Balkans is well documented in the various historical
periods, therefore it is uncontroversial. In contrast, an emerging question which had become a political issue is the following: is there a connection between the Balkan Egyptians and the Egyptian migrants who arrived centuries ago? (Trubeta, 2005 cited by Bosznay, 2005:415).

The "Egyptians" believe that the Ashkali could be regarded as Balkan Egyptians as well; who seceded from them due to the influence of the Albanians. The Ashkali perceive that the Balkan Egyptians are trying to assimilate them, and by their own admission, they have different historical and social background.

Although the Roma, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptians distinguish themselves from one other; they often marry each other, but very rarely mix with other ethnic groups (Arifi, 2009).

The most famous Ashlaki born person is Agnes Bojaxhiu (Kenrick, D. 2007:66), better known as Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa), who was born in Skopje (in Turkish: Üsküb) in 1910, which belonged to the Ottoman Empire. She was respected and recognized worldwide on account of her dedicated work among the poor people in Calcutta. Pope John Paul II beatified her in 2003.

Macedonia

Like in other post-Yugoslav countries, the ethnic composition of Macedonia is very heterogeneous. As compared with Macedonian majority, the proportion of Albanians (25.2%) is increasing in the total population, due to their higher natural growth rate. Moreover tens of thousands of Serbs, Turks and Romanies live within the borders of the country (which is about four times smaller than Hungary). The ethnic composition is more complicated because of the Kosovan refugees (most of them are Albanians). In addition to that, sizeable Macedonian minorities can be found in the border regions of the neighboring countries: in the Greek Aegean Macedonia and in the Bulgarian Pirin Macedonia.

The population of the country can be divided into two main groups by religious affiliation: the majority of Macedonians and Serbs are practicing the Orthodox religion; while the Albanians, Turks, Romanies and Torbeš (Macedonian Muslims) are the followers of Islam. Small number of evangelistic groups (mostly Baptists and Methodists) has significant roles in politics (Pap, 2007:48-49).

The ancestors of the majority of the Roma in Macedonia came together with the Turks in the 15-16th century. The smaller share of them immigrated to the country from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo in the last century. The former are distinguished by the Turkish Yerli (settled people) word from the later mentioned group of the Gurbert (foreign people). The vast majority of the Roma are Muslims, but Christian Romanies also live in the rural villages (Kiselinovski-Stavovi-Kavka, 2004 cited by Háry-M. Császár, 2011:10-12).

The Roma population has been growing steadily, like it can be experienced in other Southeast European countries, as a result of natural population growth and immigration. This is why another key issue in Macedonia is the status of Roma, along the issue of the Albanian minority. According to the data of the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, the number of Roma inhabitants is 62000 people, but in fact, their number is likely to be around 150-250 thousand. The difference between the data can be explained by that the most of the Romanies do not assume their Roma identity; instead they avow themselves Albanians or Turks, out of regard for their Muslim religion. Besides, in 1999, 2800 Romanies moved from Kosovo to Macedonia; and what is more, in the next year their number reached 8000 (Koinova, 2007 cited by Háry-M. Császár, 2011:10-12).

The Roma live scattered in Macedonia; they make up the majority just in Suto Orizari Municipality (60.6%) in the capital city. The reason is that after the devastating earthquake of 1973 in Skopje, those Roms who lost their houses were settled here (Kiselinovski-Stavovi-Kavka, 2004 cited by Háry-M. Császár, 2011:10-12).
Figure 6. The coat of arms and flag of Šuto Orizari Municipality, on which the national symbol of Romani people, the chakra and colors of the flag of the Romani people, the green and blue stripes can be observed. Source: Wikipedia

The Constitution of 1974 identified the Roma as one of the ethnic groups in Macedonia; in 1981, they received the ethnic status in Yugoslavia. The Constitution of the independent Republic of Macedonia of 1991; guarantees them the status of national minority, which means that they have the same rights, like other minorities. At the same time, the enforcement of their rights is prevented, because the majority of the Romanies have low educational qualification or have not at all; they are unemployed and live in extreme poverty. The Macedonian Radio Television regularly broadcasts Roma language programs. Since 2001, the "Roma Times" newspaper has been published, in which 60 percent of the articles are written in Romani language. In 1980, the volume of "Romani Grammar" was released in Skopje; which was instrumental in the development of the national identity of the Romanies. Even so, there was not Romani language education in Macedonia before it gained independence (Kiselinovski-Stavovi-Kavka, 2004 cited by Háry-M. Császár, 2011:10-12; Kenrick, 2007:202).

Montenegro

The historical sources first mentioned the Montenegrin Roma in 1508, as builders and repairers. Also 16th century sources reported that in the port of Ulcinj, pirates sold Roma slaves to the leaders of various building operations. These slaves were deported or expelled from different European countries and from Africa. (It is interesting that due to the favorable climatic conditions, the Roma still live in the Montenegrin coastal towns) (Vukadinović, 2001:518).

The Romanies of Montenegro, contrary to other countries of the Balkans, carried on nomadic lifestyle until 1940. They are known as Čergari. During the centuries, the Roma had to face several discriminations here, as well; e.g. in the 1930s; the police banned them from the town of Cetinje, which is regarded as the cultural and educational center of Montenegro (Kenrick, D. 2007:212).

The number of Roma according to the official census is 2600 people, but it could be estimated around 20-30 thousand. The difference is the cause of that; during the surveys the Romanies avow themselves Muslims\textsuperscript{11} or Montenegrians. For example at the time of the 1971 census, only six people of the 234 Roma of the former Ivangrad (today Berane) identified themselves with the Roma ethnic group (Vukadinović, 2001:519). The originally Montenegrin Roma group is called Kovači,\textsuperscript{12} who suppose affinity with the Ashkali and also speak Albanian language (Friedman, 2001).

\textsuperscript{11} Nearly 90% of the Roma is Muslim in Montenegro, while the remaining 10% is Serbian Orthodox (Vukadinović, 2001:520).

\textsuperscript{12} Baltazar Bogišić, a well-known lawyer (who was one of the drafters of the Constitution of Montenegro of 1905) was the first one in the late 19th century, who made a distinction between the Čergari and the Kovači; he did not consider them equally as Roma. During this period, the unwritten rules of the society defended the
Besides those Romanies who live in Montenegro for several generations (only two-third of the total Roma population of the country), there are also Kosovan Roma communities (in 1999, their number exceeded 40 thousand people); the situation of whom has been an unresolved problem for a long time. The legal status of these Roma, who live in one of the largest refugee camp in Europe, is unsettled; since they are not qualified as Montenegrin citizens and they do not wish to return home (vide Kosovo). At the time of the Yugoslav war, the number of refugees only had been a fraction of this number, only 1000 people.

Despite the less tense social conditions, the Roma students have to face the phenomenon of school segregation; and (also) because of this, it is very difficult for them to emerge from the periphery of the society.

**Romania**

Officially 620 thousand Romanies live in Romania, but their estimated number is around 1.8-2.4 million; their ratio is somewhere between 8.1 to 11% of the total population. The Gypsies of Romania involve several Roma ethnic subgroups. Each has its own social, linguistic, cultural and lifestyle idiosyncrasy. The various subgroups acquired different professions over the centuries. The Romanies are neither unified linguistically nor religiously in Romania. There are speakers of the different Romani language dialects and the Romanian, Hungarian and Turkish language, too. From the aspect of religion they also very differentiated; Orthodoxes, Protestants, Catholics, Neo-protestants and Muslims can be found among them (M. Császár, 2009:147).

The Roma of Romania, unlike in other Balkan states; arrived from east to the Carpathians, at the same time when the Mongols invaded Europe in the 13th century. Written sources had subsisted, which prove that already at the end of the 13th century, they were forced to slavery; or they arrived to Wallachia and Moldavia as the slaves of the Tatars, and their status had maintained. The first preserved sale and purchase contract; which is about the sale of the Roma slaves; survived from 1385 (Kenrick, 2007:222).

The Gypsies lived in servility in the tenures of the church and in the manors, until the nineteenth century. According to the laws of this period, those non-Gypsies could also become slaves who married Roma, so they rarely mixed with other ethnic groups. The state-owned slaves were not tied to the land, they could continue their nomadic way of life.

According to the most accepted hypothesis, the descendants of the Roma slaves are the Băjăs or Beás Gypsies, some of whom migrated from Romania, and settled in Bulgaria, Croatia and Hungary. The centuries-long slavery of the Roma in Romania also could explain that why the Băjăs speak one of the archaic variants of the Romanian language, which had been evolved as a separate language, and its vocabulary had been expanded differently. Several pidgin languages were created which are based on the Beás, therefore the Băjăs cannot understand other Romanies (and sometimes neither each other), who speak the Romani language. There are conflicts until today, between the Băjăs and other Roma communities, because of the different language and the cultural characteristics. Many non-Băjăs does not consider the Băjăs as "real Gypsies".

By 1930, the Romanies fed up their situation, and proposed the objective of social equality. To this end, several Roma organizations were formed, and Romani language newspapers were started to publish.

During the Second World War, the fascist-minded government deported thousands of Gypsies, like other states which were allied with the Greater German Reich; but the status of Roma did not improve during the socialist regime. The nomadic Roma were forced to settle down; and because of Ceausescu's "village-windup" policy, the urban lifestyle were pressed on them and they had to live in

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Kovačić, because they carried out important work for the community. Bogišić thought that this group of people is more like the Montenegris, than other ethnic groups of Romanies in the Balkans (Vukadinović, 2001:518).

13 As a result of the migration of the Romanies from Southeast Europe, particularly from Romania, where they were treated as slaves until 1855 (Moldavia) and 1856 (Wallachia); their population increased in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. This phenomenon is supportable by the statistical data of the "Gypsy censuses" of 1873 and 1893, which was performed by the mandate of the Minister of the Interior: the number of Gypsies increased from 214000 to 274940 (Kocsis, 2002:36). At the time of these censuses, the proportion of the Roma population in Hungary was 1.7%, and it was 5% in the Transylvanian counties (Kocsis-Kovács, 1998 cited by Süll-Zakar, 2013).
block of flats. Their situation was further complicated by the fact that existence of the Roma minority was not officially recognized. They got work in the state-owned farmlands, but the society still not accepted them because of the prejudices. The 1979 census was one of the first ones, in which the Roma population appeared statistically, but only 225 people identified themselves as Roma nationwide, which was only a fraction of their real number (Kenrick, 2007:224). This could be explicable by the fact that thousands of Romanies considered themselves Hungarians, mainly among the Transylvanian Romanies, because they only could speak Hungarian (in addition/instead of Romani language), but they did not understand the Romanian language.

The change of the regime had both positive and negative effects for the Roma. They could speak up again for the social equality; but non-Roma people made the Roma responsible for the economic difficulties following the change of the regime; which was often manifested in the form of violence. In response, the Roma established self-defense, paramilitary groups. The social tensions were manifested in the form of flaring of protests and confrontations in many backward rural villages and towns over the years. Through the opened borders during the 90s, thousands of Romanies emigrated to the West, trustingly for a better a life.

In spite of the many difficulties, the Roma received the ethnic minority status in 1994, so they have the same rights as other ethnic minorities; their representatives can participate in the work of the various state institutions and agencies; and the Roma language education was introduced, too.

The Romanian Minister of Education stated in 1999 that in the recent years, the government paid more attention on the education of the Roma. The ministry had a commissioner in every county, who specialized on Roma. The amounts allocated to the minority projects were significantly increased (Forray-Szegál, 2002); and the European Union accession of Romania has made additional resources available.

**Serbia**

The first written memorial about the Romanies roots back to 1348, according to which they arrived to South Serbia from Greece. They were servants and shoemakers (Čvorović, 2004). During the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottomans tried to force them to settle, to be able to collect the taxes from them on a regular basis; but this attempt was unsuccessful. After the abolition of slavery, large numbers of the Bájás arrived to the territory of today’s Serbia. Therefore the previously most Muslim religious and Romani-speaking Gypsy minority became diverse. The population census, which took place after the independence of Serbia (1878) in the late nineteenth century, recorded 50 thousand Romanies; half of them could speak the Romani language fluently, and only 25 percent of them were Muslims (Kenrick, 2007:241).

At the time of the 19-20th centuries, the population exchanges were common between Greece-Turkey and Serbia/Yugoslavia-Turkey; in the pursuance of this Christian and Muslim Roma (who mainly lived south of Belgrade) also were involved into the population exchanges (Marushiakova et al., 2001; Marushiakova-Veselin, 2001b).

In the midst of the Second World War, about 30 thousand Gypsies were deported or killed by the soldiers of the Axis powers. By the 1971 census data, only 50 thousand Roma lived in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, which is still incredibly low, if we take account the losses of the Second World War. The reason of this was the same phenomena which can be experienced in other countries today: because of religious, cultural and social reasons, the Romanies could avow themselves Muslims, Turks, Serbs or Albanians. Since during Tito’s rule all the people of Yugoslavia were free to work in the western states, the many Roma migrated to the Western European states for a better living during the ’60s and the ’70s; not only from Serbia, but also from the other former republics of Yugoslavia (Marushiakova et al., 2001:17).

Yugoslavia was among those countries, which used relatively the least amount of negative discrimination against the Roma; and foremost recognized their minority rights. Therefore the Roma

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14 Finally, Serbia obligated the Gypsies to settle down, which was also implemented (Čvorović, 2004). As a result of this order, Gypsy settlements and colonies were formed, which are called mahalas.

15 It can be observed that their religious and political attitude largely depended on the authority which ruled the area (Čvorović, 2004). They usually tried to insinuate themselves into the favor of the reigning nation.
of Yugoslavia largely identified themselves with Serb population, which made up the majority in
country; especially as many of them already have lived in the present-day Serbia and they had
conflicts with the Croat in the Second World War (Illés, 2002:168).

At the time of the change of the regime and the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Serbian governance and
the Romanies had a good relationship, as the Romanies supported Serbia during the Yugoslav Wars.
Along with several Romani-language newspapers, the New Testament was released in Romani; and
they were officially recognized as an ethnic minority.

According to official census data, 147 thousand Roma live in Serbia, but their number could be
around 500 thousand people. Most of them live in Vojvodina and southern Serbia. Some of the Roma
living in the north were integrated into Hungarian, Serbian and Romanian communities; usually one of
these languages is mother tongue of the Roma and they practice Christian religion. The south Serbian
Romanies use the Romani language in much greater proportion and the share of Muslim is higher as
well. Albanian or Turkish-speaking Roma minorities also can be found in South Serbia.

Regarding the migration direction, the Romanies could reckon among four groups (Đorđević, 1932.
cited by Mitrović, 2001:481):
1. “Turkish Romanies” who settled down together with the Turks. The Romanies whose date of
settlement cannot be claimed with surety are called Gadžikano Romanies (meaning Serbian
Romanies), whereas those whose date of settlement is known are called Korane or Korkane
Romanies (meaning Muslim, Koran Romanies). These two groups differ regarding their
language though the linguistic base is the same. In the past they were mostly artisans, cattle
traders and players.
2. White Romanies came to Serbia from Bosnia and the greatest number of them settled in the
River Drina region known as Podrinje (Šabac, Ljubovija, Krupanj). Their faith is Muslim
whereas they only speak Serbian.
3. Vlaški Romanies came to Serbia from Rumania where there used to be two great groups of
Romanies, namely, Princely (Kneževski) Romanies consisting of several groups (named after
the crafts they were practicing such as Linguari or spoon-makers, Miners who panned gold
from the rivers, Ursari or Mečkari who were the nomads named after their bear-taming skills)
and Slaves or the Romanies who used to live on the monastery or noblemen's estates. (...)
4. Hungarian Romanies or the Romanies from Banat (province in Vojvodina) came from Austria
and their arrival is mostly connected with horse-trading.”

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the ethnic composition of the territory of Serbia became more
homogeneous by the reason of migration. Between 1991 and 2002, just the ratio of the Serbs and
Gypsies increased; the ratio of all other nationalities, mostly the share of the Muslims, decreased
(Radics, 2009).

As I mentioned earlier, during the Kosovo War, the Roma were standing by the Serbs, so after the
independence of Kosovo was proclaimed, a lot of Serbian-speaking Kosovar Roms moved to the other
side of border. Today, the Serbian-speaking, Orthodox Roma; live principally in the large cities of
Central Serbia. Those better relations, which are maintained with the Serbian governance, are not
always reflected in the daily life. The clashes between the Serbs and Gypsies are frequent; and the
living conditions of the Roma are far from the average.

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16 The growth of the Serb population was not just due to the actual increase, but perhaps it is also due to the
qualification issue; as the decline of the ratio of Yugoslavs was greater than the growth of the ratio of the Serbian
population. We could say that today the ethnic space is becoming more and more homogeneous, which is
strengthened by the fact that resettlement of the immigrated Serbs is taking place in those areas, which were
previously inhabited by the ethnic minorities (Radics, 2009).
Comparative analysis

General characteristics

As far as I am concerned, before the start of the comparative analysis of the Roma population, it is worth to take stock of the demographic and economic characteristics of each country. *Figure 7.* shows the general characteristics of the previously presented countries and Hungary. In addition to the general demographic and economic data; the figure represents the ethnic groups, the spoken languages and the practiced religions, to ensure that the data reflects the diversity of the region.

If we intend to carry out a comparative analysis of the Roma population of Southeast Europe, it might be considered to study the number and rate of the Roma population in each country. As far as goes without saying to raise the question, it is not easy to collect data to find a suitable answer; since the census data are not considered as reliable in this matter, since they usually underestimate the number of Roma ethnic group (even it is actually a self-classification), so we must rely on the estimates of the experts (Bernát, 2006:120).

*Figure 8.* and *Figure 9.* show the number and proportion of the Roma population by the official census data and the estimated statistics. While studying the figures, it is apparent that the official statistics and the estimated data are not squaring in a single country. It could be said that estimate is the nearest to the "reality" in Bosnia and Herzegovina, however the most extreme estimates assume several hundred thousand Roma. The rate of the Roma is the largest in Bulgaria, Romania and Macedonia, which is according to the census data is 3-5 percent, but in terms of the upper limit, it is more likely that their ratio might come to 10-12 percent of the population.

According to the official data, the number of Roma in the following countries is: 620 thousand in Romania, 371 thousand in Bulgaria, 315 thousand in Hungary and 147 thousand in Serbia. In the rest of the studied countries just a few thousand people are registered as Roma. Contrarily, the estimates give us more concrete information about the Roma population, and usually these numbers are multiples of the census data: 2.4 million in Romania, 800 thousand in Bulgaria, 700 thousand in Hungary, 500 thousand in Serbia and 250 thousand in Macedonia. However, the maximum rate difference can be found in Albania, where only 8-9 thousand people registered as Roma, while the estimated data is more than ten times higher.

Hereafter, I make statements about the unemployment, the language usage, the living conditions and the educational data of the Southeast European Romanies; which are based on statistics published by the United Nations Development Programme. The UNDP carried out a survey in 2011. 750 Roma and 350 non-Roma households living in or close to Roma communities in 12 countries of Central and Southeastern Europe (Kosovo was not included in the survey) were interviewed. The survey collected basic socio-economic data on household as well as individual household members and perception data of selected adult members from each household. The data sets are available for everyone in MS Excel and SPSS files on the website of UNDP. In the pursuance of data evaluation, I took into account only the data of the examined countries. Thanks to the UNDP survey of 2004 - which was published in 2005 - I could carry out a comparative time-series analysis.

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17 I explained the reasons previously.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Albania</th>
<th>Bosnia and Herzegovina</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>Croatia</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Macedonia</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Montenegro</th>
<th>Romania</th>
<th>Serbia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total area (sq km)</strong></td>
<td>28 748</td>
<td>51 197</td>
<td>110 879</td>
<td>56 594</td>
<td>10 887</td>
<td>25 713</td>
<td>93 030</td>
<td>13 812</td>
<td>238 391</td>
<td>77 474</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>3 011 405</td>
<td>3 875 723</td>
<td>6 981 642</td>
<td>4 475 611</td>
<td>1 847 708</td>
<td>2 087 171</td>
<td>9 939 470</td>
<td>653 474</td>
<td>21 790 479</td>
<td>7 243 007</td>
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<tr>
<td>The estimated number of Roma population</td>
<td>100 000</td>
<td>80 000</td>
<td>80 000</td>
<td>40 000</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>250 000</td>
<td>700 000</td>
<td>20 000</td>
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<td>500 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albanian, 3% Greek, 2% other</td>
<td>48% Bosniak,</td>
<td>76.9% Bulgarian,</td>
<td>89.6% Croat,</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>64.2% Macedonian,</td>
<td>92.3% Hungarian,</td>
<td>43% Montenegro,</td>
<td>89.5% Romanian, 6.6% Hungarian, 2.5% Roma, 1.4% other</td>
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<td>4.5% Serb, 5.9% other</td>
<td>8% other</td>
<td>25.2% Albanian,</td>
<td>1.9% Roma, 5.8% other</td>
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<td>96.1% Croatian,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vlach, Romani</td>
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<td>40% Muslim, 15% Orthodox, 10% Roman Catholic</td>
<td>59.4% Eastern Orthodox, 7.4% Sunnite Muslim, 0.4% Shite Muslim, 32.8% other</td>
<td>87.8% Roman Catholic, 4.4% Orthodox, 0.4% other Christian, 1.3% Muslim, 6.1% other</td>
<td>66.5% Macedonian,</td>
<td>63.6% Serbian,</td>
<td>86.8% Eastern Orthodox, 7.5% Protestant, 4.7% Hungarian, 0.7% Roman Catholic, 1% other</td>
<td>84.6% Serbian Orthodox, 5% Catholic, 3% Muslim, 7.4% other</td>
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<td><strong>Languages</strong></td>
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<td>Albanian, Greek, Vlach, Romani</td>
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<td>96.1% Croatian,</td>
<td>66.5% Macedonian,</td>
<td>93.6% Hungarian,</td>
<td>51.9% Roman Catholic, 15.9% Calvinist, 3% Lutheran, 2.6% Greek Catholic, 6.7% Russian, 0.8% other</td>
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<td>88.1% Serbian, 3.4% Hungarian, 1.95 Bosniak, 1.4% Roma, 5.2% other</td>
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<td>87.8% Roman Catholic, 4.4% Orthodox, 0.4% other Christian, 1.3% Muslim, 6.1% other</td>
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<td>84.6% Serbian Orthodox, 5% Catholic, 3% Muslim, 7.4% other</td>
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<td><strong>Median age</strong></td>
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<td>40.4</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>39.4</td>
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<td><strong>Net migration rate (/1000 population)</strong></td>
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<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-2.86</td>
<td>1.47</td>
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<td>-0.48</td>
<td>1.36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP - per capita (PPP) (USD)</strong></td>
<td>9 403</td>
<td>9 392</td>
<td>16 043</td>
<td>20 363</td>
<td>7 500</td>
<td>11 834</td>
<td>21 958</td>
<td>14 357</td>
<td>17 004</td>
<td>11 801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inflation rate</strong></td>
<td>2.03%</td>
<td>2.05%</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
<td>3.42%</td>
<td>2.48%</td>
<td>3.32%</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>3.18%</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
<td>7.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP - real growth rate</strong></td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>-0.70%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>-1.98%</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
<td>-0.27%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>-0.55%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>-1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment rate</strong></td>
<td>14.20%</td>
<td>28.10%</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>15.80%</td>
<td>30.90%</td>
<td>31.00%</td>
<td>10.90%</td>
<td>19.60%</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
<td>23.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP - composition, by sector of origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>15.50%</td>
<td>25.50%</td>
<td>30.30%</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>22.60%</td>
<td>27.60%</td>
<td>27.60%</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>31.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>66.50%</td>
<td>67.10%</td>
<td>63.00%</td>
<td>69.20%</td>
<td>64.50%</td>
<td>61.20%</td>
<td>69.10%</td>
<td>87.90%</td>
<td>54.70%</td>
<td>60.70%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Labor force - by occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>47.80%</td>
<td>20.50%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
<td>16.70%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>21.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
<td>35.20%</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
<td>29.70%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
<td>21.10%</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>29.20%</td>
<td>47.00%</td>
<td>57.70%</td>
<td>69.00%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>57.30%</td>
<td>63.20%</td>
<td>72.80%</td>
<td>47.30%</td>
<td>58.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 7. The general characteristics of the studied countries.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Official number of Roma people (last census, latest: 2011)</th>
<th>Estimated number of Roma people</th>
<th>Total country population</th>
<th>% of total population by the census data (latest: 2011)</th>
<th>Estimated % of total population</th>
<th>Estimated rate in addition to the official data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>8 301</td>
<td>100 000</td>
<td>3 011 405</td>
<td>0,28%</td>
<td>3,32%</td>
<td>3,05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>70 000</td>
<td>80 000</td>
<td>3 875 723</td>
<td>1,81%</td>
<td>2,06%</td>
<td>0,26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>371 000</td>
<td>800 000</td>
<td>6 981 642</td>
<td>5,31%</td>
<td>11,46%</td>
<td>6,14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>9 463</td>
<td>40 000</td>
<td>4 475 611</td>
<td>0,21%</td>
<td>0,89%</td>
<td>0,68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>8 800</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>1 847 708</td>
<td>0,48%</td>
<td>1,08%</td>
<td>0,61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>62 000</td>
<td>250 000</td>
<td>2 087 171</td>
<td>2,97%</td>
<td>11,98%</td>
<td>9,01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>315 000</td>
<td>700 000</td>
<td>9 939 470</td>
<td>3,17%</td>
<td>7,04%</td>
<td>3,87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>2 600</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>653 474</td>
<td>0,40%</td>
<td>3,06%</td>
<td>2,66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>620 000</td>
<td>2 400 000</td>
<td>21 790 479</td>
<td>2,85%</td>
<td>11,01%</td>
<td>8,17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>147 000</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td>7 243 007</td>
<td>2,03%</td>
<td>6,90%</td>
<td>4,87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. The number and proportion of the Roma population by the official census data and the estimated statistics. Source: Self-edition, based on the sources of Figure 8.
Unemployment

The unemployment of the Roma population – like neither the unemployment of other ethnic groups – is not homogeneous. Such factors affect the unemployment like the age, the education, the economic situation of the given country, and the center-periphery relations of the spatial pattern. I believe that it is important to state that although the education (vide infra) affects to ability of finding a job, - that is to say, the increase of school qualification reduces the unemployment – the Romanies also have to face discrimination many times.

Figures 10-13. represent statistics on the unemployment of the Roma population. Figure 10. shows the unemployment rate of the 15-64 age group, among the Roma and other ethnic groups in the proximity of the Roma. The data of every country feature that the unemployment rate of the Roma is much higher than the others’. According to the UNDP survey, the Romanies have the worst situation in Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Macedonia; in the rest of the countries it is slightly better. In Albania, the difference between the two groups is almost minimal.

![Unemployment rate (15-64).](image)

*Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011*

The following figures write down the unemployment rate of both men and women in each country. However, for the ease of interpretability, the figures also feature the national average, which can be found in the database of Eurostat. The unemployment of male (Figure 11.) correspond with the data of Figure 10.; at the same time Figure 12. clearly shows that the situation of Roma women is much worse that the situation of Roma male. To support this statement, I made Figure 13., which shows the proportion of Roma and non-Roma unemployment by gender. In addition to the previous findings, the following consequences can be drawn: the situation of the Roma women is the worst in Hungary compared to the Roma men; after the survey, differences cannot be experienced between the genders in Serbia and Croatia, moreover the women are able to take up the positions with better chances.
Figure 11. Unemployment rates of male Roma and non-Roma in 2011 (%).
Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011

Figure 12. Unemployment rates of female Roma and non-Roma in 2011.
Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011

Figure 13. The proportion of Roma and non-Roma unemployment by gender.
Source: Self-edition and calculation, UNDP 2011
Language usage

The Roma population of the Carpathian-Balkan region is highly differentiated in terms of language usage. The Gypsies of the southern states dominantly use (some dialects of) the Romani language; while up “north” the Romanies speak characteristically the mother tongue of the majority at home. Namely, the usage of the Romani language within the Gypsy families is decreasing from south to north (this difference is strongly reflected in the data of Hungary – vide Figure 14. and Figure 15.). Examples for the former are the states of the Western Balkans, namely Albania and several member states of the former Yugoslavia: Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Croatia; and in a less extent, the same is true for Bulgaria as well. The difference between the rate of the Romani language speakers and those who speak the language of the majority is less significant in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania than in the previous one; but in both countries the majority of the Roma speak Romani at home (Bernát, 2006:120-121).

Figures 14-18. feature statistical data related to the language usage of the Romanies. The Roma were often forced to learn the language of that ethnic group or country, which they lived by near; so multilingual communities came into existence. However it is important to note that the “neighbors” rarely learned the Romani language. This implies that majority of the Roma households use more than one language in everyday life. This language is usually the official language of the given country in addition to the Romani language; or for example in the case of Macedonia, in the Albanian-majority areas, the Albanian language. The exception is Hungary, where the much of the Roma use one language at home (usually the Hungarian language); so the “language barriers” discourage the integration at the least extent.

Considering Figures 14-15. and Figure 18., it can be said that with exception of Hungary, the native language of the Gypsies is the Romani, regardless of the country!

The share of people that use three languages at home is usually 5-10 percent of the Roma population. This is due to that we can speak about ethnically heterogeneous areas. In Montenegro their share is 28 percent (which is quiet high in my opinion), because of the large number of Roma refugees. In addition to one or two South Slavic languages, the Montenegrin Roma use Romani and Albanian as well. Their share in Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is likewise high, which is due to the heterogeneous demographic and ethnographic pattern of these two countries. In Albania, the share of those who speak more than two languages at home is negligible, because it is a more homogeneous nation state like Hungary. The difference is that most of the Albanian Romanies are bilingual (Albanian and Romani).

![Language Usage of Roma Population](image)

*Figure 14. The language usage of Roma population at home in the survey.*

*Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011*
Figure 15. The language usage of Roma population at home in the survey.
Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011

Figure 16. Share of persons living in households that speak Romani at home.
Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011
Looking at the size of the Roma households, it can be said that the Roma live in more modest conditions like the non-Roma, in all of the studied countries. The rooms per household member (Figure 19.) could vary, depending on the size of the rooms and the country-specific architecture; that is why Figure 20. is more explaining. The below-average square meters per household member can be explained by that the Romanies raise more children than the other ethnic groups; however the difference is more significant in Albania, while the Albanians have the highest rate of natural increase in Europe, out of the ethnic groups which have independent state.

Furthermore, the reason of the difference is that the Romanies are “compressed” in residential districts in several settlements of the Balkan states; therefore they have less living space. The
difference is really big in the EU Member States, which shows that the convergence of the Roma is far from being started yet, from this aspect.

![Figure 19. Rooms per household member.](image1)
Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011

![Figure 20. Square meters per household member.](image2)
Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011

**Education**

It is common in every Southeast European country that drop-out rate of the Roma children was significantly higher than in the rest of the population. In the same way, it is still an established custom that Roma children learn in “special” classes, they are segregated from other children.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 program want to be successful in the education sector in particular. The program was launched in 2005; the founding partners of the program are the World Bank, the Open Society Institute and the United Nations Development Program. By this time eight countries joined the program: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia and Bulgaria. The governments of these states have committed to closing the gap in welfare and living conditions between the Roma and non-Roma populations, as well as putting an end to the cycle of poverty and exclusion that many Roma find themselves in. Each country takes control of the program in rotation, year by year. The Roma non-governmental organizations, which operate at local level, play important role in the implementation of the program: they adapt and make the integration program available to the Roma (M. Császár, 2009:143).
*Figures 21-24.* show statistical data, related to the education of the Roma population. In the most backward areas, even the illiteracy is not uncommon, but the situation is neither better in other areas. Compared to the 2004 survey of the UNDP, we could say that except in some cases of Macedonia, Serbia and Albania; the educational indicators of the Roma have improved. However by the increasing of the education level, the educational participation rates of the Roma decreasing exponentially. Perhaps the most expressive is *Figure 23.*, which shows the educational participation rates of 15-24 year olds of both the Roma and non-Roma. Hungary could be a positive example for the other countries, as the differences between the two groups are the smallest here. Hungary is followed far behind by Croatia; in the other countries the situation is quite disastrous...

![Figure 21. Share of Roma aged 14 to 20 who completed at least primary education (ISCED 1) in 2004 and 2011. Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011](image1)

![Figure 22. Share of Roma aged 17 to 23 who completed at least lower secondary education. Source: Self-edition, UNDP 2011](image2)

19 As far as I am concerned, us the Hungarians think it quite otherwise, because even here there is a lot left to do to integrate the Roma. This also points out how difficult the situation of the Roma is in the Balkan states.
Conclusion

Although the European Union and other European countries deal with the situation of the Southeast European Romanies on a daily basis; in my opinion the question is not treated at the appropriate level of its importance. National and international projects run parallel to each other, which are often fundamentally different from one another. The central organizations in each country try to pass the disposal of the situation; but in those countries which are burden by socio-economic crisis; this means financial commitments consumedly, because of that the success of the given (integration) program becomes questionable.

The migration attempts of European Roma ended in failure over the past two decades. In the near future, significant crowds cannot expect that their resettlement will succeed into Europe’s or the world’s richer countries. Therefore we must live together in the common homeland, and we have to find (and jointly design) the acceptable culture of the coexistence (Süli-Zakar, 2013).

In general it could be also said that there is some kind of “social distance” between the Roma and non-Roma, which is manifested in that although if they are tolerant to each other in everyday life, the
marriages between the Roma and non-Roma are very rare, since it can be opposed by both parents, for example by the parents of a Roma man and a non-Roma woman.

It is very important and useful for the Roma that various European Union projects, NGOs support the Roma living in extreme poverty; they try to take a turn for the better by education development and financial support; but as long as the Roma are not able to step up self-assertively and uniformly and to find solution to the problems by themselves; real breakthrough cannot be expected in the Roma issue, just "symptomatic treatment".

At least the primary school education must be made available in Romani\(^{20}\) to the Romani-speaking children, but they also need to learn the official language of the country as soon as possible, in the interest of they have the opportunity to integrate to the society.

**Bibliography**


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\(^{20}\) Since the Roma mothers and generally the Roma women are over-represented in the unemployment, a high percentage of Roma children do not receive pre-school education, – because the parents often believe that it is better for the child to stay home with mother – so they are not familiar with the language of primary school education, so come off from others already at the first grade of elementary school.


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