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Recent Trends in Roma Integration Through Local Policies and

International Projects in Eastern Europe

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International Master's Studies in Economy, State and Society: Politics and Security

13023802

21,475

Belgrade, Serbia

28 August 2018

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Introduction:

Over the past two decades we have seen an unprecedented level of international interest in the issues of Roma rights and inclusion. From the interest taken in the 'Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future' conference in Budapest in 2003, the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion' launched in 2005 and 12 European countries, mainly focused in Central and Eastern Europe, flocked to the cause. The project secured support from the European Commission, the World Bank, as well as national governing bodies, and set out boldly on a quest of 'eliminating discrimination and closing the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society.[1]' Shortly after, in 2006 and 2007, the Dosta! Campaign launched across Europe as an initiative by the Council of Europe and European Commission, designed to quash prejudices and stereotypes surrounding the Roma through media advocacy and learning programmes. More recently, the 'Roma 2020' project by the Regional Cooperation Council has launched, with its headquarters in Belgrade, with a mission statement of building on and continuing the work of the initial work of the DoRI. Reading the mission statements of these projects and examining the supporting organisations, one might well assume that governmental efforts to spread equality to the long overdue Roma citizens were in full swing.

However, a simple drive through the suburbs of Belgrade and a peek over the fences of the various Roma camps that are spread throughout the city is enough to make one question the validity of the claims these projects make. Indeed, even if one wishes to cut on the cost of a flight to Belgrade, you need only look at the papers to see frequent and seemingly unpunished human rights abuses being visited upon Roma occupants of these camps. Certainly, indicators of education and healthcare in the Roma community have increased alongside, although potentially not causally, to the international projects afore mentioned, but when these same statistics are placed against non-Roma citizens we see consistent and brutal proof that the Roma are still one of the oppressed minorities present within Europe today.

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[1] Declaration signed by the 12 member states, Albania, Bosnia and Heryegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia ,Slovakia and Spain, as seen in 'Decade News' Winter Issue 2013, produced by the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation

The purpose of this research project is to try and reconcile and understand the disparity between the intended outcomes of national and international projects designed to improve Roma rights and the actual outcomes. In order to perform this analysis, it will be necessary to examine a number of the constituent parts of this question separately. The first of these parts that will be examined is how these political systems have grouped and defined the Roma community in attempts to integrate them. That is to say I will examine the difficulties we face when we treat the Roma as a group, through historical analysis, nomenclature and political theory. Due to the nature of nomenclature being so tied up with linguistics, and my own knowledge of Eastern European languages being somewhat insufficient for the task, I will for the purposes of the initial chapter remain largely within the scope of the English language when dealing with the naming and understanding of this group as a political unit. To assess how the Roma self-identify, I will largely rely on the fieldwork conducted by Levinson and Sparkes in the field of Roma education in 2004.

I will then move onto examining the theoretical basis for the concept of integration and having established some of the more pertinent strands of thought on the matter I will then apply these to various historical and current day examples of Roma integration within Eastern Europe. I do this in the hope that failures in past attempts to improve Roma rights and wellbeing within society might be understood and that they might educate on some of the difficulties facing current attempts to achieve the same goal.

I will then examine some of the reasons for and processes by which the Roma suffer discrimination in Europe, taking the healthcare field as my primary example. I do this because of my own belief that access to decent, reliable and equal healthcare is one of the most basic and most important markers of an equal society. Due to this section being an examination of systems, and every national healthcare system differing, I will confine my study solely to the Roma within Serbia. Within this section I will also examine some of the local and national policy changes that have been put in place regarding the Roma and assess the extent of their success in promoting real and long term change for the Roma.

I will take a closer look at the work of the Dosta! Campaign through a critical examination of 'Chimeres Absantes,'[2] a film produced by the European Council for the project, which was designed to promote Roma culture in Eastern Europe and mitigate stereotypes of the people. The media representation of Roma has been infrequently researched through a critical artistic approach. Examining the campaign through this lens will allow me to identify many facets of the work that might enlighten the political situation of the Roma, such as who the intended audience of this campaign would be, what image of the Roma these campaigns wish to promote, and how this image is received.

Finally, I will take a closer look at one Roma group in particular, those in Kosovo, and examine their experiences during the Kosovo War 1998-1999. I will look closely at testimonies from Roma occupants of Kosovo, as well as political figures who influenced their situation during this time. As my research is dedicated to demonstrating a theoretical framework by which Roma discrimination can be understood, it is in the case of the Kosovo Roma, as some of the most discriminated against, that I find the issues I explore to be most apparent.

This research comes at a pertinent time within the timeline of modern Roma rights. My research comes at the end of one major international project for the Roma, the Decade of Roma Inclusion, and the start of another, the Roma 2020 campaign. Although it is difficult to assess the success or failure of these projects as a whole due to their wide geographical and cultural scope, I will examine in detail some of the policies that were put in place by governments during the course of them. In order to assess these policies, I will rely on survey data conducted by the 2011 UNDP/WB/European Commission Regional Roma Survey[3] and a series of Multiple Indicator Cluster

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[2] Chimeres Absentes, dir. by Fanny Ardant (Italy, 2010). I will provide a short synopsis of the film in Chapter 4, but the full version can be seen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo3xogU3T4c (Accessed 07/02/18)

[3] The UNDP/WB/EC survey was conducted in May-July on a random sample of Roma and non-Roma households living in areas qwith high density of Roma population. In each country, approximately 750 Roma households and approximately 350 non-Roma households living in proximity were interviewed. When examining the data, I will refer to the indicators as they appear in the data set available at:
http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/ourwork/sustainable-

Surveys conducted 2013-2014 of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities conducted for the World Bank.

Through a comparison of the rounds of these surveys through time, I hope to assess the impacts of these policies on many facets of Roma life. However, while the results are often compared by those that conduct the surveys, as well as the governing bodies of the international projects that ran alongside them, my research will differ in that I will also examine the actual validity of these markers in assessing the wellbeing of the Roma. That is to say that I will not only assess the trends of these traditional markers of wellbeing through time, such as housing and education, but also examine whether these markers can and should be applied to the Roma.

The geographical scope of this research will be confined mostly to Eastern Europe, as the majority of the counties that took part in these projects are located there, though I will focus in particular on the treatment of Roma in Serbia. I do this not only because my own base of research was located in Belgrade, but also because a central tenet of this research is the belief that the Roma community Europe is broad and non-homogenous, and governmental approaches to them equally so, and thus it is neither easy nor always helpful to cast too wide of a geographical net when considering the question of Roma discrimination.

development/development-planning-and-inclusive-sustainable-growth/roma-in-central-and-southeast-europe/roma-data.html (Accessed 03/02/18)

1.0: To Define

I have already used the term Roma numerous times in this research, my very title includes it. However, I argue that this term is poorly understood, and that this is a result of attempts to define the term being consistently incomplete. However, before I posit my own methodology for defining the Roma through this research, I wish to demonstrate some of the previous methods and lexicology by which the group has been defined.

1.1: A Place to Call Home

One crucial way in which we are defined and self-define is through the space that we occupy or have occupied. Anyone who engages with people from a different country, either as a tourist or having emigrated there, will be asked the inevitable question of - 'where do you come from?' This is compounded if starts to enter a more international field through language. Somewhere in between learning to introduce their name and telling someone their age, we are taught in every international language class to say where we come from. This answer, whatever it may be, comes heavily laden with meaning. One might describe themselves as British if they come from the UK, or as German if they come from Germany. We might even seek to describe our identity in space through a region, or simply through a biome ('I come from the mountains' or 'I come from the countryside'). A Welshman might wish to say that he is from Wales, instead of self-identifying as British. A birthplace is often a common identifier, perhaps a specific town if one is speaking to others from that country. Regardless of answer, the notion of a static point to which one tethers their identity is common in any language. However, the Roma often break this notion of spatially static identification. In this section, I will argue that a great deal of the difficulty in identifying the Roma comes through our difficulty in understanding how their identity functions within space.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the relationship between the Roma and space is through an entire reversal of one's own understanding of identification of space. The Roma connection to

space and place challenges many traditional sensibilities regarding domicile, and Sparkes writes that 'the psychological repercussions of restrictions on movement and access to traditional places might be equated with the loss of homeland among other groups.'[4] That is to say that the scale of grief of being forced to emigrate out of one's homeland can be mirrored instead in the inability to freely emigrate for a nomadic individual. In understanding this, we begin to understand one facet of the difficulty of integrating travellers into national infrastructure like housing. It is important to note that an attempt to integrate a traveller into a largely sedentary country, and by necessity temper a tendency to migrate, is a not only a cultural shift, but one that affects other facets of Roma life including health and wellbeing. Many Roma testimonies given in Levinson and Sparkes (2004) present the benefits of the more nomadic, less constrained, less state reliant system of self-management:

> Always on the move—you know, we never 'ad a doctor. It's only since we settled down that everything went adrift. Up and down the whole time . . . I loved coming back from school: the fire going; smells of cabbage, rabbit as you approached. A good old life it was... I know the young 'uns've got more chance, more technology. But it was good, hard but good. Better than today…These young uns, they're afraid of a day's work today. You 'ad to in the past, or you starved.' Willie, age 60s.

> 'It was a hard life but more healthier then. Living outside, round an open fire. Very rarely you catches anyone ill in them days. That's what I'd like back, the truth' Heather, age 50s

> 'Things were better. We were more, I don't know, in touch with one another. It was a hard life, but there was all this support for one another. Put people out in the open, ways things were, and you can't hide anything.' Jem, age 50s (Levinson and Sparkes 2004, p.714-15)

Certainly, many of these statements sound like the ranting of anyone's elderly family members over Christmas dinner, lamenting the good ol' days, but we cannot simply ignore these testimonies on

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[4] Martin P. Levinson, Andrew C. Sparkes, 'Gypsy Identity and Orientations to Space' in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 33.6 (December 2004), pp.704-734, p.707.

charges of anecdotalism. If we accept the belief that Roma are, or could become, less nomadic and more integrated with the rest of society, then we must look at the implications of this change on every level of Roma life. As Sparkes writes, 'to travel, to be a traveller, is an essential identifying symbol for those concerned.'[2] These testimonies show that mobility is deeply attached to notions of family life, community feeling, work ethic and perceived health and wellbeing. For example, as Levinson argues, 'women encounter the greatest difficulties in making the transition to houses as they become isolated from other women, confined to their homes, and distanced from the communal support system.'[5] When the success or failure of an integrative strategy is assessed, one of the most frequent markers used is the number of individuals who have been placed in permanent housing as a result of the project. Certainly, this would make sense to anyone who has seen the less cared for of the Roma settlements, and one would assume that a shift into permanent housing would be beneficial to those previous occupants of the camps. While it is not my place to say which of the two is suitable, the value of this examination of travelling lifestyle is to show that this marker of integration may not be as reliable as expected. If we are to take an increase in Roma placed within housing as a marker of success, we must also take into account the corresponding effect this will have on nomadic lifestyle as a constituent part of one's identity.

However, it should be noted that I do not wish to present the Roma as one side of a conflict between sedentary and nomadic lifestyles. As in many ways, the Roma's position within this spatial framework in neither stationary nor homogenous across the ethnicity, as 'some families travel for a few months each year, others for a few weeks. Some families still lead fully nomadic lives; some travel on a seasonal basis; a growing number have more or less settled in one place, but it should not be inferred from this alone that they perceive themselves to have abandoned nomadism.'[6] Roma attitudes towards space and location change depending on developing environments, socioeconomic shifts and simple changes in one's own personal development. It is not possible to categorise any Roma family as either sedentary or fully nomadic.

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[5] Levinson and Sparkes 2004, p.717
[6] Levinson and Sparkes 2004, p.710

1.2: Us and Them

This also leads us to the broader category of a lack of homogeneity. In an extended period of fieldwork relating to understanding the educational framework of the Roma in the UK, Martin Levinson conducted a series of discussions with Roma children, one of which went as follows:

Paul: Tim's a Gypsy

Tim: I'm not a Gypsy; I'm a Traveller.

Researcher: Maybe you could tell us what the difference is between the two.

Tim: Well, Gypsies live in old wagons. Travellers have posh trailers.

Anna: I'm a Traveller and I live in a house.

Jade: Then you're not a Traveller.

Levinon and Sparkes 2004, p.710

This reveals not only that there is a disparity between Roma attitudes to space, but that they are informed by many of the same factors that affect broader society including socioeconomic factors '(Travellers have posh trailers') and familial ties. Another conversation went as follows:

Kevin: That's a load of rubbish. She's a Gypsy.

Tizzie: Shut up!

Ivan: I used to be a Gypsy and I don't mind. I'm proud of it.

Researcher: Used to be a Gypsy? What happened?

Ivan: Caravan burned down and we moved into a house.

According to Ivan, a very central part of being a Gypsy is tied to *not* having a house, and the moment that their family got a house their identity shifted. From these conversations, we can start to see that 'the Gypsy image of the majority is more or less homogenous, stereotypical and fraught with negative bias, while the self-image of the Roma is heterogeneous.'[7] In order to examine the first of these statements more thoroughly, that of the image of the majority, I will remain within the United Kingdom.

At the end of 2013 there was a spate of news headlines regarding the prevalence of Roma in the UK, specifically in Sheffield. Former House Secretary David Blunkett said in an interview with Radio Sheffield that 'we have got to change the behaviour and the culture of the incoming community, the Roma community, because there's going to be an explosion otherwise. **We all know that**.'[8] The resultant image of Blunkett's comments were that of a binary opposition between an apparently homogenised British culture and a homogenised Roma culture. Furthermore, Blunkett attempted to place the Roma issue within a spatial framework during the interview:

> You [the Roma] are not in a downtrodden village or woodland…you are not there anymore, you are here – and you've got to adhere to our standards, and to our way of behaving, and if you do then you'll get a welcome and people will support you.

We see a clear binary opposition between the 'here' of Britain and the undefinable 'there' of Roma nomadic lifestyle, that is characteristically dirty and dishevelled. What is clear is the link between the space in which a political dialogue occurs and the national identity which is associated with it through 'our standards.' We are 'the indigenous population' of Britain according to the interview, and we have a homogenous 'way of behaving' that the Roma must prescribe to. Within this process, we see the

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[7] Gyorgy Csepeli, Davis Simon, 'Construction of Roma identity in Eastern and Central Europe: Perception and Self-Identification,' in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 30.1 (January 2004), pp.129-150, p. 129

[8] David Blunkett in Interview with Radio Sheffied, 11/11/13, full interview available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-24912190/david-blunkett-warns-over-roma-tensions-in-sheffield (Accessed 03/04/18)

ways that in attempting to identify the Roma, our own identities as British have remarkably been prescribed for us by a figurehead.

Bhabha writes that 'essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures which, when inscribed in the naturalistic sign of symbolic consciousness frequently become political arguments for the hierarchy and ascendancy of powerful cultures.'[9] The same then can also be said for the minimisation of other cultures. The Roma culture is manifestly not 'pure,' it defies traditional methods of national identity through its subversion of attitudes towards space, and therefore not only causes issues when people try to define it, but also makes people question the basis of their own national identity. This inherent impurity of a perceived Roma identity inevitably causes anxieties in host nations, as we can see from another of the Blunkett interviews:

> Please get the message back to Slovakia, those who are here are here, and they're welcome, but they've got to actually adhere to our culture, our way of life, and we want you to have jobs, and we want you to demonstrate that you have a job…we think that many of them have jobs, [and are] quite often exploited, you know…there are…there are gang masters.

Why is it that some develop such strong emotions of alarm when Roma, or other Travellers, are encountered in a community? Perhaps one framework within which to understand this is to examine one of the clearest fears expressed often expressed when it come to the Roma, that of crime. At the same time as the Blunkett interview, there were a number of interviews with local residents of the developing Roma community, including Elizabeth Boardman of Hexthorpe in South Yorkshire who said that 'if they [the Roma] carry on, people will take the law into their own hands and there will be riots in the streets.'[10] I would posit that the views of Mrs. Boardman on fictionalised Roma law

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[9] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.46.
[10] Paul Jeeves, 'Roma Migrants Cause Terror for South Yorkshire Residents,' *Express*, 04/06/14 https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/482347/There-will-be-blood-say-victims-of-Roma-terror (Accessed 06/05/18)

are probably similar to those fears we currently experience in the UK regarding Muslim communities and Sharia law. This is to say that this does not represent actual law, but rather a series of customs that are alien and often poorly understood by the host community. In another of Levinson and Sparkes' interviews, they recorded a 30 year old Roma man named Ethan who said that he had 'seen this film the other night, Mad Max. We Gypsies is just like them. Always on the move and fightin'. Can't keep us down. No one can.'[11] This might, initially, seem to give credence to Mrs. Broadman's fears of gypsy criminality. Anyone who has seen Mad Max will be familiar with the utter chaos of a leather-clad Mel Gibson driving around a barren wilderness in which criminality is the only law. However, it is too simple to assume that Ethan's alliance with this film reveals an inherent mal-intent. Instead, I would return to the notion of space as crucial to the Roma travellers. Mad Max is set in a world in which travelling is a necessity, and one's mode of transport is as much a part of life as a house is to a more traditional family unit. Domicile has long been one of the most crucial aspects of laws and customs, and so any interaction with a group or individual that has such a radically different set of value systems regarding domicile has the potential to cause discontent. To maintain Ethan's analogy, there is a reason why most of us would much more readily say we relate to The Simpsons rather than Mad Max. However, even an attempt to label the traveller a criminal to remove them from the shared identity of normative society is impossible, as this delineation is never complete. This process is what Kramer referred to when he wrote that 'even if I am a criminal the society must take my existence into account in one way or the other and respond accordingly.'[12] Despite attempts to differentiate and delineate Roma occupants through the labelling of criminality, a society will always adapt as a result of them, and thus the question of their place within this adaptive system must continually be defined.

1.3: It Ain't What They Call You, It's What You Answer To

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[11] Levinson and Sparkes 2004, p.714

[12] Eric Kramer, 'Dimensional Accural and Dissociation,' in *Communications, Comparative Cultures and Civilisations,* ed. J. Grace and E. Kramer, (New York: Hampton, 2013), pp.123-184, p.130.

However, difficulties in defining the Roma as a group need not be as complex as their relation to space, but more simply their nomenclature. Brubaker noted the importance of nomenclature when he wrote that 'by invoking groups, they (the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs) evoke them, summon them, call them into being.'[13] That is to say that the act of naming and drawing groups is a performative process, one in which the process itself as well as the executor change the nature of that group. I would posit that the invocation and evocation of Roma has been perhaps the most haphazard and incomplete that can be found. Let me take the current Council of Europe definition of the Roma, the most up to date and credible, as the case in point:

> The term "Roma" used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related
> groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers
> the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as
> Gypsies.[14]

As the current definition of the Roma, it is also the definition that is central to all projects that are currently run or have been recently run in conjunction with the European Council, including the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the Dosta! Campaign, and the current Roma Integration 2020 campaign. By the Council's own definition, this is a 'wide diversity of groups.' Jelena Cvorvic notes, frustratingly for the purposes of this essay, that although there are many different methods of grouping of fragmenting the Roma, Sinty, Manouches, Gitand and Romanichals (to name a few), 'the

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[13] Roger Brubaker, 'Ethnicity without Gorups,' in *European Journal of Sociology,* 43.2 (August 2002), pp.163-189, p.166.
[14] *Council of Europe Descriptive Glossary of Terms Relating to Roma Issues*, produced by Council of Europe (18 May 2012),
http://a.cs.coe.int/team20/cahrom/documents/Glossary%20Roma%20EN%20version%2018%20May%202012.pdf (Accessed 15/03/18)

greatest variety is found in the Balkans, where numerous groups with well-defined social boundaries exist.'[15]

So how does the European Council define the boundaries of this group through its definition? The geographical scope covers the breadth and width of Europe and Asia, from the Welsh Romanies (Kale) to the Dom and Lom of Central Asia, as well as the miscellaneous 'Travellers' and 'Gypsies' in-between. Its definition contains no discernible unifying trait, apart from an emphasis on travelling, although as I have discussed earlier the notion of travelling is too complex to be the only method by which this group is linked. The linguistic roots of the group as drawn by the European Council often barely intersect, with the Irish Traveller section of the group having barely 10% of Romani words remaining, while the others are equally diverse.[16] As in most cases, the language spoken by the Roma of a specific region more closely resembles the language spoken by the majority and is not mutually intelligible with other Romani dialects. Even a genetic similarity between the constituting members of the group is scarce. Genetic testing completed in 2012 found that most Roma originate from a group that left Northern India 1500 years ago, eventually reaching the Balkans 900 years ago. However, the fragmentation of this group over nearly a millennium in Europe alone has resulted in a genome that was similar to that of other Europeans as a result of having 'mixed with Europeans during different periods throughout' their migration.[17]

My criticism of this definition is not to suggest that I might posit a better one. It is simply to highlight the initial difficulties in defining a group that one wishes to aid and integrate, and to note the power that this definition can hold. Specifically, I would draw attention to the danger which a poorly crafted definition can hold. The Blunkett interviews reveal a poor attempt to define the Roma in the UK, with vague notions of foreign customs and faraway lands. If a group is poorly defined, especially by a figurehead, then this invites uncertainty and mistrust in those that hear the definition. As Stuart

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[15] Jelena Cvorvic, 'The making of the Gypsies: Invention of Traditions,' in Етноантрополошки проблеми н.с. год. 1. св. 1 (2006), pp.47-59, p.48.

[16] Jean-Pierre Liégeois, *Roma in Europe, (*Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2007), p.43.

[17] Sindya N. Bhanoo, 'Genomic Study Traces Roma to Northern India,' *The New York Times*, 10 December 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/science/genomic-study-traces-roma-to-northern-india.html (Accessed 26/07/18)

Hall writes, 'when statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed.'[18] If the discourse surrounding the Roma is poorly defined, and placed in opposition to a solid and immutable set of national customs and values, conflict will arise.

What makes this topic of definition even harder is the ambivalence, and often mistrust, with which the Roma themselves receive these definitions. The Roma in Serbia only received minority status in 2006, a move which received mixed receptions from those Roma in the country. The leader of one Roma association in Marcvanski Pricinovici commented:

> 'We just got a status of national minority from the officials. Some asked for it, and got it. I haven't. We were Gypsies/cigani before, now we are Roma. I don't care. I'm a Serbian cigan and Serbian cigan I will stay. But now we have the title: Roma.'[19]

Thus, we are left with a definition of the Roma by the European Council, the definition upon which the projects I will discuss throughout this dissertation are based, that is equal parts incomplete, too loose and accused of being irrelevant by the very people it is supposed to define. It is with an acceptance of difficulties surrounding this elusive and shifting identity of the Roma that I will move forward through this essay.

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[18] Stuart Hall, 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power' in *Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies, an Introduction Vol 1*, ed. Hall, Gieben (Oxford: Polity, 1993), pp.275-332, p.13.
[19] Jelena Cvorovic, *Roast Chicken and Other Gypsy Stories: Oral Narratives Amoung Serbian Gypsies,* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), p.22.

2.0: To Integrate

If we do manage to create a definition for the group of Roma which a government or group of nations wish to integrate, we must also then grapple with the process of integration itself on a theoretical level. In order to understand the attempts of current governments in the Balkans to integrate the Roma into society, it is important to first look at some of the historical methods by which previous institutions tried to achieve the same goal. However, even prior to this I will explore some different conceptual frameworks for the term 'integration,' for as Robinson writes 'integration is a chaotic concept: a term used by many but understood differently by most.'[20]

2.1: Theoretical Integration...

For the classical assimilationist standpoint 'distinctive ethnic traits such as old cultural ways, native languages, or ethnic enclaves are sources of disadvantages.'[21] However, host cultures are never homogenous throughout, and so the location and socioeconomic framework in which minorities begin their assimilation and acculturation have a great impact on how the minority will act though time. Minority families will tend to settle in those areas that are poorer in the first-generation, and so the traits that are picked up by subsequent generations will not be those of the wealthy, educated middle-class but rather the traits of the poorer classes. However, most important in this theory is the belief that 'ethnic enclaves' must be eliminated for successful integration. Roma camps are one of the clearest examples of ethnic enclaves, but the supposition that they are fully separated from the rest of society, or that they must be 'sources of disadvantages' will be questioned throughout.

For multiculturalists, the belief that these ethnic traits must be abandoned relies on a fundamental, and incorrect, belief that these ethnic traits are inferior to host nation traits, or at the very

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[20] V. Robinson, 'Defining and Measuring Successful Refugee Integration', Proceedings of ECRE International Conference on Integration of Refugees in Europe, Antwerp, November 1998. Brussels: ECRE, p.167

[21] Min Yhou, 'Segmented Assimilation: Issues, Controversies and Recent Research on The New Generation,' The *International Review*, 32.4 (Winter 1997), pp.975-1008, p.977.

least incompatible. Zhou writes that 'immigrants tend to select carefully not only what to pack in their trunks to bring to America, but also what to unpack once settled.'[22] These minorities are not passive receptacles that must be emptied of all traits before being filled again with dominant attributes. Instead, this strand of integration theory presents minorities as a collection of individuals, who will select which ethnic attributes they believe will be applicable in their new position, and more which that they will adapt without entirely removing. I find this theory to be more effective when understanding how the Roma interact with the rest of society, especially given my earlier emphasis on the role of 'host society' as a process verb rather than noun.

There is another strand of theory yet, which points to a structural perspective on integration. This perspective 'offers a framework for understanding the differences in social adaptation of ethnic minority groups in terms of advantages and disadvantages inherent to social structures rather than in a process of acculturation.'[23] This structuralist view will become particularly useful in my examination of the healthcare system in Serbia, and the extent to which its framework is largely incompatible with traditional Roma ways of life and thus they will consistently be disadvantaged within it until the system adapts for their presence.

However, before I go any further I must note that these conceptual frameworks, as with most, primarily focus on the integration and assimilation of *immigrant* minorities. The Roma, as a group that has existed in some form or another in the countries in question for a great length of time, cannot count as immigrants, with the exception of the Kosovo Roma refugees that I will examine at the very end of this research. However, the trajectories that these minorities follow after and during the attempts at integration can still educate us as to why integration regarding the Roma are so fraught with difficulty. Portes and Zhou identify three possible outcomes of any integration within the framework of the multiculturalist approach I outline earlier:

> 'One of them replicates the time-honoured portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel
> integration into the white middle-class; a second leads straight into the opposite direction to

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[22] Zhou 1998, p.982.
[23] Zhou 1998, p.983.

permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass; still a third associates rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity.'

Thus, we have a working theoretical model for a potentially successful approach to integration. That is to say a system that accepts and accounts for the host nation identity being non-static, ensures avenues of transferral of ethnic traits if they are compatible with normative society, and allows for the preservation of minority values without the necessary need for them to be adopted by the majority. Above all, systematic barriers relating to ethnicity within the host nation must be removed to allow access, opportunity and choice for the use of host nation facilities.

2.2: ...And Its Real Problems

However, this theoretical framework I have formed, or any other, proves unwieldy when we try to apply to it to the Roma situation and its corresponding issues in reality. The first of these issues is one that I have already touched upon in the previous section, that of minority status and definition. These problems of minority status are certainly not new to the Roma. Even one of the more successful regimes that the Roma were a part of, the Socialist regimes of Eastern Europe, had great difficulty finding them a place within their systems. In order to be classified as a minority within the Communist bloc, the group needed a common language and a unified culture, and the Roma lacked both of these, as well as other factors like lacking a distinct native territory. As a result, 'there was no ideological justification for granting them the type of institutions (such as schools with instruction in their mother tongue, socio-cultural organizations, etc.) that national minorities — who in many cases comprised much smaller populations — ordinarily received.'[24] This resulted in a forced disbanding of the Roma minority, at least on paper. An example of this is the 1980 census in Czechoslovakia, in

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[24] Zoltan Barany, 'Politics and the Roma in state-socialist Eastern Europe,' in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33 (2000), pp.421-437, p.423.

which 75% of Roma declared themselves as Slovaks, with the remaining 15% declaring themselves Hungarian and 10% Czech.[25] If the very cornerstone of integration is in question, that of whether the community in question is a national minority or not, then any project designed to integrate this group will never get past its conceptual stage.

One aspect of integration that is important to examine whenever integration is mentioned by politicians is the framework that they construct through dialogue. For example, the following extract is from an interview with Prime Minister Vucic in Munich in 2015 regarding the Roma who emigrate from Serbia to the EU:

'Oni nisu potražioci azila. Oni samo žele nemački novac. Mi se trudimo da poboljšamo životni standard u Srbiji. Za to nam je potrebna i vaša podrška...Većina ljudi koji napuštaju Srbiju su Romi. Ali, kod nas nema političkih protivnika Roma. Ipak nas brine njihova životna situacija'

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'They are not asylum seekers. They only want German money. We are trying to improve the standard of living in Serbia, we need your help to do that….most people who leave Serbia are Roma. However, there are no political opponents to the Roma in our country, yet still their position in life worries us.'[26] (My own translation)

This interview reveals two aspects of the approach Vucic takes towards the Roma in Serbia. Firstly, it shows a potential for the Roma to be treated by the Serbian government, or any government, as

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[25] Otto Ulč, 'Gypsies in Czechoslovakia: a Case of Unfinished Integration,' in *East European Politics and Societies*, 2.2 (March 1988), pp.306-332, p.323

[26] Dijana Roščić, 'Vučić: Romi su tradicionalno siromašni,' *DW,* 28 July 2015.

https://www.dw.com/sr/vu%C4%8Di%C4%87-romi-su-tradicionalno-siroma%C5%A1ni/a-18611554 (Accessed 18/05/18)

simply a tool with which to achieve a political goal, in this case improve Serbian-EU relations and secure funding. Vucic's statements not only pander to those within the German public that fear an influx of refugees (' soni samo Zele nemacki novac') but also offer to take this problem of Roma taking German money from Germany's hands in return for…more German money.

However, this interview also reveals a great deal about the way in which the Roma problem is phrased in Serbian politics through Vucic's statement that 'kod nas nemo politickih protivnika Roma.' The Serbian government appears to wish to phrase the Roma problem not within political terms, but instead within economic terms. Later in the interview, Vucic also said of the Roma that 'Romi su tradicionalno veoma siromašni. Drugi razlozi ne postoje. Mi nismo rasisti niti nacionalisti.' ('Roma are traditionally very poor. There don't exist other reasons. We are neither racist nor nationalistic'). If the problems surrounding the Roma are phrased in primarily economic terms then the methods of integration created will too be based solely on economics. In order to further understand these statements, I would draw on Thomas Acton's tripartite categorisation of the legislative approach to the Roma:

1. Status Quo policies: Affirm the rightness of the existing order – but determine to apply laws more rigorously

2. Repressive policies: declare that existing laws are insufficiently repressive and need to be strengthened to deal with what is perceived as a wicked resistance.

3. Integrative/Inclusive Policies: Declare that laws are insufficiently integrative, and need to be strengthened to bring the threatening populations within the boundaries of Social Order.[27]

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[27] Thomas Acton, 'Conflict Resolution and Criminal Justice - Sorting out Trouble: Can Legislation Resolve Perennial Conflicts between Roma/Gypsies/Travellers and 'National Majorities'?' *Journal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 37.51 (2005), pp.29-49, p.32.

I argue that Vucic's approach to the Roma represents the first of these categories. He sets the basis of the answer to the Roma issue as not one of political change but instead a better enactment of current economic policy towards the Roma people. One was to define the Roma is through their economic status, as Vucic did in his statement. This conforms to a long-standing tradition of defining the Roma by their economic position. It is worth noting that many of the names that are used to refer to the Roma are those of their traditional occupations, such as the Ashkali ('coal burner') and Kavaci ('smiths').

2.3: The Economics of Integration

If the dialogue surrounding the Roma is changed from one of political and cultural integration to simply the alleviation of poverty, it removes the onus for the governing body to navigate the troublesome frameworks of cultural integration I outlined earlier. However, perhaps an economically focussed methodology could succeed, but in order to assess the validity of this we must first examine how the Roma fit in with the Serbian economy at the moment. Informal employment in significantly higher in Roma communities that non-Roma communities. In survey, 79% of young Roma (15-24) did not have a contract with their current employer, while the figure was only 35% for those in the same age bracket who were non-Roma (UNDP/WB/EC 2011, Indicator EM7). This difference in frequency of informal work is somewhat explained by Roma preference, as the percentage of young Roma who preferred to have irregular employment but be able to manage their own free time is over double that of non-Roma. However, this figure for the Roma still only makes up 16% of the young population (Indicator EM9). Moreover, the survey also demonstrated the desire for secure employment when 92% of Roma said they would be willing to accept a low income if it meant that the employment would also be secure, compared with 84% of non-Roma (Indicator EM10). This data suggests that the Roma in Serbia, despite their current overrepresentation in the informal sector, would prefer a job that was secure, but in which they would be capable of managing their own time.

However, this form of work, and the potential for security and betterment for the Roma is not available to the Roma. The first cause of this is, as I will discuss in the following chapter, the frequent 'invisibility' caused by lack of documentation that the Roma suffer. However, an equally large deterrent to bringing the Roma into the formal economy is the issue of tax evasion and the shadow economy in Serbia. Contracts are, in many cases, not offered as it would place a higher tax burden not only on the employer but the employee. This is, of course, the case in every country, but even more so in Serbia, where 'from a comparative standpoint, the labour tax wedge…is higher at low wage levels and relatively low at high wage levels, a consequence of a proportional tax system with a relatively small portion of non-taxable wage.'[28] This means that if the sorts of jobs that Roma took on (especially given their surveyed preference for lower paid jobs that allowed them more freedom) were brought in to the formal economy, it would incur a disproportionally high tax burden and thus lower both the likelihood of this occurring as well as its economic validity if it did.

How then might we combat solve the rut that the Roma find themselves in, wherein they are stuck in low-paying informal jobs? I argue that one method of achieving this goal would be through improving the education systems in place for the Roma. Once again, I will examine how previous states have tried to achieve this through Balkan history. Yugoslavia had one of the most successful sets of policies when it came to the education of the Roma. Under Yugoslav control, 'special classes for adult education were opened for young illiterate Roma, and the education for all children became compulsory first for an eight-year period and then also for the duration of secondary education. Parents were punished for their children's truancy with fines or compulsory labour.'[29] The results showed the success of this methodology, with increased numbers of Roma employed in agriculture and industry, and a corresponding increase in the socioeconomic position of the Roma during this period. That is to say, the project was a success to the extent that it provided a large economic boon to the Roma. However, this forced integration into the socialist regime through

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[28] *Report: The Shadow Economy in Serbia: New Findings and Recomendations for Reform,* ed. By Gordana Krstic, submitted by the Foundation for the Advancement of Economics to USAID Serbia, p.30. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnaec461.pdf (Accessed 04/07/18)
[29] Gyorgy Csepeli, Davis Simon, 'Construction of Roma identity in Eastern and Central Europe: Perception and Self-Identification,' in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 30.1 (January 2004), pp.129-150, p.130.

industry sometimes came at the expense of traditional Roma ways of life. I have already examined how Roma identity is very much tied up in travelling and nomadism, but it is worth examining the intersection of nomadism and sedentism that occurs during integration, and how this affects the political strength of the Roma community.

Baranay noted that 'in areas where nomadism and established lifestyles survived longer conventional Gypsy leaders were better equipped to maintain their authority in their bailiwick.'[30] The traditional Roma leaders, those most likely to be successful in lobbying for the socio-political advancement of their people, rely on their followers to maintain traditional ways of life. The more Roma that are assimilated through economic policy, the fewer remain of an already fragmented community to present a unified front. Both formal education and the formal economy require a more sedentary community, often to a degree that affects many traditional customs and thus community ties and the power of traditional figureheads. Even, and especially, when governments are successful in assimilating the Roma, there is a corresponding effective decline in the Roma ability to present a strong political force. In this we see the danger of repeated failures of projects like Dosta!, DoRI and the current Roma 2020. With each concurrent project there is not only a decreasing political will from the majority, but a decreasing number of Roma who are willing or able to take advantage of these projects.

In the face of these difficulties of Roma integration, it is no surprise that some communities have abandoned integration entirely. There exists only one place in Eastern Europe where the Roma can self-govern, the town of Shutka in Macedonia. It is proof of the more relaxed attitudes of the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia compared to some of the other Central and Eastern European socialist regimes, as it came into being after a devastating 1963 earthquake, after which the Government spent large sums of money rebuilding the area 'that had quickly grown into the largest Romani community in the world with a population of approximately 40,000 people in the 1980s.'[31] However, this is a far cry from the 'Gypsy autonomous area' that Tito had considered creating as a

[30] Zoltan Barany, 'Politics and the Roma in state-socialist Eastern Europe,' in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33 (2000), pp.421-437, p.430.
[31] Baranay 2000, p.428.

reward for the 'fanatical commitment (of the Roma) to the partisan cause' after World War II.[32]

Instead, the Macedonian government has consciously split the area off from the rest of the city, not with regards to physical barriers, but instead through gerrymandering of the municipality which has resulted in much of the useful surrounding infrastructure being separated from the Roma, such as all but one of the factories belonging to other municipalities.[33]

2.4: Oh, What's the Point Then?

In the face of these difficulties in integrating, we must also ask *why should we try?* To answer this question, I would turn to Kramer's Dimensional Accrual and Dissociation theory,[34] which posits the presence of different cultures and nations as akin to organisms within an ecosystem. Each culture competes within this ecosystem across the globe, and through this competition and interaction there is a transference of cultural traits. It is only through this cultural exchange, achieved through the movement of individuals across borders, that cultures are able to adapt and survive through time. For Kramer, if there is no interaction between cultures, then each individual culture would become stagnant. Therefore, there is an inherent *need* for cultural difference in order to promote cultural growth. It is not beneficial for any culture to assimilate others fully, as the successful completion of this would result in the stalling of the process and the ceasing of further development for that culture due to the lack of impetus. This theory, therefore, not only posits political and cultural interactions between differing countries as a method by which national identities are constructed, but also a method by which the system itself is renewed.

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[32] D. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), p.222.
[33] Valerie Hopkins, 'Shutka: Inside Macedonia's Only Roma Run Municipality,' *Al Jazeera,* 8 April 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/04/shutka-life-world-roma-run-municipality-170406133010977.html (Accessed 18/03/18)
[34] The full theory is given by Kramer in Eric Kramer, 'Dimensional Accural and Dissociation,' in *Communications, Comparative Cultures and Civilisations,* ed. J. Grace and E. Kramer, (New York: Hampton, 2013), pp.123-184.

I would posit, then, that the Roma within this system act as a super-vector for cultural interaction and growth. In order to demonstrate their role within Kramer's DAD theory, I would first reiterate some of the characteristics of the Roma as a national identity:

1. They are delocalised and non-territorial.
2. They have a common language, but a large variety of dialects depending on geography.
3. They have a non-centralised governing structure across countries.

To demonstrate the first of these points, I would note that of those interviewed in 2011 UNDP/WB/EC survey, 43% of Roma in Serbia said that they expected to move abroad in the future, while only 29% of Non-Roma believed the same (Indicator M3). Of these, 46% of the Roma considered that they would move within the next 6 months, compared with 36% of the Non-Roma (Indicator M5). This hints that Roma migrate more frequently than those non-Roma. Of those Roma who expected to leave the country in the future, 44% had the migration target on Germany (Indicator M4). Even of those Roma that remained, there was a greater degree of economic internationality than those nationals in some markers, as money transfers received from friends and relatives living outside of the country: 4% of Roma, only 2% of non-Roma (Indicator M2). However, if the cross section of the Roma in Serbia hints that they are more prone to migration, then presumably integration within a single country would work counter to this predisposition. I argue that the two concepts, that is an allowance for freedom of movement and integration attempts by a country, can be reconciled. However, it would involve amending the framework of integration so that instead of attempting to integrate the Roma within existing economic frameworks that suffice only for the sedentary populace, the impetus should be on the government to instead focus their efforts on improving Roma traditional institutions and opening space within the formal economy for these to function. The first steps of this would involve opening avenues into the formal economy for seasonal work and improving the conditions of traditional Roma travelling waypoints through the country.

2.5: The Hungarian Case

One attempt to integrate the Roma into the formal economy took place in Hungary recently, and to explore it I will turn to the research of Sandor. Sandor collated various data regarding indicators of Roma health and how they changed between 2003/2004 and 2014/2015, specifically in Northern Hungary.[35] It is worth noting that all data shown in Sandor's article markedly point to the fact that Roma still suffer disadvantages in every aspect of health and wellbeing measured when compared to the results of the general population. However, in this small group in Northern Hungary, some indicators of wellbeing increased. Sandor notes that 'income improved, perceived discrimination decreased markedly, use of many health services increased, as did uptake of cholesterol lowering drug consumption.'[36] Sandor links this increase in Roma welfare to 'the decision by the Hungarian government to quadruple the budget for public works between 2010 and 2015. This is especially relevant for villages in the North-Eastern region of Hungary where segregated Roma settlements are concentrated.'[37] The belief was that by increasing the number of people working for the state Hungary would be able to solve the rampant unemployment in the country, which was suffering from its sprawling welfare system that had been left behind after the collapse of Communism. According to Bloomberg, the salary for this work is equivalent of '$303 a month, twice the basic welfare payment.'[38] However, it is worth noting two aspects of this policy. First, this wage is far less than the $415 minimum wage in Hungary. Secondly, if one is to refuse this work, a large proportion of their welfare will be revoked by the state. The choice, if it can be considered one, is either to join the public works economy that will take economic advantage of you, or face at least partial economic abandonment by the state. However, we must examine in detail Sandor's belief that coerced assimilation into the labour force is a necessary first step in not only integrating the Roma but also raising their standard of living.

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[35] Janos Sander, 'The decade of Roma Inclusion: did it make a difference to health and use of health care services?,' *International Journal of Public Health*, 62.7 (March 2017), pp.803-815.

[36] Sandor 2017, p.808.

[37] Sandor 2017, p.806

[38] Carol Matlack, 'In Hungary, the Jobless Go to Labor Camp,' *Bloomberg Businessweek*, September 2011 https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2011-09-08/in-hungary-the-jobless-go-to-labor-camp (Accessed 28/04/18)

Sandor also has another factor in his data, the active percentage of workers in the population of Roma that he used for the study. The data can be found below[39]:

	First study (2003/2004)			Second Survey (2014-2015)			Changes (ratio)		
Age Groups	18-29	30-44	45-64	18-29	30-44	45-64	18-29	30-44	45-64
Active Workers (as a % of population)	17	22	11	47	54	46	2.76	2.45	4.18

Sandor argues that the increase in employment, achieved as a direct result of policy changes on a national level, resulted in an increased standard of living as measured by markers of health and wellbeing. However, it is necessary to look beyond these two markers as a measurement of success, and also take a look at the political and social context in which these changes occurred. It is important to note that this policy was first put in to place in the town of Gyöngyöspata in Hungary in 2011. In the same year, there was a case brought forth by the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union and Open Society Justice Initiative which detailed the presence of vigilante groups in the area that had come for the sole purpose of harassing the town's Roma population under the pretence of managing crime. In testimonies given by Roma inhabitants in the region, we are told that the police aided these vigilantes by convicting them of minor offenses, usually in the form of a traffic fine.[40] This included 'walking or pushing a stroller on the street as opposed to the dilapidated sidewalk; throwing away cigarettes or seed shells on the street; the lack of compulsory bicycle accessories, even when the bike was merely being pushed to transport sacks of flour and potatoes.'[41] This was not simply a local matter, as

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[39] Sanor 2017, Table 1, p. 807.
[40] Iinterviews with Roma inhabitants about these events were produced by the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, and can be found in full at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q89g6i4FaWU (Accessed 19/06/18)
[41] Zsolt Bobis, 'Ethnic Profiling in Gyöngyöspata,' Open Society Foundations, 15 April 2017, https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/litigation/ethnic-profiling-gy-ngy-spata

although the Eger Regional Court ruled in favour of the Roma in this case, this ruling was reversed on appeal by the Debrecen Regional Court of Appeal. The court found that the police did not have legal options available to them when it came to the vigilantes, and there was not adequate evidence of discrimination against the Roma with regards to disproportionate fines. Even when the matter was brought before the Supreme Court, the judge did not find adequate evidence of discrimination. It is important to set the anti-Roma vigilantism, legal battles and criminal discrimination as a backdrop to the employment and welfare policies set up in the area in the same year. While the policy was not overtly directed at the Roma, it must be noted that 36 out of the 40 people employed in this system in Gyöngyöspata are Roma. The Hungarian Central Statistics office reported that '23,800 Roma and 108,000 non-Roma participated in public works in 2013, 31,800 Roma and 143,400 non-Roma in 2014, and 40,500 Roma and 171,100 non-Roma in 2015.'[42] This means, despite a minor positive trend, the number of Roma in this programme has stayed between 18-19% of the population. This is, of course, a disproportionate amount compared to the number of Roma in Hungary as a percentage of the overall population. Therefore, the data suggests that even if the policy was not initially designed to place the Roma in the formal economy, its continuation certainly had this as one of its primary goals.

We must also take a look at the apparent 'vigilantes' during this event. These were members of the Szebb Jövóért Polgárór Egyesület (Civil Guard Association for a Better Future). This a group that is overtly far right wing, and with a history of violence. The events peaked on 22nd April, when the vigilante groups planned a training camp nearby a Roma encampment, causing panic over the potential for violence. In response, the US businessman and philanthropist Richard Field payed for the evacuation of the Roma from the area alongside the Red Cross. He spoke of the events in an interview as follows:

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[42] *Hungary: Situation of Roma, including employment, housing, education, healthcare and political participation, whether Roma are required to pay a fee for health services (2013-July 2016)*, Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 18 August 2016, http://www.refworld.org/docid/57dfa73e4.html (Accessed 23/05/18)

Interviewer: [The Hungarian Government] has considered you a national security risk since 2012. What is it that keeps you here?

R.F.:   The American House Foundation, whose mission is to help East and Central European civil organizations providing support to the poor. Our activities to date have been focused on Hungary. The reason for this was a drastic increase in Hungarians living in conditions of poverty and social exclusion over the past five years. The foundation's activities are strictly humanitarian. **It does not engage in political activities at all.** (my own formatting)[43]

I would draw specific attention to Field's comment that 'it does not engage in political activities at all, and draw a comparison to Vucic's comments that I engaged with earlier. What unifies these opinions is a certain tension as to which field the Roma issue belongs within, and a certain emphasis on its placement within the economic realm of poverty rather than the more dangerous realm of nationalism. However, the events in Hungary clearly demonstrate that local responses to the Roma *are* coloured by issues of nationalism and racism. It is not possible to place the issue in an economic vacuum and ignore its further political implications. This belief is rooted in the very fundamentals of the nation as a political space. Anderson writes that 'it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[44] Yet the Roma are rarely part of this 'communion,' the supposed end point concept of successful integration. They are never fully included in this communion because the 'the nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.'[45] The Roma present a great challenge to this notion of

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[43] 'Interview with Richard Field, Businessman, Philanthropist and managing editor of the Budapest Beacon,' Budapest Beacon, 16 January 2016, https://budapestbeacon.com/hvg-interview-with-richard-field-businessman-philanthropist-and-managing-editor-of-the-budapest-beacon/ (Accessed 07/02/18)

[44] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983), p.49

[45] Anderson, p.50.

the nation. It is infinitely more challenging to draw imaginary boundaries, however elastic, when you have a population living within those borders that consistently remains partly outside those same boundaries. It is as frustrating a concept for those creators of nations as the square-circle is to mathematicians.

To understand the current situation in Hungary it might be helpful to compare it to the Roma situation in Hungary during the Socialist period, which was one of the kindest to the Roma, and the most willing to promote their culture. Barany notes that state-sponsored research of the Roma was prevalent in Hungary, which lead to the 'formation of Romani clubs, ensembles, and other socio-cultural organizations, supporting Gypsy intellectuals, calling for the establishment of a Gypsy newspaper and even for bilingual education (in areas where Romani children were in a majority).'[46] He goes on to note, however, that while the Hungarian socialist model did go some way to promoting Roma culture and allowing for traditions to remain, the economic profile of this period was not quite so impressive, as the Roma 'did not receive their proportional share of state resources and, in 1984, two thirds of them still lived below the official poverty line.'[47]

Csepeli and Simon give further reasons for this economic trend by noting that 'under the pressure of forced assimilation part of the Roma subjects of state-socialist societies developed dysfunctional strategies of coping such as 'learned helplessness' and striving for instant gratification.'[48] Another crucial factor is that many of the policies, especially those in education, were put in place before the *value* of these policies had been conferred upon the Roma. Certainly, there were a great number more Roma going to primary and secondary school, a direct result of Governmental punishment for truancy. However, the 'proportion of Roma with university or college degrees in all post-socialist countries did not exceed 1 per cent of the adult Roma population.'[49] I would argue that this is the result of the school system being introduced to the Roma population too quickly, as the approach to schooling was simply utilitarian. School was necessary, not

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[46] Baranay, p.427.
[47] Barany, p.427.
[48] Csepeli and Simon, p.132.
[49] Csepeli and Simon, p.130.

only as a mandatory state institution, but as a method by which one gained employment. The result was that the majority of Roma only took on the bare minimum level of education in order to gain basic employment. In many cases this personal requirement for education did not even reach secondary school, with only 10% of Roma finishing secondary school. It stands to reason that if a population in education does not understand the value of school beyond an increased ability to gain employment, then employment will always take precedence over education. The result is a large swath of Roma with only the education required to work, and not enough Roma with the education necessary to compete with non-Roma in management positions and political establishments. This outcome is a clear example of the 'second [that Zou identified which] leads straight into the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass.' The environment that the Roma were placed meant that regardless of an abandonment of ethnic traits, the traits that were picked up were those of the poorest and least educated section of society, and therefore the cycle of poverty and low achievement was reproduced. Therefore, despite the differences in approach between the Hungarian Socialist government and current day Hungarian government, we see an intersection in the outcome of attempted Roma integration. In the case of Gyöngyöspata it was clear that although the Roma were being successfully integrated into the economic machine of Hungary, the sudden influx of Roma into the area caused a nationalistic backlash from the surrounding populace. It was not a matter of economic difference between the two groups, but rather perceived cultural or ethnic difference that arose from such a rapid and forced integration. In the Socialist period, the Government's cultural and educational policies towards the Roma allowed them to function within society, but the speed at which these policies were enacted, as well as a lack of due diligence regarding the long term economic growth of the Roma, resulted in them being confined to the same low standard of living that we find them in today.

However, what is clear is that we cannot ignore the economic facet of Roma integration, not least of all because the economic benefit of integration to the host-nation might well be the easiest way of selling integration as a political policy to voters. Sandor notes that 'faced with aging populations, the EU cannot accept that several million citizens remain excluded from the labour

force.'[50] This might sound like a cynical way to approach the problems Roma face, but it is certainly a pragmatic view to take. Taking into account the *benefits* of having a Roma population that is well integrated into society may well be a cornerstone of enacting productive public policy, as well as selling this policy to the populace. However, as was seen in Gyöngyöspata, there must be effective management of the cultural dissonance that will occur when economic integration occurs.

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[50] Sandor 2017, p.804.

3.0: Roma Healthcare

My research so far has been focussed upon the difficulties of defining the goals, audience and methodology by which governments and international bodies wish to enact the mitigation of Roma rights abuses and socioeconomic issues. I have also shown what some of these integrative methodologies look like, and ways in which these difficulties have been approached, and in some ways overcome. However, I have up until this point only mentioned the difficulties that the Roma face without going too far into detail into precisely what form this takes. I have examined the difficulties of integration, but not the *need* for integration in terms of the necessity to improve the wellbeing of a group that has been and is systematically oppressed. Therefore, before I go any further in examining projects and policy aimed at integrating the Roma in the future, I will examine the situation of the Roma in the present day. Perhaps it is here that the somewhat chaotic ground that I have established through examination of identity and political theory might be tethered more firmly to the reality of the Roma situation.

3.1: The Barriers to Healthcare

There are a great many areas of society in which the Roma minority suffer injustice, but I will focus on the area of healthcare as I find equal access to healthcare across a nation to be the most basic marker of equality. Since each country's healthcare system differs, I will confine my examination only to the Roma in Serbia. I do this to show how the oppression of the Roma can be deeply systemic. The ability for any person of any ethnicity in any country to get access to healthcare is related to a certain framework adopted by that country. These frameworks can be broken down into a number of

requisite steps. Idzerda breaks down the steps required to gain access to primary healthcare thoroughly, but for my own purposes I will only list the factors that most relate to the Roma[51]:

- Personal Documents:
    - In order to obtain a health insurance card, one needs to register with the authorities and obtain an ID card.
    - The following documentation is required:
    - Proof of residence (a permanent Serbian address) and either a birth certificate, IDP card, Work booklet, Marriage certificate, citizenship card.

- Geographic Accessibility
    - In order to access services, a patient must be able to get to either a general practitioner, primary healthcare centre or polyclinic. They can travel via public transport, private transport, or on foot.

- Affordability of medical Services
    - The user of the healthcare service must pay a small user fee.

- Acceptability
    - Acceptability by provider and patient
    - Providers must be willing to treat the patient
    - Providers must recognize that a problem exists with their patient
    - Patients must recognise the importance of the treatment or intervention provided
    - If the intervention is acceptable to the patient, then the patient should correctly adhere to the treatment regime

- Affordability of Intervention
    - Patients must be able to afford the medications that are prescribed to them.

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[51] Leanne Idzerda, 'Access to the Primary Healthcare Services for the Roma Population in Serbia: A secondary Data Analysis,' *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, 11.10 (18 August 2011), p.6.

In order to assess the difficulties that Roma face when trying to gain access to healthcare, I will examine these sections separately, though there will be inevitable overlap in some cases, as each one illuminates part of their plight.

3.2: Invisibility

The first, and arguably most important, point of difficulty for the Roma is the frequent issue of their invisibility within the state. Most estimates put the number of Roma living without formal identification in Serbia at around the 6% mark.[52] It is important to highlight some of the difficulties of this invisible living, wherein a person lives in a country without there being any formal proof of their existence. Of course, one of the primary difficulties is the inability to claim any social care from the state. This is especially important when it comes to healthcare.

This issue frequently starts from childbirth as a result of new births not being immediately registered. Thankfully, at least in Serbia, the number of unregistered births has decreased, down to only 4.7% in 2014 (MICS Indicator 8.1).[53] However, this figure is still much too high. This is, arguably, one of the most crucial factors in the improvement of Roma standard of living, as it is a major barrier to care-seeking, employment and housing. This figure was higher in Kosovo, at 7.1% of children (MICS Indicator 8.1).[54] While there are avenues of identification later in life if birth registration is missed, it must be noted that the 6% figure of invisible Roma population will continue to be reproduced until all obstacles to birth registration, both physical and social, are removed.

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[52] Claire Taylor, 'Serbia's Stateless Roma Struggle for Visiblity,' *Balkan Insight*, 12 January 2018, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-s-stateless-roma-struggle-for-visibility-01-09-2018 (Accessed 12/02/18)

[53] Serbia - Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey - Roma Settlements,' produced in September 2015 by the United Nations Childrens Fund and Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. Full Data set available at http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2337/related_materials, provided by the World Bank.

[54] 'Kosovo - Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey 2013-14,' produced in January 2016 by the United Nations Childrens Fund and Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Full Data set available at http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2337/related_materials, provided by the World Bank.

One example of legislature being put in place with the primary beneficiary being Roma citizens was the 'Welcome to the World, Baby' project in Serbia. According the Governmental Website of the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanoc and Medvedja, this project will 'enable parents not to run around the counters any longer, but to have their babies registered for free very quickly, in just 15 minutes, and in one place, without using any registration forms.'[55] The Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Ana Brnabic, said of the project in this article that 'the only thing parents need to do is to agree on the name of the baby, while all the remaining work in conjunction with registering the babies shall be done by the staff of the maternity wards.' Certainly, this project has the potential to drastically reduce the number of anonymous Roma circulating within the Serbian system, but it also comes with its flaws. Firstly, there is a strict 30-day rule on the registration. If the baby is not registered within the first 30 days of its birth, then the chances of the child continuing undocumented will drastically increase. However, an even more important obstacle faces Serbia in its quest to reduce the number of invisible Roma. Many potential mothers refuse to go to hospital to give birth, and therefore miss out on crucial aspects of the registration process. Their refusal to go to a maternity ward is not unfounded. Abdikeeva writes of an incident in a maternity ward, wherein a Roma woman was left unattended by nurses during the birthing process. When asked about why the midwife had left the mother alone, she had replied that 'Roma women have many children and know how to give birth on their own.'[56] This Roma women was not alone, with 23% of Roma women saying that they had experienced gender discrimination when it came to health matters.[57] This justification by the midwife is an almost clinical approach to racism, the belief that Roma women are somehow biologically different to Serbian women. Regardless of the gender of the perpetrator, it is also indicative of a deeply sexist attitude within the medical system. In this case, the approach was 'it is a Roma problem, let the Roma deal with it in their way.' However, this is only a stone's throw away from the broader approach of 'it's a woman's problem, let women deal with it.'

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[55] Government of Serbia Coordination Body for the minicipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, 'Welcome to the World, Baby. - A New Project i The Republic of Serbia,' 13 October 2016, http://www.kt.gov.rs/en/news/news-archive/welcome-to-the-world-baby-a-new-project-in-the-republic-of-serbia.html Accessed 04/07/18)

[56] Alphia Abdikeeva, 'Assessing Legal Advocacy to Advance Roma Health in Macedonia, Serbia and Romania,' *European Journal of Health Law*, 20.5 (December 2013), pp.471-86, p.474.

[57] Abdikeeva 2013, p.473.

This might seem like an outlandish anecdote, but the data of the MICS 2014 in Serbia certainly seems to back up the belief that Roma women are less well treated during pregnancy. Of those surveyed for the MICS 2014, 25.6% of Roma women who had given birth within the past 2 years were attended by a medic less than 4 times during their pregnancy, compared with only 6.15 of non-Roma (MICS Indicator 5.5). However, it is worth noting that figures given when it came to presence of a medical professional during the actual delivery itself were identical between Roma and non-Roma (MICS Indicator 5.7). However, if the Roma fear or even expect discrimination in the healthcare system, it will reduce their faith within this system and thus decrease the likelihood of them attending a hospital for labour, thus reducing the effectiveness of at-hospital registration systems for babies.

The approach of the midwife is not only politically incorrect, but also poses a definite and physical threat to Serbia. If people are afraid to go to hospitals, starting from childbirth, due to discrimination, then the potential for disease obviously increases. Abdikeeva notes that many Roma children, often due to their lack of documentation, do not receive vaccinations.[58] Earlier this year, the CDC reported a measles outbreak in Serbia. A vaccination against measles is mandatory, but only if one is registered from childbirth, which is often not the case for Roma. This difference in the prevalence of vaccinations is not only anecdotal, as in the 2011 UNDP/WB/EC Roma Regional Survey 99% of the non-Roma children up to 5 had received any kind of vaccination, while this was only 93% in the Roma population. The figure for vaccination rates is still high, but Roma children, due to the sanitation of many settlements, should be just as high as those of non-Roma due to their potential for contraction of diseases being even higher. A more recent survey (MICS Serbia 2014) found that only 63.3% of Roma Children had received their measles vaccination by their second birthday, compared with 93.4% of non-Roma (MICS Indicator 3.4). When it came to full immunisation coverage, only 12.7% of Roma aged 24-45 received their vaccinations at the correct times, compared with 70.5% of non-Roma (MICS Indicator 3.8).

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[58] Abdikeeva 2013, p.473.

This is certainly not to suggest that unvaccinated Roma children were somehow the cause of this outbreak, but rather that they are often the most overlooked and vulnerable individuals when it comes to health. Indeed, the 'let Roma deal with their own problems' attitude of the midwife also resulted in a Roma child with Tuberculosis being put in a ward with other, non-infected, Roma children.[59] It is here that we not only see some of the systematic issues with the healthcare system that Roma individuals have to overcome, but the need for these issues to be overcome for the good of the populace as a whole. Healthcare, especially when it come to the transmission of deadly disease, cannot be only applied to a certain percentage of the population, or else the whole suffers.

However, even if these procedures of Roma registration are flaws, they are certainly an improvement, and also proof that focussed legal action on behalf of the Roma can improve their situation. The introduction of the Welcome Baby project was largely down to the work of the NGO Praxis based in Serbia. A similar case can be found in Macedonia, where the NGO Roma SOS lobbied to change bylaws of the Health Insurance Fund that required submission of income documents that made it difficult for Roma with seasonal employment to get health cards. My argument is that the success of these measures is that their focus is on amending existing laws to include Roma, rather than getting Roma to conform to a legal situation that repeatedly fails them.

A similar effect can be seen in a policy adopted by Hungary known as the Semmelweis Plan in 2010. One of the measures foreseen by the Semmelweis Plan is the 'reconsideration and revision of applicable information technologies in the healthcare sector and the system-level development of health IT.'[60] One focus of this policy was the 'system level development of health IT.' This meant, in theory, that the databases used by healthcare professionals were not only more comprehensive but more easily shared across the country. This had the effect of making it easier for those who might have previously been disenfranchised by the healthcare system to more easily be able to get adequate treatment. This is proof that focussed political will is able to amend systems for long term benefit of the Roma, but we must also examine the other parts of Idzerda's framwork.

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[59] Abdikeeva 2013, p.474.
[60] Katalin Adamis Csaszar, 'Overview of the national laws on electronic health records in the EU Member States,' European Commission, 14 April 2014, p.7.

3.3: Geography

Geographical accessibility should not, in theory, present much of a problem to the Roma trying to visit a healthcare professional. Most Roma settlements are located very near to towns or cities, and therefore there should be little to no difference between the actual distance of Roma and Non-Roma living in the same area to hospitals. However, an analysis of the 2011 UNDP/WB/EC Roma Survey showed that 'Roma respondents perceive all five of the in question medical facilities to be located at more distant places, compared to the non-Roma respondents.'[61] Considering that this survey compared Roma to nearby Non-Roma, this response cannot be down to differences in actual distances between the respondents to hospitals. It is possible that the Roma do not deem the local hospital available due to being refused care.

However, much more likely is that they simply do not have the adequate knowledge of local amenities that are available to them. This is backed up by the data, which shows that while 49% of university-educated Roma knew of a local and available GP while only 40% of non-university educated Roma knew the same.[62] It stands to reason that is an ignorance a local healthcare location constitutes a geographical barrier. Certainly, an improvement in the number of medical facilities available to the general population and the quality of these would be of service to improving the healthcare of the Roma, but a necessary first step is to ensure that they are educated as to what services are available to them. This ignorance is symptomatic of the same level of disregard from the state when it comes to promoting self-improvement of the Roma that we saw in my examination of Roma education and economics in the previous chapter.

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[61] Andrey Ivanov, Jaroslav Kling, 'The Health Situation of Roma Communities: Analysis of the data from the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey,' *Roma Inclusion Working Papers*, 2012, p.25. http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/The-health-situation-of-Roma-communities.pdf (Accessed 13/03/18).
[62] Ivanov and Kling 2012, p.42.

3.4: The Cost

The first way a government might ensure that healthcare is consistently affordable is through promoting equal access to health insurance schemes. Although the availability of insurance in Serbia is equal between the Roma and Non-Roma populations, as it is in Slovakia (2.3% non-Roma and 2.8% Roma uninsured, UNDP/WB/EC 2011, H2), this is not the case in the rest of the Balkans. The graph below, showing the data from the UNDP/WB/EC 2011 Roma Regional Survey, shows the percentage uninsured of persons in each of these countries, ordered by difference between Roma and non-Roma groups:
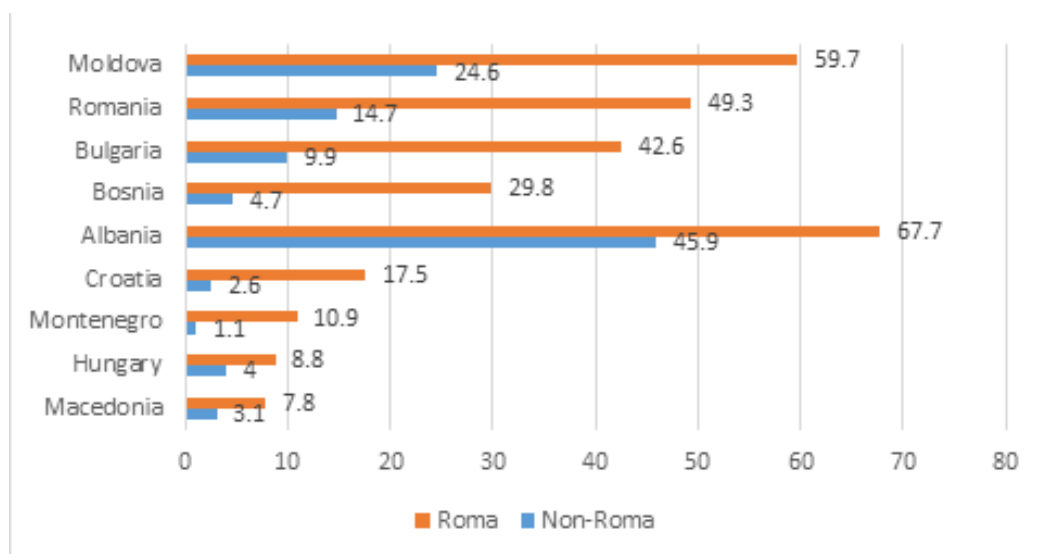

The differences in the percentage of uninsured persons in these countries is telling enough, but I would go further to show that even in those countries in which we find equal levels of medical insurance, the treatment of Roma is unequal.

The graph below is the statistical analysis run by Idzerda which compares the percentage of the population that said that they, or one of their household members, was not able to afford prescribed/necessary medication in the past 12 months.[63] The fact that the non-Roma population are

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[63] Idzerda 2013, Figure 3, p.8.

more frequently able to afford their medication should come as no surprise. The difference between the poorest quintile and the Roma population is not statistically significant.
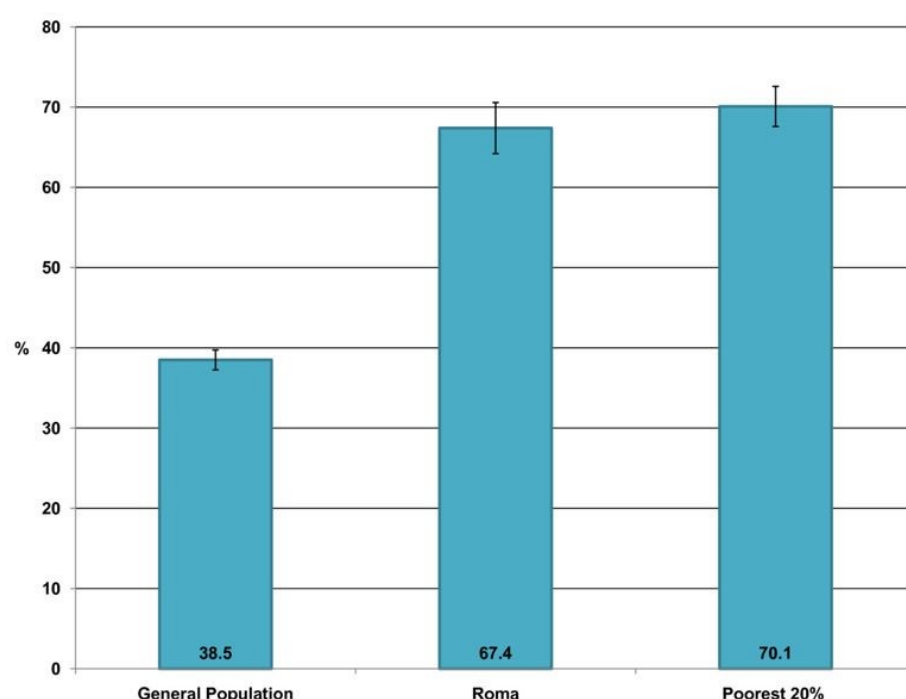

However, if we examine how the responses in both populations developed over time, we can see that they deviated even more. Examining the results from UNDP/WB/EC Regional Roma Surveys in 2006 and 2011 together, we can see that the number of people who were not able to afford necessary drugs decreased more acutely in the general population than it did in the Roma population (Indicator H4).
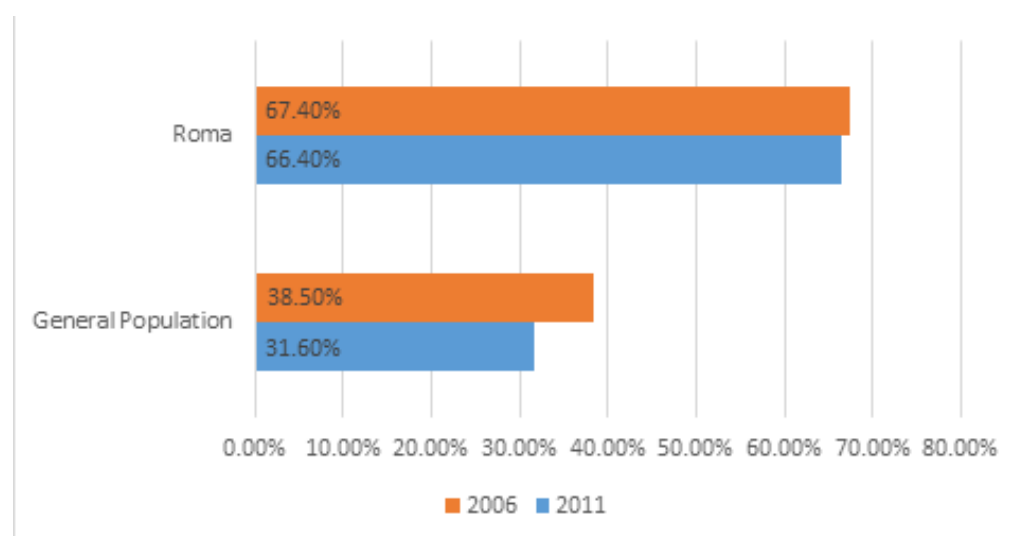
A large reason for this figure being as high as it is for either of the groups is the expense of healthcare in Serbia. In 2015 Serbia had the highest value for health expenditure versus GDP of any of the Balkan countries. This involves not only insurance costs, but most importantly out of pocket expenses.

However, this one facet impacts the Roma more than any other group. The graph below details the out of pocket expenses as a percentage of total expenditure related to Serbian healthcare. It is clear that this has been rising over the past years, up to 40.59% of total expenditure on healthcare in the most recent WHO data.[64]
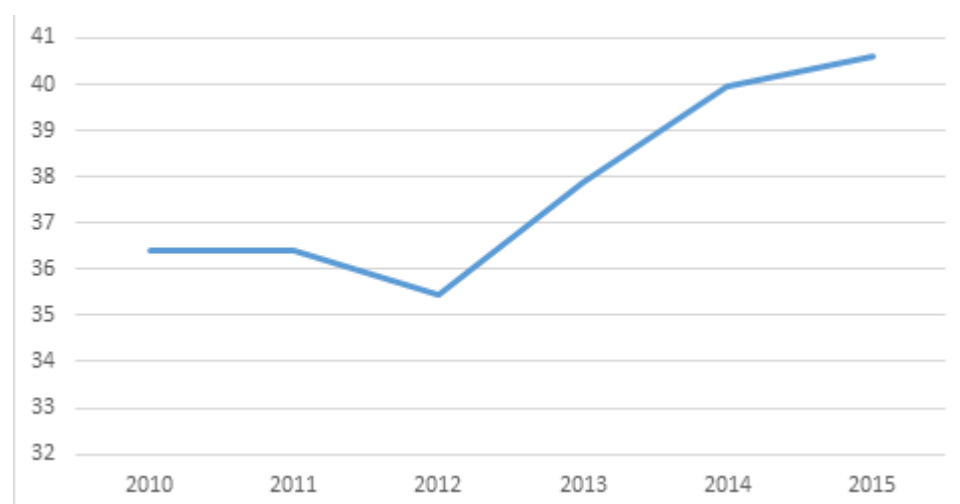
To put these issues together, while availability of medical insurance is equal for the Roma population, the insurance itself is of significantly lower value due to the prevalence of costs not paid by the insurance company. Due to the economic situation of the Roma population being significantly worse than that of the general population, the number of Roma who were unable to afford treatment was significantly higher than in the general population. Furthermore, potentially as a result of out of pocket expenses increasing through time in Serbia, the number of Roma unable to afford medication and healthcare is increasing disproportionally compared to the general population. We are all, regardless of country, aware of the difficulties of ensuring affordable healthcare, but the Serbian

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[64] Data provided by the WHO as part of its Global Health Expentditure Database, found at: http://apps.who.int/nha/database (Accessed 10/04/18)

system in particular is set up in such a way as would penalise the poor. While this is not only a Roma problem, but rather an issue facing the poor in general, its implications for the Roma cannot be ignored, nor its connection to the informal economics I outline below.

3.5: Informal Networks in Healthcare

I have already gone some way to demonstrating the discrimination of the Roma in healthcare in the first part of this chapter. However, there is a different issue that this discrimination causes beyond simply insufficient care, and that is the impact of Roma discrimination on their place within the informal networks of Serbian healthcare. In order to understand how the network of informal practices associated with the healthcare system in the Balkans in Serbia affects the Roma, we must first examine these processes aside from the Roma.

Informal payments are usually the first marker of informal systems that become apparent. These are payments made off the books in order to secure better or quicker treatment than those who do not make these payments. They might take the form of cash payments, or some other product given in exchange for preferential treatment. It is initially encouraging to note that informal practices in Serbia constitute a smaller percentage of overall health expenditure than in other Balkan countries. In fact, a study by Brendenkamp, Mendola and Gragnolati in 2011 found that Albania had not only the highest level of informal payments in the Balkan countries studied, but also had the greatest socioeconomic disparity, with the richest quintile paying 4% in informal payments while the poorest quintile payed 8%.[65] The Roma tend to occupy the lowest quintile of the economic spectrum, and are therefore impacted most strongly by this disparity. In Kosovo this was more equal, while in Serbia the socioeconomic trend was reversed, with the poorest section of the population paying less in informal practices than the richest section.

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[65] Brendenkamp, Mendola and Gragnolati, 'Catastrophic and impoverishing effects of health expenditure,' *Health Policy Plan,* 26.4 (2011), pp.349-56, p.351.

However, there is a different informal network in play in Serbia. The Arsenijevic, Pavlova, Groot study of 2014 found that many of those who did not did not report bribes indicated that they had connections, such as friends, relatives, or colleagues, who helped them avoid informal payments by not accepting payments from them and ensured special treatment and adequate care.'[66] Furthermore, the study showed that while informal payments actually decreased between 2005-2008 the number of reports of 'special connections' that avoided the need to make informal payments increased in Serbia.

The Tomini and Groot study in Albania (2012) showed that rural residents paid less, but in general, they paid higher amounts of informal payments in outpatient care compared with residents of urban areas.'[67] Mejsner argues that this shows that patients do not need to make informal payments within their own area due to personal connections, while they pay higher amounts in urban areas where such network connections are lacking and higher opportunity costs are involved. Therefore, informal connections replace the need for informal payments. In Serbia, where the frequency of 'special connections' is increasing, and therefore informal payments decreasing, we must examine how the Roma are affected by this trend.

Having briefly covered the Serbian economic systems in place within healthcare, both formally and informally, let us now put the Roma specifically within this framework in order to understand the problems that they in particular face. Firstly, healthcare within Serbia is the most expensive, as a percentage of GDP, of any of the Balkan countries. This is not inherently biased against the Roma, although there is the obvious issue of expensive healthcare impacting those in the poorest socioeconomic situation the hardest. While the 2011 Roma Regional Survey data showing that the access to medical insurance of both Roma and non-Roma is 93% is initially encouraging, this means a great deal less when 40% of the payments in an already expensive healthcare system is done out of pocket, a figure that has only risen. These out of pocket expenses are, to a certain extent, both a product and a cause of informal practices. It is here, in these informal practices, that we see the real

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[66] Sofie Mejsner, Leena Karlsson, 'Informal Payments and Healthcare Governance in Serbia: A Pilot Study,' *Sage Open*, 7.3 (2017), p.9.
[67] Mejsnerd, Karlsson 2017, p.9.

extent of the difficulties that Roma face. As I have discussed, in order to alleviate some of these informal and out of pocket expenses, the Serbian healthcare system requires the presence of personal associations between patients and doctors. If a patient knows their doctor, or has been referred by a friend of a doctor, then they are less likely to need to make an informal payment for services. This was shown to be the case both in Serbia and Albania. However, both the studies by Tomini and Groot (2014) and Tomini SM, Packard TG and Tomini F found that informal 'payments create inequity in access to services, as vulnerable groups have a higher likelihood to pay informally.'[68] If we turn to the Roma, we see an ethnicity that exists consistently on the fringes of society. Therefore, they are less likely to have the social ties necessary to be able to effectively alleviate the need for out of pocket and informal payments. In fact, as the informal networks in Serbian healthcare move more towards connections rather than payments, the Roma must deal with the issues of both an economic disability and social disenfranchisement.

3.6: Conclusion

The systematic inequalities that I have discussed in this chapter are not only brought to light to demonstrate the need for increased representation of Roma rights from a humanitarian standpoint, but to show the difficulties Roma can encounter in trying to raise their standing in society. While my initial examination of policy changes brought about through the direct influence of NGOs and Roma activists is encouraging, the latter issues regarding the permeation of informal networks into the healthcare system reveal an inequality of access on a deeper systematic level. A very fundamental principle by which the healthcare system in Serbia functions and is maintained, that of informal networks, is simply not compatible for many Roma who exist outside of these networks.

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[68] Mejsner, Karlsson 2017, p.10.

4.0: An Image of the Roma

The Dosta! Campaign was an international project run by the Council of Europe and European Commission from 2006, dedicated to promoting equal rights for the Roma throughout Europe. Its member states are encouraged to create initiatives for inclusion of Roma individuals in creative and business fields, and its work continues today. Where it differed from many other of the European Council's projects was its specific focus on the media representation of Roma culture, and so the project produced and funded a number of artistic endeavours designed to showcase Roma talent. The first and foremost of these media projects was the short film Chimères Absentes. I will examine the film from a critical angle, as I argue that the film's representation of Roma and Roma culture gives us a glimpse into how the Roma are perceived when the European Council and other international bodies start their integration projects.

4.1: Chimères Absentes

Before I examine the film from this angle, it is first worth outlining the events and cinematography of the short film. Fanny Ardant plays a teacher of young children in a small Italian town. In this school there is at least one Roma child (a little girl) who is brought into the headmaster's office along with her mother, and because of an apparent lack of money they are refused equal treatment within the school ('No money, no bread!). The mother of the little girl provocatively lights a cigarette and blows the smoke in the principle's face, before walking out of the office with her head held high. Following this, a handsome Roma man comes to the school to take the little girl away, lambasting the school for its discrimination. Fanny hears the commotion, and runs after the man, eventually hearing distant Roma music, which she goes to explore. She is immediately approached by the Roma man, who slowly circles her while maintaining strong eye contract and whispering idioms ('become a bird'). Ardant writes a letter of resignation to the principle, citing her newfound

infatuation with Roma culture, and the film ends with Fanny teaching music to some of the children in the camp.

Difference seems to have been a key idea that the directors of the film wanted to get across. In interview, Fanny Ardant said that 'what attracted me to this cause is that this is one of the last identities in Europe that is *different*, our world is becoming increasingly global, everybody is the same, we all have the same codes, we all have the same rules, and anybody who tries to be different should beware.'[169] Certainly, this emphasis on the importance of difference, and the desire to not quash cultures in the quest for cultural unity, is not unkind. However, the film attempts to show difference in almost every way possible. When Zarko goes to the school to yell at the building, a woman looks out of the window and shouts 'Sir!' to get him to quieten down. Zarko responds with 'I am no Sir, my name is Zarko! Zarko Ma'am!.' With the addition of the formal 'ma'am,' this takes a statement of individuality ('I am Zarko!') to a statement of cultural dissonance at the very level of nomenclature.

In the opening lines of the film, Ardant says that when she encountered Zarko and the Roma community she entered 'a magic circle which lead me into the unknown.' This is mirrored in the latter symbol of a group of Italian men standing outside of a large circle drawn on the ground, at the centre of which is Zarko's red scarf. They then turn in synchrony to look at a bird that flies above, while they are left standing immobile next to the circle they have been left out of. This is a clear suggestion that those who are not part of the 'magic circle' of Roma society, those who reject it, are left poorer for it. However, there is a definite danger in this portrayal to place the emphasis on Roma society in some way *excluding* those around them. There is political merit in examining the Roma issue from this angle, but the message is greatly conflicted by the letter from Ardant to the principle that is read over this image: 'I leave like freeing from a prison. My heart was about to burst, a little longer and I'd have become like you. Your rules and your codes bore me…I go away tonight on a path to adventure…where smoke protects mystery and beauty…I'll listen to what the birds tell me, and I'll

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[69] Panel discussion given in Rome after the first screening of the film on 7 June 2010. Sections of the interview can be seen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob1ukmOoEj8 (Accessed 06/14/18)

possess only what happens to me.' If one is looking to gain support from an audience for a political aim, one of the central tenants of this process is to not alienate one's audience. A nod to the rule-breaking anarchist that lurks within everyone would certainly have been sufficient to get across Zarko's message that 'for you, freedom is a crime!' However, there is a danger in the phrase 'a little longer and I'd have become like you.' This phrase, as with much of the film, depicts a world in which the Roma question is very much 'you're with us or you're against us.' We see difference in cultural values demonstrated in the film through spatial terms, and my initial examination of the Roma interaction with space showed this spatial framework and the nomadic/sedentary dichotomy to be both complex and unreliable as a marker of political and cultural difference.

Later in the film, Zarko yells at the school 'Who the hell cares about your judgements? We are Princes of freedom!' This sentiment may sound like a characteristically heroic motto of an underdog in cinema, but we must remember that this film has an intense political context. It seems to me that a declaration on behalf of the Roma that they do not care about judgement from normative society is precisely the kind of gesture that would not only invite but justify that very same judgement. It portrays the Roma as a superheroic nation with neither the need nor the desire to be accepted culturally and socially by wider society. Just as damaging is the effect of this imagined vision of the Roma clashing with reality. Levinson notes that when we are confronted by different cultures, there is a 'dichotomy based broadly on the principle which suggests that which is exotic in faraway places becomes rather less picturesque on one's own doorstep. To the host society, the very term nomad quickly becomes synonymous with tramp or vagabond, and so on.'[70] If we promote this exotic image of a beautifully chaotic life of the Roma, it will prompt an even stronger response when this chaos comes home, just as I engaged with in the Sheffield case in the UK.

The teacher character, in a letter of resignation from the school and broader normative society, writes 'I leave you order, certainties, constraints…I want to know the other side of things.' With the risk of over-assumption, this would imply that the life of a Roma on the 'other side of

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[70] Martin O. Levinson, Andrew C. Sparkes, 'Gypsy Identity and Orientations to Space,' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 33.6 (2004), pp.704-734, p. 706.

things' is one that is disordered, uncertain and unconstrained, and most importantly that these aspects are desirable. I have already shown in the previous chapters through use of survey data that the image of Roma society as inherently opposed to order and stability is a fallacy, such as my examination of the results that showed the 2011 Regional Roma Survey in Serbia, 93% of those asked preferred security of employment over increased salary (EM10).

However, despite my issues with the image of the Roma conjured by the film, and its potential political impact, it shows a clear attempt to grapple with some of the issues I have raised earlier in this research. In the director's own words, the film, and by extension the Dosta! Project as a whole, asks the question of where there is 'a solution to defend the rights of a community that does not perfectly fit the mould that we are trying to push them into.' Of course, this mould is bipartite, both the mould that we create to place the Roma in our own understanding of them as an ethnic group functioning within political space, as well as the mould of the society into which we wish to integrate them.

The film received acclaim for its use of colour and sound to portray the beauty of Roma culture, and the actors include various famous and skilled European actors, including Ardant and Francesco Montanari. However, this is not just an arthouse short film - it is, by the nature of its content and the association it had with the Dosta! Campaign, highly political. Montanari plays the central Roma character, Zarko, and I can find no evidence of any Roma heritage, and certainly no Roma activism. Portraying characters of one ethnicity with an actor of a different ethnicity is not uncommon, but for film that has a purposely political goal, and one that is specifically focussed on portraying Roma culture, it is somewhat surprising that Ardant did not try to showcase any Roma talent in the film. The approach of the film to the Roma is not unkind, nor illogical. It is clear that the director of the film identified a group that has been degraded in the media, and instead sought to elevate the Roma in their depiction.

However, for a film aimed at depicting Roma culture, there is exceptionally little Roma culture involved. We see barely half a dozen 'Roma' in the short film, and they are doing various symbolic activities like watching a wild horse run through a field, or wrestling with a German

Shepherd in an untamed manner. Certainly, one could say that the film has a certain degree of cinematic beauty, but so did Dances with Wolves, and Dances was far from a pioneering film for Native American rights. It must be said that this absence was not lost on the managers of the project, as Ardant herself said in interview: 'what I deplore the most is that I don't have with me a Roma person, a Gypsy, so that that person can express him or herself.' This is a somewhat innocent statement by Ardant, but it must be recognised that ensuring the presence of a Roma individual at a panel dedicated to promoting Roma culture would not have been difficult. However, it is also indicative of a much larger issue that plagues many of these projects designed to improve Roma rights, that of a lack of Roma voices in management. This has been the case since the very earliest days of these international projects, starting immediately after the 2003 conference. While the conference itself was well attended by Roma delegates, and they were initially placed at the helm of the Decade project, Brüggemann and Friedman note that the 'delegates' role as advocates was called into question from within Roma civil society and by government officials, who pointed to delegates' inability to represent diverse communities in each country.'[71] The fact that this disbelief in the role of these delegates came from both sides of the ethnic divide is indicative of the same issues that I raised in Chapter 1, of a lack of homogeneity internally within the group and without the group.

4.2: Another Head of the Beast

It is also worth comparing this film with other media that were produced for and by the Dosta! Campaign. For example, the *Rejected* clip produced by the campaign shows a very different image of the Roma.[72] Over flickering text, sirens and radio static (somewhat reminiscent of an Emergency Broadcast System), we are shown images of slums and the impoverished Roma occupying them. Intermittently, a hazy satellite map of Europe appears on screen with a pulsing circle showing the locations of various Roma communities, looking like a cross between a viral outbreak map and a

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[71] Christian Brüggemann, Eric Freidman, *The Decade of Roma Inclusion: Orgins, Actors and Legacies*
[72] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZU-bXMUgXQ

blueprint for localised drone strikes.[2] It is exceptionally difficult to reconcile this video with *Chimères Absentes*, though both were produced for the same campaign by the European Council. On the one hand, we have Chimeres that presents an idealised image of a Roma society that functions consciously and willingly on the fringes of society, and attracts those from within normative society without, and on the other we have *Rejected* that shows the Roma as an impoverished and outcast group in desperate need of support.

Perhaps the answer to this dichotomy lies in the actual title of Fanny Ardant's *Chimères Absentes* and its English translation *Absent Chimeras.* A chimera could refer to multiple entities, either a real animal that has been scientifically spliced with another animal, or a mythological creature that is part lion, part goat and part snake. Certainly, this is an interesting metaphor for the Roma, as consisted of multiple nationalities, cultures and ethnicities and thus being exceptionally hard to define. Chimeras, much like the Roma, have also been a topic of both fear and intrigue for centuries. However, where this campaign failed is it fell victim to the very chimera mentality that it sought to out. The vision of the Roma shown between Chimères Absentes and *Dosta! Rejected* is so dissonant that it is difficult to understand the message that the heads of the project wanted to deliver. Like the multiple heads of the mythic chimera, we are left with an image of the Roma which is simultaneously alluring and romantic as well as dangerous and alien. The result is a highly fetishized image of the Roma that fails to adequately display them as real human beings, let alone members of society. The closing credits of *Chimères Absentes* state that it was 'associated with the Council of Europe Dosta! Campaign against prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma in Europe.' Instead, we were given a highly stereotypical image of the Roma. Cvorvic notes that this process of conjuration of an ethnicity is not a modern process, as 'the invention of Roma/Egyptian/Ashkali ethnicity had been going on for a few decades, taking various forms in that time, and anthropological interpretations and misinterpretations have joined the contributions of other scholars, government officials and Roma themselves in the inventive process.'[73] However, the newest invention of the ethnicity as brought

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[73] Cvorvic 2010, p.49.

about through the Dosta! Campaign simply contributes to the chaos of definition that I discussed in Chapter 1.

I am the first to argue that an increased media advocacy for the Roma would benefit them. Sadly, the Decade of Roma Integration suffered from a lack of media advocacy, as demonstrated by the fact that in the 2011 Roma Regional Survey in Serbia, a full six years after the start of the decade, only 17% of Roma said that they were aware of the project aimed at them. This figure dropped to 13% of those non-Roma surveyed (L11). However, the audience focus of the Dosta! Campaign was broader society, and showing the 'Roma culture' off to this audience, while I argue that the primary audience for a media campaign should be the Roma members themselves, to show them various projects and schemes that they could take advantage of. Instead, we were given a choice of an image of the Roma as a helpless victim or as a superhero, produced without the Roma for non-Roma. Today, the campaign lies largely abandoned, its final calendar entries stopping in 2016, but the images it created, and their impact on the landscape of Roma live on as all media does.

5.0: The Kosovo Roma

If we are to have in our minds a more appropriate and realistic image of the Roma situation than that created by Chimeres, one that might educate as to both the need and the focus of integrative projects in Eastern Europe, we must examine one group of Roma in particular, the Kosovo Roma. It is within this geographical scope and the political context of the Kosovo War that we find the group that suffers most acutely from the issues that I have been discussing throughout this research. However, to understand the situation of the Roma during the Kosovo war, I will examine them in three different contexts separately. The first of these are the Roma that were present in Kosovo during the war and were a part of it as either victims or perpetrators of violence. The second group are those Roma who left Kosovo either during or after the war, and I will examine how they were treated as refugees by other countries. The last context I will examine are those refugees that then returned to Kosovo after the war. To examine these groups, I will take testimonies given by Kosovo Roma and place them in their political context, as these events were not only horrific but symptomatic of many of the issues surrounding the Roma, especially those issues regarding to political identity.

5.1: A Rock and a Hard Place

In order to understand why the Roma were persecuted so heavily during the war, it is necessary to assess how each side of the war, the Albanians and the Serbians, perceived them. It is in these perceptions of the Kosovo Roma that the difficulties of political identification that I discussed in Chapter 1 are made most apparent.

The first form of political identification that was prescribed upon the Kosovo Roma is that of complicity with the Serbian forces, such as is demonstrated by events that took place on July 3rd 1999. In a testimony given by a Roma inhabitant near Pristina named Ermal, the interviewer was told of the following events. When a Serbian man came to Ermal's village to employ Roma workers to help him

move out of his apartment in Pristina, Ermal's brother and cousin accepted the offer as they needed money. While they worked, a group of Albanians asked why they were working alongside a Serbian man, and in retaliation for this they later came back armed to Ermal's village. They beat Ermal, and kidnapped his brother and cousin. He never saw them again.[74] Working for a Serbian in a non-military situation was enough to assume that they held a primarily Serbian identity, and was enough to result in a death sentence. This is the first method of identification that can occur, that of identity being prescribed by context. However, in this case, as in many others, the context can be misinterpreted, resulting in misidentification. This potential for misidentification can also be abused, as is the case in the following example.

In one account of the war, an Albanian refugee named Sali told the New York Times that 'he ventured into one of the villages a day after the killings…heard that some of his relatives had perished and was taken to a swath of freshly dug earth. [He] was told that paramilitaries had forced local Gypsies to collect the bodies of those shot by Serbs and to bury them in a mass grave.'[75] A similar report by the ERRC points to the events of April 18th 1999 in Lipljan in Kosovo, during which 'a number of Roma from Kosovo, who escaped together with Kosovo Albanians to Albania, testified…that in some cases Roma were forced by Serbs to loot and destroy property of Kosovo Albanians, so that Roma would be blamed too.'[76] Roma identity during the war suffered from the same lack of homogeneity as I have examined previously, and so other groups could either prescribe them a political identity, or force it upon them.

I point to these cases of a misidentification of political allegiance not to suggest that all Roma were pacifists, or neutral with regards to their views on which was correct. The Roma community is not homogenous enough to make any assumption like this. Instead, as was recently said by a Roma activist in interview, 'if the Roma lived in an area with a majority of Serbian population, they fought

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[74] Morgan Meaker, 'Roma in Kosovo: The justice that never came,' *Al Jazeera,* 26 January 2017.

[75] David Rohde, 'Reports of another massacre – with 40 dead,' *New York Times* (25th April 1999), p.17.
[76] Claude Cahn, Tatjana Peric, 'Roma and the Kosovo Conflict,' European Roma Rights Centre, http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=798 (Accessed 29/04/18)

with the Serbs. If they lived with the Albanian population, they fought with the Albanians.'[77] This

point may be simple, but like so many things during times of war, it was lost on both sides. Another

Kosovo Roma said of the situation that the 'Roma are between two fires because they are…treated

like Serbs by Albanians, and treated like Albanians by Serbs.'[78] This treatment is made possible by

the deeply complex and ill-defined identity of the Roma, as well as their status as a marginalised

minority that is poorly equipped to counter this treatment through exercising of their rights. However,

these two issues are compounded by a lack of unified political will *within* the Roma community, not

only a mistreatment from non-Roma. Kosovo is a region with a number of disparate political and

religious groups, and the Roma community in Kosovo is no different. In a report submitted by the

François-Xavier Bagnoud Centre for Health and Human Rights, we are told that 'some leaders would

prefer a complete separation of the three groups (in Kosovo) at political and social intervention levels

while other Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian spokespersons are disappointed by the lack of unity and do

not accept the discrimination among the three groups.'[79] Much as I showed in Chapter 1, the politics

of the Roma are not homogenous of either side of the ethnic divide, neither between Roma nor those

focussed on the Roma from the outside.

This lack of a political figurehead in the Roma community that would allow for a more

unified position within the framework of the war resulted in observers assuming their identity through

context. The most powerful context arose in 1989, when some Roma demonstrated their support for

the Serbian war effort in Belgrade with the Banner 'We are behind you, Slobo.'[80] The event was

frequently used by both sides of the war to prescribe a largely pro-Serb identity upon the Roma. As I

have shown, however, this identification was neither correct nor allowed the Roma safety from abuses

resulting from the actions of Serbian forces. There are a number of accounts of Roma being taken to

labour camps by the Serbian forces. These camps came under close scrutiny during the Balkan Roma

Conference on Peace and Security, held between June 18th and 19th 1999 in Sofia. This conference

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[77] Quoted in Meaker 2017, for Al Jazeera.
[78] Jacqueline Bhabha, *Post War Kosovo and its Policies Towards the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2014), p.9.
[79] Bhabha 2014, p.9.
[80] Cahn and Peric, ERRC

brought together Romani representatives from Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Yugoslavia, Greece, Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia. One of the primary issues raised here was that due to the Roma being considered a non-territorial minority, they suffered discrimination from both the Serbian and the Albanian sides. Both viewed the Roma as not their own, and therefore the enemy. The participants pointed to the forced labour camps as an example of Roma abuse. When Serbian authorities rounded up Roma to be sent to labour camps there was no segregation between Albanian Kosovar Roma and Serbian Roma, resulting in them occupying the same camps. As a result, the Roma interred within were subject to discrimination and prejudice from both the guards present and their fellow inmates. I point to this example not only to demonstrate the treatment of Roma by Serbian forces, but also to show their treatment by other Roma. This was also the case in refugee camps set up across the Balkans in response to the war. One such example took place in the infamous Stankovic camp in Macedonia, wherein Albanian refugees attacked a Roma family on June 5th 1999, savagely beating a 7 year old boy until he was rescued by Catholic aid workers. The boy's family had been accused of collaborating with the Serbian armed forces.[81]

5.2: The Refugees

This brings me to the second group of Roma, the Roma refugees. Just as the treatment of the Kosovo Roma during the war reveals a great deal about the political identity of the Roma, so too does the treatment of the Roma refugees in camps. My earlier examinations of national policies directed at the Roma showed a tendency for the creating of short-term, rapid-fire aid responses, and then leaving them until their situation reaches a critical level, and then repeating this process. A good example of this can be found during the Kosovo war, when the United Nations set up three refugee camps in the Mitrovica region named Cesmin Lug, Kablar and Zitovac. While these camps were only temporary, the lack of on site management led to many Roma families still living there up until 2005. By this point, the camps had become so degraded that the WHO insisted on 'immediate evacuation of the children, removal of the camps and immediate treatment [for] high levels of lead in their blood

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[81] Suzana Sudar, 'Serbia: Roma Under Attack,' *BCR Global Voices*, 323 (March 2002),Institute for War and Peace Reporting, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/serbia-roma-under-attack (Accessed 13/08/18)

streams, causing stunted growth, mental retardation and paralysis.'[82] It is worth noting that even after these families were moved they continued to suffer health problems, as the French military camp they were moved to was in little better condition.

The situation was little better for those Roma refugees that attempted to settle outside of the camps. I have already covered some of the difficulties of the 'invisible' Roma, those who have been unable to register themselves with the Serbian system as citizens, often from childbirth. These same problems face the Roma who migrated during and after the Kosovo War, as well as others. The United Nations Development Program puts the number of Roma who fled Kosovo to Serbia up to 80,000.[83] The Serbian Constitution dictates that 'everyone has the right to move freely and settle in the Republic of Serbia,' and this right stands for Roma as long as there is no legal reason (criminality or disease) to stop them. However, in order to register as a resident in Serbia, and thus gain citizenship, one must provide proof of legal residence. If a Roma refugee lives in a community settlement, then they are unable to resister within the country and remain invisible. The Roma refugee must either own the residence, or if the residence is rented then they must have a lease contract.[14] However, landlords usually prefer to rent the flat without a contract as it allows for the avoidance of tax. This informal practice means that even if a landlord was willing to allow a Roma refugee to rent a flat, the very nature of the rental system might well prohibit them from gaining a residence permit. This is indicative of the same issues regarding systematic incompatibility of Roma in Serbia that I discussed in my chapter on healthcare in Serbia, but it must be noted that although the systematic obstacles are similar, the need for quick and effective induction into the Serbian system of housing and healthcare was far more pressing for the Kosovo Roma due to the persecution they had already suffered.

On July 14th, the US Secretary of State Madeline Albright received a letter from the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) asking her 'what measures the

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[82] Olivia Ward, 'Poisoned Children,' *Toronto Star* (November 13, 2005), p.A12.

[83] T. Perić, 'At Risk: the social vulnerability of Roma, refugees and internally displaced persons in Serbia,' United Nations Development Program Serbia, 2006, p.15.

Department is seeking to ensure [Roma] safety during this period of refugee settlement.'[84] Not only was very little, if anything, being done for the Roma during the war, but the situation only degraded post war, culminating in the surge of anti-minority violence that took place in early 2004. On May 18th, the Kosovar Ombudsperson released a statement to all countries that had taken in Roma refugees (as well as those of Ashakli and Arab descent, stating that they should not return to Kosovo as it would pose 'considerable risks to their personal safety.'[85]

5.3: The Returnees

However, despite these warnings, and continued violence in the region, many Roma refugees returned to Kosovo after the war, bringing us to the final group of Roma I will examine, the returnees. Deutsche Welle reported that 'about 2,500 Kosovars have been returned since a bilateral treaty between Germany and Kosovo was signed in 2010. Most of these did not leave voluntarily.'[86] Human Rights Watch put the figure of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian refugees that have been relocated back to Kosovo since 1999 at 51,000.[87] This means that Roma children who had been born in Kosovo, but had the first 10 years of their lives in Germany, could be legally forced to go back to Kosovo as result of the bilateral treaty. This forced repatriation can lead to an intense difficulty with identity. Many of the children sent back to Kosovo to live in the Roma camps from Germany only speak German, but when they are relocated find that tuition is only available in the language of the area. Tuition for older children take their lessons in the northern part of Mitrovica and in Serbian, while tuition for younger students is only available in the southern part of Mitrovica in Albanian. One need only look at the events I earlier outlined in the refugee camps and labour camps, where Albanian and Serbian Roma were forced to cohabitate, to see that the situation created as a result of the poor international management of the Roma community in Kosovo is primed to reproduce the political tensions of the

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[84] D. Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, (London Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.272
[85] Crowe 2007, p.273.
[86] Bahri Cani, 'Deported Roma Face Tough Times in Kosovo,' *Deutsche Welle,* 30 March 2013, https://www.dw.com/en/deported-roma-face-tough-times-in-kosovo/a-16710238 (Accessed 04/04/18)
[87] Anon,. 'Rights Displaced: Forced Returns of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians from Western Europe to Kosovo,' Human Rights Watch, October 2010, p.7. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/kosovo1010webwcover_1.pdf (Accessed 04/04/18)

past. This is not to say that the Roma are inherently prone to political violence, but rather to note that placing two disparate political groups in the poor conditions with little oversight on the basis of a perceived shared ethnicity is a poor choice in the quest to improve political stability within a recently war-torn country.

The treatment of Kosovo Roma in a post war context with regards to their physical wellbeing is only one facet of ensuring that their persecution is rectified, but equal attention must be given to how transitional justice was handled after the Kosovo War with regards to the Roma. It is not enough to look at their situation in the present, but ensure equal value is placed on their experiences during the war, and seek justice for these experiences. However, this process is hampered by the same issue of a lack of Roma presence in the justice proceedings as we saw in the Decade Project or the Dosta! Campaign. As Mensur Haliti of the Open Society foundation writes, 'if you have no Roma voices in any of the structures that will be collecting evidence and protecting witnesses, then there will be no justice for Roma.'[88]

I would posit two causes for this. Firstly, the general populace simply does not care about human rights violations against the Roma. In Romania, estimates of the Roma population reach nearly 10% of the overall population (as high as 2.5m), making it the largest diaspora population of Roma as a percentage of population out of any of the Balkan countries. However, up to 57% of people in the country believe it is acceptable to exclude the Roma to some degree.[89] Media advocacy is key in improving minority rights, but if there is little audience for this advocacy than it will be unheard, and finances of NGOs would be better spent in direct litigation of human rights abuses. In this, we see the second problem, that of legal illiteracy in the Roma population. 89% of Romanian Roma did not know of a single institution where they would get legal help with discrimination.

However, the situation in Kosovo is still tense, and so a dedicated effort to bring the Roma into the discussion would take a great deal of political will, which has often been lacking in seeking justice even for non-Roma Kosovars. This takes a very real form in the dangers that witnesses and

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[88] Quoted in Meaker 2017, for Al Jazeera.
[89] Abdikeeva 2013, p.848

defendants of these cases face. There have been repeated failures by justice systems to protect those willing to testify in war crimes cases. Many have been disappeared before they were able to testify, or it is presumed that their testimonies were changed under duress. The Roma are some of the least protected and most disenfranchised inhabitants within any political context, and one can only assume that the level of physical protection that they would be given in order to testify in these cases would simply not be sufficient. I have already shown earlier in this research that a systematic incompatibility with national systems hampers the ability of Roma to take part in them, as well as a ignorance on the part of the Roma as to what systems of help are available to them, but here we also see a clear example of a state being unable or unwilling to provide the potential protection needed to support a bid for Roma justice in Kosovo. Mirjan Karoly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe said in interview that when she spoke to 'the people who wanted to engage in transitional justice in Kosovo in 2008, the Roma were not an issue at all. The interest was limited.'[90] A lack of political will combined with insufficient funding and capabilities to protect those required to enact transitional justice in Kosovo has meant that abuses against the Roma have gone entirely unresolved.

5.4: Justice

However, against the inherent difficulties of seeking justice for a minority group in a volatile political situation, I argue that the status of the Roma could well be beneficial for seeking transitional justice and prosecuting perpetrators of rights abuses. The liminal identity status of the Kosovo Roma that I demonstrated earlier means that they cannot be either fully associated with the Serbian nor Albanian sides of the war. Therefore, a prosecution for crimes might be less likely to be seen as either a victory for the Albanians or the Serbians, but more of a neutral outcome. To support this view, I draw on the statements made in the declaration of Roma delegates in 1999, addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Chair of the European Commission among others:

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[90] Quoted in Meaker 2017, for Al Jazeera.

Roma people in the Balkans have a centuries-long experience of living in multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, multi-linguistic local communities. They could be valuable promoters of peace in Kosovo and the Balkans

Within this statement, we see the greatest potential for the elevation of the Roma community not only within the context of Kosovo, but within many of the political or geographical contexts that I have engaged with during this research. The statement acknowledges the inherent difficulties in a non-homogenous ethnic group fraught with internal and external discrepancies with regards to politics and culture. However, this breadth, and the presence of this group within and throughout Eastern Europe, one that is able to adapt and survive within a broad range of contexts, invites the potential for international cooperation and permeation of borders to cultural exchange that has been operated by the Roma for centuries.

6.0: Conclusion

When researching the Roma in Europe, it often feels as though in the attempt to answer any one question relating to them three more become apparent. Perhaps this is why attempts to integrate the Roma in Europe have become so fragmented, and differ so greatly, even when unified under the common banner of an international project like the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Along every step of the way, from the definition of the Roma as a group to the meaning of integration, there is no necessarily correct answer. Indeed, even the very markers of success that these integrative projects are supposed to be measured by often come under question. However, despite this difficulty it is imperative that any approach made towards increasing Roma rights does not stray too close to an image of them that is too chaotic or places too great an emphasis on their difference and incompatibility. Roma have, after all, existed within, around, and through European societies for a great deal longer than most of those same societies that reject them have existed.

What I have demonstrated through this research is that not one of the integrative strategies through history, even those that have succeeded in raising the relative economic, social or cultural status of the Roma, have been without flaws. This comes as no surprise, all evidence points towards the Roma still suffering great injustice within Europe, but I have also shown the dangers of failed integration beyond simply a lack of advancement of wellbeing markers. Policies that attempt, and fail, to integrate the Roma have the potential to further fragment them as a political group or incite nationalistic backlash against them from the general populace or simply contribute to the creation of an image that is increasingly more chaotic and incompatible with the rest of society. If there is the degree of political will and funding as we saw in the initial Roma conference in Hungary in 2003, but 15 years later little has changed, it creates the potential for a degree of both victim-blaming and pessimism towards the Roma. This is why the Roma 2020 project, still in its infancy, must be treated

with such caution. The leaders of this project will reside in Belgrade, and therefore the heavy mantle of not only looking to the future of the Roma but learning from the repeated mistakes across Europe and through history must fall there.

Achebe comments that 'Africa is to Europe as the picture is to Dorian Gray.'[18] I have always found this image to be one of the most powerful metaphors of European-African political relations, and if I may be permitted I would transpose it to the current matter by adapting it to 'the Roma are to Europe as the picture is to Dorian Gray.' Europe has created, and continues to create and redefine, an image of the Roma that is imbued with a great many potent and dangerous symbols and shreds of language. They might be wild, they might be chaotic, subversive or indefinable. We imbue the image with these characteristics because they exist outside of traditional visions of nationhood, and seemingly reject notions of domicile, modern economic models and static identity. However, they exist uncomfortably close to us, as part of our nations, and we are therefore unable to entirely separate the imagine of our nations from them. Like Gray, we will paint this picture but dare not look too close at it, as a close examination of the Roma and the culture might well subvert and destroy fundamental concepts of nationhood, those of rigid borders and modular national identity. Perhaps Europe, especially with the rising tide of nationalism and discontent, would do better if integrative projects were not designed at bringing the Roma into the fold, but rather extending and widening our own societies and definitions of nationhood to allow for their existence within them.

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