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Transnational Advocacy Networks: The Case of Roma Mobilization in Macedonia and Serbia

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Contents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to ascertain and explain the effectiveness of Roma political activism in contesting state oppression in Macedonia and Serbia. More specifically, this thesis seeks to investigate the divergent treatment of Roma communities in the respective states by analyzing the role of state institutions, civil society, political parties and international organizations. The thesis seeks to provide a multi-level analysis of Roma mobilization in Macedonia and Serbia by addressing the domestic and international factors that influence Roma political activism, and relies on two main theoretical concepts within the social movement literature: the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) model and 'transnational advocacy networks.'

The POS model is a comprehensive framework to assess if Roma political activism has been effective in Macedonia and Serbia. This study uses the following components to describe the domestic factors that may facilitate or constrain Romani activism in the respective states: state repression and/or facilitation, institutional access, influential domestic and international allies. This thesis attempts to provide a detailed analysis of movement dynamics by taking into account the inter-relationship between actors and contesting groups. The limitations of the domestic opportunity structure regarding Roma advocacy in Macedonia and Serbia are outlined by describing the political context concerning minority inclusion, institutional mechanisms, and NGO/political party activities.

As domestic opportunity structures are 'closed,' Roma activists and NGOs seek international allies to influence and change domestic policy on Roma inclusion. This study, while recognizing the importance of other international initiatives, specifically focuses on various institutions of the European Union as the main international actor influencing Roma inclusion policies in Eastern Europe. The thesis outlines the main EU initiatives on Roma inclusion to provide an overview of the opportunities and challenges in the international arena. Furthermore, it analyzes the interaction between international and civil society organizations assessing the effectiveness of the 'transnational advocacy

networks.' Finally, the thesis provides a comparative analysis of Roma political activism in Macedonia and Serbia, indicating coordinated action has not been successful.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is entirely my own work, and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CoE	Council of Europe
CPRSI	Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues
DOS	Democratic Opposition of Serbia
DS	Democratic Party
DSS	Democratic Party of Serbia
EU	European Union
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ERIO	European Roma Information Office
ERPC	European Roma Policy Coalition
ERTF	European Roma and Travellers Forum
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
ESF	European Structural Fund
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
HCNM	High Commissioner for National Minorities
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRU	International Romani Union
MG-S-ROM	Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OSI	Open Society Institute
RAE	Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian
RED	Race Equality Directive
REF	Roma Education Fund
RNC	Roma National Congress
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SEE	Southeast Europe
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
VMRO-DPMNE	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity

Chapter 1

Roma Identity, Marginalization and Exclusion

1.1 Introduction

The Roma are perhaps the most marginalized, disadvantaged, and persecuted group among the world's ethnic communities, and are, often the targets of discrimination in the areas of employment, health, education and housing. Across Europe, anti-Gypsyism is prevalent, and racism toward Roma has gained currency as a legitimate belief. Throughout history, Roma have been subjected to official policies of extermination (most directly during the Holocaust), assimilation, forced resettlement, and the sterilization of women. As a result of extensive discrimination and persecution over the centuries, many Roma communities remain isolated and impoverished, not gaining socio-economic equality within their societies. In contradiction to the belief that Roma are social deviants; morally and ethnically disreputable, involved in criminal activities, and taking advantage of social benefits, Roma activists and leaders have attempted to mobilize and improve the situation of their community since the early twentieth century. Romani political leaders sought inclusion in national parliaments (predominately in Central and Eastern Europe) and IGOs, such as the League of Nations.[1]

In the 1960s, goals of Roma activists were the formation of a Romani state, Holocaust reparations, and international recognition of the community. The aims of improving living conditions, and promoting the Roma cultural identity, while recognized as priorities, remained secondary to nationalist aspirations. Mobilization efforts eventually led to the formation of the First World Romani Congress in April 1971, including participants worldwide. At this time, efforts of activists also led to the development of the first transnational Romani organization - the International Romani Union (IRU).[2] By

[1] Klimova-Alexander, Ilona. *The Romani Voice in World Politics: The United Nations and Non-State Actors*. (England: Ashgate Publishing, 2005) pp. 14-15

[2] Ibid, p. 17 Subsequent IRU meetings occurred in Geneva (1978), Goettingen (1981), Warsaw (1990), and Prague (2000).

the 1970s, a significant change occurred as the idea of an autonomous Romani nation was marginalized, with very few Romani activists promoting the nationalist cause. Transnational links fostered the development of local and national Romani organizations in Western Europe (as Romani activism was generally prohibited in Communist countries). The proliferation of Roma organizations in Eastern Europe occurred only after 1989. The IRU was a preliminary attempt to create a permanent Romani umbrella organization, but has not been very effective due to limited financial resources and personnel. The organization generally remains inactive between World Congress meetings, only infrequently lobbying various governments and international organizations. In the mid-1980s, Rudko Kawczinsky separated from the IRU, openly challenging the leadership at the IVth International Roma Congress in 1990. In the same year, Kawczinsky established the Roma National Congress (RNC) promoting a 'radical politics' (sit-ins, street protests). The separation of the RNC instigated political conflict within the IRU, and various realignments among the national organizations, resulting in numerous political reforms and renewal within the organization.[3] However, the IRU is the dominant organization that promotes the idea of a Romani nation, the Roma flag and anthem, and national day (8 April) adopted by the Congress in 1971.[4]

It is only quite recently that international organizations such as the European Union (EU) have recognized Roma inclusion as an issue of humanitarian concern and political significance. In 2007, the European Council, as the foremost political institution of the EU, addressed the situation of Roma communities. In 2008 a Roma Summit was organized by the European Commission as the first high-level conference focusing on Roma issues. The Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005 – 2015), an initiative with the support of many international institutions, such as the World Bank, United Nations, and Council of Europe, specifically focused on improving the situation of Roma

[3] "The Decade of Roma Rights: Interview with Nicolae Gheorghe." *Roma Rights 2-3*, (ERRC: November, 2006)
[4] Klimova-Alexander, I, op.cit., pp. 15-18

communities in Eastern Europe.[5] In addition, many international NGOs have documented the extensive discrimination and racial violence towards the Roma community in Europe, playing an integral role in bringing attention to serious human rights violations.[6]

There has also been a burgeoning of academic literature on Roma issues. Earlier scholarly work focused on an anthropological understanding of 'Gypsy' communities, predominately examining cultural traditions, identity, and socialization patterns.[7] Few authors, however, have analyzed the political activism and mobilization of the Roma community within Central and Eastern Europe.[8] This study is also unique in its case study selection; few researchers have studied Romani mobilization in Macedonia and specifically, Serbia (although encompassing one of the largest Roma populations in the former Yugoslavia) remains under-examined. This thesis seeks to provide an addition to the literature on Roma studies, as well as the work on ethnic mobilization, minority rights and social movements. The thesis draws on both sociological and political academic disciplines to present a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

Although this study has adopted a dominant theoretical approach, the political opportunity structure model (POS), to understanding Roma political activism in Macedonia and Serbia, it attempts to provide a multi-level analysis by examining international advocacy efforts, utilizing the literature on transnational networks and norm socialization.

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[5] Decade countries include: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain. See romadecade.org for further information

[6] See for instance reports by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Amnesty International

[7] See Okely, J. *The Traveller-Gypsies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), C. Silverman. "Negotiating Gypsiness: Strategy in Context." *The Journal of American Folklore*. 101.401 (Jul – Sep 1988), Acton, T. and G. Mundy (eds.) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity* (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997).

[8]See for instance, Vermeersch, P. *The Romani Movement: Minority Politics and Ethnic Mobilization in Contemporary Central Europe*. (Berghahn Books: Oxford, 2006), Barany, Z. *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Friedman, E. "Political Integration of the Romani Minority in Post-Communist Macedonia," in *Southeast European Politics.* (Nov 2002)

1.2 Research Question

The purpose of this study is to ascertain and explain the effectiveness of Roma political activism in contesting state oppression in Macedonia and Serbia. It seeks to investigate the divergent treatment of Roma communities in the respective states by analyzing the role of state institutions, civil society, political parties and international organizations. There are two hypotheses underlying this study that will be investigated: i) Roma mobilization is likely to succeed when the domestic political opportunity structure is favourable ii) A 'closed' domestic political opportunity structure shifts the focus of Roma activism to the international level. The main research question this thesis seeks to address is how effective are Roma political activists in contesting state oppression in Macedonia and Serbia?

Additional questions addressed in this study include:

- Has the political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia facilitated or constrained Roma advocacy?
- Do institutional mechanisms exist at the domestic level to promote Roma inclusion?
- Are Roma political parties and civil society actors coordinated in their actions to promote Roma issues?

Regarding the transnational sphere, the following questions are of relevance:

- How has the internationalization of Roma advocacy affected movement activity?
- What instruments are available to international institutions to guarantee state compliance on international obligations and are they effective?
- How do international institutions and social movement actors (transnational advocacy networks) seek to influence and change Roma-related policy in Macedonia and Serbia?

1.3 Roma Mobilization: Domestic and International Theoretical Approaches

The thesis seeks to provide a multi-level analysis of Roma mobilization in Macedonia and Serbia. To address the domestic and international factors that influence Roma political activism, the study relies on two main theoretical perspectives within the social movement literature: the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) model and 'transnational advocacy networks.' The POS model provides a comprehensive framework to understanding how marginalized communities can challenge political institutions. The following components will be used to assess if Roma political activism has been effective: state repression and/or facilitation, institutional access, influential domestic and international allies. While discussing structural conditions at the macro level, previous studies have not accounted for the inter-relation between components.[9] This thesis attempts to provide a more detailed analysis of movement dynamics by taking into account the inter-relationship between actors and contesting groups.[10]

International institutions since the 1990s have demonstrated an increasing interest in Roma inclusion, specifically in Eastern Europe. It is thus necessary to account for the conditions at the international level that may facilitate or constrain Roma activism. This study, while recognizing the importance of other international initiatives,[11] specifically focuses on various institutions of the European Union as the main international actor influencing Roma inclusion policies in Eastern Europe. Transnational advocacy scholars have analyzed how domestic activists may circumvent the state to build alliances with

[9]See C. Tilly. *From Mobilization to Revolution.* (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1978). D. McAdam. "The Political Process Model," in *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970.* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982). S. Tarrow. *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[10] See J. Goldstone. "More Social Movements or Fewer? Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields." *Theory and Society*. 33.4 (2004)

[11] See for example, initiatives by the Open Society Institute (OSI), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), National Democratic Institute (NDI)

international allies to influence domestic governments.[12] International allies are especially important in 'closed regimes' such as Macedonia and Serbia that suppress domestic activism. This thesis also integrates literature on norm socialization to analyze how domestic governments may be influenced by international actors.[13] The processes of instrumental adaption, argumentation, rhetorical entrapment and action are examined to illustrate international and domestic negotiation on Roma inclusion.

1.4 Who are the Roma?

As stated by well known activist and international civil servant Andrzej Mirga, "you may not know who we are, but we do." [14] This statement conveys the sentiment that anyone who thinks of themselves as Roma can be defined as such, without the specific demarcations that generally indicate 'belonging' to an ethnic group or nation-state. As will be argued in the following chapter, defining a Roma identity has often been an external imposition by state authorities and international institutions seeking to control the population. Ethnic categories and state mechanisms such as the census allow for 'the exercise of racial governmentality ... to fashion racialized knowledge," emphasizing the differences among social groups.[15] The 'ambiguous' Roma identity essentially contradicts dominant Western modes of political organization. It is not the purpose of this thesis to provide a historical account of the Roma people. However, a brief note is necessary to provide some background knowledge of the community. In attempting to provide some definition of a Roma identity, Vermeersch offers the following overview: "a historical diaspora (with origins in the Punjab region and common patterns of migration from this region to Europe and other continents), a group characterized by a typical culture and lifestyle (common cultural practices such as elements of religion,

[12] M. Keck and K. Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998)
[13] T. Risse and K. Sikkink. "The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: introduction," in eds. T. Risse, S. Ropp, and K. Sikkink *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. (Cambridge University Press, 1999)
[14] Andrejz Mirga in Stewart, M. "Introduction," in *Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Romany Studies*. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010) pp. 1-12
[15]Brubaker, R., Loveman, M., and Stamatov, P. "Ethnicity as Cognition." *Theory and Society*. 33 (2004), p. 34

habits, rules of cleanliness, musical traditions and interpretations of the world through the lenses of Romipen – Romani values), and a biological kinship, group or race."[16] It is important to note, however, that Roma, like other ethnic groups do not have a monolithic identity. There are many linguistic and cultural differences within the Roma community. Factors such as geographic location, educational level, and economic status also impact internal self-identification and relations with others. According to an Ethnobarometer study, Roma individuals identified the following attributes as 'defining' their identity: "a feeling passed on by parents, others' identification/reaction, participation in a variety of common rituals and customs, cultural values, and speaking a dialect of Romani."[17]

Many academics and activists trace the origins of the Roma people from 9-14th century India. Generally, the community is referred to as a 'non-territorial nation,' geographically dispersed with a population ranging from 12-15 million.[18] In Western Europe, Roma are derogatively assigned the label 'gypsy,' or alternatively, in the CEE region referred to as 'tsiganes,' 'gitano,' 'Zingari,' etc. The term 'Roma' encapsulates various social groups, such as the Manush, Rudari, Ludari, Lingurari, Boyash, Beash, Banyash, Kale/Kaale, and Romanichal found in numerous countries.[19] While the term 'Roma' is widely used among academic and political elites, it is not always recognized as a form of identification among communities in Eastern Europe.

1.5 Inter-group Dynamics

Many Roma communities in Eastern Europe are isolated from central areas and inhabit segregated spaces that inhibit communication with other social groups. This accordingly promotes the construction of constricted boundaries and 'ethnic localism.'[20] Historically, and in contemporary Macedonian and Serbian society, Roma communities have at times

[16] See Vermeersch in Klimova-Alexander, I. op.cit., p. 13
[17] See Memedova, A., Plaut, S., Boscoboinik, A., Giordano, C., "Roma Identities in Southeast Europe: Macedonia." *Ethnobarometer*, (Rome: Utta Wickert-Sili, 2005), p. 37
[18] Project on Ethnic Relations (PER)"Roma and the Question of Self-Determination: Fiction and Reality" (Princeton, 2003)
[19] Klimova-Alexander, I. op.cit., p. 30
[20]Wimmer, A. "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory." *American Journal of Sociology*. 13 (4): Jan 2008, p. 975

maintained a distance from the 'Gadje' (non-Roma) society that is often characterized as morally and ethically corrupt. There is much suspicion and caution among the Roma in relation to 'outsiders' who at times are seen as threatening, especially as many Gadje are representative of authority figures (police, social workers, teachers) that can inflict harm or 'negatively' influence community values.[21]

Another factor determining Roma self-identification was the perception of discrimination based on ethnicity – which all respondents in the Ethnobarometer Study had experienced. In attempting to participate in Macedonian and Serbian societies, at times, Roma have also adopted alternative public ethnic identities; disassociating from negative group stigma. Wimmer refers to this process as 'repositioning.'[22] The hierarchical order is not contested, rather the individual and less often the entire ethnic category, seek to change their status within the boundary system.[23] Alternatively, a strategy of repositioning is 'passing;' reconstructing one's identity to fit the dominant social category. For example, some interviewees in Macedonia and Serbia described having knowledge of light-skinned professional Roma 'passing,' for fear of disrepute within their community; effectively making their 'Gypsyness' disappear.[24] Thus, "the construction of skin colour becomes an alternative formulation of the difference between Gypsy and non-Gypsy. In these cases, the tone of skin is the mark of the uncontestability, the reinforcement, and the permanent presence of colour."[25]

[21] Correspondence with Enisa Eminovska, Roma activist, Skopje, Macedonia, February, 2009
[22] Wimmer, A. op.cit., p. 988
[23] Ibid, p. 988
[24] Interview with Vitomir Mihaljovic, Member of Parliament Democratic Party (DS) and President of the National Council for Roma, Belgrade, Serbia, June 6, 2009 and Nadja Kocic, Roma Education Fund, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009
[25] Horvath, K. "Passing: Rebeka and the Gay Pride. On the Discursive Boundaries and Possibilities of Skin Colour." *Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Romany Studies*. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 127 In an evocative article, Horvath demonstrates how the skin colour of Roma individuals is articulated through their sexuality, by providing a narrative of a young Roma girl whose beauty is 'exotic' within the context of participating in a Hungarian gay pride parade, yet she contests the often negative characterizations of her 'darkness' on the Roma settlement. The author also describes a relationship between a non-Roma man and Romani woman, not accepted by his family because skin colour marked her identity and difference; 'passing' was inconceivable.

As noted by Nadja Kocic, Roma Education Fund (REF) representative in Serbia, one strategy to contest anti-Gypsyism is for professional Roma and the younger generation to assert and be proud of their identity. She states,

"hopefully in five or six years time we will have this Roma intellectual elite who will probably make a change. Some of them will remain Roma -- some of them will not -- but, I think most of them will. There are some changes regarding this Roma ethnic identity. You can meet many young Roma people who are not ashamed to be saying that they are Roma, which is an excellent difference from ten - fifteen years ago. And, I think that it is the influence of these huge Roma and pro-Romani civil society organizations. It would be good if this remains -- not only in Serbia, but also in Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia, and Macedonia. That is something new. It was already happening in Bulgaria and Turkey twenty years ago. But, that is something totally new for here."[26]

1.6 Dominant Group Perceptions of Roma

Anti-Gypsyism as a definition is not widely recognized; Nicolae attempts to define it as

"a very specific form of racism, an ideology of racial superiority, a form of dehumanization and of institutionalized racism. It is fuelled by historical discrimination and the struggle to maintain power relations that permit advantages to majority groups. It is based, on the one hand, on imagined fears, negative stereotypes, and myths, and, on the other, on denial or erasure from the public conscience of a long history of discrimination against the Roma. Prejudices against Roma clearly go beyond racist stereotyping that associates them with negative traits and behaviours. Dehumanization is its central point."[27]

The dehumanization of Roma can be viewed as a 'legitimating myth' that reinforces social group hierarchies, validates abusive behaviour toward the community and goes beyond racial categorization and negative stereotypes.[28] As Roma are defined as less than human, human rights are not an entitlement for the minority. The belief that Roma are inferior to Europeans is not only shared by Europeans, but, perhaps more importantly, anti-Roma sentiment is shared by Roma.[29] The more successful the dominant group is in promoting self-derogatory ideology within the subordinate social

[26] Interview with Nadja Kocic, Roma Education Fund, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009

[27] Nicolae, V."Towards a Definition of Anti-Gypsyism," in eds. V. Nicolae and H. Slavik. *Roma Diplomacy* (New York: International Debate Education Association) p. 27

[28]Legitimating myths "consist of attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for the social practices that distribute social value within the social system."[28] See Sidanius, J. and Pratto F. *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 45

[29] Nicolae, V. op.cit., p. 24

group, the more intact the social hierarchy.[30] Perceptions of the Roma community in many Eastern European countries illustrate what Barth refers to as a 'pariah group.' The Roma identity "imposed a definition on social situations which gave very little scope for interaction with persons in the majority population and simultaneously as an imperative status represented an inescapable disability that prevented them from assuming the normal statuses involved in other definitions of the situation of interaction."[31] Historically and presently, the Roma identity has been characterized in multiple ways; romanticized in fiction and television, 'admired' for their fortune telling and musical abilities.[32] A recent statement by the Romanian prime minister (2007) depicts the racism and sexism that exist among members of the elite and general society.[33] Comments by French President Sarkozy (2010) concerning settlement evictions and violent racial incidents were presented as "related to the behaviour of certain Roma and Travellers in France."[34]

Although there is constant interaction between Roma and non-Roma in Macedonia and Serbia, both groups are led to believe they live in parallel spheres. Roma in post-socialist states are generally 'ignored;' unless constructed as a 'problem' to mainstream communities. This is changing however, as there is greater interest and involvement by international organizations. Rather than perceiving Roma to be a 'threat,' to the state or society, there is aversion on a personal level; characterizing Roma as 'lazy,' 'dishonest'

[30] Sidanius, J. and Pratto, F., op.cit., p. 47

[31] Barth, F. "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference.* ed. Fredrik Barth. (Bergen: Univertsitetsforlaget, 1969) p. 31

[32] Mattis Van De Port provides an excellent analysis of how 'Gypsy' Musicians are believed to touch the innermost being of non-Gypsy customers in Novi Sad, Serbia; despite everyday animosity toward the Roma community. Van de Port, M. "The Articulation of Soul: Gypsy Musicians and the Serbian Other." *Popular Music*. 18.3 (Oct 1999): 291 – 308.

[33] On May 19, 2007, Mr. Traian Basescu, President of Romania, addressed journalist Andreea Pana as: "You, pussy, don't you have anything to do today?" and then said about her in private: "How aggressive that stinky Gypsy was." Subsequently, Mr. Basescu apologized to Andreea Pana for an "underserved moral prejudice" commenting that "the used phrasing doesn't represent in any way the President's attitude towards the Roma community in our country." According to the President's press release, Mr. Basescu doesn't regret what he said, but that "an inappropriate expression has become public" The president didn't see any relation between him saying 'Gypsy' and the Roma community - it was just an expression "used under a state of maximum political and media pressure." (Enisa Eminovska, Source: http://www.petitionspot.com/petitions/romawomen)

[34] "France President Urged Not to Stigmatize Roma and Travellers." Amnesty International, July 23, 2010. Accessible: amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/

and 'uneducated.'[35] A respondent to the question of Roma/non-Roma relations in Macedonia explained:

"*Roma, all the time, were with the Macedonians. Roma are voting for Macedonians and they are closer with Macedonians then they are with, for example, Albanians. Macedonians in some ways love Roma because they are good people, peaceful people and loyal people. But, should we be proper? A Macedonian person could not stand to see a Roma person as better than them, to know more than he/she does, to be more worthy, to be in a better position than he or she is ... A Macedonian loves you only if you are under them. Because he knows that in this way you are going to serve them in a certain manner.*"[36]

1.7 What are they advocating for?

The aims and objectives of Roma political activism are two-fold: One is to alleviate poverty in Roma communities by improving housing, accessibility to health care and education, as well as providing employment opportunities. Many activists have therefore focused on civil registration activities to ensure that Roma have the necessary documents to access state services such as birth certificates, identity documents and health insurance.[37] On the other hand, Roma seek public and political participation in their societies through representation in national parliaments, government institutions, and decision making bodies. Often Roma cannot make free and informed choices in elections due to undemocratic practices by mainstream political parties. In many CEE countries, Roma also seek to promote awareness among law enforcement institutions to prevent excessive use of force and respect for human rights. It is also of consequence, as many NGO and international organization reports have emphasized, that the precarious, position of Romani women is addressed.[38] Overall, one of the main priorities of the

[35] Memedova, A. Plaut, S. Boscoboinik, A. Giordano, C., op.cit., p. 34
[36] E. From Bitola (interviewee), in Memedova, A. Plaut, S. Boscoboinik, A. Giordano, C. p. 45
[37] Muller, S. "Background Paper: Regional Conference on Civil Registration of Roma in Southeastern Europe." (Budapest: November, 2005) 21pp.
[38] See Council of Europe, Dosta! Campaign "*Roma women urge European governments to respect their human rights*." December, 2010 available: dosta.org, See also European Roma Rights Report (ERRC) Romani Women's Rights Movement 4 (2006) available: errc.org/en-research-and-advocacy-roma

movement is to combat racism and discrimination which impacts the subordination of Roma in all spheres of interest.[39]

1.8 Roma in the Post-Yugoslav Context

The nation building process in the former Yugoslavia was not conducive to minority integration, despite the rhetoric of 'brotherhood and unity.' A unique hierarchical structure based on ethno-nationality recognized the differences among 'nations,' 'nationalities,' and smaller 'ethnic communities,' signifying the inclusive/exclusive character of Yugoslav identity. Roma defined as an 'ethnic community,' were effectively at the bottom of the national hierarchy.[40] These categorizations have subsequently determined, and negatively impacted contemporary inter-ethnic relations in the former Yugoslav republics.

In analyzing the position of Roma in the former Yugoslavia, it is also important to note how labour relations impacted the construction of Roma as a 'subservient class.' This was most readily apparent in the Romanian principalities where Roma were effectively 'slaves' and 'important resources to be used and exploited' until the mid-nineteenth century. The variations in state policy toward Roma were determined by structural conditions affecting labour usage. Thus, capitalist developments in the West led to the expulsion of Roma, who were regarded as 'unproductive nomads.' Comparatively, in Eastern Europe, attempts were made to 'settle' the Roma population, in order to most effectively make use of their labour. Although Romani labour was essential in CEE economies, discrimination and segregation perpetuated and maintained their subordinate position. Mirga and Gheorghe have argued that it was the social identity of Roma at the

[39] The above priorities and goals of Roma political activism were adapted from the *OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*. available: osce.org/odihr/17554

[40] Adamson, K. and Jovic, D. "The Macedonian-Albanian Political Frontier: the re-articulation of post-Yugoslav Identities."*Nations and Nationalism* 10 (3), 2004

lowest stratum of the labour force and not their ethnicity that defined their marginalization in the former CEE region.[41]

During the communist period, Roma benefitted from the restructuring of CEE economies, influenced by Soviet-style command economies; rapid industrialization required a large unskilled work force. Roma now had the capability of earning similar wages to other citizens, and few also took advantage of obtaining educational qualifications; later forming part of the small, yet influential group of intellectuals, leaders and activists in Eastern Europe. Although Roma achieved limited integration during this period, socialist ideologies prescribing the abandonment of ethnic identities, and the specific perception of Roma culture as a 'relic from the past,' forced many attempting to transcend their marginal position, to hide their identity. Socialist policies promoting assimilation further compounded feelings of inferiority and self-derogation.[42]

The Roma in the post-Yugoslav context are in a further disadvantaged position, as democratization and the transition to a market based economy have exacerbated socio-economic inequalities**.** Since the end of the socialist period, the role of the state has changed dramatically in Eastern Europe. The 'Charter of Paris for a New Europe' adopted in 1990 encompasses Europe's new liberal democratic order that respects minority rights and economic freedom. The Charter however, conceives of human rights as an extremely ambiguous and flexible principle. Civil and political rights pertain to every individual, but the document asserts that all individuals have the right "to *enjoy* economic, social and cultural rights."[43] Social and economic rights according to the Charter are not universal, but dependent on the specific jurisdiction. Specifically in the case of Macedonia and Serbia, Roma have the highest rate of unemployment, inadequate

[41] Guy, W. "Romani Identity and Post-Communist Policy," in *Between Past and Future: the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe* (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001) pp. 3-32.
[42] Ibid, p. 11
[43] Pogany, I. "Refashioning Rights in Central and Eastern Europe: Some Implications for the Region's Roma." *European Public Law* 10 (1), 2004, pp. 89-90

access to health care, social benefits and housing.[44] Roma children, across the SEE region have the lowest levels of school enrolment.[45]

The exclusionary nationalist ideology in Serbia deserves special attention as the republic was the primary aggressor in perpetuating ethnic conflict as Yugoslavia fragmented along ethnic/national lines. By the 1980s, the multinational Yugoslav state had disintegrated with increasing conflict among its republics. Revived nationalism in Serbia's intellectual sphere was readily promoted by Slobodan Milosevic, who in the fall of 1987 led an insurgency to take leadership of the Communist Party. Milosevic challenged the political ideas of Tito's regime by promoting pre-socialist nationalist concepts of the Serbian nation.[46] The vision of a 'greater Serbia' was promoted by Serbian intelligence forces, the Serbian Orthodox Church, and political leadership in control of the media. Serbian national consciousness was invoked by promoting the idea of a unique culture and identity, and most importantly relied on hatred of other Yugoslav people. Political elites invoked the idea that Serbia was threatened and hated in Yugoslavia – current and historical grievances formed the basis of this repertoire. Exclusionary nationalist rhetoric included ideas such as Yugoslavia as a Serbian delusion, Serbia exploited, conspiracy against Serbians, Serbian genocide, and hatred toward Serbians.[47]

Nationalist movements in Serbia have mobilized constituents based on ethnic identity; non-Serb is equated with anti-Serb.[48] Presently, racism and discrimination against visible minorities has increased, and 'gypsies' have been the targets of physical assault by neo-Nazi groups and civilians.[49] In 2001, after a Roma rally in Novi Sad, Serbia,

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[44] See Ringold, D. Orenstein, M. Wilkens, E. *"Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*." (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2005)

[45] See UNICEF Report: *Breaking the Cycle of Exclusion: Roma Children in Southeast Europe*, March 2007 available: unicef.org/ceecis/media_6204.html

[46] Denich, Bette. "Dismembering Yugoslavia: National Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide," *American Ethnologist* 21.2 (May 1994), p. 371

[47] Pesic, V. "The Role of Serbian Ressentiment," in *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis*. Peaceworks No. 8 (Washington D.C., April 1996), pp. 18-20

[48] Denich, B., op.cit., p. 373

[49] See "Romani man beaten in Serbia," *European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)*, 26 November, 2007 and "Civilian violence against Roma in Serbia," *ERRC*, 2002. Available: errc.org

Marija Milosevic daughter of former President Slobodan Milosevic described Serbia as "a concentration camp ruled by Gypsies, Jews, Tzintzars and Turks."[50] Discrimination against the Roma is also promoted by the media. In 2003, a local Serbian newspaper published a 'joke' about killing Roma; a joint civil action suit was filed by the ERRC and Romani civil organizations in Belgrade.[51]

It is not the purpose of this thesis to compare Macedonian and Serbian national identities – however, it can be proposed that although Macedonians have asserted a strong ethnic identity; generally, as a consequence of aggressive neighbouring states,[52] nationalist fervour and antagonistic sentiment toward other Yugoslav identities and minority groups has been less salient. Macedonia in comparison to other SEE states has often been portrayed by academics, civil society representatives and politicians as a 'multi-ethnic, tolerant' state concerning minority communities. Although Roma are not the subjects of 'overt racism,' a sophisticated, hidden racism exists that has perpetuated institutionalized marginalization of the community.[53] Roma are often characterized as 'loyal citizens,' yet remain politically irrelevant and the most disadvantaged minority group in the state.

1.9 Thesis Outline

The theoretical chapter provides a conceptual framework and analytical tools to analyze Roma political activism in Macedonia and Serbia. The chapter reviews the studies on nationalism, ethnic categorization, and development discourse to demonstrate the problematic of identity construction in assessing ethnic conflict and the exclusion of Roma communities. In order to focus on the emancipatory potential of Roma activists, it is necessary to review the social movement literature on political opportunity structures,

[50] "Roma Rally in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia." *ERRC*, 2001. Available: errr.org/Archivum_index.php
[51] "Serbian newspapers publishes 'joke' about killing Roma." *ERRC*, Updated November 16, 2004. See website: errc.org
[52] Rossos, A. "The disintegration of Yugoslavia, Macedonia's independence and stability in the Balkans," in *War and Change in the Balkans: Nationalism, Conflict and Cooperation*." ed. Brad Blitz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
[53] Plaut, S. "Absent Roma, Imported Interest. 'Roma' as Subject and Agent in the Republic of Macedonia." February 2006

transnational advocacy networks, and norm socialization to analyze how marginalized communities can challenge political institutions and advocate effectively.

The third chapter outlines the research design of the study. Some preliminary definitions are introduced relating to the research question, as well as the key variables utilized in the study to evaluate the political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia. The benefits and limitations of the 'case study approach' are discussed, and various data collection methods are outlined.

Chapters four and five describe the domestic factors that may facilitate or constrain Roma activism in Macedonia and Serbia. In each of the case studies, there is a brief review of the political context concerning minority inclusion. The chapters proceed to outline the institutional mechanisms for Roma inclusion that often do not facilitate the promotion of Roma issues. In addition, the role of Romani civil society organizations, political parties and domestic/international allies are discussed to evaluate if advocacy has been effective in the respective states.

Chapter six evaluates the opportunities and challenges in the international arena, focusing on the main EU initiatives and compliance instruments on Roma inclusion. The chapter proceeds to evaluate the interaction of international institutions and civil society in impacting domestic policy on Roma, as well as considering domestic responses to the 'transnational advocacy network.'

The final chapter of the thesis includes a comparative analysis of the case studies. The chapter proceeds to evaluate Roma mobilization as 'collective action' and also discusses research implications for the future.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Perspectives on Roma Mobilization

2.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to provide a multi-level analysis of Roma mobilization in Macedonia and Serbia. The study will rely on the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) model[1] to address the domestic factors that influence Roma claims-making in the respective states. The literature on 'transnational advocacy networks'[2] and 'norm socialization'[3] will be utilized to evaluate the international dynamics of Roma activism. Previous to discussing the various components of the theories, the chapter will review the literature on nationalism, ethnic categorization and development to problematize identity construction in relation to analyzing internal conflict and the exclusion of Roma communities. In particular, the literature discusses how dominant perceptions of Roma identity do not allow for an emancipatory politics. It therefore becomes necessary to review the literature on social movements to analyze how marginalized communities attempt to challenge political institutions and advocate for their claims.

The chapter will proceed to outline the main components of the POS model (institutional arrangements, resources, allies, and elites) and the interrelation between factors. In order to comprehensively assess Roma mobilization, it should not only be limited to domestic activism, but also recognized in the international sphere. Transnational advocacy networks enable a study of how domestic activists in alliance with international actors attempt to influence domestic power structures. Finally, the literature on norm socialization is integrated to operationalize how international institutions influence Roma inclusion policy in Macedonia and Serbia.

[1] See C. Tilly and S. Tarrow. *Contentious Politics*. (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007)
[2] M. Keck and K. Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998)
[3] T. Risse and K. Sikkink. *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. (Cambridge University Press, 1999)

This study seeks to examine six main research questions in relation to the interaction between domestic actors, international institutions and social movement activity:

- Has the political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia facilitated or constrained Roma advocacy?
- Do institutional mechanisms exist at the domestic level to promote Roma inclusion?
- Are Roma political parties and civil society actors coordinated in their actions to promote Roma issues?
- How has the internationalization of Roma advocacy affected movement activity?
- What instruments are available to international institutions to guarantee state compliance on international obligations and are they effective?
- How do international institutions and social movement actors (transnational advocacy networks) seek to influence and change Roma-related policy in Macedonia and Serbia?

2.2 PREVIOUS EXPLANATIONS

Nationalism Literature

A recurrent theme throughout Kaplan's work[4] is that ethnic conflict in the Balkan region is the result of racial and ancient hatred between Serbians and Albanians. While Kaplan provides an interesting narrative, his analysis is superficial by overlooking the underlying political factors that account for internal conflict between the two majority groups. Kaplan's work can be criticized for not providing a multi-level analysis of ethnic conflict; that is the domestic and international political factors that contribute to Roma oppression in Macedonia and Serbia. In this sense, the author's analysis is simplistic, by solely relying on the idea of 'ancient hatred' to depict the situation between Albanians and Serbians. In contrast, Brown provides a different theoretical focal point to analyze internal conflict. The author outlines four main political factors that underlie internal conflict: "discriminatory political institutions, exclusionary national ideologies, inter-

[4] See R. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (US: Vintage Books, 1993).

group politics, and elite politics."[5] Brown posits that internal conflict is more likely if a political transition is occurring and especially when a state is in the process of democratization.[6] While Kaplan covers the historical reasons for internal conflict between Albanian and Serbian groups ('ancient hatred'), he does not account for processes of democratization that may have perpetuated ethnic conflict.

Brown argues that the prospect for internal conflict depends on the national ideology in a particular country. In the case of Macedonia and Serbia, both national identity and citizenship are based on ethnic affiliation, rather than the idea that national citizenship provides all individuals equal rights. Ethnic nationalism is based on culture, rather than political institutions. Thus, ethnic nationalism prevails when existing political institutions are weak and no viable, alternative state structure exists.[7]

While Gellner (1983), Smith (1991), and Hutchinson (2001) make important contributions to the debate on nationalism, their analysis is not sufficiently comprehensive in explaining *how* ethnic nationalism excludes minority groups. Gellner acknowledges the importance of nationality in defining the individual and national culture as the mode of communication that connects a community of strangers. Although he recognizes the importance of evoking the past in affirming national identity, there is no acknowledgment of ethnicity as an important factor that affirms collective identity during the nation building process.

Ethno-symbolists, such as Smith and Hutchinson are in agreement with modernists such as Gellner that nations are a recent phenomenon in their physical consolidation, high vernacular cultures, and self determination.[8] However, Smith and Hutchinson differ in their assessment when stating that the main concerns of nations are with identity and

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[5] M. Brown. "The Causes of Internal Conflict," in ed. M. Brown. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), p. 8.

[6] R. de Nevers. "Democratization and Ethnic Conflict," in ed. M. Brown *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993) 61-78. See also, K. Newland."Ethnic Conflict and Refugees," in ed. M. Brown *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993) pp. 143-164.

[7] See M. Brown, op.cit., p. 9

[8] J. Hutchinson. "Nations and Culture," in eds., M. Guibernau and J. Hutchinson, *Understanding Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) pp. 74-96.

history."[9] Hutchinson explains that warfare, economic decline, and migration have all challenged the physical and cultural existence of a population. By incurring a collective imagination that invokes identification with the historic nation that embodies "myths, symbols and culture," individuals are able to overcome historical circumstances and unite to find their collective purpose. Thus, for ethno-symbolists "culture … means not just symbols, traditions or rituals, but rather the meanings and orientations to collective action that these evoke."[10]

Focusing on the aspect of national identity construction, Smith outlines six main characteristics of an ethnic community: "a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific 'homeland,' and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population."[11] While these attributes are relevant for describing the collective identity of most ethnic groups, in the case of Roma, there is only minimal relation to any one characteristic. One of the main criticisms of the national and ethnic identity literature is its basis on Western European ideals of national belonging and 'imagined communities.'[12] The case of Roma is unique, precisely because there is no Romani nation-state. Hence, the community's precarious position as 'illegal migrants' in many European states.[13] Romani existence is further problematized in Macedonia and Serbia as the community does not belong to the dominant ethnic categories – the 'naturalized' ethnic groups of post-Yugoslav nations. Although viewed as a homogeneous ethnic group by 'outsiders,' how Roma perceive themselves and in relation to others is a complex process.[14] Thus, the concept of 'ethnie' or 'ethnic community' as suggested by Smith, does not have relevance when analyzing the case of Roma oppression and mobilization.

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[9] J. Hutchinson, op.cit., p. 76
[10] Ibid, p. 76
[11] See A. Smith. *National Identity.* Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1991, p. 21
[12] See B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).
[13] For further information on France's decision to expel hundreds of 'illegal' Romanian Roma, see "France's Expulsion of Roma: Have your Roma back." *The Economist* (August 19, 2010). Available: economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches.
[14] C. Silverman. "Negotiating Gypsiness: Strategy in Context." *The Journal of American Folklore*. 101.401 (Jul – Sep 1988), p. 267

Ethnic Categorization and Boundary Making

The term 'Roma,' signifying the inclusion of communities with varying cultural and linguistic attributes, is a response to state imposition and insistence that the 'Roma' community has a singular voice and vision.[15] The 'Roma' risk political alienation unless a unified identity is displayed; despite the fact that no ethnic community has a monolithic identity. Attempts to define a 'Roma identity' are a response to the nation-state system that seeks to control its population through the categorization of individuals and construction of salient boundaries.[16] The literature on nationalism does not include a discussion of how the creation of ethnic identity categories presents a specific construction of reality – state mechanisms such as the census allow for the expansion and maintenance of this illusion. Thus, "categories are central to the state's exercise of racial governmentality; censuses have constituted a formative governmental technology in the service of the state to fashion racialized knowledge ..."[17]Assigning individuals to a singular category creates the myth of a shared identity and emphasizes the differences among categories. Instead of perceiving social groups as circumstantial the census promotes categorization and boundary making.[18]

A further critique of the nationalism literature is the limited interrogation of key assumptions that only perpetuate Western modes of political organization and power structures. For example, the literature does not include a conceptual analysis of how divisions are created and maintained among 'ethnic communities.' The 'natural' phenomenon of national and ethnic identity, and everyday primordialist assumptions as proposed by Kaplan's analysis, can be critiqued by reviewing the work of constructivists such as Barth (1969), Fearon and Laitin (2000), Wimmer (2008) that acknowledge the social construction of identity and its impact on inter-ethnic relations. The authors refute

[15] Memedova, A., Plaut, S., Boscoboinik, A., Giordano, C., "Roma Identities in Southeast Europe: Macedonia." *Ethnobarometer*, (Rome: Utta Wickert-Sili, 2005)
[16] A. Wimmer. "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory." *American Journal of Sociology.* 113.4 (January 2008), p. 975
[17]R. Brubaker, M. Loveman, and P. Stamatov. "Ethnicity as Cognition." *Theory and Society*. 33 (2004), p. 34
[18] D. Kertzer and D. Arel. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 5-6

the idea of 'eternal hostility;' the idea that conflict ensues because of enduring characteristics and enmities between ethnic groups. As noted by Barth in a seminal essay, ethnic boundaries are defined by differences and not the cultural characteristics of the social group.[19] Expanding on Barth's ideas, Wimmer introduces a multilevel model of ethnic boundary making presenting different strategies of ethnic boundary construction used by actors in various social contexts. As defined by Wimmer, a boundary:

> "displays both a categorical and a social or behavioral dimension. The former refers to acts of social classification and collective representation; the latter to everyday networks of relationships that result from individual acts of connecting and distancing. On the individual level, the categorical and the behavioral aspects appear as two cognitive schemes. One divides the social world into social groups—into "us" and "them"—and the other offers scripts of action—how to relate to individuals classified as "us" and "them" under given circumstances. Only when the two schemes coincide, when ways of seeing the world correspond to ways of acting in the world, shall I speak of a social boundary (975)."[20]

It is important to note that the concept of boundary does not intend to restrict definitions and belonging to an ethnic group; boundaries are variable dependent on the societal and institutional context. As Silverman notes "there has been ... a tendency to study Gypsies context-free, that is, as an isolated, bounded group. This tendency reflects the conventional concept of an ethnic group which implies that members have more frequent ... contact with each other than ... with outsiders."[21] However, Gypsies although maintaining a strict boundary between members and non-members, conduct informal and formal relations with non-Gypsies. Thus, any account of Gypsy ethnicity must focus on the interaction between Gypsy and non-Gypsy culture. This is especially interesting, concerning the Gypsy identity, which depending on the context may reflect mainstream stereotypes of the group. For example, Gypsy fortune tellers encourage the stereotype of the exotic, foreign healer that meets the expectations of non-Gypsies, as it is more profitable to advertise this image. Furthermore, by presenting a superficial image of the Gypsy culture, the group is able to hide the in-group culture.[22]

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[19] Barth, F. "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference*. ed. Fredrik Barth. (Bergen: Univertsitetsforlaget, 1969) pp. 15-16
[20] A. Wimmer. op.cit., p. 975.
[21] C. Silverman, op.cit., p. 266
[22] Ibid, p. 266

An analysis of Gypsy culture and identity demonstrates how 'race' is an ideological construct, and a historical process. 'Gypsiness' as a racial/ethnic category has been defined differently depending on the social structure, dominant ideology, historical context, and geographical location. As a mechanism to overcome this challenge, Gypsies have negotiated their identity depending on the oppressive structure in place at a specific time. For instance, Gypsies may 'assimilate' adopting cultural traits such as clothing, music, language, and occupation without identifying with non-Gypsy culture. The characteristics have no meaning, beyond their significance for the particular role that is 'expected' and period of time. To an outsider, this may be perceived as an adaptation to the local culture, or to categorize the Gypsy as a 'foreigner,' but with specific social traits to be ranked within a hierarchy. However, the identity that is presented to the 'outside world,' is fictive. [23]

Ethnic boundary making strategies, as compared to the literature on nationalism, accounts for how the state's promotion of ethnic categorization at times creates the justification for minority discrimination, as members of the majority are 'representative' of a particular state. Minorities are confronted with a new hierarchy of exclusion as ethnic boundaries become established in everyday understanding and action.[24] In contextualizing Romani exclusion in the overall debate regarding European racism and nationalism, it is useful to refer to Balibar's argument that each nation "through its institutions, constructs a fictive ethnicity" that is different from the 'other' on the basis of visible, behavioural or audible characteristics. As fictive ethnicity and patriotism are augmented, it serves only to perpetuate racism. Balibar understands racism as "internal

[23] C. Silverman, op.cit., p. 267

[24] "Categories structure and order the world for us. We use categories to parse the flow of experience into discriminable and interpretable objects, attributes, and events. Categories permit indeed entail massive cognitive, social, and political simplification. Following a principle of 'cognitive economy,' they provide maximum information with the least cognitive effort. When we make sense of our experience by seeing objects, persons, actions, or situations as instances of categories, this always involves more than mere sorting. It always carries with it expectations and ''knowledge'' about how members of that category characteristically behave. Such beliefs and expectations are embodied in persons, encoded in myths, memories, narratives, and discourses, and embedded in institutions and organizational routines. Even when we are not consciously aware of them, they can subtly (or not so subtly) influence our judgments, and even our very perceptions, of objects or persons so categorized, and thereby the way we behave toward them."(R. Brubaker, M. Loveman, P. Stamatov, op.cit., p. 38)

to the current history of nationalisms."[25] As states are progressing toward 'anti-citizenship,' security measures, constitutional changes, and legislation coordinated among nations are similar in immigration and asylum rights. National identity is increasingly displaced by fictive ethnicities and racism. Additional security measures and constitutional changes coordinated among European nations create "a new mode of discrimination between the national and the alien."[26] The nation's exclusion of 'others' and individual internalization of the 'foreigner' creates internal and external borders.

The previous discussion focused on how the literature on nationalism is inadequate to explain Roma exclusion. The concept of 'ethnic community' is problematized in the case of Roma as the social group does not conform to European ideals of national belonging. While the nationalist literature provides an account of how national ideology based on culture and ethnic affiliation contribute to societal divisions and internal conflict, it does not analyze state ethnic categorization and boundary making. The nationalism literature is focused on Western conceptions of collective identity and does not include a discussion of identity construction; this is especially limiting in the case of Roma identity formation and political participation in Macedonia and Serbia.

2.3 IDENTITY POLITICS

The Externalization of Roma Identity

The literature on nationalism and ethnic boundaries provided a framework for understanding how Macedonian and Serbian societies are characterized by a high degree of social closure and politicization**.** Generally, in Eastern Europe individuals are identified as belonging to a specific ethnic community with little ambiguity and there is strong emotional attachment to an ethnic category. Social groups will attempt to preserve cultural authenticity at any cost, even in periods of great social change. Identity preservation reduces the options for boundary making strategies and

[25] Balibar, E. *Politics and the Other Scene.* (London and New York: Verso, 2002) p. 71
[26] Ibid, p. 78

interpretation of ethnic categories.[27] However, this structure of ethnic boundary making in relation to Roma is not deterministic. In certain historical junctures, a strategy may be reformed and change is possible. An 'exogenous shift'[28] may occur as new actors become involved changing the availability of resources and political alliances. For instance, international organizations such as the European Union, Council of Europe and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have been active in Eastern European candidate countries on issues regarding inter-ethnic relations.

Wimmer accounts for political alliance networks as an integral factor in boundary adaptation.[29] However, a critical evaluation of international organization discourse demonstrates an external imposition of identity on the Roma community. The EU for instance, has been an important actor in authenticating 'Gypsy' and 'Roma' as political terms within international organization discourse and documents such as 'action plans.' Challenges arising from seemingly 'objective' categories remain submersed, as EU institutions and governments search for numerical evidence to validate the construction of the 'Gypsy/Roma' category and its political objects. Early EU discussions acknowledged that information regarding 'Gypsies' was to be collected, but the community was not included as active participants. Instead, dialogue occurred only among EU institutional actors; an interaction that has only recently included the Roma community.[30] As the Roma community does not have significant political power and legitimacy, advocating a new ethnic boundary and establishing alliances is challenging. Political actors with different interests have to be persuaded of their self perception that entails a delicate negotiation process.[31] Although the state and international institutions determine the contours of individual ethnic boundary making, those in a disadvantaged

[27] A. Wimmer, op.cit., p. 1003
[28] Ibid, p. 1005
[29] Ibid, p. 1005
[30] K. Simhandl. "Beyond Boundaries? Comparing the Construction of the Political Categories 'Gypsies' and 'Roma' Before and After EU Enlargement," in eds. N. Trehan and N. Sigona. *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-Liberal Order*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) pp. 73-75.
[31] Wimmer, A. op.cit., p. 997

position may construct counter discourses and categories than those promoted by the dominant actors.[32]

For instance, Valery Novoselsky, Roma activist and organizer of the web based Romano Liloro Groups; a forum and information service on Roma issues, has argued that the internet encourages 'cultural communities' and 'transnational ethnic identification among the Roma.'[33] Novoselsky has argued that the internet can change how Roma communicate, disseminate information, build civil society, develop social partnerships and political activism. These mechanisms can foster a 'virtual nation,' utilizing the internet as a platform. In critically evaluating the role of the internet as an 'emancipatory tool' for Romani political mobilization, Atanasoski suggests that the marginalized status of Roma communities in Eastern Europe limits the capacity of technology to advance Roma rights. For instance, for many Roma families in non-Western nations, the internet is considerably expensive; this is especially the case in Macedonia and Serbia. Furthermore, as Roma rights discourse on the internet is generally influenced by Western international agencies and NGOs, there is a misrepresentation of the Roma issue as an Eastern European problem. For instance, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is often the target of criticism for not publishing sufficient information on the Roma rights violations in Western Europe. It is also recognized that the ERRC monitors and conducts research predominately on EU accession states, rather than current member states.[34]

Roma as a 'Victim-Subject' within Development Discourse

The literature on development discourse is especially useful in negating Western European constructions of Roma identity and perceptions of the community. International organizations such as the EU have authenticated the category 'Roma,' creating a vast network of experts, statistics, and documents that validate the

[32] R. Brubaker, M. Loveman, P. Stamatov, op.cit., p. 35
[33] Atanasoski, N. "Roma Rights on the World Wide Web: The role of internet technologies in shaping minority and human rights discourses in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 12 (2) 2009, p. 210
[34] Ibid, p. 212

community's existence. Roma prior to the early 1990s were predominately excluded from the development discourse. Developmental policies and programs under the guise of 'political activism,' target a once peripheral people, and symbolize 'reform' and 'progression' in Eastern European countries, to eventually join the European community. As noted by Havel, the Gypsies offered "a litmus test of liberal tolerance within 'new Europe' constituting Gypsiness as a marker of racial difference that measured the progress of Eastern Europe democracies by their multicultural inclusiveness."[35] Thus, any measures to support Roma political activism are connected with the idea of 'Balkan development and minority inclusion' and the adoption of international human rights norms, as well as the particular transformation of Serbia as a 'Balkan monster.' Macedonia is comparatively, romanticized as a haven for minorities and thus, more amenable to international intervention.

The role of the 'victim subject' in particular is a dominant concept in the context of Western intervention regarding marginal groups in 'developing nations.' International institutions and Western European states have reinforced the image of Roma as a victim subject,[36] promoting cultural essentialism in discussions of minority issues that has further transferred into a Western European/Balkan divide. As stated by Hansen,

> The Western discursive constructions of the 'Balkans' have taken a spatial identity, the Balkans, and constructed it within three different discourses: a Byronian Romanticism that constituted 'the Balkans' as different from the West, as an object of admiration that should be transformed, but supported by the West in it struggles for independence; a civilizational Enlightenment discourse that constituted 'the Balkans' as different from the West but with the capacity for liberal political and economic transformation, a transformation for which the West had a moral responsibility as well as financial and geopolitical interest; and, finally, a Balkanization discourse that constructed 'the Balkans' as radically different and threatening in its capacity to bring chaos and war to the West, as incapable of transformation, and to be isolated and deterred rather than supported.[37]

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[35] Havel in N. Atanasoski. "Race Toward Freedom: Post-Cold War US Multiculturalism and the Reconstruction of Eastern Europe." *The Journal of American Culture*. 29.2 (June 2006), p. 220.

[36] See R. Kapur. "The Tragedy of Victimization Rhetoric: Resurrecting the 'Native' Subject in International/Post-Colonial Feminist Legal Politics." *Harvard Human Rights Journal*. 15 (2002): 1-36. Kapur provides an analysis of how Indian women are depicted as victim subjects in the international women's human rights discourse.

[37] L. Hansen. *Security as practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 42

In particular, academic, media and government discourses refer to Serbian national identity as 'violent,' 'irrational,' 'underdeveloped,' 'barbarian,' 'backward,' 'tribal,' 'primitive,' and 'savage,' as compared to the 'developed,' 'civilized,' 'rational,' and 'controlled' European identity.[38] The connection between Balkan culture and violence are used as an explanation of the kind of marginalization and impoverishment that Roma individuals are confronted with in Eastern European contexts.

By successfully adopting Western 'multicultural' standards,' Eastern European states may also 'progress,' in attaining racial equality and eradicate inter-ethnic divisions.[39] Within this emancipatory framework, the important marker of 'colour' loses its significance. Recognizing 'difference' through the process of 'integration,' thus renders 'race' an insignificant signifier, as Eastern European states adopt neoliberal values sustained by economic reforms. The 'multicultural' society, as an 'ideal' state does not always make visible the cultural and physical characteristics that define and empower a community. 'Race consciousness,' ethnic identity, heterogeneity and fragmentation within the Roma community do not devalue its representation and participation in an inclusive society.

These ideas are an essential foundation for Western development discourse that seeks through the extensive network of international organizations, and development agencies to propose strategies and programs that will 'develop' Eastern European states to discontinue the victimization of Roma communities. The emphasis on the victim subject reinforces the impression of Roma in Eastern Europe as perpetually ostracized and impoverished; reasserting stereotypes and racist portrayals of Balkan culture that privileges the position of Western European nations. International attention on the Roma community has had important and beneficial consequence, focusing interest on the lack of domestic governmental action on Roma claims-making for equality in education, employment, health care and housing. The victim subject has also allowed Roma to

[38] Hansen, L. op.cit., p. 42
[39] Atanasoski, N. op.cit., p. 220

discuss issues of importance, that otherwise would have remained invisible in human rights discourse.

However, if a more progressive and representational movement is to develop on Roma concerns it is necessary to renegotiate international intervention on Roma affairs. As stated by Kapur "it is important to recognize and centre the peripheral subject and her multiple historically, culturally, and socially determined subjectivities instead of falling back on universalized assumptions about the individual's realities and their subject position."[40] In order to empower marginalized people, it is important to recognize 'moments of resistance' so as not to produce a narrative that simply describes how the individual is subjugated. Providing multiple narratives of an individual's or movement's history helps to undermine hegemonic interpretations of culture and race that are reiterated in the international and domestic arenas. Representations of Roma as thoroughly disempowered and incapable of self-determination does not help to liberate the community from repressive domestic power structures.

Limitations of the Nationalism, Ethnic Boundary, and Development Literature

To sum up, the nationalism, ethnic boundary and development literature focuses on how identity construction impacts processes of internal conflict and exclusion. The nationalism literature based on Western European ideas of collective identity and national belonging pays little attention to ethnicity and how this determines insider-outsider status in a society. The literature reflects on the nation building process, but is limited by not interrogating state categorization and how this may create the justification for minority discrimination. Comparatively, the ethnic boundary model provides a multi-level analysis of how 'differences' between social groups are constructed, thereby critiquing everyday primordialist assumptions of 'eternal hostility.'

In the specific case of the Roma community, it is important to reflect on the externalization of identity using the concept of political alliance networks. Strategies of boundary adaptation are important to challenge nationalism and exclusion in

[40] Kapur, R. op. cit., p. 19

Macedonian and Serbian societies. External actors, such as the EU have supported alternative constructions of the 'Gypsy' identity, but have only recently included the Roma community in political discussions. The further contextualization of Roma as a 'victim subject' within the Western European/Balkan divide illustrates how the literature on development and nationalism are integrated. The promotion of cultural essentialism and characterization of the Balkan identity as 'violent,' and 'barbaric,' privileges the Western position and intervention on minority issues in the Balkans. International attention on the Roma community is essential to criticizing limited domestic implementation of Roma related policies and programs, but an emancipatory framework would challenge universalized assumptions of Balkan culture and the victimization of the Roma community.

It is thus important to introduce the social movement literature that provides a framework for understanding how a marginalized community such as the Roma can challenge political institutions. Kapur (2002) addresses the importance of recognizing 'moments of resistance,' and focusing on community emancipation without providing a basic narrative of subjugation. The literature on nationalism, ethnic boundaries, and development provided a useful analysis to illustrate minority exclusion, but in order to address the topic of minority mobilization it must initially focus on the political opportunity structure in a state that facilitates or constrains claims-making.

2.4 POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES (POS)

The POS model is one of the dominant theoretical approaches used to analyze protest group mobilization.[41] As defined by Kitschelt "political opportunity structures are comprised of specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest

[41] See C. Tilly. *From Mobilization to Revolution.* (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1978). D. McAdam. "The Political Process Model," in *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970.* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982). S. Tarrow. *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

movements in some instances and constrain them in others."[42] The existing social movement agenda outlines "increasing access, shifting political alignments, divided elites, influential allies, limited repression and facilitation, low state strength, ineffective and illegitimate state repression, and international conditions and allies,"[43] as factors necessary in analyzing social movements.

By comparing the political opportunity structures in Macedonia and Serbia one can demonstrate how movement strategies are influenced by the choices presented by the state structure, and concomitantly how protest activity impact their environments. It is important to recognize the interaction between open/closed political structures and movement mobilization. Kitschelt attempts to demonstrate that closed political structures suppress social movements, open and receptive regimes reformulate protest demands in accordance with state policies, and moderately authoritarian structures provide a platform for movement demands but do not readily accommodate its ideas to reform established policies.[44] One way that political opportunity structures can restrict or enhance collective action is dependent on the "coercive, normative, remunerative and informational resources"[45] a movement can collect and utilize in its protest activities. Movement appeal to universal norms, the collection of information regarding human rights violations, and monetary funds to distribute information increases the chances of attracting a wider audience and movement membership.[46]

Developments of the POS Model

McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) introduce the idea of a dynamic mobilization model, building upon the existing social movement factors and identifying the mechanisms that allow for their interrelation. Opportunities and threats are not perceived as objective structural variables, but the focus becomes on how the opportunities and constraints are

[42] H. Kitschelt. Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science*. 16.1 (1986), p. 56
[43] J. Goldstone. "More Social Movements or Fewer? Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields." *Theory and Society*. 33.4 (2004), p. 347
[44] H. Kitschelt, op. cit., pp. 61-62
[45] Ibid, pp. 61-62
[46] Ibid, pp. 61-62

viewed by collective actors. Mobilization cannot occur unless the protest group conceives the opportunity or threat. Thus, while repression poses a constraint on collective action, it also depends on how movement actors perceive or define it as a threat.[47] Furthermore, a dynamic mobilization model does not focus on existing opportunity structures, but the "active appropriation of sites for mobilization."[48] Instead of forming new organizations; protest groups turn existing structures into sites of mobilization. For protest groups that lack resources, this is one way to compensate for organizational deficits.

Goldstone (2004) suggests that while POS may be useful to describe macro-level conditions, *'external relational fields'* is a more accurate term to account for relationships with other actors and contesting groups; as well as allowing for a more detailed analysis of movement dynamics.[49] The main contribution to POS literature is Goldstone's adoption of a relational approach when analyzing social movement mobilization and success to study the effect of specific elements on a particular movement and issue, and the relationship between the various factors. Tarrow and Tilly (2007) improve upon the dynamic mobilization model, and adopt a 'relational approach' by clarifying concepts and including additional components. Many of the factors important to analyzing social movements remain the same. Threats and opportunities are viewed as a simultaneous process; constantly changing in response to regime openness, shifting political alignments, and the availability of allies. Variable threats and opportunities move contesting groups to either rigid or flexible repertories. For example, conflict between those in power sometimes leads to an alliance formation with challengers (i.e. mainstream parties in Macedonia and Serbia would not form alliances with Roma political parties unless additional votes were required for election). This

[47] D. McAdam, S. Tarrow and C. Tilly et al. "Lineaments of Contention," in *Dynamics of Contention*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 43.
[48] Ibid, p. 44
[49] Goldstone, J. op. cit., pp. 356-357

limits those in power as well as the challengers from adopting a more rigid or flexible repertoire.[50]

This thesis argues that the Roma movement may be constrained as cooption and dependency on the Macedonian and Serbian political structures has not enabled flexibility and innovation in terms of advocacy. A common repertoire connects social movement challengers and those in power. Activists once clear on the object of their claims, may now be uncertain of some movement goals.[51] For example, as it exists presently in Macedonia and Serbia, Roma civil society is either part of the government structure, or dependent on alliances with the government for survival. Roma civil society in the respective states is active, but limited in its criticism of government action on Roma inclusion policies. Political response to Roma claims by international organizations and governments has led to institutionalization and a loss of momentum concerning Roma activism.

It is important to note the tactics of 'power holders' that may constrain protest activity, not enabling a social movement campaign: i) target groups may dispense symbolic satisfactions. Appearances of activity and commitment to problems substitute for, or supplement, resource allocation and policy innovations which would constitute tangible responses to protest activity, ii) target groups may dispense token material satisfactions – crises cases, and no general assault on problems, iii) target groups may organize and innovate internally in order to blunt the impetus of protest efforts iv) target groups may appear to be constrained in their ability to grant protest goals, v) target groups may use their extensive resources to discredit protest leaders and organizations vi) target groups may postpone action.[52]

This thesis will demonstrate that the Roma community is not perceived as a legitimate actor by power holders in Macedonia and Serbia. Although some room has been made to create Roma-related positions within Macedonian and Serbian political structures,

[50] C. Tilly and S. Tarrow. *Contentious Politics*. (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), pp. 58-59
[51] Ibid, p. 58
[52] Lipsky, M. "Protest as a Political Resource." *The American Political Science Review*. 62.4 (1968), pp. 1144-1158.

resources concerning Roma inclusion projects are lacking, leading to further constraints on activism. Macedonian and Serbian institutions as the 'objects' of Roma 'program claims'[53] have not been a successful endeavor. Other factors limiting Roma activism include alliance formation and cooption by mainstream political parties, an uncritical civil sector, division among Roma leaders, limited inter-departmental cooperation, and the ineffective measures implemented by international organizations to be discussed in detail in later chapters.

Limitations of the POS Model

One of the main limitations of the POS and Dynamic Mobilization models is a predominant focus with institutions and organizations as the main avenues for claims-making. Stammers and Eschle argue that movements are frequently conflated with, or subordinated to organizations, while other aspects of activism are neglected, thus reinforcing existing power structures and relations. Social movement organizations are often viewed in an ultra positive light and assumed to be 'progressive,' initiating a 'new politics.' Organized and informal activism is often portrayed as sharing similar ideological commitments and goals. As noted by Stammers and Eschle "if informal grassroots activism and non-institutional articulations of collective identity entirely disappear then a social movement no longer exists."[54]

Similarly, Trehan argues that the 'NGOization of human rights' has not led to the emergence of an independent voice among Roma communities in Europe. Roma activists are seeking inclusion in a predominately White civil society, in which alternative discourses remain insignificant. The 'Roma movement' is highly institutionalized as a primarily NGO and elite driven process promoting neoliberal values in post-socialist states. Local Romani organizations are marginalized and viewed only as 'implementing partners,' as national/international elite interests dominate. Private American organizations advocating strong anti-communist humanitarian values

[53] Ibid, p. 81
[54] N. Stammers and C. Eschle. "Social Movements and Global Activism," in eds. W. de Jong, M. Shaw, N. Stammers. *Global Activism, Global Media.* (London: Pluto, 2005) pp. 51-54

frame the Roma rights agenda, particularly in Eastern Europe. Thus, substantial funding was allocated to NGOs in Eastern Europe that promoted neoliberal values and democratization processes which focused on supporting civil society and human rights.[55]

Secondly, the POS model does not articulate the important differences between movement emergence and success. As argued by Goldstone, the two processes are not fostered by the same opportunities and should be analyzed using different factors.[56] Goldstone posits that *democratization* provides the basic framework for the emergence of social protest movements, as well as institutionalized political activity. Once democratic institutions are in place, protest becomes a normal part of politics. Thus, other factors that the POS model lists – "state strength, allies, repression," no longer seem relevant.[57] Democratization may be conducive to the emergence of social movements, but not necessarily institutionalized protest activity. Ballentine and Snyder make the persuasive argument that ethnic and nationalist conflict is exacerbated when there is greater freedom of expression and debate in emerging democracies. While civil society is blossoming and state institutions are not well established, the state and political opportunists compete for constituents to acquire power. Under these conditions, an increase in the freedom of expression allows 'nationalist mythmakers,' to dominate public debate.[58] For instance, Milosevic was successful in attracting Serbian constituents by monopolizing the media outlets in Belgrade, and relying on historical tensions between Albanian and Serbian groups. Thus, Serbian constituents reacted favourably to his uncontested propaganda.[59]

Earlier POS models identified the domestic structural conditions for movement mobilization. The work of Kitschelt exemplifies previous studies that focused on the

[55] N. Trehan. "The Romani Subaltern within Neoliberal European Civil Society: NGOization of Human Rights and Silent Voices," in eds. Nidhi Trehan and Nando Sigona. *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-liberal Order*.(Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) pp. 52-56.
[56] Goldstone, op.cit., p. 347
[57] Goldstone, J. op.cit., p. 349
[58] Snyder, Jack and Karen Ballentine. "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," in ed. Michael E. Brown. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*.(Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001) pp. 61-63.
[59] Ibid, p. 76

interaction between open/closed political structures and movement actors. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly refer to a dynamic mobilization model, building upon the existing social movement agenda by accounting for the mechanisms that allow for variable interrelation, adopting a 'relational approach.' One of the main limitations of the POS and dynamic mobilization models, however, is a focus on organizations and institutions as the main avenues for claims-making. It was noted that domestic political structures as the target of Roma activism have constrained movement actors and led only to 'symbolic success.' The domination of NGOs and political elites within the Roma movement submerse informal forms of activism that could build movement momentum. The subsequent discussion will focus on mobilization at the international level, utilizing 'transnational advocacy networks' as a concept to analyze if Roma claims-making has been successful in the international sphere.

2.5 International Advocacy and Roma Mobilization

Since the early 1990s, international organizations have shown an increasing interest in addressing Roma-related issues in Eastern Europe, thus constructing favourable opportunities and facilitating Roma claims-making in international arenas. International initiatives have included the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015),' as well as various programs and actions by the European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Council of Europe (CoE). Although Roma-related issues are prominent on the international agenda, implementation is severely lacking in the domestic sphere where the reforms need to occur. There is indication of 'symbolic' success; shown for instance, by the institutionalization of Roma-related issues. However, the path between international and domestic levels is impeded. Although the international opportunity structure is more 'open,' the lack of implementation at the domestic level severely impairs the ability for sustainable change.

Often political imperatives do not enable international organizations to fulfil their potential. National leaders generally support policies that will keep them in power,

rather than promote policies that international institutions suggest for expansion and growth.[60]Although international agencies seek to provide knowledge and resources for development – often many of the resources are misallocated. Domestic institutions are central to policy direction – without political reforms, international influence is negligible. International organization staffs are confronted with an awkward predicament. Acknowledging the difficulty of implementing political changes, but having to act within the bureaucratic structures of international organizations bolsters the idea of 'doing something,' despite the limited achievements.[61]

International Organizations such as the Council of Europe and OSCE are limited in their ability to act by EU Member States, but are able through a variety of mechanisms to penalize non-implementation of policies. International organizations may monitor and disseminate information that would negatively impact the international status of member states.[6263] It is also essential that international organizations be viewed as impartial actors for enforcement mechanisms to work effectively. An international organization's authority and legitimacy is integral to its influence – thus cannot be taken lightly. Although international agencies may be perceived favourably among EU member states, if perceived as biased, too coercive, or vindicating of government actions it is likely they

[60] Smith, Alastair. Why International Organizations Will Continue to Fail Their Development Goals. *Perspectives on Politics* pp. 565-567

[61] Ibid, pp. 565-567

[62] J. Joachim, B. Reinalda, and B. Verbeek. "Enforcers, Managers, Authorities? International Organizations and Implementation," in *International Organizations and Implementation: Enforcers, Managers, Authorities*? ed. Jutta Joachim, Bob Reinalda, and Bertjan Verbeek. (London: Routledge, 2008) p. 178

[63] There are multiple methods by which monitoring can occur. International obligations may require states to submit progress reports to international institutions on this issue of concern. A specific committee may be organized to review the reports and then provide recommendations as to the course of action. Monitoring can also take place with international organization representatives travelling to the respective state to evaluate if the authorities are able to meet political commitments. International institutions can also engage with other sectors such as NGOs to gain critical or complementary information to state reports. Other monitoring procedures include appeals by individuals or states to international courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights, to address the violation of international commitments (J. Joachim, B. Reinalda, and B. Verbeek. "International Organizations and Implementation: Pieces of the Puzzle," in *International Organizations and Implementation: Enforcers, Managers, Authorities*? eds. J. Joachim, B. Reinalda, and B. Verbeek. London: Routledge, 2008, p. 8)

will be negatively assessed. Thus, it is important for international institutions to act with concern and deliberation.[64]

Civil society organizations are also critical of international organizations and their focus on government institutions as the main conduit to implement Roma-related policy. This may be viewed as the most effective means of ensuring the institutionalization of minority issues and focusing on long term measures to implement change. Institutional democratization is a constructive approach, but is limited as the extent to which reforms can be implemented is dependent on the political environment in Macedonia and Serbia. The result of political corruption and struggle between various political parties is institutional inertia and policy stagnation. The international community has invested considerable resources in attempting to build democratic institutions, but have failed in their efforts, as political actors specifically in Serbia are not yet ready to reach a consensus. In this regard, civil society representatives have advocated further capacity building initiatives and monitoring within the NGO community.

One of the key limitations of project implementation in the post-conflict period has been political and government instability, diminishing opportunities for NGO/government cooperation. As campaign and re-election periods are lengthy, government institutions and personnel are only operational several months later. Institutional inertia and the lack of communication disallow any activity on government policies, and specifically, Roma-related issues. There is a lack of responsibility among government personnel to implement previous agreements, thus NGOs struggle to compensate for government deficits in implementing programs.[65]

The work of Kitschelt (1986), McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly (2001), Tarrow and Tilly (2007) has been helpful in analyzing how different government structures facilitate or oppress social movement actors at the domestic level, but is inadequate to evaluate how the connection between the international and domestic levels is impeded. It is essential,

[64] J. Joachim, B. Reinalda, and B. Verbeek. op.cit., p. 180
[65] Interview with Jasna Kronja, Director, CARE International, Belgrade, Serbia, May 18, 2009

therefore, to integrate literature on 'transnational advocacy networks'[66] to develop a comprehensive framework for this study. In order to analyze Roma political activism one needs to understand it as a domestic and trans-national social movement. To comprehensively discuss Roma political action one cannot only think of transnational advocacy in regards to domestic opportunity structures. It is also important to focus on the characteristics of the international arena that provide favourable opportunities or limitations for protest activity. As international organizations are one of the primary actors that promote, but also conflict with other social movement players regarding Roma advocacy, it becomes necessary to analyze the unique relationship between domestic and international actors, as well as institutions.

2.6 Transnational advocacy networks

Building upon the social movement literature, Keck and Sikkink (1998) introduce the idea of 'transnational advocacy networks' defined by international actors, who share common values, discourse, information and services on a specific issue.[67] The predominant issues that characterize advocacy networks are those "involving bodily harm to vulnerable individuals and equality of opportunity – these issues speak to aspects of a belief system or life experiences that transcend a specific cultural or political context."[68] By constructing new alliances between civil society actors, states and international organizations, advocacy networks increase linkages to the international system allowing activists to take advantage of international resources to utilize in domestic protest activity.[69] Keck and Sikkink argue that domestic groups may seek recourse at the international level to express their concerns when their government refuses to recognize their claims. It is important to note that transnational advocacy networks are most likely to appear concerning issues where:

[66] M. Keck and K. Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998)
[67] M. Keck and K. Sikkink, op.cit., p. 2
[68] Ibid, p. 1
[69] Ibid, p. 204 Major actors in advocacy networks may include the following: 1) international and domestic nongovernmental research and advocacy organizations 2) local social movements 3) foundations 4) the media 5) churches, consumer organizations and intellectuals 6) international intergovernmental organizations 7) parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments (p. 9)

1) the linkages between domestic groups and governments are restricted or when communication paths are ineffective for conflict resolution
2) activists believe that networking will strengthen social movement campaigns and further promote the issue
3) international conferences and contacts create opportunities for network building[70]

An integral part of this strategy is the "construction of cognitive frames."[71] How a movement frames the issue can enhance its appeal with the broader public. In turn, this can help to influence and change other actors' interpretations of their identities and interests. Furthermore, advocacy networks can have influence regarding:

i) issue creation and agenda setting
ii) influence on discursive positions of states and international organizations
iii) influence on institutional procedures[72]

One of the main aims of building international alliances is to increase activism domestically in 'closed' regimes that suppress social movements. It would follow that as the communication path between activists and domestic governments is impeded, activists in 'closed' regimes, have no alternative, but to make international links. Thus, 'closed' regimes become more 'open,' by transforming both the domestic and international opportunity structures by improving human rights and promoting democratization.[73] Thus, "international institutions offer international opportunity structures, which interact with domestic political opportunity structures to produce particular types of environments for transnational collective action."[74] Similarly, Della Porta and Tarrow argue that "externally there has been a shift in the locus of institutional power from the national to both the supranational and the regional levels, with the

[70] Ibid, p. 12
[71] Ibid, p. 16
[72] Ibid, p. 25 It is beyond the scope of this study to include iv) influence on policy change in target actors which may be states, international organizations and v) influence on state behaviour.
[73] K. Sikkink. "Patterns of Dynamic Multilevel Governance and the Insider-Outsider Coalition," in eds. D. della Porta and S. Tarrow. *Transnational Protest and Global Activism.* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005) p. 163.
[74] Ibid, p. 171

increasing power of international institutions …"[75] Informal networks have expanded across national boundaries (such as international agreements on human rights, and NGO alliances on human rights issues). These processes have led to the creation of a 'complex internationalism,' which consists of threats and opportunities to non-state actors and weaker states.[76]

Key factors impacting the success of networks are the opportunities and constraints within domestic arenas, specifically their susceptibility to economic and moral incentives. For instance, the target country may be more amenable to change in cases where monetary support is dependent on human rights improvements. Additionally, international obligations may also influence changes in domestic policies, or specific historical junctures may induce improvements. Lastly, prospective changes may depend on the need to maintain a reputable position within the international community.[77]

The effectiveness of networks is based on their identity, the values and aims, as well as the formalized interactions among the connected organizations and individuals. Thus, the 'network as actor' obtains its success from its structure, as ideas are developed, discussed, practiced, and negotiated. Although there may be representatives that act on behalf of the network, the communication among members distinguishes the unique voice of the network – it is not only the product of various actions by individual members. However, this does not presuppose that advocacy networks are democratic structures. It is important to recognize the power asymmetries of many network communications, which are often based on resources, overwhelmingly located within North American and European 'network nodes.' Often stronger members in the network overshadow weaker players, but dominant actors can be altered through membership in the network.[78]

[75] D. della Porta and S.Tarrow. "Transnational Processes and Social Activism: An Introduction," in eds. D. della Porta and S. Tarrow. *Transnational Protest and Global Activism.* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005) p. 2
[76] Ibid, p. 2
[77] M. Keck and K. Sikkink, op.cit., p. 208
[78] Ibid, p. 208

The literature on transnational advocacy networks has contributed extensively to understanding the complex relationship between different actors and institutions at the international level. Components of the POS model have enabled a discussion of how domestic opportunity structures have contributed to the lack of success of Roma political activism in Macedonia and Serbia. In order to guide the empirical research, transnational advocacy networks as a concept needs to be operationalized by using the literature on norm socialization to complete the discussion of how international institutions seek to influence the domestic government in accommodating social movement claims.

2.7 Mechanisms of Transnational Advocacy Networks

The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices

Social movement actors may also use international norms, defined as "shared expectations held by a community of actors about appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity."[79] The concept of diffusion crucial to the proliferation of norms is defined as networking across national boundaries, but also the adoption of organizational structures, collective action frames and goals of protest groups from collective actors in other states.[80] International norms as political opportunities and resources can support social movement actors in transforming their goals and at times, collective beliefs may influence international norms.[81] Specifically, in the case of Romani political activism, international norms were not entirely inclusive of the Roma community in Europe. The first task of activists was to build new international norms by mobilizing consensus around collective beliefs.

[79] S. Khagram, J. Riker, and K. Sikkink. "From Santiago to Seattle: Transnational Advocacy Groups Restructuring World Politics," in eds. S. Khagram, J. Riker and K. Sikkink *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms.* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 13
[80] della Porta, D. and S. Tarrow, op.cit., p. 3
[81] Ibid, p. 3

The literature on international norms and domestic implementation stipulates three main processes by which internationalization occurs:[82]

1) processes of instrumental adaptation
2) processes of moral consciousness raising, argumentation, dialogue, and persuasion
3) processes of institutionalization and habitualization

Instrumental adaptation can be described as state concessions to international pressure (for example, the signing of international agreements). This process also involves bargaining and discussing human rights violations in the international arena. Domestic governments amend their actions according to international norms, engaging in rhetorical communication,[83] but may not necessarily believe in the norms. In the initial stages of norm socialization, governments generally, instrumentally adapt in response to increasing domestic and international pressures.[84]

The second steps important to analyzing norm socialization are argumentative and persuasive processes. There is an acceptance among actors as to the authority of norms in their daily discourse. As domestic and international actors formulate a shared understanding of the norm, it can lead to the influencing of political and social obligations. Argumentative and persuasive processes enable a change in perception based on acceptance of the norm. A combination of instrumental and argumentative processes may influence humanitarian issues in a state and does not allow for a lack of commitment in the long term. [85] As governments validate instrumental interests, challengers can seek legitimization of the claims, provoking a response and detailed discussions. However, states may employ 'rhetorical action' to undermine international values, reconstruct ideas to fit individual preferences and context, or use alternative international norms that support their arguments.

[82] T. Risse and K. Sikkink. "The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: introduction," in eds. T. Risse, S. Ropp, and K. Sikkink *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 11.
[83]Schimmelfenning, F. "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union." *International Organization.* 55.1 (Winter 2001) pp. 62-66
[84] T. Risse and K. Sikkink, op. cit., p. 12
[85] T. Risse and K. Sikkink, op.cit., p. 15

While exercising 'rhetorical action,' states must refrain from creating an inconsistent image that uses conflicting arguments and actions at different times, thus damaging their international standing. Processes of argumentation lead to 'rhetorical entrapment and commitment,' that force states to comply with international norms, although initially reacting from an individual perspective.[86] Finally, norm socialization cannot occur until the state has institutionalized certain humanitarian practices regardless of individual values.[87] States generally have few motivations to collaborate on issues. As advocacy networks challenge and transcend the idea of national sovereignty, in many cases states may coordinate to oppose the campaign and activities of networks. Continuous lobbying by committed activists is essential to agenda-setting before domestic policies are influenced. Individuals within government institutions may also highlight issues, but in order for states to implement change, questioned values must either correlate with the 'national interest' or the target country must view the change as an inexpensive alternative. Networks may also attempt to change state perceptions of the 'national interest,' and subsequently, the rational deliberation of specific policies. Furthermore, network members may attempt to recruit state representatives who sympathize on certain issues, or accrue other benefits from taking action.[88]

The concepts of rhetorical communication, rhetorical action, rhetorical entrapment and commitment are integral to understanding how argumentative processes focus attention on a humanitarian issue that subsequently, may lead to the socialization of norms in a country. The literature on transnational advocacy networks and norm socialization are essential to studying the interaction between domestic power structures, international institutions, and social movement actors. Although advocacy networks seek to describe how state policies may be influenced, the concept does not comprehensively discuss the mechanisms by which this occurs. Similar to the POS model, transnational advocacy

[86] Schimmelfenning, F., op.cit., p. 65
[87] T. Risse and K. Sikkink, op.cit., p. 16
[88] M. Keck and K. Sikkink, op.cit., p. 203

networks focus on the role of institutions and organizations without discussing the individual cognitive processes by which political actors make decisions.[89]

This chapter outlined domestic and international theoretical approaches in the study of political activism and mobilization. Specifically, the POS model and the concept of 'transnational advocacy networks,' were highlighted as necessary to guide the empirical research. The discussion also demonstrated the limitations of the nationalism, ethnic boundary and development literature in relation to the particular case of Roma mobilization. The subsequent methodology chapter will focus on how the research was conducted.

[89] For example, see K. Weyland. "The Puzzle of Policy Diffusion," in *Bounded Rationality and Policy Diffusion*. (Princeton University Press, 2007) for further information on individual cognitive decision making

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In order to examine the effectiveness of Roma mobilization in contesting state actions in Macedonia and Serbia, and to investigate the divergent treatment of Roma communities in the respective states a comparative case study approach was applied. This chapter will also outline the main factors of political activism and discuss the limitations of the research strategy. This research project used a variety of data sources in conducting a case study: official government documents, NGO and international reports, interviews, and direct observations. Various government institutions, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, legal aid offices, independent consultants, and academics working on policy formulation and implementation concerning Roma inclusion were contacted to provide information and relevant documents for this study.

3.2 Mechanisms and Processes of Political Activism

This study seeks to deconstruct mobilization by evaluating its particular mechanisms. This enables an analysis of how political activism is initiated and thus, how important an individual component is to the eventual outcome. More specifically, in order to present a comprehensive explanation, it is useful to identify the location of contention. In addition, it is important to describe the political context at the specified location, describe the inter-relationship between various activist claims, identify the most important results of activism, and observe the integral mechanisms that feed into processes of mobilization.

In analyzing political activism, Tarrow and Tilly outline the following mechanism process procedures:

1) Disaggregating a familiar process, such as mobilization, into its component mechanisms, in order to understand what makes it work.
2) Comparing how such a process works in different settings to understand what difference the presence or absence of a particular mechanism makes.

3) Examining whether particular mechanisms coincide so frequently with similar outcomes as to constitute a robust process.[1]

This study will focus on three main mechanisms that combine in various political sites and situations to stimulate effective political activism: *brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action*. Brokerage refers to the "*production of a new connection between previously unconnected sites*."[2] Diffusion is defined as the *"spread of a form of contention, an issue, or a way of framing it from one site to another."*[3] The study will demonstrate that Roma activists have not been able to form a connection between multiple sites of contention. For instance, this is especially apparent among pro-Romani civil society organizations and political parties in Macedonia and Serbia. While activists have an institutional base and few financial resources to develop programs for Roma inclusion, there is considerable dissension among relevant actors. The lack of coordination is also a key limitation among government institutions implementing Roma inclusion policies and programs, especially between leaders of various Roma political parties.

Romani activists in civil society organizations and government agencies have similar goals of public and political participation, as well as the alleviation of poverty in Roma communities. Although activists can coalesce around similar goals, there are many challenges with the *diffusion* of ideas, resources and practices, as there is limited coordination and extensive competition among Roma activists and politicians. As will be described further in chapters four and five, government authorities are also unlikely to facilitate Roma activism through institutional channels. The domestic political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia is not conducive to Roma advocacy. Thus, diffusion and other mobilization mechanisms are not likely to be effective under such conditions.

[1] Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. Contentious Politics (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), p. 30
[2] Ibid, p. 31
[3] Ibid, p. 31

The mechanisms of brokerage and diffusion enable *coordinated action* defined as *"two or more actors' engagement in mutual signalling and parallel making of claims on the same object."*[4] In the context of this research project, coordinated action would generally seek to connect three components: a group of claimants, object (s) of claims, and government authorities that may or may not choose to implement changes, having extensive impact on the claimants' welfare.[5]

Although Roma activists in government institutions, civil society, and political parties seek to develop and implement Roma inclusion policies and programs, the inability to present a common platform and cooperate (absence of brokerage and diffusion mechanisms) has not led to *coordinated action*. The Macedonian and Serbian government authorities as the target of activist claims are important to take into consideration as part of the internal dynamic that presents specific challenges for Roma activists in contesting their oppression. As the study will demonstrate in proceeding chapters, there is a limited and weak connection between government authorities and Roma activists. It is not likely that coordinated action will transpire within the current domestic opportunity structure.

In conducting a comparative analysis of Roma mobilization in Macedonia and Serbia, the particular presence or absence of *brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action* were noted. This accounted for why similar mobilization mechanisms did not always lead to a successful outcome in case (A) compared to case (B). For example, in comparing civil society organizations in Macedonia and Serbia, it was found that the presence of brokerage, diffusion and thus, coordinated action enabled better opportunities for political activism in Macedonia. Although parallel mechanisms facilitated the emergence of civil society organizations in Serbia, the ramifications of the conflict (1990-1999) and repressive tactics of the Milosevic regime did not enable the effective participation and influence of civil society organizations in the state. Thus, the domestic political opportunity structure constrained activists' actions and remained 'closed.'

[4] Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. op.cit., p. 31
[5] Ibid, p. 119

Alternatively, in evaluating institutional responses in Macedonia and Serbia, it was found that while brokerage enabled a connection between government authorities and Roma activists, diffusion and coordinated action were absent – leading to similar (negative) outcomes for Roma inclusion in the respective states.

Roma activists have not been effective advocating and coordinating at the domestic level. However, there has been extensive activity at the international level. In order to examine political activism in the international sphere, it is useful to refer again to the concept of 'transnational advocacy networks.' As defined in the previous chapter, transitional advocacy networks are most likely to transpire when the linkages between domestic groups and governments are restricted or when communication paths are ineffective for conflict resolution.[6] The specific challenges of coordination among Roma activists, as well as domestic government oppression has led to the production of new connections, and the *diffusion* of ideas, resources, and practices in the international arena. This has led to the participation and influence of the European Union, as well as other international organizations. An *upward scale shift* has occurred, leading to coordinated action at a higher level;[7] that is, among Roma activists and international institutions that seek to influence domestic Roma inclusion policy. *Emulation* occurs when structural conditions (internationalization and communication), social mechanisms (brokerage), and pathways (diffusion) are conducive to action. As multiple actors adopt similar ideas and practices, activist claims and influence intensify.[8] The specific opportunities and challenges of this endeavour will be further discussed in chapter six.

3.3 Factors of Political Activism

It is useful to refer to the two initial propositions in this study before discussing the explanatory components that describe the ability of Roma to mobilize and advocate for their issues: i) Roma mobilization is likely to succeed when the domestic political

[6] Keck, M. and Sikkink, K. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p.12.
[7] Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. op.cit, pp. 93-95.
[8] Givan, R. Roberts, K. Soule, S. *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 103

opportunity structure is favourable ii) A 'closed' domestic political opportunity structure shifts the focus of Roma activism to the international level.

Following Goldstone, this thesis adopts a 'relational approach'[9] analyzing the relationship between various factors impacting a particular issue, rather than focusing on the macro-level conditions influencing protest activity as included in classic POS literature. By using an alternative term 'external relational fields'[10] to account for protest group dynamics, Goldstone does not define a clear set of conditions for the emergence, sustainability, or results of protest activity. Collective action is rather confronted with its own unique set of factors within the 'external field,' consisting of: (1) other movements and counter-movements that may compete for attention and resources, or provide reinforcement and alliances, or engage in direct competition or conflict with the movement; (2) political and economic institutions (and their history) that provide the framework in which political actors recruit, act, and seek responses; (3) various levels of state authorities and political actors (including political parties and civil and military officials) whose responses to the movement and its actions affect its development and outcomes; (4) various elites - economic, political, religious, media - whose interests, capacities, and actions affect movement development and its outcomes.[11] In the following empirical chapters, 'external fields' are conceptually defined by using the terms 'state repression/facilitation,' 'increased institutional access,' 'influential domestic and international allies,' and 'shifting political alignments.'[12]

3.3 Research Strategy

Case Selection Rationale

[9] Goldstone, J.A. "More Social Movements or Fewer?" Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields." *Theory and Society*. 33.4 (2004), p. 357
[10] Ibid, p. 356
[11] Goldstone, J.A., op.cit., p. 357 This study does not analyze the following components also mentioned as 'external fields': (5) various publics whose interests, capacities, and actions affect movement development and its outcomes; (6) symbolic and value orientations available in society that condition the reception and response to movement claims and actions; and (7) critical events - such as wars, economic crises, or incidents of violence or outcomes of specific episodes of confrontation.
[12] These terms are widely used by social movement scholars analyzing domestic opportunity structures. See C. Tilly and S. Tarrow. *Contentious Politics* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007)

Skopje, Macedonia and the cities of Novi Sad and Belgrade in Serbia were selected as fieldwork sites because they highlighted a number of interesting contrasts in terms of state responses to Roma political activism. Additionally, Skopje and Belgrade as capital cities facilitated access to the main NGOs and government institutions working on Roma issues. As the researcher resided in Novi Sad, located in the province of Vojvodina, and recognized its distinct history and culture, it was perceived as necessary to describe the particular case of Roma in this region. Additionally, many of the prominent academics, NGO activists, and government officials working on Roma inclusion were residing in Novi Sad – thus, it was important to include their interviews and documents in the study.

Macedonia is often promoted by Romani and non-Romani politicians and activists as a 'multi-ethnic state' promoting tolerance toward minority communities. In addition, Macedonia, in 1971 was the only Yugoslav nation that officially recognized Roma as an ethnic community in its constitution. Serbia, in contrast, has often been portrayed by academics, the media and Western governments as nationalistic, promoting inter-ethnic conflict.[13] The Serbian constitution while classifying the Roma as an 'ethnic group' has *not* recognized the community as a national minority. A cross-case comparison allows for an examination of Roma political activism in two post-socialist states in the process of democratic transition. Thus, Macedonia presents an ideal case assuming that the political opportunity structure has been *more conducive* to promoting Roma inclusion, while Serbia presents a case in which the political opportunity structure *may not be conducive* to Roma inclusion.

3.4 The Case Study Approach

The research project utilized the *case study* as a research strategy, defined by Yin as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not

[13] See Pesic, V. *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis*, United States Institute of Peace, Peaceworks No. 8 (Washington D.C., April 2006), and Mann, M. *The Darkside of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

clearly evident."[14] The alternative research strategies that could have been utilized are ethnography, or a statistical survey. A secondary analysis has not been used as conducting comparative research by designing a survey or questionnaire in which the meanings are perceived the same way by respondents in each state would be a difficult task to accomplish. Surveys would not encapsulate the details necessary for an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon studied, for instance in interview techniques utilized.[15] Ethnography as a research strategy is a popular field research technique, which uses participant observation to develop thick descriptions.[16] However, these two research strategies do not incorporate all of the intensive data collection and analysis procedures as outlined by the case study approach. Furthermore, a case study strategy is especially relevant as this project gives considerable attention to contextual conditions that are important for describing state oppression of Roma and their ability to mobilize.

Therefore, this research project has been a qualitative study, as one of the goals is "directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories."[17] Regarding theory development, a multiple case study design is useful as conclusive findings of the research project may support the 'hypothesized contrast,'[18] thus moving toward theoretical replication and satisfying external validity.

3.5 Limitations of the Case Study Approach

Bias

[14] Yin, R. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods.* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), p. 13
[15] Dale, A., Sara A., and M. Proctor. "Benefits and costs of secondary analysis," in *Doing Secondary Analysis.* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 47-57
[16] See Geertz, C. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), for an example of 'thick description' and ethnographic methods
[17] Snape, D. and L. Spencer, "The Foundations of Qualitative Research," in *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. eds. J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 3
[18] Yin, R. op.cit., p. 54

The issue of bias in a research study is important to address regardless of the research strategy employed. There is the perception that the case study is not a rigorous research strategy. At times, there has been the opinion that the researcher has not conducted a systematic analysis, and has allowed personal biases to formulate the final conclusions. However, as Yin argues the opportunity for bias to influence the research strategy can also occur in designing experiments, formulating questionnaires, or undertaking historical study.[19]

Concerning this study on Roma, the issue of bias may arise in regards to taking the side of the oppressed group or 'underdog.'[20] The initial reason for conducting research on this issue stemmed from an emotional response to the marginalized situation of Roma in Macedonia and Serbia. One of the main concerns in conducting social scientific research is the difficulty of remaining impartial and unemotional. The issue of emotion and sentiment is addressed by Gouldner arguing against "the myth of the sentiment-free social scientist."[21] By suggesting that bias is an inherent part of the research process, Gouldner's argument presents a better understanding of how a researcher can balance viewing research emotionally, as well as engaging in an intellectual project that is credible in the academic community.[22]

As an individual that has worked in this field, to undertake the role of researcher was at times problematic. In view of the widespread discrimination and exclusion of the Roma community, it was difficult to present a negative image of the group, or reveal some of the weaknesses and problems within political parties and civil society organizations as Roma seek to mobilize in opposition to the state. It was found that state institutions and societal discrimination are only part of the problem that can account for the oppression of the Roma people in Macedonia and Serbia. The lack of cohesion among Roma activists and politicians also plays a role in limiting activism.

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[19] Ibid, p. 10
[20] Becker, H. "Whose Side Are We On?" *Social Problems* 14.3 (Winter, 1967) p. 239
[21] Gouldner, A. "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State," in *For Sociology: Renewal and Critique in Sociology Today* (London: Allen Lane, 1975) p. 33
[22] Ibid, p. 34

Another important aspect is the identity of the researcher in influencing the research process. Mies, in reference to feminist activism, writes,

> "feminist women must deliberately and courageously integrate their repressed, unconscious female subjectivity, that is, their own experience of oppression and discrimination into the research process. This means that committed women social scientists must learn to understand their own 'double consciousness' as a methodological and political opportunity and not as an obstacle."[23]

As a researcher who is a 'visible minority,' my identity and prior experiences of racial discrimination and exclusion influenced the research process and eventual findings. In interviewing government officials, NGO activists, and international organization representatives, specific questions regarding individual and institutional discrimination were proposed. Furthermore, if the interviewees discussed certain themes related to racism and exclusion, the researcher pursued these ideas further. In analyzing the data and including interview excerpts, the researcher attempted to provide a comprehensive perspective of the challenges confronting Roma activists in Macedonia and Serbia. The researcher's personal experiences as a 'visible minority' (sometimes perceived as a Romani female) residing in Macedonia and Serbia, as well as witnessing the treatment of Roma individuals in everyday interactions did influence the inclusion of specific material related to racism and discrimination. As previously noted in the introductory chapter, racism and discrimination are important factors in accounting for the marginalization of Roma communities that impacts essential areas of interest such as housing, health care, education and employment.

Mies criticizes the idea that researchers when analyzing women's issues should "suppress their emotions, their subjective feelings of involvement and identification with other women in order to produce 'objective' data."[24] Furthermore, my identity as a visible minority and being of Indian ethnicity rather complemented efforts to gain access to the community. Many Roma intellectuals and elites are aware of their cultural, religious and linguistic roots in India. Because of a perceived ethnic affiliation with the researcher, respondents were at times more forthcoming with information, and at times,

[23] Mies, M. "Towards a Methodology for Feminist Research," in *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics, and Practice*. ed. Martyn Hammersley (London: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 68
[24] Mies, M. op.cit., p. 67

displayed greater interest and curiosity in the study. Although perceived ethnic affiliation may have encouraged a friendly rapport and facilitated discussion, the researcher and respondent remained objective by following the interview agenda, as well as focusing on the main aims of the study. In analyzing interview content, the researcher's access to informants (Roma and non-Roma) from different institutions led to a comprehensive evaluation of Roma mobilization, providing a varied and rich source of data.

Generalization

A secondary concern regarding the case study approach is the difficulty in generalizing. As George and Bennett emphasize "case study methods involved a trade-off among the goals of attaining theoretical parsimony, establishing explanatory richness, and keeping the number of cases to be studied manageable."[25] Additional cases would increase the generalizability of the research project; however, there are limitations to resolving the issue in this manner. Primarily, multi-site studies can be quite costly. By focusing on numerous sites one may not be able to analyze the cases extensively and in depth.[26] This supports the idea of 'explanatory richness' as a strength of the case study approach.[27]

The challenge of generalization can be dealt with by offering a re-conceptualization of the term.[28] Schofield offers an alternative term 'fittingness,'[29] that can be described as studying the extent to which the social phenomenon studied is comparable to another case one finds interesting. Subsequently, there is a greater focus on increasing information about the social phenomenon and context analyzed. Without detailed information, it is difficult to apply the findings from one case to understanding another site of interest.[30] Thus, generalizability conceptualized in this manner, may help to

[25] George A. and A. Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), p. 31
[26] Schofield, J.W. "Increasing the Generalizability of Qualitative Research," in *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice.* ed. M. Hammersley (London: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 80
[27] George A. and A. Bennett, op.cit., p. 31
[28] Schofield, J.W., op.cit., p. 74
[29] Guba and Lincoln in Schofield, op.cit., p. 75
[30] Ibid, p. 75

deflect criticism of using a case study approach, and demonstrate the strength of this strategy in providing strong support for the theoretical propositions developed.

In discussing the 'targets of generalization,'[31] Schofield argues that qualitative studies should attempt to generalize by seeking explanations to the question of: what could be. Thus, the researcher can choose a site that represents a 'theoretical ideal' (i.e. Macedonia). If there are serious difficulties that arise at the research site, it would be reasonable to assume that there would be problems in other situations, thus, the researcher would reform or dismiss theoretical propositions that led to the case selection. Alternatively, the case could also present an opportunity to gain further understanding into why these particular conditions produce positive outcomes and the difficulties that still arise.[32]

However, there is a limitation in employing the strategy of selecting a site as the analysis of the case may be influenced by the theoretical propositions and expectations. The researcher may ignore other interesting puzzles and dimensions that emerge because of their commitment to a particular perspective. This poses difficulties concerning internal validity, but can be mitigated if the researcher is open to what may actually occur at the research site and uses the theory as a support rather than an inflexible rubric. Although a case is chosen as a theoretical ideal, it is important to analyze problems that arise. A related issue is that prior knowledge of cases allows "stronger research designs; cases can be selected with a view toward whether they are most-likely, least-likely, or crucial for a theory, making the process-tracing test of a theory more severe."[33] As it applies to this research project, Macedonia exemplifies an 'ideal case,' and Serbia a distinct comparison on the relevant factors.

3.6 Data Collection

Interviews

[31] Ibid, p. 76
[32] Schofield, J.W. op.cit., p. 86
[33] George A. and A. Bennett, op.cit., p. 24

From January – June 2009, I conducted field research in Skopje, Macedonia, and the cities of Belgrade and Novi Sad in Serbia. The empirical investigations of Roma political activism presented in this thesis rely on data from secondary literature, surveys, international and NGO reports. The majority of the information, however, is obtained from semi-structured interviews with forty-two representatives or members of NGOs, government institutions, legal aid offices, and international organizations, as well as independent consultants and academics working on Roma inclusion. This was also the most appropriate method to collect data for this research project, as secondary documents do not always adequately explain the effects of state and international organization policy toward Roma. After completing transcription of all forty-two interviews, the content was categorized by sub-themes relating to the factors of political activism.

Through the interviews, a variety of topics were covered such as the state response to Roma advocacy, the impact of Roma political parties, networking among Roma activists, NGO-state cooperation, international organizations and influence on domestic Roma inclusion policies and programs, international cooperation with NGOs, the Decade of Roma Inclusion and its impact, challenges for Roma political activism, as well as the steps required to promote further integration of the Roma community.

In Macedonia and Serbia, interviews were conducted in person in the offices of the participants. The following organizations relevant to Roma and minority inclusion policy at the domestic and international levels were contacted in the respective states: RNVO 2002 (NGO), NGO Sumnal, Association of Roma Students (NGO), Roma Resource Center Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (NGO), Novi Sad Humanitarian Center (NGO), Union of Roma Students (NGO), League for Roma Decade (NGO), Minority Rights Center (NGO), Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Minority Affairs and Languages, Department of Justice, Office for the National Strategy on Roma and Implementation of the Roma Decade, Secretariat for National Minorities in the Executive Council of Vojvodina, Office of the President (Vojvodina), Office for Roma Inclusion (Novi Sad), National Council of Roma National

Minority in Serbia, think tank Studio Room, European Commission, Open Society Institute (OSI), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Roma Education Fund (REF), World Bank, CARE International, and University of Novi Sad.

The researcher would have liked to interview Roma politicians in Macedonia and Serbia; unfortunately, there was a lack of credible candidates in Macedonia. In meeting some of the Roma politicians from the dominant Roma political parties, the researcher decided not to arrange interviews, as in the opinion of the researcher, the individuals would not have provided accurate or substantive information on the research themes. Furthermore, NGO activists and international organization representatives informed the researcher that a few of the Roma politicians in Macedonia were either absent (had left the country to escape punitive corruption charges), or were extremely biased and had limited knowledge of political issues. The following tables are the list of interviewees contacted by the researcher from January – June 2009 in Macedonia and Serbia. The institutional affiliation and position of the respondent are also included.

Interviews in Skopje, Macedonia (January – March, 2009)

Interviewee/Gender	**Date of Interview**	**Position/Institution**
Neseme (F)	January 19, 2009	Executive Director, Multicultural Society
Neda Milevska (F)	January 23, 2009	Consultant, think tank STUDIOROOM
Ramiza Sakip (F)	January 23, 2009	Coordinator, RNVO 2002
Slavica Indzevska (F)	January 26, 2009	Director, Roma Education Fund
Mereba Kamberi (F)	January 28, 2009	Director, National Coordination Office for the Implementation of Decade Action Plans and National Strategy for Roma Inclusion
Jessica Mangskau (F)	February 2, 2009	Peace Corps Volunteer, NGO Sumnal

Sabena Mustafa (F)	February 3, 2009	Program Assistant, National Coordination Office for the Implementation of Decade Action Plans and National Strategy for Roma Inclusion
Ljatif Demir (M)	February 5, 2009	Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Action Plans, Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade
Eben Friedman (M)	February 6, 2009	Independent Consultant , Roma Education Fund
Alexandra Bojadzieva (F)	February 9, 2009	Manager, Roma Democratic Development Association
Ibrahim Ibrahimi (M)	February 9, 2009	former Deputy Minister of Justice
Elvis Memeti (M)	February 10, 2009	Junior Associate, National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the Decade Action Plans and National Strategy for Roma Inclusion
Nevenka Krusarovska (F)	February 16, 2009	Ombudman's Office
Orhan Usein (M)	February 18, 2009	Assistant to Director of Roma Education Fund
Senad Mustafov (M)	February 18, 2009	Program Coordinator, Roma Education Fund
Denis Durmis (M)	February 19, 2009	Junior Associate, National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the Decade Action Plans and National Strategy for Roma Inclusion

Fatma Bjram (F)	February 21, 2009	Executive Director, NGO Sumnal
Ramche (M)	February 24, 2009	Senior Community Service Officer, UNHCR
Alma Mustafovska (F)	February 25, 2009	Lawyer, CEEOL
Redzpali Cupi (M)	February 26, 2009	Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture
Elvis Ali (M)	February 27, 2009	Task Manager, Public Administration, European Agency for Reconstruction
Victor Friedman (M)	March 10, 2009	Professor of Linguistics, University of Chicago
Domenico Albonetti (M)	March 13, 2009	Political Adviser, OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

Interviews in Belgrade and Novi Sad, Serbia (April – June, 2009)

Interviewee (Gender)	**Date of Interview**	**Position/Institution**
Dusko Jovanovic (M)	April 28, 2009	Director, Roma Inclusion Office
Jelena Savic (F)	May 5, 2009	Junior Assistant, Education Program, Open Society Institute
Sonja Barbul (F)	May 5, 2009	Roma Assistant, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Jelena Jovanvic (F)	May 6, 2009	Coordinator, Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities
Stanka Jankovic (F)	May 6, 2009	Executive Director, Ecumenical Humanitarian

		Organization
Andrea Colak (F)	May 7, 2009	Executive Director, Minority Rights Center
Matthew Newton (M)	May 7, 2009	Director Roma Assistance Program, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Petar Nikolic (M)	May 12, 2009	Roma Activist and Television Host
Svenka Savic (F)	May 17, 2009	Director Women's Studies and Research, University of Novi Sad
Jasna Kronja (F)	May 18, 2009	Department Head, CARE Serbia Office
Milena Cuk (F)	May 18, 2009	Program Coordinator, Novi Sad Humanitarian Center
Nenad Vladisavljavic (M)	May 21, 2009	Roma Students Association
Srdjan Sajn (M)	May 29, 2009	Leader of the Roma Party
Dusko Radosavljevic (M)	June 2, 2009	Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad
Osman Balic (M)	June 3, 2009	Director, YUROM Centar
Nadja Kocic (F)	June 5, 2009	Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund
Ljuan Koka (M)	June 5, 2009	Head of Department, Secretariat for Implementation of the National Strategy, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights
Vitomir Mihajlovic (M)	June 6, 2009	Member of Parliament Democratic Party (DS) and President of the National

		Council for Roma
Jadranka Stojanovic (F)	June 8, 2009	Program Coordinator, Fund for an Open Society

Regarding *state repression/facilitation, increased institutional access, and shifting political alignments* the following documentation was relevant: academic studies of the same cases, election and survey data, government and international organization reports. Academic sources, government and international organization reports provided historical background and current information on the government structure. Election and survey data supported an understanding of the political dynamics in each state (political parties and factions that influence openness). It was also important to conduct semi-structured interviews with government authorities in Macedonia and Serbia to analyze how 'open' the government structure is to policy demands by minority groups. Additionally, interviews would help to evaluate the intermediation between interest groups and the executive branch.

To evaluate the *strength of influential domestic and international allies* it was useful to collect documents such as agendas, announcements, conference and commissioned papers, proposals, progress reports, academic studies, government reports, international organization policy papers, and NGO human rights reports. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with NGO and individual activists, international organization and government representatives. The information obtained from the interviews supported an understanding of state/NGO/activist relations. Key actors involved in Roma activism revealed the challenges and opportunities that are encountered with state authorities.

There are strengths and weaknesses to conducting semi-structured interviews. A key characteristic of a semi structured interview is its combination of "structure with flexibility."[34] There should be enough flexibility to ensure that the responses of the

[34] Legend, R., J. Keegan, and K.Ward. "In-depth Interviews," in *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. eds. J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006) p. 141

interviewee can be fully penetrated and that the interviewer can formulate questions of interest that arise spontaneously. The interactive aspect of interviews is perhaps, one of the best qualities of this research method creating information that otherwise would not be generated.[35]

The limitations of the interviewer concerning this project may be an imposition of the interviewer's framework of understanding the issue. It can be difficult not to interrupt the flow of conversation with one's own thoughts on the issue, respond to questions by the interviewee, or guide the interview with preconceived questions.[36] It was also important to build trust in order for the respondent to feel comfortable in answering questions. This is especially the case when conducting a study on Roma inclusion; as some respondents had negative experiences with academics, and government officials who manipulated the information to present highly discriminatory reports on Roma communities. Interviews were primarily with Roma and non-Roma working in government institutions, international organizations and NGOs. Some respondents were cautious initially, questioning how the information provided would be used in the context of the study. Respondents were notified at the beginning of the interview that their names could remain anonymous, information would be kept confidential and transcriptions upon completion would be available for review. As the researcher had previously worked on Roma issues and was acquainted with Roma activists working in Macedonia and Serbia, issues of trust and credibility were facilitated by mentioning their names.

Because the interviewing process is a highly intellectual exercise, as well as emotionally draining, the researcher limited the quantity of interviews conducted per week, in order not to become oversaturated with information and exhausted.[37] This lengthened the period of field research, but also allowed for further access to government officials and

[35] Ibid, p. 141
[36] Merton, R. and P. Kendall. "The Focused Interview." *American Journal of Sociology*. 51.6 (May, 1946), p. 547
[37] Arksey, H. and Knight, P. "Interviewing for Social Scientists: Why Interviews?" in *Interviewing for Social Sciences* (London and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1999) p. 35

NGO personnel, as well as facilitating informal conversations with activists working on Roma issues. Generally, for all interviews contact was initiated primarily through the snow-ball method, as key informants would be able to relay information about other experts/activists in the area of Roma issues. A limitation of this method is the potential for bias, as interviewees may not provides names of individuals with whom they have personal conflict, or differing political affiliations. However, the majority of Roma politicians, activists, NGO personnel, and international organization employees working on Roma policies and programs were well acquainted, and this greatly facilitated making contact and arranging meetings.

It was also important, although not directly related to the topic, to visit and reside in Roma communities. While in Skopje, Macedonia the researcher volunteered briefly in NGO Sumnal situated within the Roma settlement of Topaana on the outskirts of the city. This enabled a more comprehensive understanding of how Roma inclusion policy and international funds are implemented in the context of providing tutoring, and English language classes for Roma children. Although the thesis does not analyze aspects of Romani culture (traditions, socialization, gender roles etc.), it was an enriching and humbling experience to reside in Topaana for two weeks to understand the effects of marginalization, exclusion, and socio-economic inequalities impacting the community. The researcher also had the opportunity to accompany 'street level' activists working with Romani beggar children. This further demonstrated the limited effects of international and domestic policy, such as the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015)' on the lives of the most vulnerable groups within the Roma community. The researcher did not have the opportunity to visit or reside in Roma communities in Serbia, as a familiar acquaintance is generally necessary to gain access to the community.

Other limitations of interviews included the time consuming task of constructing an interview agenda and transcription. Although the majority of Roma activists and academics are fluent in English, language posed a problem as the researcher does not have competence in the Macedonian, Serbian or Romani dialects and had to rely on informants or interpreters to translate which can be costly. In Macedonia, the researcher

relied on a translator for seven interviews. In Serbia, a total of ten interviews included the presence of an interpreter. Having an interpreter present may have influenced the respondent's answers or relayed inaccurate information as it is not always possible to translate some Macedonian and Serbian terms into English. It was also challenging to set up interviews with participants, as differing schedules did not always allow for the respondent, translator and interviewer to meet. Another important concern was conducting interviews primarily with NGO personnel, international organization and government officials that may have resulted in biased conclusions, as the concerns and perceptions of activists are secondary.

Direct Observation

By conducting field work in Macedonia and Serbia, the contextual conditions in international organizations, government offices and NGOs could be observed, thereby supporting an analysis of Roma political activism in the respective states, as well as revealing novel dimensions to be studied. The researcher was able to participate in conferences and meetings regarding Roma inclusion, and could directly observe policy makers and activists engaging on relevant issues. This also enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges for Roma political activism at the domestic and international levels. The researcher was able to attend the Open Society Institute/World Bank Conference on Roma Inclusion and Health in Macedonia (Januray 2009), as well as a meeting of Roma politicians in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (June 2009) and the UNHCR/World Bank Conference on progress made during the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Serbia (June 2009). Furthermore, the researcher had the opportunity to attend various seminars and presentations relating to NGO programs and EU policies on Roma inclusion at the Central European University (CEU) summer course on 'Social Integration and the Romany Minority in Europe Today: Linking Policy and Research to Work Against Poverty Discrimination, and Ethnic Conflict' (June – July 2010), as well as the University of Oxford Conference on 'Roma Mobilities in Europe' (January 14-15,

2010). Documents and academic papers distributed at the various conferences and meetings also contributed to providing information for the thesis.

Finally, there are a few general difficulties that were encountered while conducting field work in Macedonia and Serbia. Both countries are post-Socialist and post-conflict areas of study, which was problematic for collecting information, as records may have been lost, incomplete and not up to date. Furthermore, the field research period was lengthened from four to six months, as the researcher did not expect that respondents, particularly in the case of Serbia, would take longer to respond to the initial invitation for an interview.

Data Reduction and Analysis

In analyzing the data, the study applied an inductive approach. Although the researcher focused on one aspect of the research process at a time, there was constant movement between the various steps outlined below. Hence, the theoretical framework, empirical evidence, and research questions were in simultaneous dialogue; eventually converging to establish a cohesive structure to present the findings. The following steps were important to the analysis and reduction of data: analyzing within-case data, searching for cross case patterns, and shaping propositions.[38]

Subsequent to data collection in Macedonia and Serbia, the researcher transcribed forty-two interviews, and wrote detailed case notes for each site. This was an essential process to provide further insight into the various components of Roma mobilization, as well as providing greater clarity and organization of the data. The researcher became very familiar with each case study and its particularities, prior to making general claims. This process also facilitated cross case comparison.

In recognizing comparable themes between the case studies, the researcher developed several categories (i.e. NGO/political party conflict, Decade of Roma Inclusion) to further establish similarities and differences between the cases. Although at initial

[38] Eisenhardt, K. "Building Theories from Case Study Research." *The Academy of Management Review*. 14.4 (October 1989): 539-545.

glance, the dynamics of Roma mobilization in Macedonia and Serbia seemed quite similar - the categorization of data allowed for the recognition of distinctive subtleties. This process allowed for the generation of new categories and concepts not previously anticipated. This technique of cross-case comparison also supported the development of robust propositions and conclusions that were closely connected with the empirical research. Furthermore, cross case comparison enabled the realization of new findings in the data.[39] As relationships between the various components of Roma mobilization emerged, the researcher compared the tentative theoretical framework with the emerging case data. This was a highly iterative process that built upon new findings and developed a strong theoretical base that reflected the empirical research.

In order to evaluate the quality of the research design, one has to take into account construct, internal, and external validity, as well as reliability.[40] It is important that the study used multiple sources of data, as mentioned previously, to meet the test of construct validity. By "establishing a chain of evidence" the researcher improves the reliability and construct validity of the information collected. In order to do this, the report cited the relevant data collected (i.e. interviews, documentation). Second, the data collected revealed the context and primary evidence of information included in the case study.[41] Alternatively, 'triangulation' referring to "the process of multiple mapping, whereby a particular observation or finding is subject to scrutiny from more than one source"[42] was used as a research strategy; especially as some interview material and documents collected during field research, while contributing to the originality of the study, have previously not been subject to academic or public review.

A primary concern of this research project is internal validity. The issue of external validity has been discussed extensively concerning the generalization of a study. Concerning internal validity, the propositions initially stated in the introduction of the

[39] Ibid, p. 540
[40] Yin, op.cit., p. 34
[41] Ibid, p. 105
[42] See Pinnock in Klimova-Alexander, I. *The Romani Voice in World Politics: The United Nations and Non-State Actors*. (England: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), pp. 7- 8 Klimova also mentions this as a helpful research strategy in mitigating the challenges of conducting field research on Roma issues.

methodology chapter refer to a causal relationship regarding the political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia that may have an impact on the ability of Roma to mobilize and advocate for their issues. The researcher took into account that inferences based on interviews and documentation were rigorously analyzed by taking into account alternative possibilities and explanations.[43] It is also important to mention that after extensive analysis only certain transcriptions and quotes were used, as only the most relevant and representative content regarding the research topic was included.

Ethical Implications

Many of the academic studies, international and NGO reports are written by non-Roma individuals. The 'epistemic violence'[44] that constitutes the 'other' by the West, as well as the intellectual's role in knowledge production about Roma, assists in marginalizing the illiterate, the majority of Roma that exist beyond the 'civilization' of the West and its elites. At best the academic community is only an 'informant' for those concerned with the voice of the 'other.' It is important to question, as Spivak provocatively states "how can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics? With what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?"[45]

In any written text, such as this thesis, the analysis is elaborated in place of the 'subject,' – the 'Roma community,' is only a brief reminder to describe the multitude of experiences, rich oral history, and consciousness that are not written into a text intended for an academic audience. A more difficult task still, one must be careful not to transform the 'subject' into an object for investigation. Furthermore, any narrative of the 'subaltern subject' is a substitute for those that cannot speak within the confines of dominant group discourse. And, thus it is important to be reflective when constructing a narrative - as not only representing 'them,' but, also our selves.[46]

[43] Yin, op.cit., p. 36
[44] Spivak, G. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), p. 285
[45] Ibid, p. 285
[46] Ibid, pp. 287-288

Furthermore, any research on ethnic minorities has to account for the politically sensitive nature of the topic. This is especially the case regarding the Roma community. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the Roma identity is often conceptualized as 'monolithic,' negatively portrayed as a subservient underclass. It is important that various stereotypes of the Roma as poor, uneducated and criminal are not perpetuated within this study. Thus, while the thesis criticizes some elements of Romani political organization, it does not imply this is true for 'all Roma,' nor does it suggest specific behaviours of Roma activists. It is the aim of the study to provide an objective perspective of the successes and failures of Roma mobilization and national/international policy on Roma inclusion. It is also important to note that while the study describes the social exclusion of some Roma – it does not reflect on the entire population. It is recognized that many Roma are integrated within mainstream Macedonian and Serbian societies. Socio-economic inequalities are only highlighted as it is this particular segment of the population that are targets of national and international policies on Roma inclusion.

This chapter has demonstrated that the case study approach is a rigorous research strategy regarding this research project. Data analysis and collection techniques outlined enabled the researcher to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, while taking into consideration criteria for evaluating the research design. In conducting the research, challenges were mitigated by having prior knowledge of the research strategy and finding innovative ways in formulating and revising the theoretical framework. The following chapters (chapters 4 and 5) will examine the domestic opportunity structure and Roma political activism in Macedonia and Serbia. Chapter 6 will focus on international advocacy and Roma mobilization. The final chapter of the thesis (chapter 7) will include a comparative analysis of the case studies and examine Roma mobilization as 'coordinated action.'

CHAPTER 4

Domestic Opportunities and Constraints: The Case of Macedonia and Roma Political Activism

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to describe the domestic factors that may facilitate or impede Romani activism in Macedonia. The domestic political opportunity structure (POS) is a useful framework to analyze components impacting mobilization; these include, state repression and/or facilitation, increasing institutional access, influential domestic and international allies, and shifting political alignments. The preliminary section provides a brief synopsis of how the nation building process in the former Yugoslavia impacted contemporary inter-ethnic relations in the state and was not conducive to minority integration. Despite ratification of the Ohrid Framework agreement and promulgation of Macedonia as a 'multicultural community,' the Roma community remains in a disadvantaged position. This section also describes the political conflict and lack of consensus among decision makers seriously debilitating opportunities for legislative reform and policy making, thus creating closed political channels for Roma claims-making. Although Macedonia has ratified numerous international agreements on human rights, minimal progress has been achieved in addressing state and societal discrimination concerning Roma. Secondly, the chapter focuses on various institutional responses to deal with issues of Roma inclusion. Additionally, the various strategies of domestic actors are outlined and evaluated; specifically focusing on the implementation of national strategy and action plans, inter-agency cooperation, and various actions by civil society and political parties on Roma

issues. Finally, the chapter discusses the extent to which the current process of decentralization may facilitate Roma activism at the local level.

4.2 Macedonia: Inclusive Society or Repressive State?

Nation Building and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Prior to discussing the opportunities and challenges facing Roma advocacy actors in Macedonia, it is important to briefly describe the socio-political environment that impacts minority related concerns in the state. Contemporary conflicts regarding inter-ethnic relations in the former Yugoslavia are an outcome of the nation building process. At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the Ottoman Empire diminishing in power, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Turkey disputed Macedonia. According to the 'principle of nationalities,' territorial sovereignty was substantiated by the ethnicity (cultural nationality) of the population. Thus, the four contesting states attempted to define the population in a way to produce 'their' ethnic majorities. As stated by Kertzer and Arel, "cultural identities in Macedonia were complex, with much of the population multilingual, religion (Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Islam) cross cutting languages, three Patriarchates (Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek) contending for the loyalty of Orthodox believers, and much of the population having a weak national consciousness, in the modern sense of the word."[1] All four competing states contested the existence of a Macedonian ethnic identity even though historical sources attest that an increasing number of people defined themselves as such at the time.[2]

The Macedonian nation did not exist previous to 1944 in Yugoslavia, but upon recognition was made equal to the other republics. The creation of a Macedonian nation was dictated under the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) under the leadership of

[1] Kertzer, D. and D. Arel. "Census, identity formation and the struggle for political power" in *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 21-22
[2] Ibid, pp. 21-22

Tito.[3] The nation building discourse in Yugoslavia made distinctions between various national communities. There were nations (Slovenes, Croats, Muslims, Serbs, Montenegrins, and Macedonians), nationalities (Albanians, Hungarians, and Italians), and smaller ethnic communities (Roma, Austrians, Czechs and Slovaks).[4] The concept of 'minority' did not exist in the Yugoslav communist vocabulary, but the aforementioned hierarchical ordering did signify the inclusive/exclusive character of Yugoslav identity. This reflected the acknowledgment of a common Slavonic identity, and the idea that the constitutive 'nations' as compared to 'nationalities' and 'ethnic communities' did not 'belong' elsewhere in the world.[5]

To include the non-Slavic population in Yugoslavia, ethnic identity could not serve as the main referent point in defining national identity. Instead, "brotherhood and unity" and Marxist conceptions of class reinforced the idea of a unified past and future. Despite the rhetoric of a collective identity based on opposition to liberal conceptions of citizenship, national identity was not suppressed during the Yugoslav socialist period. Thus, "Yugoslav discourses on the national question acknowledged difference between national groupings, thus legitimizing the constitution of separate political identities based on ethnicity."[6]

Yugoslavia can be described as an 'institutionalized multinational state'[7] as compared to a multiethnic or multicultural state. Yugoslavia contained separate nations that sought political autonomy in order to develop their 'own' national culture and identity. The unique hierarchical structure based on ethno-nationality institutionalized relations among different nations in the Yugoslav state. Despite the state's attempts to suppress national sentiment by creating political/territorial boundaries in the form of republics,

[3] Adamson, K. and Jovic, D. "The Macedonian-Albanian Political Frontier: the re-articulation of post-Yugoslav Identities." *Nations and Nationalism* 10.3 (2004), p. 295
[4] Pesic, V. "Integrative Problems: Interwar Yugoslavia and the Major National Ideologies," in *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis*, United States Institute of Peace, Peaceworks No. 8 (Washington D.C., April 1996), p. 10

[5] Adamson, K. and Jovic, D. op.cit., p. 296
[6] Ibid, p. 297
[7] Pesic, V. op.cit., pp. 3-10

supporting the notion of 'states' among the different ethnic groups fermented the geographical boundaries and ethnic affiliation of the nations within Yugoslavia.[8]

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) with a population of 2.2 million people is comprised of six officially recognized 'nationalities' (Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, Bosniac, and Roma).[9] Macedonia is a parliamentary democracy; with numerous political parties suggesting the state is a functioning democracy with transparent and competitive elections. The political and security situation in Macedonia is relatively stable; in August 2001, the Ohrid Framework agreement made important constitutional and legislative reforms to improve minority civil rights in Macedonia.[10] A further description of the political environment will illustrate the factors that present challenges for Roma claims-making in Macedonia.

2008-2009 Elections

The 2008 election outcome resulted in a governing coalition led by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), and the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), the ethnic Albanian party which received the most popular support. Opposition parties the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) initially opposed and protested the VMRO-DUI led Parliament based on SDSM accusations of false arrests during the election campaign, and DPA platform to recognize Kosovo. Early presidential and municipal elections were held in March and April 2009 leading to the victory of VMRO-DPMNE, a coalition of Macedonian, Albanian and smaller minority based parties. Elections in 2009 were peaceful; political parties and candidates avoided the violence that disrupted the 2008 election process.[11]

[8] Ibid, pp. 3-10
[9] Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, December 2004, p. 8
[10] See Background Note: Macedonia, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, October 2007available: state.gov
[11] The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Presidential and Municipal Elections: 22 March and 5 April, 2009. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report (Warsaw). 30 June 2009. available: osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom/69937

According to the 2009 OSCE-ODIHR Election report, Macedonia met most international standards for a democratic election process that was professional and transparent. Municipal and presidential campaigns were targeted toward specific ethnic communities, and voting preferences concomitantly were influenced by the ethnic background of the candidate. However, significant impediments to the election process were noted such as voter intimidation. Civil service employees were fearful their jobs would be threatened if they did not vote for the ruling party. Some citizens were intimidated into believing their pensions or social welfare benefits would be rescinded if they did not vote for a specific political party.[12]

Prior to the 2009 elections, the main contributing factors to dissolution were high political tensions and inadequate communication between parties which seriously debilitated parliamentary work, leaving important ministerial positions vacant. It is hopeful that political tension between coalition members and with the opposition will not lead to government inaction concerning the implementation of legislation. Undemocratic actions by members of parliament in the past have led to the president's refusal to promulgate legislation. These concerns raise serious doubt as to the future functioning of government institutions.[13]

Ohrid Framework Agreement and Minority Rights

The Ohrid Framework Agreement, with the support of the international community was signed in 2001 as a resolution of the conflict between Albanians and ethnic Macedonians. Inter-ethnic tensions have been assuaged, but confusion still exists as to the reasons and consequences of the conflict. As a result of the Ohrid Agreement, important amendments were made to the Constitution of Macedonia. This instigated public administration reforms, such as the Decentralization Act and allowed for territorial divisions within the state. The Ohrid Agreement stipulates that certain rights

[12] Ibid
[13] European Commission (2008). 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report (Working Document) 2695 final of 05.11.2008 (Brussels, European Commission), p. 9

are guaranteed (i.e. proportional representation, use of language) where members of minority groups in municipalities comprise more than 20% of the population. In August 2007, a law specifying the use of non-majority languages at the state/local level and in parliament was passed. However, the 20% threshold concerning the use of languages favors larger ethnic communities and does not serve the needs of smaller groups that may be territorially dispersed, such as the Roma. The law has allowed for the use of minority languages of smaller ethnic communities in the educational system, but financial limitations remain regarding faculties for teaching. Although Albanians are a sizeable minority in Macedonia, the needs of other ethnic communities are often neglected. Ethnic tension in the country may increase as minority groups attempt to meet the 20% threshold through the provision of territorial division.[14] The only municipality where Roma comprise more than 20% of the population is Shuto Orizari.[15] Municipal committees concerning community relations have been set up at the local level (19 out of 20 municipalities) in response to a law adopted on the advancement and protection of smaller ethnic communities, but are limited by inadequate resources and an incoherent legal framework. In addition, a Secretariat for implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement has been established, but remains understaffed.[16]

Macedonia as 'Multicultural Community'

It has been asserted that Macedonians have a long tradition of relative interethnic tolerance, and have peacefully coexisted with the Roma for centuries.[17] The Macedonian government has continued to foster the idea of a tolerant and multiethnic nation – but the portrayal of the Roma community in Macedonia differs considerably from reality. Open and direct discrimination is not apparent, but rather a 'sophisticated,

[14] European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and Minority Rights Group (MRG) 'Shadow Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia.' March 2004, pp. 9-14
[15]Plaut, S. "Absent Roma, Imported Interest. 'Roma' as Subject and Agent in the Republic of Macedonia." February 2006, p. 4
[16] ECMI and MRG 'Shadow Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia,' p. 14
[17]Barany, Z. *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 324

discrimination'[18] exists among state/societal actors. Plaut states "domestically, the attitude of politicians, academics and public figures towards Roma in Macedonia can most easily be labeled as a lack of interest or, more accurately, institutionalized marginalization."[19] The myth of a 'multi-ethnic, tolerant' Macedonia has gained acceptance within the Southeast European region and has been promoted by Roma/non-Roma politicians and civil society.[20] Although Roma do not face overt discrimination (i.e. skinhead attacks, hate speech) found in countries such as Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Hungary, hidden and sophisticated forms of institutionalized discrimination may be more dangerous in terms of minority integration.[21] Discrimination exists within all facets of society and state structures including the educational, judicial, employment and housing systems.

In 1971, Macedonia was the only Yugoslav nation that officially recognized the Roma as an ethnic community in the constitution, and legislation is explicit in meeting international human rights standards, and protection of minorities.[22] As Roma became a significant minority in Macedonia, the group benefited from political reforms that advocated minority representation. While not equal to other minority groups, Roma did gain minimal cultural and symbolic freedom such as TV and radio communication in Romani, as well as a national flag.[23] In 1996-97, optional language instruction was introduced in elementary schools. Furthermore, there are several cultural and artistic societies representing this group.[24] However, minimal progress can be noted concerning the promotion and enforcement of human rights. In reality, the Macedonian government has demonstrated a lack of interest and concern regarding the Roma community.

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[18] Plaut, S. op.cit., p. 4
[19] Ibid, p. 4
[20]Interview with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009
[21] Interview with Redzpali Cupi, Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture Skopje, Macedonia, February 26, 2009
[22] Plaut, op.cit., p. 1
[23] Crowe, D.M "Muslim Roma in the Balkans," in *Nationalities Papers* 27 (2), 1999, pp.114-115
[24] Ortakovski, V. "Inter-ethnic Relations and Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia," in *Southeast European Politics* 2 (1), May 2001, pp. 30 - 32

4.3 General Situation of Roma in Macedonia

The Roma community is the most marginalized population in Macedonia (official population 52 000, unofficial population 60 000 – 260 000 based on the 2002 census). The national report on the situation of Roma in Macedonia shows that the largest number of Roma live in urban settlements (95%), concentrated in ghettoes or suburban areas. Basic infrastructure conditions have not been provided (no electricity, water, there is often lack of sewage facilities, asphalt roads, street lights, lack of regular garbage collection, as well as basic urban infrastructure). Living conditions are very poor; frequently housing does meet adequate standards. Populated settlements are often without clear ownership status and outside urban planning arrangements, thus basic infrastructure and state services are difficult to access. According to some assessments, about 70% of the Roma do not have ownership documents for their residence.[25]

Employment

Roma are at a further disadvantage, as often individuals lack the appropriate level of education to be competitive in the labor market. Official data show that in the year 2000 from the total number of unemployed registered in the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia 4% were Roma, of these half have incomplete elementary education. In comparing the total labor force according to ethnic categories, it is evident that the Roma have the highest percentage of unemployment, over 70%. Roma NGOs claim that in reality, the percentage is in fact even higher (95%) and differs significantly from the official statistics.[26] State reports suggest that the main problem of Roma employability

"*lies in their difficult re-entrance on the labor market. In principle the Roma live 'from one day to the next' with the earned money, without paying contribution that would include them in the legal trends of the state and would guarantee them certain rights. This picture is supplemented also with the social 'safety net' that covers the minimum needs of those receiving it, stimulating the operation of the grey economy. This way the beneficiaries of assistance acquire the social benefits dependency psychology, making more difficult their entry on the regulated labor market*." Furthermore, the state report on

[25] Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia 2004, p. 23
[26] Ibid, pp. 31-32

employment states "*the reason for the unemployment is partially found in the Roma themselves who do not know how to inform themselves about possible employment at the competent official institutions."*[27]

It is important to note however, according to data collected in 2004 by the Social, Political, and Legal Research Institute in Macedonia that 50% of Roma recognize

discrimination as a major debilitating factor of employability.[28] It is also clear that the state report supports the discourse that the majority of Roma is dependent and takes advantage of the social welfare system, perpetuating the stereotype of Roma as a lazy, social underclass. It is also uncertain how the Roma community should "inform themselves about possible employment …"[29] when the Macedonian state has consistently demonstrated a lack of political will and concern for the community. Additionally, a focus group survey demonstrated that Roma are generally disappointed by Romani politicians in government as employment in state administrative bodies is subject to party influence and politics. Roma with completed secondary education, able to work in some positions in the state administration, are still on the waiting list of unemployed. This consequently, according to the focus group has discouraging effects on the others attempting to obtain educational qualifications.[30]

Education

According to the national statistics office, less than 600 out of the 7868 Romani children who are enrolled in elementary school completed their primary education. Although each Macedonian citizen is obliged to complete primary education, the results show inconsistency with the legislation. In 2003, the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) conducted focus groups to assess and evaluate the low level of enrolment of Roma children in Macedonian educational institutions. The findings suggest there are several reasons contributing to the low level of educational attainment such as family

[27]Ibid, pp. 31-32
[28] The research conducted by the Social, Political and Legal Research Institute in 2004 on the needs of the Roma demonstrates that: 44% of the Roma live on social assistance, 30% on personal income, 22% on 'other sources' and 4% on retirement pension. In 39% of the cases no member of the family works, whereas in 40% of the families interviewed only one member works (Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, p. 31)
[29] Ibid, p. 31
[30] Ibid, p. 32

structure/environment, living conditions, language barriers, and discrimination/segregation. In regards to family structure/environment, there is often inadequate education awareness among the Romani population. Many parents are unable to assist and support their children with homework as they lack the appropriate educational background. Additionally, although elementary school education is free in Macedonia, expenses for clothes, books, and transportation are a burden for poor Roma families.[31]

An additional difficulty for many Roma children is the language of instruction in educational facilities, as 99% of the Roma population in Skopje speaks Romani. Thus, progress in school is seriously debilitated as children do not have an adequate knowledge of Macedonian and frequently drop out in later years. It is also important to note the extensive discrimination and segregation of Romani students. Often, teachers neglect Romani children, thus the quality of education in comparison to other students is substandard. It has also been recognized that Romani children are discriminated in the evaluation process. There have been cases where Roma children with special needs were transferred to institutions for children with mental disorders; segregation and unlawful discrimination continue.[32]

Health

In contradiction to the belief that the health conditions of Roma are influenced by their culture, customs, and lifestyle, – factors such as the reduction of government support, decreased unemployment benefits and emigration offer a more plausible account for the poor health within Roma communities. During the transition period, many Roma families sought asylum in Western European nations, but have now returned through a process of mandatory repatriation. Consequently, many Roma were no longer registered with the unemployment bureau, and as a result could not apply for health insurance. The health of Roma children is similarly affected, as parents are unable to cope with socio-

[31] European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), "Roms on Integration: Analyses and Recommendations," (Skopje, Sept 2005) pp. 9-23
[32] Ibid, p. 11

economic difficulties. Furthermore, as Roma children are excluded from educational institutions, systematic monitoring of their health status (vaccination, systematic medical checkups) is lacking, leading to further health problems. Poor health conditions are further exacerbated as living conditions are often substandard within Roma communities. In the past ten years, Macedonia has not adopted adequate measures to address the health of the Roma population.[33] Despite various international commitments, specifically, the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015)' that addresses four priority areas – health, housing, employment, education, Macedonia has achieved minimal progress in improving the situation of Roma communities.

Roma Human Rights Awareness

As noted in the European Commission progress report on Macedonia, there has been ineffective control of police units, particularly the *Alpha Units*, which have used excessive and undue force in relation to the Roma community. The report suggests that the prosecutor's office and Ministry of Interior should make further investigations concerning cases of ill treatment that meet national and international standards. External procedures to investigate police corruption have not been established.[34]Economic and social inequality of minorities limits their ability to receive assistance and access to justice concerning rights violations (i.e. property rights, court decisions). A survey conducted in the summer of 2005 by the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) among Roma communities in ten Macedonian cities revealed that Roma have limited awareness of their human rights. The survey's findings also demonstrate that Roma infrequently refer to state institutions for protection of their rights due to a lack of trust. The low education level of survey respondents is also an important factor in accounting for their limited awareness. However, the study also indicated that two thirds of the respondents are interested and would benefit from state education regarding human rights awareness. The study demonstrated that presently, the state system is not

[33] Ibid, pp. 99-114
[34] European Commission (2008). 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report (Working Document) 2695 final of 05.11.2008 (Brussels, European Commission), p. 16

sufficient to promote education of rights.[35] Specifically, significant resources are required for those who are the targets of indirect discrimination and do not have access to information regarding rights violations. Supporting evidence in the case of discrimination cases is generally difficult to obtain and the state is able to rationalize or conceal evidence.[36]

4.4 Increasing Institutional Access? Various Mechanisms for Roma Inclusion

Observance of international human rights legislation

The republic of Macedonia has ratified numerous international agreements and conventions concerning the protection of all citizens, including Roma. The main international documents that have significance concerning the *National Strategy on Roma* are the Copenhagen Criteria (1993), main principles adopted by the EU in Tampere (1999), and the Social Inclusion Draft. The Copenhagen Criteria sets guidelines for EU candidate status including institutional stability that guarantees democracy, rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities and commitment to the political and economic principles of the EU. It is recommended that candidate states include Roma in the area of minority rights. The main focus of the 1999 Tampere principles is on eliminating discrimination and racism towards Roma, and enabling equal opportunity and access in the areas of education, employment, housing, health, and gender relations. The Social Inclusion Draft is a novel document that imposes an obligation on states to include social inclusion and poverty reduction aims concerning certain communities in official state policies. The document highlights the interrelation between economic, employment and social policies to resolve problems of integration.[37] Relevant international and national documents ratified by the Republic of Macedonia

[35] European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), "Roms on Integration: Analyses and Recommendations," (Skopje, Sept 2005) p. 73
[36] Shadow Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia, p. 13
[37] Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, December 2004, p.12

signify the importance of minority related issues, but there is limited implementation to improve the status of ethnic communities, especially in the case of Roma.

Participation and Integration

In accordance with the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Republic of Macedonia is responsible for the "better quality participation and integration of national minorities, especially in confidence building measures, development of a decentralized government, non-discrimination and equal representation in all areas of social life."[38] In reality, opportunities for minority group participation in the political sphere remain limited. Minority communities until recently did not have representatives within centralized government structures to participate in the decision making process and represent the community. Thus, any minority related concerns were presented and discussed by representatives that did not have knowledge or interest in the minority community in question. This resulted in the under development of some communities and regions in Macedonia. The recent Decentralization Act allows for greater citizen participation in local government structures, but has not been implemented. The state is not promoting this as a mechanism to address and solve problems within minority communities.[39]Furthermore, the creation of minority related positions and individual nominations to those positions are a matter of negotiation between political parties. The process does not have the support of different ethnic communities and lacks transparency. Ethnic communities do not have access to representatives, or knowledge of department/ministry functions and responsibilities.[40]

In accordance with the Ohrid Agreement, the Macedonian state initiated civil service training for ethnic communities to be equally represented in state structures. In the period 2002-2007, public employment data shows that the participation of Albanians increased (from 11-12% to 17-18%) and participation of the Turkish community has

[38] Shadow Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia, p. 28
[39] Ibid, p. 29
[40] Ibid, p. 29

only increased slightly.[41] According to the 2002 Census, Roma constitute *2.66%* of the population. As of 2007, only *0.6%* of Roma were public employees[42] and very few high-level positions have been created within government structures.[43] There has been uneven representation of ethnic communities in municipal and central level government structures, with the Roma community being severely underrepresented. Former Deputy Minister of Justice, Ibrahim Ibrahimi accounts for a number of factors that may debilitate the representation of Roma within the public service: the influence of political parties in determining the employment of public officials, the low level of education within the Roma community, and inadequate advocacy and lobbying by Roma political parties.[44]

In general, there needs to be considerable public administration reform. Decisions to recruit and promote individuals lack transparency and accountability. Qualifications and experience are not taken into account, thus recruitment procedures are not based on objective, merit-based criteria. These practices are in contravention to civil service legislation and have de-motivating effects on state employees. In addition, the state has not provided for adequate civil service training and funding is still dependent on donor contributions. Overall, the internal management structure and administrative capacities are insufficient concerning financial and human resources, policy development, co-ordination and planning. These difficulties have detrimental effects on governance: in particular, a number of key positions in the Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Local Self-Government remain vacant. Additional measures

[41] Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. 'Monthly newsletter with OSCE success stories for the purpose of the Public Affairs Section at the US Delegation in Vienna.' February, 2009.
[42] Ibid
[43] In 2009, five positions were held by individuals of Roma ethnicity: Minister without Portfolio Nezdet Mustafa (National Coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the National Strategy for Roma; Ibrahim Ibraimi (Union of Roma in Macedonia) Deputy Minister of Justice; Amdi Bajram (President of Union of Roma in Macedonia and Member of Parliament. Shaban Saliu (leader of Democratic Forces of Roma) Director of the Agency for Protection and Rescue; Bajram Berat (President of Party for Integration of Roma) Advisor in Ministry of Internal Affairs
[44] Ibrahim, I. "Roma and their Participation in Public Administration in Macedonia," in eds. V. Nicolae and H. Slavik. *Roma Diplomacy*. (New York: International Debate Education Association, 2007), p. 209

should be taken to ensure a professional public administration that is free from political influence.[45]

It is in this political context that the government is currently developing Roma inclusion policy and programs. Although national and international legislation promote minority rights, and positions have been created within political structures regarding Roma issues, the *implementation* of policy remains stagnant. The next section discusses the national strategy and action plans, inter-departmental communication, Roma political parties and Roma civil society, as well as the process of decentralization to describe the lack of progress on Roma issues. Further discussion of these factors allows for an analysis of the interrelation between Roma actors and government institutions to demonstrate how Roma activism has been constrained. Cooption and dependency on the Macedonian political structure has not enabled flexibility and innovation in terms of advocacy. The process of decentralization, in this regard, may serve as a mechanism in the future to promote activism at the local level.

Implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plans

In 2005, the national strategy and action plans on Roma inclusion were adopted by the Macedonian government as a result of the Decade of Roma Inclusion; an international initiative to influence signatory countries to develop and implement policies and programmes concerning the Roma population. The national strategy and action plans provide a detailed account of activities the Macedonian government will implement concerning Roma in the areas of housing, employment, health and education.[46] However, actual implementation of activities is weak and minimal financial means have been provided by the government. In total, 370 000 € were provided to the Transport,

[45]European Commission (2008). 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report (Working Document) 2695 final of 05.11.2008 (Brussels, European Commission), pp. 11-12

[46] See Decade Action Plans for Macedonia, Available: romadecade.org/decade_action_plans

Education, Labor and Social Policy, and Health Ministries concerning Roma-related activities.[47]

Responsible for the coordination and implementation of the national strategy and action plans are the Ministry for Social and Labour Policy and offices of the Minister without Portfolio. Inter-departmental cooperation is weak and implementation of activities often remains stagnant. Many ministry documents concerning Roma-related activities have been circulated previously as part of past initiatives and very few records have been kept of activities.[48] In general, many conference papers and international documents signify the importance and concern for Roma inclusion. There has been much funding allocated for 'paper work' concerning the Roma issue, but in terms of actual implementation – only sporadic projects have been initiated by national governments, with little or no funding for implementation of detailed policies and activities within national/international strategies and action plans.

Project – Oriented Approach

One of the fundamental problems concerning how the Roma issue is addressed is the project-oriented approach of many government departments, international and civil society organizations.[49] Project oriented activities are generally short term and only have impact on a small segment of the population. A long term, programme structured approach that incorporated Action Plan activities within all government departments would allow for better implementation and have wider impact on the general Roma community. For example, the Macedonian health department has a comprehensive programme for socially marginalized people. However, the action plan on health for Roma communities was not considered while formulating the programme. Additionally,

[47] Interview with Denis Durmis, Junior Associate, National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the Decade Action Plans and National Strategy for Roma Inclusion, Skopje, Macedonia, February 19, 2009

[48] Ibid

[49]Ibid - At the time of writing the action plans were under revision and awaiting approval by the Department of Finance

more funds may be allocated to Roma-related issues if all action plans were incorporated into current governmental programmes.[50]

The project-oriented approach to addressing Roma concerns is *partly* a result of government agencies adopting the practices of international and non-government organizations. Many departmental staff have previous work experience in international and civil society organizations concerning Roma issues. The method by which the national strategy and action plans are implemented may be reflective of this fact. Furthermore, international organizations are still funding Roma inclusion programs within the government. Although international institutions such as the World Bank and Open Society Institute have been essential to the creation of government departments and staff positions concerning Roma-related issues, the project oriented approach of implementing activities may suppress macro level development of successful initiatives.

Inter-departmental Cooperation

As mentioned previously, the Roma Decade and national strategy are the two main approaches the Macedonian government is using to develop Roma-related projects and activities. Thus, these initiatives are the basis for analyzing inter-agency cooperation concerning Roma-related issues. Responsibility for coordination of the Roma Decade is in the offices of the Minister without Portfolio. The Unit for Implementation of the National Strategy is in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. There is, however, limited communication and severe animosity between the offices of the Minister without Portfolio and the Unit for Implementation of the National Strategy, creating many difficulties in implementing Roma inclusion policies. An additional problem is the Macedonian government's decision to specify unclear ministerial/departmental roles and tasks for strategy implementation. The offices of the Minister without Portfolio and the Unit for Implementation of the National Strategy do not comprehend the decision of the

[50] Interview with Elvis Ali, Task Manager Public Administration, European Agency for Reconstruction, Skopje, Macedonia February 27, 2009

government and both departments take ownership of implementing Roma inclusion policy without cooperating.[51]

Another challenge of inter-departmental cooperation is the *shifting* of Roma-related issues to Roma staff employed within the offices of the Minister without Portfolio, the Unit for Implementation of the National Strategy and the Department of Minority Languages and Culture. Although implementation of the Decade action plans and national strategy should be divided between all government ministries – the aforementioned departments and staff members are viewed as responsible for the *overall* implementation of Roma-related policy. This then leads to a limited/segregated approach to Roma inclusion policy in which only Roma are viewed as being responsible for Roma issues – and not mainstream government personnel. Thus, ethnic Macedonian staff shift implementation of Roma programs onto any ministry/department where Roma staff are employed or to the Roma individual who is working in their department. Additionally, although the Decade action plans and national strategy cover four core areas (i.e. employment, health, education, and housing) each ministry does not have a department or focal point responsible for Roma issues.[52]

The dysfunctional inter-departmental communication is also a result of the discriminatory attitudes of ethnic Macedonian government personnel. It is incomprehensible to some state employees that there are professional, qualified Roma individuals who work on Roma inclusion policy and programs. There is also the perception that Roma are not part of the overall government structure, working toward common policies and programmes in Macedonia. Mainstream government staff view Roma employees as only working on behalf of the Roma population and find it difficult to understand that Roma can be employed in non-Roma related positions and

[51]Interview with Elvis Ali, Task Manager Public Administration, European Agency for Reconstruction, Skopje, Macedonia, February 27, 2009. It should also be noted that generally within the Macedonian government there is a lack of communication between ministries and departments.
[52]Interview with Redzpali Cupi, Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture, Skopje, Macedonia, February 26, 2009

departments.[53] As one staff member in the office of the Minister without Portfolio stated "*one cannot expect to have cooperation where by being Roma and entering the building everyday people give you strange looks. In such a context you cannot expect to set up foundations for meaningful collaboration among different institutions*."[54] Furthermore, he noted

"*governmental institutions are not used to hiring experts to do work around Roma. They are a little bit rigid when it comes to the approval of certain documents, structural reforms or anything that it takes to target the specific needs of the Roma community. The people in the government do not understand that Roma can work for the benefit of the whole society and not only for the benefit of the Roma community*."[55]

Alternatively the former Deputy Minister of Justice noted

"*I can see how people find it unusual that Roma can be in such high positions, in executive government. When I was working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in the past -- we had to prove that we can be fully committed and do the work professionally. So, there is no direct discrimination in government institutions, but there are more doubts that Roma are capable to perform their duties in a professional manner and this is something we should change in the future*."[56]

This also presents problems for the implementation of the national strategy and Decade action plans. With mainstream personnel not included in developing Roma inclusion policy, Roma working in government institutions can only communicate with other Roma government personnel. The same issues are discussed among those who are quite familiar with Roma-related concerns, as many current Romani government staff members are former civil society employees. Furthermore, any additional trainings, related conferences and seminars are only attended by Roma government personnel. Roma do not have the opportunity to convey issues to higher levels of government and

[53] Several interviewees of Roma ethnicity working in government institutions related similar narratives of discrimination

[54] Interview with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009

[55] Ibid

[56] Interview with Ibrahim Ibrahimi, former Deputy Minister of Justice, Skopje, Macedonia, February 9, 2009

this does not allow for the discussion of Roma inclusion policy in higher level meetings.[57]

An additional issue that needs to be addressed is the impact of Roma political parties on the implementation of Decade action plans and national strategy. Members of Roma political parties occupying government positions each have a different interpretation of the documents, adding to the difficulty of developing a coherent and collaborative approach to implementation of the strategy and action plans in government institutions. Additionally, political party leaders sometimes put pressure on government personnel to achieve the goals of the political party as opposed to the goals specified in the national strategy and action plans. Inter-departmental cooperation is also hindered as conflict exists between the Deputy Minister of Justice and the Minister without Portfolio.[58] The government of Macedonia has been slow in formulating and implementing Roma-related policies and programmes. It is unfortunate that political party affiliations and personal conflict are dividing Roma leadership in the country when two Ministers of Roma ethnicity are occupying such high level positions. The role of Roma political parties in advancing the claims of the Roma community deserves further discussion in the next section.

4.5 Influential Allies for Roma Activism? The role of political parties and civil society organizations

Roma Political Parties

Early presidential elections in March 2009 led to the election of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonia National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), a coalition of Macedonian, Albanian and smaller minority based parties.[59]

[57]Interview with Redzpali Cupi, Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture, Skopje, Macedonia, February 26, 2009

[58] Interview with Redzpali Cupi, Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture, Skopje, Macedonia, February 26, 2009

[59]See OSCE-ODIHR Presidential Elections March 2009 Report, available: osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom

Presently, there are six Roma political parties[60] that have formed a coalition "For a Better Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE. However, political and power struggles between Macedonia and Albanian parties often leads to the marginalization of minority groups limiting their participation in developing state policies. This has led to the unequal representation of ethnic communities in government structures. In previous years, the Romani vote was divided as Roma political parties formed coalitions with different mainstream Macedonian parties. Although this is an opportune time to lobby the Macedonian government to implement the National Strategy and Decade action plans, personal conflict and the inability to develop a common platform are dividing Roma leadership. This has weakened the credibility and political stance of Roma leaders, presenting the image of fragmented Roma activism and leadership in front of ethnic Macedonian government leaders and staff.[61] It has been stated that Roma political parties are merely 'pulled by the nose' and acting upon the advice of the prime minister. At times, conflicts among the Roma political parties are also resolved by the Prime Minister. [62] As Roma related concerns are not a priority for the Macedonian government, this has contributed to the lack of progress and action on the national strategy and Decade activities.

Generally, within Roma political parties there is a lack of intellectual, organizational and financial capacity. Regarding the internal management structure of Roma political parties, inner conflict among leaders is one of the major challenges with personal ambition and interest taking precedence. There is limited membership and funding to support branch offices and facilities.[63] Among other challenges is the lack of political education among Roma political leaders who are not able to represent their communities

[60] Roma Political Parties and Leaders: DUR/Democratic Union of Roma from Prilep – Adem Arifovski; PIR/Party for Integration of Roma – Bajram Berat; PCER/Party for Full Emancipation of Roma – Samka Ibraimovski; SRM/Union of Roma of Macedonia – Amdi Bajram; OPE/United Party for Emancipation – Nezdet Mustafa; DSR/Democratic Forces of Roma – Shaban Saliu

[61] Interview with Redzpali Cupi, Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture Skopje, Macedonia, February 26, 2009

[62] Interview with Elvis Ali, Task Manager Public Administration, European Agency for Reconstruction, Skopje, Macedonia, February 27, 2009

[63] Interview with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans, Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009

effectively as they do not communicate often with their constituency and have minimal knowledge of community issues.[64] Politicians only relate to the community in pre-election campaigns promising basic needs for an impoverished community. The Roma community, in turn, has minimal choices regarding which political party to vote for. There is also a lack of long run strategic thinking and planning that is not connected with capacities, and when activities do occur, they are spontaneously constructed and implemented.[65] Added to these limitations is the reluctance to let the younger generation of well educated Roma access the decision making process within political parties. The younger generation is perceived as a 'threat' to older political party members and leaders.[66]

Because of these challenges and limited membership, Roma political parties are forced to form coalitions with larger, mainstream political parties. In the process of negotiating with mainstream political parties, Roma political leaders are pursuing their personal interests ahead of community interests. Roma political parties do not have their own 'agenda' to negotiate and are not lobbying for any specific programmes or policies. Thus, government institutions set-up to benefit the Roma community are not being used effectively under present Roma leadership.[67] It is especially difficult to develop and implement project activities when different political actors have not resolved issues among themselves. This is foremost in the election period, when political conflict among leaders is especially detrimental to Roma-related projects, with work sometimes stalling for five or six months. Political conflict at the national level also impacts local politics

[64] Interview with Elvis Ali, Task Manager Public Administration, European Agency for Reconstruction Skopje, Macedonia, February 27 2009
[65] Ibid
[66]Interview with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans, Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009
[67] Ibid

and implementation of projects at the municipal level – with the election of municipal councilors connected with national elections.[68]

Upon Macedonian independence in 1991, the Roma as a marginalized community and 'nationality' was given political recognition in the constitution. Although the Macedonian constitution is explicit in granting equal status to Roma and other ethnic communities, it is definitive in referring to ethnic Macedonians as the 'primary owners of the state.' International recognition of an independent Macedonia was not easily attained, and hostile neighboring states claiming the territory as their own has led to persistent arguments as to the self-determination and culturally dominant position of ethnic Macedonians.[69] Nationalist sentiments have further exacerbated ethnic cleavages within the state and with the disintegration of Yugoslavia; Macedonia effectively has an 'ethnic party system.' It should be mentioned, however, that Macedonia was the first post-Yugoslav state to grant Romani political representation (i.e. Roma political parties and a Romani member of parliament). In 1991, Roma political parties rather than seeking further political rights emphasized the improvement of living standards for Roma communities. In this way, mainstream Macedonian parties have often thought of Roma political parties as easy allies. Furthermore, subsequent to the 2001 conflict, the Albanian community benefitted from reforms implemented under the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Although Roma could also refer to the Framework Agreement to advocate for further political rights, it is unclear if Roma politicians have used this as an advocacy tool.[70]

The Roma community in post-socialist Macedonia lacks a unified political platform and 'public face,' as ineffective political leaders have not used the opportunity of constitutional recognition to promote Roma issues. In this sense, a significant proportion

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[62]Interview with Denis Durmis, Junior Associate, National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the Decade Action Plans and National Strategy for Roma Inclusion, Skopje, Macedonia, February 19, 2009

[69] Rossos, A. "The disintegration of Yugoslavia, Macedonia's independence and stability in the Balkans," in *War and Change in the Balkans: Nationalism, Conflict and Cooperation*." ed. Brad Blitz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp. 110-117

[70] Memedova, A., Plaut, S., Boscoboinik, A., and Giordano, C. "Roma's Identities in Southeast Europe: Macedonia."*Ethnobarometer Working Paper Series* (2005), pp. 26-28

of the Roma community is alienated from the political sphere which is based on an 'ethnic party system' demanding assertion of a strong public identity. In an ethnically divisive state, it is also widely perceived that only an ethnically based political party can represent and advocate for a specific ethnic community. As representation in the public sphere is essential for political inclusion in Macedonia, it is important to note that in Macedonia, as well as in Serbia, Roma individuals have a strong sense of identity and affiliation with the category 'Roma' that is perpetuated at the micro (familial and community) level, as compared to the macro state level. Romani participation in the political sphere is generally within NGOs that work with Roma communities or at the international level, circumventing the state. Roma political activists generally refer to the international Romani movement or civil society as promoting a collective Roma identity, and not domestic Macedonian institutions. Generally, the Roma community does not believe Roma political parties are effectively representing or addressing their needs. Thus, from the public's perspective Roma have a 'weak identity' and domestic political representation.[71]

The participation of Roma political parties in parliament has not been effective in advancing Roma claims. In terms of bargaining with mainstream parties, Roma political parties can show they have a voting/constituency base which can be used during the election period to gain concessions from Macedonian mainstream political parties regarding Roma inclusion policy and implementation. According to Friedman, often the Roma community is the decisive factor in national and local elections between VMRO-DPMNE and its main rival Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM). Representatives of both parties have attested to the importance of Roma political support, as demonstrated by campaigns in Roma settlements.[72] However, as stated

[71] Ibid, pp. 20-21
[72] Friedman, E., "Political Integration of the Romani Minority in Post-Communist Macedonia," in *Southeast European Politics.* (Nov 2002), p. 115

previously Roma political parties do not have the capacity to effectively lobby and represent the interests of the Roma community.[73]

As mentioned previously, the Macedonian government while perceiving the Albanian community as a threat with potential to destabilize the state, has generally viewed the Roma as 'loyal citizens.' The Macedonian-Albanian divide is one of the central political issues in the state. Political conflict among the two largest political parties in Macedonia (VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM) has led to the participation of ethnic Albanian parties in government since multi-party elections commenced in 1990. Thus, any regard for the Roma community, as argued by Friedman, was in reality the need for a potential ally against other ethnic Macedonian political parties and the ethnic Albanian diaspora.[74] Since the late 1970s, as Albanian nationalism grew, Muslim Roma were encouraged to identify with the Albanian community, reportedly sometimes being offered bribes during census declarations. There have also been efforts to co-opt the Roma community by Albanian political parties to the chagrin of Macedonian politicians. Despite common religious affiliation, however, relations between Roma and Albanian communities are not amicable.[75]

The Albanian political parties have opposed their status as a 'minority,' subordinate to the 'Macedonian' majority in the new constitution. This act re-defined Albanians as the hostile 'other,' and was viewed as opposition to Macedonians asserting their territorial rights, and constructing a new identity.[76]Any discussion of Albanians having equal status to Macedonians is viewed as denying Macedonians national sovereignty and their identity. It is the socialist discourse of differentiating between 'nations,' 'nationalities,' and 'ethnic communities,' that has influenced contemporary debates concerning majority-minority status in Macedonia. Inclusion in the Macedonian state is based on ethnic affiliation despite rhetoric that argues for the equal status of all citizens.[77] In

[73]Interview with Eben Friedman, Independent Consultant for the Roma Education Fund, Skopje, Macedonia, February 16, 2009
[74] Friedman, E. op.cit., p. 113.
[75] Ibid, p. 111
[76] Adamson, K. and Jovic, D. op.cit., p. 303
[77] Ibid, p. 303

contrast to the Albanian population, Roma in the former Yugoslavia held a subordinate status as an 'ethnic community.' As Albanians and Macedonians are attempting to renegotiate their identities, and struggle for political power, Roma as one of the few minority groups in the state are viewed as an irrelevant contender for inclusion. While Albanians are seen as outsiders – the group is still viewed as politically relevant. The Macedonian-Albanian divide in contemporary Macedonia has been a great disadvantage to the Roma population.

Collective action and protest among the Albanian population have caused unrest in the state especially since 1991. It should be noted that the Albanian community has been more effective in advocating for their claims partly as a result of generous funding from the Albanian diaspora in neighboring states, but also as the community has greater organizational capacity and aptitude for politics. As stated by Friedman, the Roma community in Macedonia has organized fewer than ten demonstrations, generally in relation to election preparations, improving living conditions, police brutality or the plight of refugees from Kosovo. While specific issues are important to emphasize, the overall goal of securing political rights and inclusion within Macedonian society should continuously be on the agenda of activists and politicians. The few political rallies that have been organized have not instigated a response from Macedonian authorities in the form of repression or concessions.[78] The next section considers the role of Roma NGOs in political advocacy.

Romani Civil Society

The establishment of Roma civil society and humanitarian organizations in Macedonia was initially a response to the refugee migration from Kosovo. Subsequent to this period, many NGOs continued their work as humanitarian organizations serving the basic needs of the Roma community in the form of small-scale projects. Due to the conflict in Kosovo there were many international organizations in the Southeast European region, and substantial funding available for Roma humanitarian

[78] Friedman, E. op.cit., pp. 108-109

organizations.[79] With the simultaneous processes of subsiding conflict in the SEE region, democratization and EU accession status, Macedonia exists in a 'vacuum' where the international community is retracting funds concerning humanitarian and Roma-related issues.

The retraction of funding by international organizations has created increased conflict and jealousy between Roma political representatives and Roma civil society. Comparatively, the Roma civil sector has been advantageous in building contacts with international organizations and receiving training on lobbying, project development and implementation. The attractiveness of NGOs, as one of the main avenues to advocate for Roma claims, was also due to the inability of Roma politicians to join mainstream political parties. The electoral terms of Roma politicians has been unstable and vulnerable, and as ethnic nationalism in Eastern Europe ferments, Roma candidates are not viewed as assets to mainstream political parties. Thus, politicians and activists viewed the sphere of civil society in more favorable terms and as an arena to influence state policy on Roma-related issues.[80]

Roma political representatives believe that NGOs are corrupt, receiving international funds without serving the needs of the Roma community.[81] In contrast, NGOs argue that Roma political parties are only interested in personal interest and ambition.[82] In response, some Roma political representatives have actively tried to suppress the Roma NGO sector from obtaining international funds, and tried to take ownership of Roma organizations and activities. This has created a tense situation; the government needs the

[79] Interview with Sabena Mustafa, Program Assistant, National Coordination Office for the Implementation of Decade Action Plans and National Strategy for Roma Inclusion Skopje, Macedonia, February 3, 2009

[80] Trehan, Nidhi. "The Romani Subaltern within Neoliberal European Civil Society: NGOization of Human Rights and Silent Voices," in *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-liberal Order*. eds. Nidhi Trehan and Nando Sigona. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p. 59

[81] Interview with Eben Friedman, Independent Consultant for the Roma Education Fund, Skopje, Macedonia, February 16, 2009

[82] Ibid

input of the Roma civil sector in order to gain access and information concerning the Roma community, but at times, the Roma civil sector is not supportive.[83]

An NGO activist noted, *"in my view the NGO sector is far more developed … the political parties they think they are developed. So, I don't think there is good cooperation. Additionally, I think that's not the problem of only Roma political parties, its how the political situation in Macedonia is. Basically, people involved in politics are there for their interest. They don't work much on community interests, global interests. They are just trying to get a job for themselves and for their families. And, they also don't understand policy, the National Strategy, and the Decade of Roma Inclusion. They think the Decade is a pot of money, that the NGO sector is spending and they don't have anything. For years Roma politicians were trying to get leadership in the Decade. I think the NGO sector is always declaring the same thing. We would like to work with all the politicians -- not one in particular. We are not affiliating with one political party. But, from the political parties you hear so many even, contradictory things such as, the current Minister without Portfolio speaking in the parliament before election to his post: 'I'm publically declaring war with the NGOs.' And, the Roma political parties are not open, we want this and that... you're never sure*."[84]

The development of Roma activism has been inhibited by the withdrawal of international funding, conflict between major actors, but also the inclusion of recent Roma university graduates and civil society representatives in Roma political parties and government structures. This is a problematic development and may lead to the lack of constructive criticism regarding Roma-related policies. The government has been slow in implementing the national strategy and action plans, but there will be no critical civil sector to effectively lobby and instigate change. In addition, Roma activists hired within government institutions often become distant from community issues. As stated by a Roma government representative

"*it is important for young people to go back into communities and listen to people, and look at their real needs and problems. This is one of the problems that we had in the past -- people once they get employed, once they get positions they don't go back into communities. They try to resolve issues by sitting in their office*."[85] Further compounding

[83] Interview with Ramche, Senior Community Service Officer, UNHCR, Skopje, Macedonia, February 25, 2009

[84] Interview with Alexandra Bojadzieva, Manager, Roma Democratic Development Association, Skopje, Macedonia, February 9, 2009

[85] Interview with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009

difficulties is the inability of young Roma graduates to find employment, thus as stated by the former respondent "*the intervention we made in the past decade or so with increasing the number of educated Roma and having a base of qualified professionals, we are kind of lagging behind -- but not only lagging, we're turning the whole process back. And, that's to say because those Roma who graduate from universities there is no employment for them ... and you can see some of them working in the black market economy, exactly in the same way as some of the Roma who have no education at all. And, some of the government people it's easy for them to say it doesn't really matter, education doesn't really matter for Roma, because both of them, both the illiterate and the educated will end up selling things on the black market.*[86] *Despite investing in the young Roma and the efforts we make, some people will say that they're not visible, and that's true they're not visible*."[87]

An additional problem is the lack of cohesion and networking among existing Roma NGOs. The lack of international funding has increased competition among Roma NGOs, but more importantly, the inability to coordinate and agree on a common platform has debilitated Roma activism. However, successful examples of NGO networking and coordination do exist such as RNVO 2002. The network is a composition of two lobby groups including representatives from state institutions. The purpose of the group is to advocate on behalf of the Roma community concerning issues of legislative reform, citizenship, housing, discrimination, education, and health.[88]

When Romani activism started building momentum in Macedonia and in the region, many of the new NGOs to demonstrate they are 'fighting for the Roma community,' called themselves Roma NGOs. In order to address Roma issues and attract attention to the movement it was beneficial to add Roma as a precursor. However, this can be debilitating to Roma activism as in this way, NGOs are not targeting a specific expertise, but rather focus on a broad range of issues (health, employment, education, housing) attempting to do 'everything.' Often times international and government institutions have noted the lack of professionalism, and competency among Roma NGOs. Thus, including 'Roma' in the organization's name can promote a negative image. As noted by a think tank executive in Macedonia in relation to advocacy work and capacity building, Roma NGOs should

[86] Ibid
[87] Ibid
[88] Interview with Ramiza Sakip, Coordinator RNVO 2002, Skopje, Macedonia, January 23, 2009

"*start becoming an equal partner, an equal fighter in the arena. Otherwise, it will always be under certain circumstances okay, its Roma, they are always less educated, or they are always less capable so let's give them sort of quota, so they can rest assured they will always be covered despite the lower quality they have in comparison to the others*."[89]

In 2005, the national government enacted a strategy and established an office for cooperation with the civil society sector. NGO activists believe the strategy was developed only to appease EU conditions for membership. As stated by a think tank representative

"*our general government attitude is that we don't want the membership in terms of wanting to improve ... we do not understand the membership as having to improve the lives of our citizens, but it's rather a task that Brussels gave us, so it's like a checklist. So, it doesn't really matter if the cooperation between the government and NGO improved. But to the government, we have the Strategy, we have the office and, it has produced no results as far as I know...*"[90]

Furthermore, many NGOs in Macedonia have not received any funding from the Office for Cooperation with the civil sector. As of 2009, the office had only developed the paper work for funding applications and criteria for the distribution of funds. Initially, the Macedonian government had proposed 2 million € for NGO activities; it was then deduced to 250,000 €. NGO activists also mentioned that as funding is dependent on political party affiliation, it is often difficult to maintain a critical perspective on government actions. Thus, many organizations do not apply for monetary resources and rely on international aid.[91]

In general, there has been some progress concerning implementation of the Government Strategy and action plan for cooperation with civil society organizations. Grants available for NGOs are limited, but the selection criteria and public calls for proposals have allowed for greater transparency in this area. In addition, new sources of funding have become available as current legislation allows for business and private contributions through income tax, but tax relief benefits for civil society organizations

[89] Interview with Neda Milevska, Consultant Think Tank STUDIOROOM, Skopje, Macedonia, January 23, 2009
[90] Ibid
[91] Ibid

have not been forthcoming. Civil society organizations in Macedonia remain dependent on international funds, limiting their ability to provide services. In general, the government has not solicited civil society involvement in policy and legislative development.[92] The current process of decentralization may create opportunities for greater NGO involvement in government policy development.

As SEE countries are still struggling to find their own sense as states, it is challenging to conceptualize how the Roma issue is a part of this process to redefine state identity. The Roma community is severely marginalized – challenges are in capacity building, negotiating with mainstream political parties, and coordinating actions among activists. Roma activism is still in the initial phase – developing as a relevant important social/political actor. In order to be politically active and influential the community needs a solid foundation, as stated by an OSI representative "*the Roma community as a base for either NGO activism, or political representation and participation is completely unprepared for that ...*"[93] It is also problematic that NGOs implement activities in 'chunk mode,' implementing small scale projects. Roma communities 'develop the vision that tomorrow will be better, and NGOs are going to make life better.'[94] However, as funding decreases in the SEE region, NGOs are not in a position to make long term improvements in Roma communities. As NGOs are increasingly working with the government, they are highly dependent on the bargains Roma politicians made with the government. Thus, there is no one to 'really define boldly what we want to do with the Roma community.'[95] NGOs have existed in an ambiguous space, 'of being a partner, but a partner with no funds,' and could not 'persuade the government to open up.'[96] Thus, NGOs are in a 'dangerous position ... coming very close to the government and Roma

[92] European Commission (2008). 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report (Working Document) 2695 final of 05.11.2008 (Brussels, European Commission), p. 17
[93] Interview with Slavica Indzevska, Director, Roma Education Fund, Skopje, Macedonia, January 26, 2009
[94] Ibid
[95] Ibid
[96] Ibid

political parties,' and losing their critical perspective.[97] Another NGO activist recognized that "*some organizations are very much connected with particular politicians – it seems as though the NGO is politically active. The connection is very close and sometimes it's questionable -- it creates doubt."*[98] This in essence for many activists and international organization representatives was mentioned as the 'biggest challenge' for Roma inclusion in Macedonia.

Decentralization

As noted previously the institutionalization of Roma activism at the national level has not been conducive to promoting Roma-related issues. The current process of decentralization may induce greater levels of activism at the local level. Although this may occur in cooperation with local organizations and political structures, it can create opportunities for grassroots activism that promotes community consciousness and the implementation of programs that effectively serve the needs of the community. The process of decentralization initiated in 2005 is unfolding slowly – additional time and finances will be required until local structures are able to manage independently and effectively. In the last two years, the central government has devolved responsibilities in the areas of social services, education and urban planning. This has led to the approval of Roma-related local action plans in few municipalities (Kumanovo, Bitola, Stip, and Vilis). However, monitoring and implementation of local action plans is impeded as limited funding is provided by the central government, but does not necessitate a complete withdrawal of support for programmes by local governments. As noted by a NGO activist,

"*the decentralization process is very difficult in Macedonia. Local self government is in total chaos because they don't receive money, but do receive more responsibilities. They can't handle it -- they don't have the capacity from previous periods, so, they cannot manage themselves. And, local authorities rarely think of Roma*."[99]

[97] Ibid
[98] Interview with Alexandra Bojadzieva, Manager, Roma Democratic Development Association, Skopje, Macedonia, February 9, 2009
[99] Interview with Alexandra Bojadzieva, Manager, Roma Democratic Development Association, Skopje, Macedonia, February 9, 2009

The European Reconstruction Fund (at the time of writing) was in discussion with the government regarding the portion of funds that can be transferred for the municipality to implement its responsibilities effectively.[100] In general, municipal taxes have increased but revenues remain insufficient to administer new tasks and in some cases municipalities have considerable debts leading to legal proceedings concerning their accounts. Within local administrations, human and financial resources are inadequate to manage state-owned resources. There is also a lack of transparency and accountability in local administrations and limited civil service training. Past efforts to function effectively were further hindered by the resignation of the Minister for Local Self-government; the post remained vacant for 7 months.[101]

Other activities that have been implemented concerning the integration of Roma related issues within the community are the establishment of Roma information centers within NGOs.[102] This signals progress in terms of community development and interest in Roma-related issues, but has some limitations as the purpose of creating Roma information centers is not to provide greater support to civil society in communities, but to ensure funding and continuous communication with municipal governments so that Roma issues are not marginalized. Roma information offices could be established as autonomous units within local government structures to ensure a distance from local politics, while having an input in the decision making process. Although a new 'political space' has opened in creating positions for local Roma councilors within information centers at the municipal level, many of the challenges that exist at the central level of government regarding monitoring and implementation of actions plans, NGO/political party conflict, and the precedence of personal ambition threaten effective engagement with the Roma community in Macedonia. The position of Roma councilor within

[100] Interview with Redzpali Cupi, Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture, Skopje, Macedonia, February 26, 2009 and Elvis Ali, Task Manager Public Administration, European Agency for Reconstruction, Skopje, Macedonia, February 27, 2009

[101] European Commission (2008). 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report (Working Document) 2695 final of 05.11.2008 (Brussels, European Commission), p. 10

[102] Interview with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009

municipalities should be an independent post without taking into account the interests of political parties and coalition members.[103]

In the particular case of Shuto Orizari local governance structures and informal activism could have a positive impact on the Roma community. Shuto Orizari is the only municipality in the world predominately populated by Roma, with a Romani mayor and councilors. The redrawing of territorial boundaries in 2002 allowed for the re-establishment of factories and loss of investment to other municipalities. The community has no resources to obtain funding and cannot generate tax revenues as many of the inhabitants are social welfare recipients. As mentioned previously, the provision of funding to local governments is progressing slowly, thus local governance structures in Shuto Orizari are not functioning effectively.[104] As noted by a Roma activist and government representative

"*if we compare the municipality of Shuto Orizari with smaller municipalities in Macedonia, and compare the institutions which are present within one municipality, than you would see that Shuto Orizari doesn't have some of the most important institutions, the core institutions which develop any group people, any population, any community, any nation. One cannot expect any progress here. The big question for the Macedonian government and Roma political parties is how do you develop a nation which is dependent on social welfare? And, how do you work with people who can only think of their social welfare and whether it's going to come on time or not*?"[105]

In 2009, the municipality did not approve the budget due to political difficulties and has incurred a deficit.[106] These limitations should not inhibit plans for future development and investment in the area. Effective political leadership and community level decision making could lead to a vibrant, cultural municipality.

Conclusion

[103] Ibid
[104] Interview with Redzpali Cupi, Director, Department of Minority Languages and Culture, Skopje, Macedonia, February 26, 2009
[105] Interview with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009
[106] Interview with Elvis Ali, Task Manager Public Administration, European Agency for Reconstruction Skopje, Macedonia, February 27, 2009

The nation building process in the former Yugoslavia although promoting the idea of 'brotherhood and unity' legitimated national and political identities based on ethnicity, and established a hierarchical ordering of the various communities within the state – positioning Roma at the bottom. This has impacted contemporary inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia; despite state ratification of numerous international agreements on minority rights, as well as recognition of Roma as an 'ethnic community' in the constitution, the community remains in a disadvantaged position, often the target of discriminatory practices. The Roma predominately perceived as 'loyal citizens,' are excluded as relevant contenders in political negotiations, as frequent contestation and effective lobbying by the large Albanian community provide a constant threat to the Macedonian state. The lack of effective leadership, political acumen, financial and organizational capacities within Roma political parties has lead to a weak public image and political platform. The division among VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, the dominant political parties in Macedonia requires coalition building with smaller minority parties. With marginal votes determining election outcomes; both parties have commented on the importance of Roma political support. However, Roma political parties have failed to capitalize on their bargaining potential – important concessions are not realized, such as further implementation of the national strategy and action plans.

In addition to ineffective political leadership, often internal conflict within Roma civil society organizations has not led to the successful promotion of Roma issues. Increasingly, the international community has limited funding to the SEE region, and this has presented further difficulties for Roma NGOs that do not have domestic support from Roma politicians or Macedonian institutions. Among other challenges is the employment of Roma NGO representatives within government institutions, which may lead to limited criticism of government policies and activities. The Ohrid Framework Agreement has stipulated the equal representation of ethnic communities in government institutions, but Roma remain severely under-represented. As minority communities did not have effective representation in centralized decision making structures, many regions and communities in Macedonia remain neglected. The current process of

decentralization may allow for greater involvement and participation of minority representatives in local government structures, as well as greater opportunities for advocacy and addressing the needs of the Roma community.

Macedonia as a participating state in the Decade of Roma Inclusion has created the relevant documents necessary to provide policy direction and implement activities on Roma inclusion. Limited funding and lack of political interest in Macedonia, however, has not led to significant progress on improving the situation of Roma communities. Further challenges are the lack of cooperation between the main agencies and political leaders responsible for implementation of Roma inclusion policies, in addition to adoption of a 'project oriented' approach that has short term impact; consequently, limiting the macro level development of initiatives on Roma issues. Furthermore, Roma political parties often lack a collaborative approach in interpretation of the national strategy and action plans. Discrimination among government personnel also debilitates opportunities for cooperation, as Roma issues are not viewed as integral to the overall goal of representing and addressing Macedonian concerns. Implementation of Roma issues are generally relegated to employees of Roma ethnicity, thus issues concerning the community do not enter higher level agendas and decision making processes. Thus, in analyzing the factors of political activism (state repression/facilitation, increasing institutional access, influential domestic and international allies, and shifting political alignments) it is evident that the political opportunity structure is 'closed.'

Chapter 5

Domestic Opportunities and Constraints: The Case of Serbia and Roma Political Activism

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyze the domestic factors that may support or debilitate Roma advocacy in Serbia. The domestic political opportunity structure (POS) is a useful framework to analyze components impacting mobilization; these include, state repression and/or facilitation, increasing institutional access, influential domestic and international allies, and shifting political alignments. The first section argues that the strength and form of national feeling in a state can be used as an indicator of increasing state repression towards minority groups and as such, it constitutes a major destabilizing factor for minority groups' ability to integrate. This section also summarizes the conflict among various domestic political actors and elites to illuminate the difficulty of

negotiating within a system of closed political channels that does not allow for policy reform or development in the state. The discussion proceeds to outline the situation of the Roma community, describing the prevalence of societal discrimination and violence. Secondly, the chapter seeks to describe the various institutional mechanisms that seemingly provide 'increasing access' regarding Roma inclusion as a response to international commitments. Influential domestic and international allies within the domestic arena pose opportunities as well as challenges for civil society organizations and Roma political parties that seek to influence Roma inclusion policy.

Finally, it will be illuminating to analyze Roma inclusion policies within Vojvodina and Kosovo subsequent to the Milosevic period that consequently had a lasting impact on ethnic relations in the state. The former is an ethnically divisive territory under the auspices of the international community, Serbian, and Kosovo governments, thus minority inclusion is dependent on domestic and international allies; while shifting political alignments create a complex scenario for the RAE minority. In comparison, the province of Vojvodina has traditionally been viewed as a multi-ethnic society, receptive to minority participation and interests, but has been negatively influenced by ethnic and political conflict in the region.

5.2 State Repression: Explaining Nationalism in the Former Yugoslavia

As previously noted, the foundations of nationalism and ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia are very much a result of the hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups within an institutionalized multinational state system designed to accommodate differences. While Serbians constituted forty percent of the population, Yugoslavia did not include a significant majority that was able to dominate 'naturally.' The preservation of Yugoslavia was dependent on the cooperation of Serbians and Croatians, the two national groups with the largest populations in a constant struggle to maintain their 'boundaries.' This understanding formed the basis for Yugoslavia as a nation state.[1]

[1] Pesic, V. "Explaining Nationalism in Yugoslavia," in *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis,* United States Institute of Peace, Peaceworks No. 8 (Washington D.C., April 2006), p.1

In this political environment, nationalism was the vehicle for creating new power sharing arrangements in reconstructing the nation and perceived as a necessary evil to ensure security among newly forming states. The foundation of Yugoslavia was based on an uneasy cooperation between two opposing national ideologies and was therefore unable to cope with claims of territorial sovereignty.[2] The conflict in the former Yugoslavia can be defined by political fragmentation along ethnic lines and consequently the outbreak of war to redraw national boundaries. The origins of the conflict in the mid-1980s were the outcome of a nationalist upsurge led by Serbia's Communist Party. The movement sought to provide further cohesiveness of the federation under leadership of the Communist Party, but nationalist fervour led to ideas of a 'Greater Serbia.'[3]

Ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia was intensified as the Serbian nation was reconstructed by nationalist intelligentsia, political leaders, and the Orthodox Church by appealing to the idea of a special and distinct national identity. Serbian identity was juxtaposed with 'other' Yugoslav nationalities that were constructed as a 'threat' and an 'enemy.' Serbian nationalist ideology was also based on the notion of Serbian solidarity – that all Serbs reside in one state. The security of Serbian people could only be accomplished by excluding all other ethnic groups from this state.[4] Thus, "to be a Serb … and not be nationally obsessed means to be accused of betraying your nation, and labelled as a 'bad' Serb. Distinctions between 'bad' and 'good' Serbs have become very important to the national mythology …"[5] The re-vitalization of historical grievances in opposition to other ethnic groups was able to fuel the nationalist goals of political leaders and impassion the populace. Propaganda in the form of conspiracy theories; Serbia as an 'exploited nation,' 'hatred' of Serbs and their genocide, the imagined

[2] Pesic, V. "Integrative Problems: Interwar Yugoslavia and the Major National Ideologies," in *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis*, United States Institute of Peace, Peaceworks No. 8 (Washington D.C., April 1996) p. 10
[3] Ibid, p. 14
[4] Gow, J. "Serbian Nationalism and the Hissssing Ssssnake in the International Order: Whose Sovereignty? Which Nation? *Slavonic and East European Review* 72 (3), July 1994, p. 458
[5] Korac, M. "Serbian Nationalism: Nationalism of My Own People," *Feminist Review*. 45 (1993), p. 108

Yugoslav nation that betrayed Serbian people, led to the inevitable conclusion of a secure nation that unified all Serbs.[6]

The resulting violence that ensued in Kosovo toward the Roma minority, forcing the population to seek refuge in Macedonia, Germany and other Western European nations is further testament to the effect of Serbian national identity on majority/minority relations. During the conflict, the Roma minority was caught between the two rival majority groups vying for control of the province. According to Mann, numerous social groups became involved – not just leaders and masses, but also radical and moderate movements and core constituencies. All were involved in a descent from a multinational Yugoslav Federation to murderous ethnic cleansing by organic nationalists. This comprised five main steps: the breakup of the Yugoslav Federation, its replacement by organic leaning nation-states, the outbreak of violent incidents between these states and their ethnic minorities; the escalation of such incidents into war between ethnically based states and statelets and escalation of war into murderous ethnic cleansing.[7] Radicalized nationalism was thus able to spread quite widely among the rival communities, but it was stirred, manipulated, and coerced by elites, armed militants, and core constituencies of radical nationalism. War then made ethnic identity compulsory, triumphant over all other identities.[8]

Barany has asserted that Macedonians have a long tradition of interethnic tolerance, and have peacefully coexisted with the Roma for centuries whereas Gypsies were settled in Bohemia only in the communist era.[9] The Macedonian identity and conception of nationhood is not as strong as in the Serbian case, especially after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. In contrast, the population in Serbia was aware of a common 'Serbian'

[6] Pesic, V. "The Role of Serbian Ressentiment," in *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis*. Peaceworks No. 8 (Washington D.C., April 1996) pp. 18-20

[7]Mann, M. "Yugoslavia I: Into the Danger Zone," *The Darkside of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 362

[8]Mann, M. "Yugoslavia II: Murderous Cleansing," *The Darkside of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 424

[9]Barany, Z. *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 324.

identity, although part of a greater Yugoslav state.[10] From an early period there have been strong nationalistic tendencies and awareness of a common ethno-national bond or greater Serbian nation. Thus, it can be assumed that there is greater discrimination toward the Roma minority as they are viewed as 'outsiders,' unable to integrate successfully and not capable of adopting the Serbian national identity. Additionally, one may surmise that Roma in Macedonia have had better opportunities to protest against discriminatory state practices and advance their claims for equality, as compared to their situation in Serbia. Although the prevalence of nationalism and political turbulence in Serbia has not been conducive to promoting Roma issues, Roma claims-making has led to minimal achievements in both Macedonian and Serbian states.

'Multiculturalism' and the new Serbian state

The constitution in Serbia further entrenches ethnocentrism, although political leaders attempt to convey the impression of a multicultural society. There are divisions among political parties in Serbia concerning EU accession, but for supporters of EU integration, discussions of multiculturalism are essential to promoting national myths and narratives that present the idea of an inclusive society. There has been a lack of political will in Serbia to develop the idea of civic participation, and the political and societal realities in both Macedonia and Serbia have falsified the myth of multi-ethnic states.[11]

The constitution and political party platforms explicitly state the idea that Serbia is the state of the Serbian people. As stated by a former presidential advisor in Vojvodina

"*the problem is that the mainstream Serbian population doesn't feel that Serbia is a multi-ethnic community. That's felt objectively and subjectively. They don't recognize inter-ethnic problems. For example, Serbians would probably be insulted if you called them racist or discriminatory because for them you're either Serb or nothing. They don't recognize Roma people as a separate community, autonomous community within themselves. They believe that there are no other people in Serbia except Serbs obviously. I can clearly state with certainty that nobody will die for Roma rights in Serbian*

[10]Mann, M. op.cit, p. 362.

[11] Gavrilovic, Z. "Analysis of the Political Position of the Roma in Serbia," in *Toward the Political Inclusion of Roma*, Report funded by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Serbia, p. 23

government. Equally, as they will not recognize the problem of Vojvodina, of Kosovo etc."[12]

An additional problematic are the contradictory laws in Serbia, which according to Bašić

enable an *"inarticulate and sterile multicultural policy in contemporary Serbia. During the preparation of the Law on the Protection of National Minorities itself, it was emphasized that its implementation depends on the solutions provided for in other laws – on local government, official use of language, elections, education, culture, information and others. However, only in rare instances did laws in the Republic of Serbia follow the idea of recognizing differences through the cultural autonomy of national minorities."*[13]

Political Turbulence in Serbia

The 1990s marked the most tumultuous period for Serbia with the final phase of Yugoslavia's disintegration commencing. This process resulted in wars between former Yugoslav states, international sanctions, the NATO bombing, and authoritarian rule under Slobodan Milosevic, perpetuated into isolationism and opposition to European integration. Subsequent to political reforms in 2000, external relations with the EU improved and Serbia has attained EU accession status.[14]

In the 1990s, political struggles centered on the divide between nationalist and pro-European supporters. Nationalism tended to fuel an anti-Western opposition and with the transition to a multi-party system, the nationalist wing attained a significant advantage in elections. Political reforms in 2000 did not remove Milosevic supporters entirely within government structures and in 2003 the Prime Minister of Serbia Zoran Djindjic, was assassinated; partly as a result of his actions in the extradition of Milosevic to the Hague Tribunal in 2001. This was a momentous loss for the country as Djindjic was a powerful actor in the process of democratization. Consequently, these events

[12] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009
[13] Osman in Gavrilovic, op.cit., p. 23
[14] Orlovic, S. "Europeanisation and Democratisation of Parties and Party System of Serbia," in *Politics in Central Europe* 3 (2007), p. 93

strained relations with the Hague Tribunal, with the omniscient threat of destabilization in the state.[15]

The election of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) in 2000 facilitated drastic political reforms, indicating a change from the old regime. The DOS had many challenges, as the previous administration of Slobodan Milosevic resulted in a disenchanted electorate that had no faith in public institutions, the media, the judiciary, law enforcement, and election procedures. A fragile economy, high unemployment rate, and the significant inflow of refugees extenuated difficulties. In addition, the disputed status of Kosovo and the possible secession of Montenegro created a volatile political climate rife with conflict and nationalist fervour.[16]

Although the 2000 elections led to the overwhelming victory of the DOS, stability was temporary. The 18 party DOS coalition was rife with political and personal conflicts, as well as ideological differences. The most significant cleavage was between the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), led by the President Vojislav Kostunica, and the Democratic Party (DS) led by the Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. In 2001, DSS withdrew support and this led to the expulsion of its members from parliament. As a consequence, parliament reached an impasse which delayed the adoption of legislation. DSS members returned only temporarily to enable election amendments; not minimizing conflict between DSS and DS.[17]

In 2002, several factors changed the political environment in Serbia. Agreements were concluded regarding the common state of Serbia and Montenegro. Conflicts continued between DOS coalition partners; it became unclear if the government still had a parliamentary majority, once again leading to an impasse and delaying legislative reforms. This was an especially challenging period as further indictments by the

[15] Ibid, p. 93
[16] ODIHR-OSCE Parliamentary Election Report Serbia 2000, p. 3 available:osce.org/odihr-elections/14615.html
[17] Kesic, O. "An Airplane with Eighteen Pilots: Serbia after Milosevic," in *Serbia since 1989: Politics and Society Under Milosevic and After*. eds. S. Ramet and V. Pavlakovic (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1995) pp. 106-108

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia detained senior staff of army and police forces. As a result of continued feuding among political parties and a vote of no-confidence, the National Assembly was dissolved in November 2003.[18] Parliamentary Elections in December 2003 did not mark an improvement in political relations and no consensus was reached among political parties. Although Zoran Zivkovic continued the political reforms initiated by Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic; political stalemate was aggravated by the non-election of a President since 2002 leading to an increasingly volatile political climate.[19] The December 2003 elections marked the end of the fragile DOS Coalition and the promise for reforming an autocratic, quasi-mafia state to a functioning democracy.

As the parliamentary elections in January 2007 did not indicate a clear parliamentary majority, a government coalition consisting of the DS, G17+, Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and New Serbia (NS) was formed with Kostunica as Prime Minister. A coalition agreement was signed among the political parties indicating cooperation on priority issues such as the status of Kosovo as a Serbian province, EU candidacy, and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Partnership among the coalition members increasingly grew tense with the upcoming 2007 presidential elections, stemming from differences concerning the priority issues – this perpetuated a very negative political climate and campaign. January 2008 marked the first presidential election since the approval of the new Constitution of Serbia, and perhaps the most important elections since the end of the Milosevic regime.[20] Once again, the May 2008 parliamentary elections in Serbia followed the demise of the coalition government under the leadership of Kostunica – mainly due to the contentious topics of the Serbian reaction to the declaration of independence by Kosovo in February

[18]ODIHR-OSCE Presidential Election Report Serbia 2003, p. 3 available: osce.org/odihr-elections/14610.html

[19]See OSCE-ODIHR, Parliamentary Election Report Serbia 2003, p. 3 available: osce.org/odihr-elections/14631.html

[20] The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on 30 September 2006. It was further endorsed by a popular referendum on 28-29 October 2006.

2008, and cooperation with the European Union.[21] Perhaps most alarming for minority groups is the increasing support for the Serbian Radical Party that promotes a strong nationalist agenda. The country continues to be plagued by corruption, organized crime, ethnic conflict in the region, weak coalition governments and government institutions, and a political culture of intolerance and undemocratic values.[22]

5.3 Situation of Roma in Serbia

Serbia has the largest population of Roma in the former Yugoslavia, predominately residing in the cities of Nis and Belgrade; estimations of the population are as high as 600,000.[23] Prior to the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1989-1991, it was the first country under the leadership of Tito to recognize Roma as a national minority. The 1993 Constitution classified the community as an 'ethnic group;' Roma leaders advocated for national minority status in 1998, however, Macedonia and Montenegro are the only successor Yugoslav states to recognize the community.[24] The situation of Roma in Serbia, as in other SEE countries, is precarious. As noted by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights "despite the State party's efforts to improve the economic and social situation of Roma through National Plans of Action for the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) in both Republics, widespread discrimination of Roma persists with regard to employment, social security, housing, health care and education."[25] A 2002 report assessing the social, ethnic and racial distance toward the Roma community demonstrates a high degree of societal discrimination on part of Serbians, as well as Albanian and Hungarian minorities. Depending on the region in Serbia, approximately 50% of the populace would not accept

[21] See OSCE-ODIHR, Parliamentary Election Report Serbia, 2007 and OSCE-ODIHR, Presidential Election Reports Serbia, 2008 *.osce.org/odihr-elections/14610.html*
[22] Kesic, O. op.cit, p. 118
[23] See European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) Website, Council of Europe, Statistics, available: coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers
[24] Reinhartz, D. "The Yugoslav Roma under Slobodan Milosevic and After," in *Serbia since 1989: Politics and Society Under Milosevic and After*. eds. S. Ramet and V. Pavlakovic (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1995) pp. 383-384
[25] See the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, available: ohchr.org/tbru/cescr/Serbia_and_Montenegro.pdf.

Roma as an employer or neighbour. Regarding marriage and partnership, approximately 70-90% would not accept Roma within their families.[26]

Inter-Ethnic Violence and Racially Motivated Attacks

The perception that Roma are prone to crime is a widely shared belief in Serbian society. The most frequent violation of Roma rights is in the form of ethnicity based discrimination either by private individuals, as well as documented cases of police torture. Often Roma individuals cannot rely on police protection in assault cases. Furthermore, investigations of police brutality are rarely initiated, and in the few cases of a guilty verdict, sentences are quite lenient. The frequent infringement of human rights by law enforcements officers are viewed as 'irregularities.[27]'

Many human rights organizations have noted the high incidence of hate crimes and racially motivated assaults against Roma in many Serbian cities. Physical assaults take the form of beatings in public, and setting fire to homes in Roma settlements. At times, victims have suffered from life threatening injuries. Many Roma individuals have also complained of verbal assaults and harassment. [28] Although anti-discrimination legislation in Serbia is explicit in addressing hate crimes, the major challenge in confronting racism is the lack of political will and limited penalties or non-persecution of offenders. At times, the police are responsible for racial profiling and physical assault on Roma individuals. Judicial decisions and lenient sentences for perpetrators reflect discriminatory attitudes and disinclination of applying anti-discrimination measures and confronting racial and physical violence against Roma.[29]

Education

[26] Dordevic, Dragoljub. "Social, Ethnic and Religious Distance Towards Roma of Serbia (Empirical Report for 1999-2002)," University of Nis, Serbia, pp. 257-266

[27] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

[28] See "Rights Organizations Urge Prevention and Prosecution of Racist Attacks in Serbia," June 17, 2010 available: errc.org

[29] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

In Serbia, adoption of the 2005 Action Plan on Roma inclusion resulted in considerable progress in the area of education. However, there is a lack of initiative by the Ministry of Education; most projects are the actions of the National Roma Minority Council, NGOs and international organizations. Although some key improvements such as the employment of Roma assistants, adult education programs, and affirmative action for enrolment in high school and universities were achieved – major challenges remain such as segregation and bureaucratic obstacles. As many Roma families do not have the appropriate property, birth certificates and health documentation, a considerable number of Roma children do not enrol in educational facilities. Segregation is a major obstacle that has not been addressed. Research by the Minority Rights Centre in Belgrade demonstrates that in elementary school often there are classes with Roma children only, as ethnic Serbian parents refuse to send their children to the same school. Approximately 50-80% of Romani children are sent to 'special schools' seriously debilitating future opportunities to enrol in higher education. Similar to the case of Macedonia, many Roma live in isolated settlements, thus Romani children do not always have the opportunity to learn other languages. Roma children are often the targets of racial violence at school; educators often do not condemn these actions.[30]

Living Conditions

According to the 2009 Decade Watch Report, housing in Roma communities is the area where the least progress has been made. In many SEE countries, Roma are confronted with similar challenges in regards to substandard housing conditions. Similar to the case in Macedonia, Roma often live on settlements without basic services and infrastructure, residing near hazardous areas that pose a health risk to residents. Many Roma communities living on informal settlements are often susceptible to forced evictions; in many cases legalisation is very difficult or impossible. According to the report, Macedonia and Serbia had the highest number of evictions regarding the Roma community. Consequently, the settlements are destroyed and inhabitants are moved to

[30] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

inadequate housing or provided with no alternative facilities. Often evictions are conducted without prior consultation with the inhabitants, in sometimes, severe weather conditions. As no long term solutions are developed, many Roma live in a perpetual condition of insecurity. It is evident that racism and discrimination pose challenges to Roma finding adequate living accommodations. This is made apparent by state authorities refusing Roma access to social housing, but also individual landlords that refuse to rent.[31]

Employment

Roma have the highest unemployment rate in Serbia – the 2002 census noted that only 27.2% of Roma are economically active. Furthermore, Roma are severely underrepresented in state and local administrations. In addition, there has been no state funding for Roma entreneurship initiatives; any small measures implemented have been the result of international efforts which are inadequate to combat Roma unemployment and poverty. For example, there have been efforts to employ Roma in various public works programmes; generally inadequate measures, as Roma cannot actively participate, lacking formal education, skills and appropriate documentation. When Roma do participate in the labour market, they are employed in often hazardous work conditions. Discrimination by employers also hinders the employability of Roma - as a consequence, many take low paid jobs in the informal sector. As the majority of the population is markedly young (below the age of 15) this also greatly accentuates the socio-economic differences between the Roma and ethnic Serbian population. The majority of Roma families rely on limited sources of income (agriculture, construction, recycling, social welfare, and remittances from abroad). Due to the transition process, limited state funding, the economic recession, and high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), it is unlikely there will be an improvement in the socio-economic status of Roma in Serbia. The Roma Employment Action Plan adopted within the framework

[31] Decade Watch – Results of the 2009 Survey, pp. 83-89

of the Roma Decade is not implemented in a comprehensive manner, and has no clear budget for financing activities.[32]

5.4 Increasing Access? The Institutional Response to Roma Inclusion

Observance of International Human Rights Legislation

Similar to Macedonia, Serbia has ratified numerous international agreements and conventions concerning human rights. The Copenhagen Criteria (1993), main principles adopted by the EU in Tampere (1999), and the Social Inclusion Draft have relevance concerning the development of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in Serbia, but the document also highlights various other international commitments that have influenced the development of national legislation, and especially apply to the situation of Roma communities. Some of these include the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Articles 28 and 29), the OSCE, EU, CoE *Framework Convention on Protection of National Minorities, European Social Charter,* the Council of the European Union (the *Directive Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin, Status of Roma in Candidate Countries: Basic Document, Guiding Principles for Improvement of the Status of Roma*) and the United Nations (*International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*), which includes recommendations in regards to new economic empowerment, can be applied to the Roma community in the Republic of Serbia.[33] As mentioned by many international and NGO representatives, both Macedonia and Serbia have effective national legislation regarding the social and political inclusion of Roma. However, inadequate funding and limited political will have debilitated efforts to comprehensively address the situation of Roma communities.

In Serbia the central government institutions that formulate and implement Roma inclusion policy and programmes are the National Council for Roma (Republic Council

[32] Decade Watch – Results of the 2009 Survey, pp. 89-94
[33] Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 2010, pp. 10-11

for National Minorities), Office for the Roma Decade League, Agency for Human and Minority Rights, Secretariat for the Roma National Strategy located in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. In 2009, there were two high profile political positions within the government occupied by individuals of Roma ethnicity: the Deputy Minister of Human and Minority Rights, Petar Antic, and Vitomir Mihaljovic (MP) in the Democratic Party, also President of the National Council for Roma.

In January 2005, as a participating state in the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion,' the Government of Serbia adopted National Action Plans for the improvement of the Roma community in the areas of housing, health, education and employment. As of yet minimal achievements have been realized and no sustainable system of funding has been provided by the government for the implementation of national and local action plans. In 2008, the *Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities* in Vojvodina, Serbia conducted a field assessment in Roma communities pertaining to awareness of state initiatives and the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The results of the surveys demonstrate that the Roma community had inadequate information regarding policies and projects to improve the situation of the Roma population. The report questioned 450 respondents; 76 (18%) had knowledge of the Decade, while 369 (82%) had no information concerning the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Even more surprising, the few respondents that had knowledge of the Decade were not aware of its program mandate, such as the participation of SEE countries and action plans. In regards to knowledge of state programs, specifically self-employment, 103 (24%) have some information and 342 (76%) have no information.[34]

The statistics demonstrate a lack of interest in disseminating knowledge of international and domestic initiatives to the Roma community, as well as rhetorical commitments made by the Serbian government without implementation. As stated by the Department Head of the Roma Inclusion Office in Vojvodina

[34] Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities: Report on Roma Community in Vojvodina, Serbia, p. 8.

"*the Decade is not visible in Roma municipalities. They've spent the previous three or four years just with empty words – just saying something, and making action plans – but, nothing has really been done. The concept of the Decade is really well conceived, but the implementation has not been very successful and most Roma people have not had the chance to encounter it, or actually see some consequences or results*."[35] As noted by a NGO activist in Vojvodina,

"*the World Bank and other international institutions they see the Roma as a factor of political instability for foreign investments. It's not that they love us -- or something like that. So they agree that they will start this Decade but all the burden of the implementation of the Decade will be on the countries. So that is not a new financial mechanism for this country. There are some good initiatives, but for some things you really need serious financial resources. Also, there is a lack of political will because they are only looking at Kosovo so, the Roma are a secondary issue. We are not on the top of the agenda*."[36]

The National Council of Roma

The National Council for Roma created in 2005 has the authority and responsibility for the overall formulation and implementation of Roma-related policy and programmes in government ministries. The National Council and the President of the Council are elected by members of the minority community. The Office for the Coordination of the Roma Decade is presided over by the Vice President of Serbia; there are twenty-two members (eleven ministers and eleven representatives of the Roma community). The Secretariat for the Roma National Strategy functions as the expert and technical support office.[37]

NGO representatives have criticized the National Council of Roma, stating the difficulty of working with the staff. This is quite consequential to developing actions on Roma-related issues as the office is one of the main institutions that decides on project funding and appraisal of the Roma community's needs.[38] Following the reforms in October 2000 a 'declaration on a new democratic system of advancing the position of national

[35] Interview with Dusko Jovanovich, Director Roma Inclusion Office, Novi Sad, Serbia, April 28, 2009
[36] Interview with Nenad Vladisavljavic, Roma Students Association, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 21, 2009
[37] Interview with Vitomir Mihaljovic, Member of Parliament Democratic Party (DS) and President of the National Council for Roma, Belgrade, Serbia, June 6, 2009
[38] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

minorities' was adopted focusing on two main components: the recognition of national minorities/communities and the Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, passed in 2002. The 2002 Act initiated the process of institutionalizing Roma political activism. As a result, National Roma Councils were formed in municipalities with large Roma populations. Additionally, the Office for Implementing the National Strategy, the Provincial Council for Roma Integration and the Office for Roma Inclusion in Vojvodina were created in 2002.[39]

Adoption of the new Consititution of the Republic of Serbia in 2006 guaranteed national minority rights in the areas of: affirmative action, and local governance on issues of culture, education, information, and language. Government documents focus on the need to promote anti-discrimination through affirmative action measures. The *National Council of Roma* and the *Agency for Human and Minority Rights* emphasize Roma integration in muncipalities as a priority. The *Secretariat for Implementation of the National Strategy* would be the organization responsible for supporting municipalities in formulating and implementing local action plans.[40] Many SEE countries during the Decade of Roma Inclusion, as in the case of Macedonia, have created a Secretariat for Implementation of the National Strategy within the Ministry of Employment and Social Policy. Although institutional response has not been very effective in Serbia, it is important to note that by creating an office within the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, it has enabled more effective communication with other government departments in priority areas such as education, housing, health care, and employment.[41]

In analyzing the legitimacy of the Roma National Council in Serbia, Basic found that membership tended to be highly exclusive; with many members inter-linked through various interest groups and political connections.[42] According to Article 24 of the Law on the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, political parties are able to directly

[39] Gavrilovic, Z. op.cit., pp. 22-23
[40] Ibid, p. 24
[41] Interview with Ljuan Koka, Head of Department Secretariat for Implementation of the National Strategy, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009
[42] Osman Basic in Gavrilovic, op.cit., pp. 24-25

influence the election of members to the National Councils. Thus, a limited number of individuals with specific views are controlling the cultural and political development of Roma activism.[43] Basic states

"*in essence, this is an authoritarian model of rule that tends toward the centralization, unification and control over human and institutional resources. Its establishment confirms the rule by which minority leaders often pay lip service to the need for autonomy and decentralization which, however, they are not prepared to recognize within their own communities*."[44]

Further difficulties arise due to the vague and undefined functions of national minority councils that allow for the monopolization of issues in the area of minority self-government. National minority representatives are predominately responsible for funding distribution. Although limited funds are available, there is a lack of information as to how available funding is dispersed for administration and programs. Remarking upon the general incoherence and non-transparency of Serbian policy and programs regarding minority affairs, Basic states

"I don't want to get into the details of this messy situation, which seems to have come about not purposely but through the neglect of institutions charged with dealing with national minority rights, but it should be clearly underlined that the existing administrative system treats national minority issues as a marginal social and political problem. An absence of strategy regarding the integration of minorities and the view of multiculturality as found and not too desirable state has resulted in a situation in which issues of organizing the state administration on the protection of national minority rights has been left to ad hoc decision-making, to incompetent people who are ready to prepare and implement decisions and solutions that are in the interest of political power centers."[45]

The Roma community is based on patriarchal and traditional forms of organization; to a certain extent this mode of leadership and communication has been reified within government institutions. Traditional Roma communities are dependent upon a few 'leaders' and 'mediators' that represent the population in communicating with government authorities. While it is convenient for international organizations and government institutions to refer to one representative voicing the needs of the

[43] Interview with Osman Balic, Director, YUROM Centar, Belgrade, Serbia, June 3, 2009
[44] Osman Basic in Gavrilovic, Z. op.cit., pp. 24-25
[45] Gavrilovic, Z. op.cit., p. 29

community, often it is detrimental to democratic representation, and community members are unable to articulate their concerns and issues as the 'mediator' is able to gain power through the monopolization of money and information. Generally, patriarchal forms of organization are indicative of Serbian society, but perhaps issues of power and control are exacerbated within the Roma community due to high levels of poverty and illiteracy.[46]

Serbia has created the relevant departments to coordinate and implement Roma-related policies and programs, but it has not led to increased access for Roma activists, nor have the results of these initiatives been successful. As noted in the case of Macedonia, short-term strategies do not effectively address issues within the Roma community. As stated alternatively by a representative of CARE international,

"*one of the things that have burdened our projects considerably is the fact they are implemented throughout a period that has been very politically unstable diminishing our chances to have good cooperation with the national government. We had five election cycles in twenty five years. And the political struggle between the political parties is huge. The mandates of the previous governments are never implemented. There are several months of preparation for a new campaign, and the campaign itself, and then you have the election process and I don't know how many months after that before the government's national or local agencies are established. So, it's at least a six month cycle that you can't work with anybody -- there is nobody that you can talk to, nobody will take any responsibility. There is no way you can talk to people and lobby enough for them to realize that they should take a certain level of responsibility and work together with us on the improvement of the situation of Roma. So whatever we did up to now is more like a struggle*."[47]

It is thus important to create a system and strategy that has longevity. One of the main challenges within the SEE region, as in Macedonia is the lack of implementation at the local level. Although many international initiatives, national strategies and action plans exist, it is at the local level where change is necessary and can have the most effective impact on the Roma community. One NGO representative noted a situation in which the Ministry of Education provided all elementary schools recommendations concerning

[46] Interview with Svenka Savic, Director Women's Studies and Research, University of Novi Sad Novi Sad, Serbia, May 17, 2009

[47] Interview with Jasna Kronja, Department Head, CARE Serbia Office, May 18, 2009, Novi Sad, Serbia

Roma students. At the municipal level of government the letters were never distributed to teachers and principals, as discrimination is pervasive and many local government representatives do not view the issue as important. [48]

Influential Allies for Roma Activism? The role of civil society organizations and political parties

Roma Civil Society

As conflict subsides in the SEE region, international organizations are decreasing funding for Roma-related issues. The Serbian government, similar to the case in Macedonia, implemented short term projects and measures during the election period, but no significant policy and program reforms were initiated to have an impact within the Roma community. As mentioned by the former presidential advisor in Vojvodina,

"*during elections the government does a few good propaganda movements toward Roma people – they give them a few packages, find employment for some of their activists. Then wait another 3-4 years for the next elections. Except for a few lonely cases – there aren't any bigger actions regarding the issue*."[49]

State funding is generally limited with resources divided between few NGOs that have personal connections to the ruling party. The funding process is not transparent; there are no 'open tenders' for project proposals and in some cases, quasi or fake NGOs simply profit from the funding.[50] Furthermore, as the majority of NGOs are funded by international donors, there is a lack of accountability to the community in question. NGOs are incapable of implementing wide scale social policy reform or utilising the plethora of institutional resources available to the state, and as such can legitimate limited voluntary activities. Civil society organizations, unlike state agencies are not accountable or responsible to a constituency, and instead promote an agenda created by

[48] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

[49] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009

[50] Interview with Svenka Savic, Director Women's Studies and Research, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 17, 2009

the international community. In addition, board members of international organizations to which NGOs report meet infrequently and generally reside outside the target community, thereby silencing Roma concerns and needs.[51]

As noted in Macedonia, civil society representatives are increasingly employed within state departments or informally involved with the government. Similarly, in Serbia, it has been a challenging task to maintain a critical stance concerning Roma-related policy and programmes if civil society representatives are connected to state authorities. Many Roma students are also at risk of not completing their university education, as international organizations and NGOs need to fill vacant positions with Roma individuals from the younger generation who have a good knowledge of English and the skills required to perform organizational tasks. Roma intellectuals are provided with considerable financial incentives, and sometimes choose to expend their resources and energy as activists. Consequently, several students either graduate after many years or not at all. Thus, the Roma intellectual elite, although obtaining skills in project development and management, will not have the credentials to gain employment in other fields as contracts with international organizations and NGOs are generally short term. A further problematic is those individuals that do manage to finish university education sometimes do not want to be recognized as Roma or become activists. At times, educated professionals may even adopt a different ethnic identity.[52]

With the increasing presence of international organizations, such as the Open Society Institute (OSI), funding for Roma education included programs for Roma youth - to facilitate opportunities to represent their community at the EU level, as well as the national/local level. Thus, a new group of young, well-educated leaders are progressively taking key positions in the government and NGOs, actively making up the new 'Roma elite.' These activists and politicians would be the key communicators for

[51] Trehan, N. "In the Name of the Roma? The Role of Private Foundations and NGOs,' in *Between Past and Future: the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe*. ed. W. Guy (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), pp. 137-138

[52] Interview with Nadja Kocic, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009

present and future relations between Roma and Gadje (non-Roma) societies. Research demonstrates that while many Romani leaders remain in close contact with their families and 'mahallas,'[53] frequently, individuals' sever contact with their communities. Often members of the 'Roma elite' have more familiarity within their network, in comparison to community ties. Moreover, in distinguishing themselves from the Roma community, many young leaders purported a greater affiliation with Gadje culture and traditions. It is also interesting that the majority of youth in leadership positions generally come from families that were politically and socially active during the Communist period. It is very infrequent that the 'Roma elite' are representatives of 'lower' social strata in their ethnic group. It is of consequence that impoverished Roma communities as the target of NGO programs are generally not represented in the 'Roma elite.'[54]

Marx differentiates among 'presenters,' and 're-presenters,' among the younger generation of Roma leadership. The 'presenter' epitomizes many contemporary Roma activists who are socialized within the mahallas – can 'present' community issues within government institutions and decision making bodies, but are unable to communicate information or implement changes within the community. This consequently accounts for the failure of NGO and internationally funded projects. The 're-presenter' is able to obtain information about the community, and has the ability, trust and legitimacy to provide advice, leading the community to unpopular outcomes. However, this is a complex process as often Roma communities differ in terms of values and culture from the majority society. Thus, information (especially impacting life-style) should be re-contextualized or translated before possible implementation. Thus, the ability of de-contextualizing and re-contextualizing has to be arranged by the leader.[55]

[53] The term 'mahalla' refers to a Romani settlement
[54] Marx, T. '*Roma-elite and the problem of re-presentation. First outcomes of a PhD project*.' Conference Paper for Romani Mobilities in Europe: Multidisciplinary Perspectives, January, 2010, Oxford University, Oxford. pp. 92-94
[55] Ibid, p. 97

Synkova similarly argues that the NGO sector in post-communist Eastern Europe became a 'mobility channel' for the small elite group of Roma that had experience interacting with non-Roma.[56] Thus, non-educated, impoverished Roma are targeted as 'clients' of humanitarian organizations, and also legitimate the organizations' existence that promotes an ideology of 'Roma helping Roma.' Although the clients' mobility can be assisted by NGOs, there are many cases of Roma and non-Romani paternalism; the monopolization of information and communication with authorities. Synkova's case study illuminated some interesting findings on NGO legitimacy and Roma participation. In contradistinction to the idea that Romani organizations are not transparent, unprofessional, corrupt and run as a 'family business,' Synkova argues that Roma self-employment in a NGO is an attractive option, provided that generally, finding employment is quite difficult in the transition period.[57]

Furthermore, Synkova views the participation of external actors such as EU funding bodies as both significant and detrimental to NGO development. Thus, international involvement re-contextualizes the aim of 'helping other Roma' as a 'project,' that requires professional writing, managing finances and personnel management. The NGO previously run as a 'family business,' is institutionalized requiring significant reforms in the hierarchical structure, and decision-making processes. In addition, the input of many former employees is no longer perceived as valuable – 'experienced professionals,' are required to fill defined positions with multiple responsibilities. The organization's culture based on mutual cooperation and loose job descriptions is now a formal environment. As international funds are increasingly channelled through government institutions, this also promotes the bureaucratization of NGOs and dependence on state bodies. These changes also indicate a transition from 'activism and advocacy,' to 'providing services,' as well as the employment of individuals that are effective

[56] Synkova, H. "Can NGOs serves as mobility channels." Conference Paper for Romani Mobilities in Europe: Multidisciplinary Perspectives, January, 2010, Oxford University, Oxford. Hana Synkova in discussing an 'elite group' refers to educated individuals, but also having a specific kind of knowledge regarding majority-minority relations. Generally, Roma individuals in the NGO sector were from powerful, wealthy, business oriented families who often came from 'mixed' families.
[57] Ibid, pp. 175-180

mediators between the state and NGO sector. As Romani organizations' increasingly require professional staff, the training capacity of NGOs is also diminished, as 'uneducated Roma' can no longer function in an environment that is based on the documentation of results and output. Non-Romani organizations are also able to criticize Roma organizations on the basis of their 'amateur status,' clearly demarking their position as a 'qualified, professional, service oriented,' agency. As noted by Synkova, there are few Roma individuals able to maintain their position in NGOs that value the different kinds of knowledge and expertise of non-Roma or better educated Romani individuals.[58]

Similarly, Trehan has argued that substantial funding provided by Western donors in the 1990s, created what many Roma activists and intellectuals refer to as a 'gypsy industry.' This led to increasing conflict between Roma and non-Roma personnel, native and foreign employees concerning pay equity. There could also be negative ramifications in the long term as NGO service provision is no longer community based and focused on technocratic ability, rather than altruistic concerns. A further challenge is the exclusion of Roma employees from NGO work, as international organizations prefer western educated professionals that are familiar with bureaucratic language and culture. Although civil society organizations promote principles of anti-discrimination and inclusion, only few Roma professionals are able to gain access to elite circles and international networks.[59]

Representatives of international organizations and NGOs have mentioned that although approximately 1000 Roma organizations exist within Serbia, very few effectively serve the needs of the community.[60] Similar criticisms of civil society cooperation in Macedonia resound in Serbia: although Roma NGOs are essential to maintaining communication with the general Roma population, it is widely perceived that NGOs lack

[58] Ibid, pp. 175-180
[59] Trehan, N. op.cit., pp. 139-141
[60] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009 and Jelena Jovanvich, Coordinator, Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities, Novi Sad, Serbia, May, 6, 2009

organizational skills, lobbying and advocacy abilities, professional capacities, as well as the motivation to complete project tasks.[61] The following statement of a CARE representative summarizes the view of many international NGOs and institutions concerning Romani organizations:

"*Roma NGOs in Serbia are rather undeveloped. Out of the hundreds of registered Roma NGOs, it's really a very small number of those who you can call a NGO. And even those have problems with their organizational structure and capacity to run a business. And, the motivation for registering so many NGOs I would say was how to get hold of different funding. Even the partners that we have been working with for quite some time have certain -- very significant weaknesses they cannot overcome. And, we would like to establish a partnership with a group of people, or organization that is not Roma. But, including Roma as representatives are necessary for acting as mediators between the project and the Roma population. They are absolutely essential. But, they need to be part of better established organizations that can channel their capacities in a more professional way. The cooperation is better because the organization has a certain culture, structure, procedures, and rules of behaviour. If you don't have that -- then you're struggling around things that should have been solved within the partner organization – it should not be a job CARE has to deal with.*"[62]

In the late 1990s, many civil society organizations in Serbia, as in Macedonia, were distributing humanitarian aid. Some international organization and NGO representatives believe that servicing the Roma community now requires different skills that the majority of Roma NGO personnel do not possess. As mentioned by some informants, funding distribution has also increased competition between Roma NGOs, which as in the case of Macedonia, has led to some challenges in building a cohesive movement. This also poses difficulties for international organization representatives, as explanations are generally required for funding one organization and not another creating some unpleasant experiences.[63] The majority of funding is generally distributed to non-Romani led organizations, as donors conceive difficult relations with Roma NGOs noted for their 'lack of professionalism and expertise.' This perception, consequently, reaffirms wider societal norms denoting the inferior status of the Roma community, as well as limiting their influence and participation in decision making bodies. Moreover,

[61] Interview with Jasna Kronja, Department Head, CARE Serbia Office, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 18, 2009
[62] Ibid
[63] Interview with Jasna Kronja, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 18, 2009 and Nadja Kocic, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009

the internal political conflicts and lack of professionalism within non-Romani advocacy organizations is not scrutinized.[64]

Serbian civil society organizations in the late 1990s were successful in mobilizing public opinion in opposition to Milosevic, but it has been challenging to regroup and find support for other human rights issues. A study conducted in 2003-2004 regarding public opinion of NGOs in Serbia showed negative results. One focus group participant stated "the very notion of something being 'non-governmental' has negative connotations in the country – something fighting against the authorities."[65] The majority of respondents were also sceptical that NGOs could achieve any results; believing civil society organizations to be closed, untrustworthy and selfish, ignoring the marginalized groups they purported to support. The politicization of civil society and influence of political parties was stated as the main reason for negative public perceptions. In regards to the legitimacy of Roma advocacy organizations, one participant noted

"*only a small number of those people for which the project really is needed are using it … the biggest part of the project goes to the NGOs themselves, the President of the NGO and the closest ones around him. Let me give you an example: the NGO for Roma rights. How are they going to solve the problems the Roma face when the President of the NGO employs his wife and there is absolutely no Roma staff! How can they solve Roma issues*?"[66]

While the study indicated general apathy toward NGO work and staff, there is scope for improvement as many respondents indicated a willingness to join the voluntary sector if NGOs provided better information about their projects, and were more open to membership, thus enhancing the capacity and public image of civil society organizations.[67]

Roma Political Parties

[64] Trehan, N. op.cit., p. 140
[65] Grodeland, A. "Public Perceptions of non-governmental organizations in Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Macedonia." *Communist and Post Communist Studies* 39 (2006): 226-232.
[66] Interviewee in Grodeland, A. op. cit., p. 235.
[67] Grodeland, A. op.cit., p. 245

Previous arguments described Serbian mainstream politics as increasingly nationalistic; as the former advisor to the president of Vojvodina noted to not be a nationalist is to be considered a 'traitor' of the Serbian people. In this political environment it is challenging for minority parties, and specifically Roma political parties to gain concessions or advocate effectively on behalf of the community. Generally, Roma and other minority political parties in Serbia form coalitions with the Democratic Party (DS) which has a history of co-opting minority parties. Political parties at the republic level, including nationalist radical parties, do not openly discriminate against the Roma community. Very often mainstream Serbian political parties will include Roma politicians on membership lists who eventually become MPs, if only to generate additional votes. Often, Serbian political parties that are not nationalistic and attempting to form coalitions with Roma political parties are undermined by the actions of nationalist parties.[68]

From 1990 - 2008, 29 Roma political parties have been registered in the Republic and Federal Registers at the Ministry for State Administration and Local Government. The two main Roma political parties in Serbia, the Association of Roma led by Rajko Djuric and the Roma Party led by Sergin Shaiyan in 2007, managed to win seats in the Serbian Parliament.[69] According to the new draft law, 500 signatures of employed, adult citizens are required *for the founding of a national minority political party*, which is one-tenth of the percentage required for mainstream parties.[70] The new election law introduced in 2008 destroyed smaller minority parties by creating unrealistic requirements, such as collecting 10,000 signatures in two weeks time in order to be included on the election list. In addition, funding is restricted to political parties with representatives in government. Roma political parties having not participated in earlier elections did not have funding available until January 2007, when the two Roma representatives gained seats. For smaller political parties, funding is only available 12 hours before the election

[68] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009
[69] Interview with Nadja Kocic, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009
[70] Gavrilovic, Z. op.cit, pp. 23-24

begins, ensuring election defeat. In this case, minority political parties do not have the opportunity to stand for election, unless the party is self-funded. The two dominant political parties in Serbia, the Democratic Party and the Radical Party, both practice undemocratic election procedures by distributing food and hygiene packages in Roma settlements few days prior to the elections in order to gain votes. Vitomir Mihajlovic (MP) representative of the Roma Social Democratic Party was forced to concede his votes to the Democratic Party under threat of such practices.[71]

In the 2008 elections, both the Roma Party and the Association of Roma did not form a coalition, hoping to garner enough votes individually; consequently, this was not the case and as a result, no Roma political party representative was in parliament. Although Roma political parties did not gain seats in the 2008 elections, the Democratic and Radical Parties include two MPs of Roma ethnicity, Vitomir Mihaljovic and Sergin Shaiyan.[72] There are also a few individuals of Roma ethnicity as members of the Democratic and Radical parties who do not wish to acknowledge their ethnic identity, perhaps fearing disrepute among the electorate. However, as representatives of the mainstream political parties, there is limited influence that can be exerted regarding Roma issues. If Roma politicians agreed on a common platform and formed coalitions among Roma political parties, perhaps further action and progress could be achieved concerning Roma-related issues.[73]

Similar challenges exist in Serbia and Macedonia concerning the organization and leadership potential of Roma political parties. Frequently, there is disunity among political party members as a consequence of personal rivalries and ambition. There is a lack of professional and educational skills that would contribute to articulating interests, coalition building and networking. There is an absence of a strong funding base to support the election campaign and technical competencies. In general, in Serbia as in

[71] Interview with Vitomir Mihajlovic, Member of Parliament Democratic Party (DS) and President of the National Council for Roma, Belgrade, Serbia, June 6, 2009
[72] Interview with Nadja Kocic, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009
[73] Interview with Vitomir Mihajlovic, Member of Parliament Democratic Party (DS) and President of the National Council for Roma, Belgrade, Serbia, June 6, 2009

Macedonia there is a lack of political knowledge and experience within Roma political parties.[74] Generally, Roma politicians are ineffective in representing the concerns of the community. For instance, on April 3, 2009, 47 Roma families were forcibly evicted in Belgrade from 'Block 67' by Serbian authorities. 128 individuals were left homeless without the provision of alternative accommodation, in contradiciton to Serbia's international obligations.[75] As noted by a UNHCR representative, the limited involvement of Roma political parties concerning the forced evictions demonstrates their lack of organization and 'political acting.' The representative further criticized Roma political parties stating

"*it was not important for them to attract attention and be firm in their demands. Instead, they were telling me that it wasn't the right moment and it wasn't something to be done now becasue the country is in transition and there are big problems – the Roma National Council even had a very limited reaction*."[76]

Many government representatives and politicians have utilized the economic crisis in 2009 as an argument for the limited progress on Roma inclusion initaitives.[77]

Former advisor to the President of Vojvodina commented that a major challenge for the Roma community is finding adequate representation for their issues. He states

"*to be honest people in Serbia are full of prejudices and stereotypes, and are quite xenophobic. When some representatives of ethnic groups show up on the political scene with a low personal agenda, it is a 'shadow' upon the entire ethnic group. It makes a really bad picture, conflict within the ethnic community and representatives of the community, when addressing representatives of government*."[78]

The majority of Roma leaders in Serbia are of the opinion that the political and party system are still influenced by the values of the Milosevic period. Nationalism, intolerance and discrimination are still present within mainstream parties, and a severe

[74] Interview with Nadja Kocic, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009
[75] Troszczynska, W. "Government Should Ensure Adequate Housing for Families Left Without Homes." *Human Rights Watch* April 8, 2009 available: hrw.org
[76] Representative of the UNHCR, Belgrade, Serbia, May 5, 2009
[77] Ibid
[78] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009

increase in extreme right organizations with limited state interference has created a hostile environment for minorities, especially Roma. The following are statements of Roma leaders conveying these sentiments:

"I realized that very little can be done in Serbia, because after Slobodan Milošević's plebiscitary dictatorship we now have a multi-party dictatorship… The problem is that the Milošević regime destroyed all the democratic institutions in Serbia… Then came the wars, which are by themselves destructive, both for the states against which we fought and for Serbia itself… We did that (exerted pressure for an insistence on Roma rights as a precondition to EU accession) earlier in the cases of Romania and Slovakia, and I am afraid that Serbia will also experience that, including lawsuits in the court in Strasbourg for drastic human rights violations. Romas are, first of all, citizens of this state and the state must care for their rights. If that is left to the people, it is nothing but an excuse. We have many political parties in Serbia, of which half are fascistically oriented."[79]

"There is no serious civic party today. Let someone try to convince me that DS is not a national party, that DSS is not, that SRS is not, that the Hungarian Alliance of Vojvodina is not a national party. We should recognize that DS is a national party hiding behind a democratic program."[80]

At a meeting of Roma politicians, facilitated by the OSCE, the discussion on the political integration of Roma led to many interesting thoughts on leadership and the potential for political action in the future. Many discussants reported that in regards to the Roma community, access to information is very problematic. Thus, state and international programs seeking to provide aid, should take into consideration that after centuries of exclusion and discrimination, the Roma are quite skeptical and suspicious of 'outsiders' requesting information to 'help them.' Rather, the acquisition of information is often and perceptively viewed as a mechanism of control. The Department Head for the National Strategy Office also mentioned that 'ethnic group' in the political sense should not be used in reference to Roma, as there are many implications to this categorization. The consequence of a 'general position' is conformity – this may lead to a self-destructive motivation. The politicization of the Roma community in general was questioned – as it is often mentioned that the limited political participation of Roma may lead to criminal activity – further stigmatizing the group as a deviant underclass. It is important to clarify, as noted by the Roma politicians that the issue of Roma inclusion

[79] Anonymous Roma political party leader in Gavrilovic, op.cit, pp. 29-30
[80] Ibid, pp. 29-30

should be important for the state, not as a potential security threat, but as a legitimate human rights issue.[81]

The politicization of the Roma community revolves around the issue of meeting existential needs. Thus, Roma political parties are viewed as a mechanism by which these needs are actualized. It was recognized among the Roma politicians in attendance, that while their political parties had 'good programs' the implementation of those programs was limited. It was also acknowledged that the 'public image' of Romani politicians could be improved, as traditional mechanisms of communication were not conducive to contemporary public relations. In addition, discussants commented on the lack of trust among Roma leaders, and their limited political experience. It was the consensus of the group that it was necessary to unite Roma in order to attain effective political participation. There was a collective agreement that the work of Romani political parties could be improved. It was also noted that while difficulties and problems with Roma leadership and organization are discussed orally, limited documents exist to analyze the areas for improvement or to build political consensus and movement momentum. It was recognized among some discussants that Roma had limited historical experience of political participation – thus, it was suggested that Roma were too 'passive,' - Roma have 'accepted the role of helplessness.' It was also interesting that the discussants acknowledged the assistance of the international community as essential to their political participation and inclusion in Serbian society.[82]

In terms of how Roma politicians perceived their relations with mainstream political parties in Serbia, often politicians stated 'they felt used as electoral votes,' and many understood their political participation as essential only in the pre-election period to garner additional votes among the Roma community. Generally, the consensus was that mainstream political parties in Serbia do not want Romani politicians in parliament.[83]

[81] OSCE Meeting of Roma politicians, Belgrade, Serbia, June 11, 2009
[82] OSCE Meeting of Roma Politicians, Belgrade, Serbia, June 11, 2009
[83] Ibid

In regards to Romani political culture, discussants argued the possibility of imagining Roma activism without a leader. The majority of Roma politicians perceived leadership as a 'messiah' way of doing politics; leading the Roma community to recognize issues. A minority of the participants argued that the Roma were tired of the traditional role of leaders within settlements and villages. It was recognized among the discussants that members of the general Roma community were not included – thus collective interests were not represented. Some politicians suggested establishing a new, democratic body that did not have a leader – initiating a movement emphasizing the equality of all members. It was also highlighted that members of the new forum should not have political affiliation. Thus, the specification of an agenda and election to important bodies should be a transparent process. Roma from various socio-economic backgrounds and locations should be represented. Additionally, the discussant mentioned the challenges of mobilizing Romani intellectuals, although recognizing the importance of building a 'broad based movement.'[84]

Some members alternatively stated that without leadership, the Roma community cannot move forward. The community should be represented, as the general Roma community is not 'politically mature.' Another suggestion put forth the idea of a council for inter-ethnic relations. Some members vociferously argued that without a forum it would not be possible for Roma members to organize, and the Decade action plans would remain minimally implemented. It was acknowledged by a few discussants, that without the participation of state representatives the actions of the forum would be futile. In terms of the organization of Roma political parties, many of the discussants recognized they were inadequately prepared for the 2008 elections.[85]

The leader of the Roma Party in Serbia, mentioned that the aim of Romani political parties in general should not be to remain an ethnically based party – but in a period of transition to participate as 'political elites.' Furthermore, he stated the distinction among

[84] Ibid
[85] OSCE meeting of Roma politicians, Belgrade, Serbia, June 11, 2009

Roma leaders as 'left' or 'right' wing should be diminished as it promotes disunity. The politician criticized those advocating for the Roma community as members of the Democratic Party. This argument was further contextualized within the general ethnic political party system in Serbia that promotes an undemocratic political culture. Several discussants argued that mainstream political parties do not fulfill their promises. Thus, it was fundamental to commit to a political goal having longevity; that exceeded any one mandate of a political party. A discussant similarly emphasized the need for an independent pressure group that does work with political parties or state agencies.[86]

5.6 The Special Case of Vojvodina in Serbia

Government representatives and Roma politicians since WWII have often described Vojvodina as a tolerant, inter-ethnic community where the position of Roma residents, in terms of state policies and societal acceptance, has been much better as compared to other areas of Serbia. Many Roma activists describe this perception of inter-ethnic relations as a 'myth.' Conveying their sentiments, Roma Student Association president in Vojvodina noted

"*the provincial government is not giving more space for Roma inclusion or putting in more effort than the Serbian government. Vojvodina in general has a policy to be much better than Serbia as Vojvodina - to show that we are more 'European.*'[87]

Under the oppressive rule of Milosevic, Vojvodina, formerly enjoying political and economic autonomy – and organizing its own institutions since 1974 (the presidency, executive council, parliament, and supreme court), found its powers retracted, changing the political environment and ethnic relations in the province. Serbian nationalist fervour spurred under the leadership of Milosevic, ethnic conflict in the region, economic crisis, and the migration of Serbian refugees from Croatia, contributed to animosity and fear among minority communities in Vojvodina in the 1990s. Serbian refugees affected by the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia predominately settled in Vojvodina, and

[86] Ibid
[87] Interview with Nenad Vladisavljavic, Roma Students Association, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 21, 2009

were perceived as one of the main agents eroding social cohesion in the province, as the regime intentionally or unintentionally generally settled refugees in areas with ethnically mixed communities. The Hungarian community in Vojvodina, historically recognized as a minority, generally not conceived as an 'enemy nationality,' and with considerable political influence in the country, at this time, experienced extensive subjugation – further contributing to ethnic tensions. As noted by Kerenji "the regime of Slobodan Milosevic left a disastrous legacy in the area of ethnic relations. It will take long for trust and tolerance among different ethnic groups in Vojvodina to recuperate."[88] It is within this difficult transition period and political context that Roma inclusion policies are presently implemented.

The Office of Roma Inclusion in Novi Sad, Serbia is the main government institution in Vojvodina that implements Roma-related policies and programs. Vojvodina has been recognized as the first region in Serbia observing the need for a separate government body dealing with Roma issues, and as a result the Roma Inclusion Office was created. Although an Office of Roma Inclusion exists at the provincial level in Novi Sad, due to state centralization, the province has minimal authority on addressing or implementing measures regarding minority issues. In the period 2000-2004, a number of decisions were made in regards to minority inclusion in Vojvodina based on laws concerning the protection of ethnic minorities, and as a result national minority boards were formed in this period. The Roma National Board primarily focuses its actions in Vojvodina and was the first provincial government in Serbia to transfer 'founding rights' of the national boards to the minority communities.[89]

While the Secretariat for the Implementation of the Roma Decade exists at the national level, Belgrade has yet to establish a Roma Inclusion office, or department that implements services specifically for the Roma community. Many international

[88] See Kerenji, Emil. "Vojvodina Since 1988," in eds. S. Ramet and Vjeran Pavlakovic. Serbia Since 1989: Politics and Society Under Milosevic and After (London: University of Washington Press, 2005) pp. 355-373.
[89] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009

organizations and civil society organizations have commended the government of Vojvodina in taking an active role regarding Roma issues therefore promoting effective cooperation. There are arguments, however, that convey some of the limitations within the Office for Roma inclusion. In Serbia, activists have noted the monopolization of Roma issues once positions have been created within government institutions. In particular, the Office for Roma Inclusion has been associated with the Democratic Party which inadvertently is accredited with the implementation of all Roma-related programs and activities that have been the work of activists and individuals in the area. Another problem is how the Roma issue is influenced by specific party ideology.[90] Most importantly, although some Roma-related issues in Vojvodina have been institutionalized to a greater extent in comparison to other areas of Serbia, the situation of the Roma community has not improved.[91]

The Office for Roma Inclusion since its inception has become the main information centre concerning Roma-related issues. As international organizations require institutional cooperation for NGO projects, many NGO project proposals have to be accepted by the department head before funding is received. Roma related issues are decidedly 'important' based on the views of one individual. Another issue is the re-instatement of patriarchal organizations common within Roma communities in government structures. This has led to the exclusion of different perspectives and de-prioritization of concerns such as those related to Romani women.[92]

There are many challenges concerning institutional coordination between the republic and provincial levels, as well as their relations with Roma/non-Roma NGOs. Communication is especially weak between local government representatives, NGOs, and Roma local councillors hired in communities at the municipal level. It has also been stated that Roma organizations do not exist on the level of local government, instead

[90] Interview with Svenka Savic, Director Women's Studies and Research, University of Novi Sad Novi Sad, Serbia, May 17, 2009
[91] Interview with Jasna Kronja, Department Head, CARE Serbia Office, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 18, 2009
[92] Interview with Svenka Savic, Director Women's Studies and Research, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 17, 2009

NGOs wanting to profit from Roma inclusion funds advocate on behalf of the community. Severe prejudice and discrimination among municipal authorities and within the community is especially detrimental to implementing Roma inclusion policies/programs, as direct cooperation is essential at the local level.[93] In general, it has been noted that one of the main challenges for Roma activism to succeed is for local governments to accept and recognize that the situation of Roma is their 'problem.' Although strategies and documents exist at the national level, major reforms in housing, education, employment and healthcare cannot occur unless local governments recognize the decisions.[94]

5.7 Shifting Political Alignments: The Political Mobilization of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) Minorities in the Republic of Kosovo

The status of Kosovo remains disputed under the provisional governance of UNMIK, Kosovo and Serbian governments. It is important to address the situation of the RAE minority in this territory due to its close proximity with Macedonia and Serbia proper, which consequently impacts Roma migratory concerns and inclusion within the respective states.[95] Ethnic conflict and minority participation as a key component of stabilization in the Balkans has remained an important issue on domestic and international agendas. The international community, however, has effectively ignored the situation of RAE, and the group remains marginal to the political and ethnic conflict between Albanian and Serbian groups. Subsequent to the end of NATO intervention in

[93] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009 and Jelena Jovanovich, Coordinator, Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities Novi Sad, Serbia, May 6, 2009

[94] Interview with Ljuan Koka, Head of Department Secretariat for Implementation of the National Strategy, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009

[95] In December 2009, the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) commented on the poor living conditions of IDPs in Serbia from Kosovo. Basic provisions such as electricity and running water are limited, with IDPs living under the pervasive threat of forced eviction. Roma IDPs are confronted with many other challenges in regards to civil registration. Those Roma IDPs living on illegal settlements are unable to apply for residency status without supplementary documents such as birth certificates and citizenship cards. Consequently, this prevents IDPs from obtaining health and social benefits, and eligibility for employment programs. See *Amnesty International Report on Discrimination and Roma 2009*. available: amnesty.org

the former Yugoslavia in 1999, and the reintegration of Albanians in the Kosovo province, approximately 100,000 RAE were evicted from their residence. The ERRC has documented numerous human rights violations of the RAE community; predominately by Albanians attempting to expel other minorities from the region. Albanians have targeted the RAE community due to assumed compliance with Milosevic and Serbian forces in 1999, although the RAE community has asserted their actions were coerced and non-complicit. This has not led to reconciliation among ethnic communities, and in many cases, the international community has played a mere observatory role as the RAE community is persecuted on the basis of race and ethnicity.[96]

International Disregard for the RAE Community

Despite efforts of RAE to mobilize and seek participation in Kosovo's political structures, the international community has not been supportive. UNMIK, international NGOs and other donor states in shaping the governance structures and administrative bodies in the new nation were in a position to facilitate the development of an inclusive, multi-ethnic society that would encourage the representation and political participation of minorities. The actions of the international community in Kosovo, however, demonstrate the lack of political will and bias in effectively advocating on behalf of the RAE community. As stated by a Roma activist in reference to the issue of political representation and international involvement

"*the process has made me think that you can never trust anyone, and never rely on UNMIK and others to represent Romani issues and to assist us. They care only about their organization's agenda and their own jobs. I never expect a real commitment from them to resolve our problems*."[97]

[96] Cahn, C. "Birth of a Nation: Kosovo and the Persecution of Pariah." *German Law Journal* 8 (2007), pp. 82-83.

[97] Sigona, N. with Avdula (Dai) Mustafa and Gazmen Salijevic. "Being Roma Activists in Post-Independence Kosovo," in eds. N. Trehan and N. Sigona. *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-Liberal Order*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 214.

The RAE community has not been included in final status negotiations; their political participation effectively prevented by the Kosovo Albanian leadership. The international community, despite provisions within the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UNHCHR) has not advocated equally for all minority groups in Kosovo. International organizations while initiating the reconciliation process between Serbians and Albanians have not attempted to include the RAE community. Some activists believe this has debilitated efforts among the RAE population to unify and present a common political platform despite similar challenges to integrate in Kosovo, as Ashkali and Egyptian communities differentiate from Roma fearing Albanian retaliation. [98]

Since 2000, according to Roma activists in the region, the international community has supported one Roma representative in the Kosovo parliament without democratic nomination. The United Roma Party of Kosovo (PREBK) is widely perceived as nepotistic, and has not advocated equal representation of the community in public institutions or advisory bodies.[99] The international community has not included Roma activists in decision making processes, as stated by a youth activist

"*the problem is that international organizations use Romani leaders to keep Roma quiet. They don't like the Roma who speak out. Now in Kosovo we have a generation of RAE activists who can work for the RAE communities. You need to have young Roma doing the job and not those Roma who can be manipulated by internationals with 1000 Euro salaries*."[100]

Various actions by the international community have led Roma activists in Kosovo to believe their human rights are not promoted and at times, have debilitated efforts to integrate. For instance, regarding the case of refugee returnees, Roma activists were dissuaded by international NGOs stipulating it was not in their operational capacity or

[98] Jashari, S. "Together in Alliance – The Roma Ashkali Egyptians of Kosovo: The Challenges of a Unified Political Party," in eds. V. Nicolae and H. Slavik. *Roma Diplomacy*. (New York: International Debate Education Association, 2007), pp. 225-226. Kosovo Ashkali and Egyptians speak Albanian, claim origins from ancient Persia and Egypt, and belong to the Islamic faith. While relations between Ashkali and Egyptians are tense, both groups ally with the Albanian population, believing this will improve efforts to integrate.
[99] Ibid, p. 221
[100] Sigona, N. op. cit., p. 222.

mandate. While international organizations do portend an inclusive image in requesting the participation of Roma representatives in public meetings, the international community was often criticized for not sharing information, seriously hindering Romani NGO efforts to effectively implement their activities.[101]

Actions by the international community in Kosovo have led to a lack of trust in their intentions and commitment to support the Roma community.[102] In essence, many Roma activists have criticized the 'human rights package,' believing Roma are manipulated and used as 'tools' to meet international obligations, receiving differential treatment compared to the Serbian and Albanian populations. At times the imposition of a 'human rights approach' has exacerbated tensions within ethnic communities, reinforcing the construction of boundaries – especially among the RAE, as the formation of Ashkali and Egyptian organizations received substantial financial support. Roma activists view the Socialist period in Kosovo as a time when differences were not accentuated – the political ideology at the time advocated a different system of values. Activists now view the community's situation as more difficult since state independence. The human rights discourse, is thought to be an imposition by international workers to legitimate their power. Activists in Kosovo sometimes feel as though they are not able to operate effectively, lacking the political vocabulary and knowledge to address their needs within this discourse.[103]

It is not only government documents and project proposals that present an elusive 'Roma activism,' international organizations have also used conferences as an arena in which

[101]Ibid, p. 214-215

[102]In addition to the pervasive violence and discrimination of RAE communities largely ignored by the international community, UNMIK specifically has been scrutinized for its actions in Mitrovica. In 1999, under the supervision of UNMIK, approximately 500 Roma, victims of physical violence and property destruction were resettled on a lead contaminated site in Mitrovica. The encampment created as a temporary measure has persisted, despite WHO warnings of hazardous conditions. Residents of the Mitrovica camp with the support of the ERRC filed a complaint against UNMIK at the ECHR in 2006. As stated by the ERRC "in Kosovo, UNMIK is acting not only as an international organization, but also as a surrogate state authority. As the 'government' it cannot avail itself of wholesale immunity but, rather, as every sovereign, must be answerable for its conduct under the law." See "UN Human Rights Committee Reviews Kosovo." February 20, 2006, available: errc.org and "Toxic Camp Angers Kosovo Roma." June 13, 2005, available: news.bbc.co.uk.

[103] Sigona, N. op.cit., pp. 220-221

activists can network, and government officials can present falsified narratives regarding Roma-related policies and programs. Conferences provide politicians and activists the 'space' to define what activism is within the contours of international organization language and behavioural code. The professionalism with which international organizations representatives and domestic government officials present reports, publications, and findings are 'evidence' to create the illusion that the Roma movement is gaining momentum. Action plans and policy papers further attest to how the international community has supported a thriving civil society and acted as effective mediators between domestic governments and the Roma community. With the exception of filling vacant positions with members of a small intellectual elite; in fact, there has been little improvement in the lives of Romani people.

It has also been acknowledged by Roma activists, that with numerous international institutions involved there is often disorganization and ineffective policy implementation. The difficulty of incoherent policy positions are exacerbated as often international personnel are contracted for a short duration, which also negatively impacts the work of local NGOs. This also contributes to the lack of investment within local communities; instead, foreign money is dispersed among professionals and returned to donor countries. Roma communities have also had to contend with the idea that the international community has provided considerable funding to improve their situation, despite miserable living conditions; thus, accentuating jealousy and ethnic tensions in Kosovo. Although it is acknowledged that Roma leadership has not always led to the transparent and effective use of funds, activists believe it is necessary to employ Roma in these positions to enhance accountability and ensure project funds reach Roma communities.[104]

A major initiative promoting a unified political identity and position is the Kosovo Roma and Ashkali Forum encouraging participation and discussion among RAE leaders, activists and organizations. The Forum promotes dialogue and reconciliation with other

[104] Sigona, N. op.cit., pp. 222-223

minority communities in Kosovo and seeks to facilitate the social, political and economic inclusion of RAE. The Forum fulfills an important role; lobbying policy makers to improve minority inclusion practices thereby contributing to a multi-ethnic and democratic state.[105] In regards to the situation of the Roma community in Kosovo, the ODIHR-CPRSI in 2006, attempted to facilitate discussions among the Kosovo Romani population, and the representatives of the ERTF. As noted by Gheorghe, discussions were not very progressive, as the majority of Roma in Eastern Europe are concerned with their primary needs and are not seeking cooperation with the most marginalized Roma groups. Concerning transnational coalition building among Roma activists in Kosovo and other countries, there is a lack of solidarity.[106]

Conclusion

Nationalism and political turbulence in Serbia has generally created difficulties for policy reform and implementation, especially regarding minority inclusion for a historically marginalized community such as the Roma. The regime of Slobodan Milosevic, ethnic conflict in the region, and international sanctions in the 1990s have fuelled nationalism and anti-EU, anti-Western opposition. Serbia's participation in the Decade of Roma Inclusion has not led to significant improvements concerning the socio-economic situation of the Roma or addressed the increasingly alarming racial violence toward the community.

Despite the creation of various state bodies related to Roma inclusion, institutionalization has led to minimal achievements. This is a result of limited political will and systemic discrimination within the Serbian government, but also the political concessions made by Roma leaders for personal gain to the detriment of the wider Roma community. Symbolic tokens of participation within government institutions, such as the

[105] See Kosovo Roma & Ashkali Forum – Our Position 2006, funded by OSCE-ODIHR-CPRSI. Available: osce.org/odihr/18158.html

[106] "The Decade of Roma Rights, Interview with Nicolae Gheorghe," *Roma Rights 2-3*, (ERRC: November, 2006)

nomination of few Roma individuals to high political posts have led to minimal achievements for Roma inclusion. As noted by NGO representatives and Roma activists, patriarchal forms of organization, exclusive membership, and political bias have effectively led to a monopolization of Roma concerns that has not lent legitimacy to organizations such as the National Roma Councils in Serbia.

Similar to the government organizations supporting Roma inclusion policies, the perception of Roma civil society is often negative. The limited domestic funding of NGO projects is not transparent and generally based on connections to the ruling party; while international funding does not promote accountability to the local Roma community as emphasis is often on the implementation of an external agenda. It is often the case that younger Roma intellectuals and activists are employed within government institutions or international organizations, which may present challenges in the future, as a critical perspective may be largely absent. The lack of 'professionalism and expertise' of Roma NGOs is often mentioned as a criticism by international donors. This consequently leads to a reaffirmation of negative perceptions toward the Roma community, while largely ignoring the internal conflicts among non-Romani personnel in international organizations. Furthermore, it is important to note that nepotism, lack of accountability and the influence of political parties are often mentioned as factors contributing to the general negative public perception of Serbian civil society.

The co-option of Roma political parties by the Democratic Party of Serbia has led to few achievements. As noted by Roma politicians and activists, political parties in Serbia are increasingly nationalistic, despite advocating for democratic reforms. Voting manipulation within Roma communities and undemocratic election procedures ensure minority parties cannot be represented effectively in domestic politics. Furthermore, the lack of coalition building, networking and professionalism within Roma political parties seriously hinders the effective representation of Roma.

Vojvodina, historically as a province with congenial inter-ethnic relations, was negatively affected by policies implemented during the Milosevic regime. As Vojvodina

no longer exercises autonomy on minority affairs, the Roma Inclusion office in Novi Sad is challenged to implement activities without state authorization. Additional limitations are the monopolization of Roma concerns within one institution and affiliation with a specific political party ideology. Kosovo, similarly to Vojvodina, is a multi-ethnic community that experienced a negative change in inter-ethnic relations. As the status of Kosovo remains disputed, the present governing structure under the leadership of UNMIK, Serbian, and Kosovo governments does not support the political participation of the RAE minority. Often the multiple actors in the region advocate an incoherent and disorganized policy prescription that has created general apathy among the RAE community. The 'human rights approach' advocated by international organizations has not led to reconciliation among minority communities, creating only distrust and disunity. Thus, in analyzing the factors of political activism (state repression/facilitation, increasing institutional access, influential domestic and international allies, and shifting political alignments) it is evident that the political opportunity structure is 'closed.'

Chapter 6

Transnational Advocacy and Roma Mobilization

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyze the internationalization of Roma advocacy. Specifically, the discussion will address how international institutions and social movement actors seek to influence and change Roma inclusion policy in Macedonia and Serbia. The first section will outline the main EU initiatives on Roma issues to provide an overview of the opportunities and challenges in the international arena. In addition, this section will

outline the various EU instruments utilized to influence state compliance on Roma inclusion, such as structural fund implementation, the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion,' and conditionality measures. The role of the Council of Europe (CoE) and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will be outlined as two of the main international institutions in Europe regarding Roma inclusion. Secondly, the chapter aims to analyze the interaction between international organizations and civil society to evaluate the effectiveness of 'transnational advocacy networks.' Finally, it is important to discuss domestic responses in Macedonia and Serbia to international/civil society influences considering the processes of instrumental adaptation, argumentation and institutionalization within the norm socialization literature.

There are three main questions this chapter seeks to address:

- How has the internationalization of Roma advocacy affected movement activity?
- What instruments are available to international institutions to guarantee state compliance on international obligations and are they effective?
- How do international institutions and social movement actors (transnational advocacy networks) seek to influence and change Roma-related policy in Macedonia and Serbia?

6.2 International Neglect on Romani Issues

International organizations have historically neglected to discuss the Roma community as a humanitarian concern. The UN Commission on Human Rights "in its fifty-six years of existence reduces to just the adoption of one Roma-specific and one Roma-mentioning resolution, and to some interest from three Special Rapporteurs and the WCAR."[1] Additionally, Special Rapporteur Weissbrodt noted "there has been no systematic UN effort to understand the situation of the Romani minority in Europe, and there has not been a thorough study addressing the ways in which Roma suffer

[1] Klimova-Alexander, I. *The Romani Voice in World Politics: The United Nations and Non-State Actors.* (England: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), p. 35.

discrimination and of methods to improve their situation."[2] In a 2000 UN study on minorities, fleeting references were noted regarding the situation of Roma, but responsibility was passed onto the OSCE and CoE to undertake measures addressing discrimination and equality of Roma in Europe.[3] In contrast, early EU discussions in the 1970s acknowledged that information was to be collected about 'Gypsies,' but did not include the community as active participants. The objectification of the community was realized in various fact finding consultations. For instance, the following questions were posed to the European Commission in the 1970s by an MEP: a) how many itinerant people are there in the Community? b) are they concentrated in any particular countries or regions and what origins do they have? c) what nationalities they have and whether they have any problems in relation to nationality? d) to what extent they benefit from social services in the Member States?[4] As noted by Roma activist and MEP Livia Jaroka, the European Parliament essentially ignored marginal communities, and specifically, in regard to the Roma community there was minimal knowledge.[5] The latest phase of EU discourse on Roma has constructed the community as the 'minority in Eastern Europe.' 'Roma' replaced 'Gypsy' as the predominant term in the mid-1990s, and the Roma question was assigned an Eastern European territoriality. As the enlargement process continues to include Eastern Europe states, the topic of Roma is a regular occurrence in Commission documents and the issue has entered EU policy debates.[6]

6.3 The European Union and Roma Advocacy

The 2008 Roma Summit organized by the European Commission as the first high level EU conference on Roma issues, demonstrated the importance of Roma inclusion as an issue of political significance. The Summit included representatives of EU institutions,

[2] Ibid, p. 38-39
[3] Ibid, p. 35
[4] K. Simhandl. "Beyond Boundaries? Comparing the Construction of the Political Categories 'Gypsies' and 'Roma' Before and After EU Enlargement," in eds. N. Trehan and N. Sigona. *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-Liberal Order*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 75
[5] Seminar presentation, Livia Jaroka (MEP), July 5, 2010. Central European University, Budapest.
[6] Simhandl, K., op cit., p. 80

member state governments, civil society, and participating states in the Decade of Roma Inclusion.[7] The unprecedented institutional response by the EU was an outcome of sustained Roma activism, but also alarming events involving the Roma community in Italy.[8] The turbulent events in Italy in 2007/2008 illuminated systemic discrimination and violence against Roma communities in Western Europe; contrary to the belief that the exclusion of Roma is a unique problem of Eastern European countries. It also signified the minimal progress of EU institutions in addressing the marginalization of Roma in member states.[9]

December 2007 marked the first time the European Council, as the foremost political body of the EU specifically addressed the issue of Roma, emphasizing the role of Member States in improving the status of Roma communities, as well as highlighting the role of the Commission in evaluating policies and instruments. The European Parliament in January 2008 called for the immediate drafting of a 'comprehensive European Framework Strategy on Roma Inclusion.' The insistence to form a strategy was reiterated by the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) composed of the predominant national and international NGOs working to improve the situation of Roma.[10]

As an update of the 2000 Lisbon Strategy, the Renewed European Social Agenda includes a report assessing the policies and instruments for Roma inclusion. The 2008 European Commission report was not a 'strategy,' however, but merely stated that a

[7] Decade countries include: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain. See romadecade.org for further information

[8] In the Summer of 2008, increased anti-Roma rhetoric by Italian authorities may have legitimated violent attacks on Roma communities in Milan and Naples. Minister of Interior, Roberto Maroni called for the immediate dismantling of Roma camps, stating that inhabitants would otherwise be evicted or incarcerated. In July 2008, the European Parliament criticized Italy for the fingerprinting of Roma individuals, including children as it constituted an act of discrimination based on race and ethnic origin. The Italian government defended the campaign stating it would reduce crime, identify illegal migrants to be deported, and decrease child begging. For further information, refer to Amnesty International EUR 30/002/2008 "Attacks against Roma Communities in Italy," Available: amnesty.org and BBC News, July 10, 2008 "Italy Rebuke on Roma Fingerprints." Available: bbc.co.uk

[9] Guy, Will."EU Initiatives on Roma: Limitations and Ways Forward," in eds. Nidhi Trehan and Nando Sigona. *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-liberal Order*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 23-25.

[10] Guy, W. op.cit., p. 25

'framework exists at the EU level for promoting Roma inclusion.' The report referred to the 'different tools that are available and used by Member States.' Optimistically, 'lessons can be learned from the experience to date and generate improvements.'[11]At the 2008 Roma Summit, Commission President Barroso maintained a similar position highlighting the gravity of the Roma situation, but stressed the divergent roles of the Commission and Member States. Barroso argued the primary responsibility for implementation and improvement of the Roma situation was with Member States; the Commission would facilitate and provide instrumental support.[12]

The European Roma Policy Coalition thought the Commission's position to be vague and insufficient. The Commission relegated responsibility to Member States and did not suggest a critical role beyond ad-hoc policy instruments, effectively rejecting the proposal for a European Platform for Roma Inclusion.[13] In August 2010, the French government expelled hundreds of 'illegal' Roma residents, demolishing settlements in a move to increase the ailing public support of President Sarkozy.[14] The Commission after closely 'monitoring' the expulsions provided, perhaps, the most critical stance on Roma affairs concerning a Member State in the history of the Commission. Viviane Reding, Vice President of the European Commission and EU Commissioner for Justice stated:

"I personally have been appalled by a situation which gave the impression that people are being removed from a Member State of the European Union just because they belong to a certain ethnic minority. This is a situation I had thought Europe would not have to witness again after the Second World War. This is not a minor offence in a situation of this importance. After 11 years of experience in the Commission, I would even go further: This is a disgrace. Let me be very clear: Discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin or race has no place in Europe. It is incompatible with the values on which the European Union is founded. National authorities who discriminate ethnic groups in the application of EU law are also violating the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which all Member States, including France, have signed up to. I therefore find it deeply disturbing that a Member State calls so gravely into question, by the actions of its

[11] European Commission (2008). 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of Regions.' Community Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion (Brussels, European Commission, 2008), p. 56
[12] Guy, W., op.cit., p. 25
[13] Ibid, p. 27
[14] The Economist. "Frances Expulsion of Roma: Have your Roma Back." Accessible: www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2010/08/france

administration, the common values and the law of our European Union. I am personally convinced that the Commission will have no choice but to initiate infringement action against France."[15]

The ERPC while applauding the European Commission statement reiterated the proposal for a European Framework Strategy on Roma Inclusion. Although the September resolution on the situation of Roma and free movement in Europe was adopted by the European Parliament, France continued the dismantling of camps and deportation of Roma.[16] The actions of Italy and France demonstrate the lack of political interest and discrimination regarding the Roma community among Member States. In EU progress reports and international arenas, Macedonia, Serbia and other candidate countries are criticized for their neglect and oppression of Roma communities. However, as European political bodies and international criticism are not taken seriously by EU Member States, it provides validation for inaction in accession and candidate countries. Humanitarian rhetoric by EU institutions and Member States is viewed as a legitimate recourse to the actual implementation of Roma-related policy. The following discussion will proceed to analyze some of the main EU initiatives and instruments to support Roma inclusion.

6.4 International Instruments for State Compliance on Roma Inclusion

Roma and the Structural Funds

Macedonia as an EU candidate and Serbia designated as a potential candidate country are eligible for pre-accession assistance (IPA funds) to compensate for inequalities between them and Member States.[17] It is necessary here to briefly discuss the EURoma Network, a trans-national initiative created in June 2007, to improve the use of structural funds for the inclusion of the Roma population in Member States.[18] The strategy and

[15] EUROPA Press Release. Vivian Reding Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights, and Citizenship. Statement on the Latest Developments on the Roma Situation. Brussels: 14, September, 2010. Available: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.

[16] European Roma Information Office (ERIO) Press Release. "France does not respect the European Parliament Resolution for Roma Situation and Free Movement in Europe." 14 September, 2010. Accessible: erionet.org

[17] European Commission (2008-2010) 'Roma in Europe: The Implementation of European Union Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion – Progress Report 2008-2010' (Working Document) 400 final of 07.04.2010 (Brussels, European Commission), p. 27

[18] Ibid, p. 31

activities of the network will influence how Roma inclusion policy and programs are realized in the future, impacting development and implementation in Macedonia and Serbia.

The EURoma Network was created in the context of broadening trans-national cooperation between government authorities and civil society in the EU. The network seeks to focus on the enhancement of institutional and information sharing mechanisms, including data collection. The European Council's consensus on the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion[19] serve as a basis for on-going discussions on common methodologies, mutual knowledge sharing, and harmonized activities for the effective use of Structural Funds. The goals of the network are to provide a 'coordinated, integrated approach' and 'create a forum for debate' regarding Roma issues.[20]

An integrated approach reflected by the standardization of experiences, or 'best practices'[21] is an ineffective strategy regarding the development and implementation of Roma inclusion policies. International organizations such as the OSCE, Council of Europe[22] and initiatives such as EURoma have focused on the emulation mechanism in policy making. The political context, national culture and unique situation of Roma communities in each state should be considered before adopting a policy that has been effective in a neighbouring country. The theoretical premise for the policy may also change over time, and this should impact the decision making process.[23] Empirical studies and scholars of policy diffusion have noted that policy adoption is not always a rational process. Political actors can be influenced by mediocre policies in neighbouring

[19] Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion include: "constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies, explicit but not exclusive targeting, inter-cultural approach, aiming for the mainstream, awareness of the gender dimension, transfer of evidence based policies, use of community instruments, involvement of regional and local authorities, involvement of civil society, and the active participation of Roma." (EU Roma Report – Roma and the Structural Funds 2010, p. 21).
[20] Ibid, p. 26
[21] Ibid, p. 35, For instance, a 'Bank of Positive Experiences' has been created by EURoma Network members to highlight project transferability to other countries.
[22] See for instance, reports such as *Police and Roma and Sinti: Good Practices in Building Trust and Understanding*. available: osce.org/odihr/44247
[23] See B. Simmons., F. Dobbin, G. Garrett. "The International Diffusion of Liberalism." *International Organization*. 60.4 (Autumn, 2006): p. 799.

countries, rather than looking for global alternatives. Policies that are not adapted to local context can result in suboptimal results.[24]

Structural Fund Implementation: Challenges

In recent years there has been a substantial increase in structural funding for Roma communities. However, no clear strategy exists specifically for the Roma community in terms of structural fund implementation and evaluation of activities. Although structural funds are available, projects cannot be initiated without the participation and coordination between local mayors, Roma leaders, and policy analysts. Governments tend to be unaware of the community's needs – which often makes project design an unsuccessful enterprise. The diversity within Roma communities suggests finding solutions that take into account the unique economic and social context. Limited information concerning the Roma community results in ad-hoc activities and funding, delivering ineffective projects. Additionally, government authorities are confronted with difficult administrative procedures and co-finance obligations when applying for structural funds. Limited political interest is one of the main challenges in effective Structural Fund implementation. Without mainstreaming Roma issues into broader national social policy, funding cannot have demonstrable effect in communities. As noted by the former Deputy Justice Minister in Macedonia

"*if we learn from the experience of some of the latest EU members – Bulgaria and Romania, by joining the EU the situation of Roma hasn't changed. Discrimination is still present, human rights violations as well. It would be more important for us to integrate Roma needs in the mainstream public policies since there is more money*."[25]

More importantly, the situation of Roma needs to be viewed within the overall context of poverty alleviation. Although there are specific crisis areas with the direct involvement of the EU, funds have not been directed toward impoverished Roma communities. Rural areas especially, remain invisible as the target for funding. [26]

[24] Ibid, pp. 535-536
[25] Interview with Ibrahim Ibrahimi, former Minister of Justice, Skopje, Macedonia, February 9, 2009
[26] See EURoma Report – Roma and the Structural Funds (2010), pp. 90-91, Seminar Presentation, Livia Jaroka (MEP), July 5, 2010. Central European University, Budapest.

As in the case with Macedonian and Serbian institutions, there is a significant problem with coordination between agencies focusing on Roma-related policy. International organization activities often overlap; enhanced information sharing could result in more effective resource management of funding and personnel. Within Member States, national projects are often implemented without taking into consideration Structural Fund programs. There is limited cooperation between ESF Managing authorities, and regional/local administration implementing programs for Roma inclusion. Furthermore, in both Member States and Macedonian/Serbian government structures, Roma representatives have been included in high level policy making, through ministerial positions, but have only participated to a minimal extent in the processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation. Similar to program implementation challenges discussed in Macedonia and Serbia, a long term approach needs to be adopted at the international level to effectively use structural funds.[27]

Decade of Roma Inclusion

In 2000, the Lisbon Strategy promoting social inclusion was initiated, requiring states to draft action plans; this was also inclusive of Roma populations. Subsequently, the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015),'[28] initiative directly targeting the Roma community, with similar components to the Lisbon Strategy was launched. As the EU and other international organizations[29] are active partners, supporting Decade programs, it is necessary to briefly evaluate the progress and limitations of the initiative. Participating states in the Decade of Roma Inclusion have adopted action plans on four main priority areas: education, employment, housing and health. 'Decade Watch', an initiative including Roma activists and researchers fulfils the important task of assessing the progress of participating states. Decade Watch reports include an assessment of

[27] EURoma Report – Roma and the Structural Funds (2010), p. 92
[28] Decade of Roma Inclusion, participating states: see p. 2
[29] International Partner Organizations of the Decade: The World Bank; the Open Society Institute (OSI); the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); the Council of Europe (CoE); the Council of Europe Development Bank; the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE–ODIHR–CPRSI); the European Roma Information Office (ERIO); the European Roma and Traveller Forum (ERTF); the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), UN-Habitat, UNHCR, and UNICEF.

government policies and reforms concerning Roma inclusion in the past five years. Surprisingly, the 2009 report indicates that Serbia**,** alongside Bosnia-Herzegovina and Spain, is one of the leading countries making progress on Roma issues. This assessment revealed that while the *current* level of integration of the Roma community in Serbia was low, the *reforms* implemented by the government were positively impacting Roma integration. Comparatively, when assessing the level of discrimination toward the Roma community, Serbia is viewed as one of the least favourable countries. In the areas of education and employment, Serbia received a high evaluation. Comparatively, Macedonia was assessed well in the areas of employment and health.[30]

While important steps have been taken by governments in Macedonia, Serbia and other Decade participating states, the 2009 Decade Watch report indicates that current policies and programs are not sufficient. It is believed that only a comprehensive approach focusing on all priority areas would have long term, sustainable impact in Roma communities. It is important to note that government policies, in accession-Balkan countries have received a positive assessment as compared to EU member states, specifically newer Member States. This is especially disappointing as EU member states have access to greater financial resources, yet policies and programs did not have considerable influence.[31] More generally, the conclusions of the Decade Watch report that show lower state impact and results regarding Roma inclusion policy among Member States than accession countries, is in line with EU studies that are sceptical of sustainable EU conditionality reforms after accession. The EU may have difficulty eliciting compliance as the adoption of conditionality requirements are based on the incentive of membership, as compared to the norm socialization processes of learning and persuasion.[32] Moreover, studies demonstrate that EU conditionality requirements are sometimes unclear, applied in a biased manner, and more exacting of candidates than EU member states. The Decade Watch report in comparing government policy impact in

[30] Decade Watch – Results of the 2009 Survey, pp. 8-9
[31] Ibid, p. 10
[32] Sedelmeier, U. "After conditionality: post-accession compliance with EU law in East Central Europe." *Journal of European Public Policy*. 15.6 (September 2008): 806-807.

Member States and Balkan countries supports the idea that while international organizations may influence Roma inclusion policy during the accession process, international influence post-EU membership may not have the same leverage. It is important then to consider conditionality as an instrument of the EU to influence Roma inclusion policies in candidate countries.

EU Conditionality: Ambiguity and lack of compliance measures on minority policy

Prior to the 1990s, the EU did not have a policy on minority protection. The EU 'minority rights regime' is a social and political construct arising from security concerns during the post-Communist transition process. The violent dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, and potential conflict between minority groups generated fear among EU Member States, particularly the prospect of westward migration. The European Council in 1993 included 'respect for and protection of minorities' in the Copenhagen criteria for accession, without however, prior EU or international consensus on minority protection. By referring minority issues to the OSCE and CoE, the EU externalized minority issues prior to accession, as well as circumventing elaboration and cohesive articulation of its own minority policy. 'The respect for and protection of national minorities' is highlighted as a key example of the EU's positive influence on democratization in Eastern Europe. However, the EU has promoted norms that lack a firm basis in EU legislation and remain contentious within old and new member states. How can conditionality and compliance be measured without clear definition and agreement on minority protection? Often, 'conditionality' is a flexible notion, and without clear indicators invites political bias.[33]

Monitoring 'EU Conditionality'

The primary instruments to monitor and assess potential EU candidates are annual Commission reports. The 1995 Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) serves as the main document to evaluate

[33] Sasse, G. "The politics of EU conditionality: the norm of minority protection during and beyond EU accession." *Journal of European Public Policy*. 15.6 (September 2008): 847.

candidate progress in accordance with 'European values.' The annual reports frequently criticized EU candidates on the non-ratification of the FCNM, although Member States were not signatory countries. This incongruity consequently, led to discussions of a 'double standard.' As argued persuasively by Sasse, the annual reports assessing the situation of minorities are often politicized, focusing on specific minority groups and replete with ambiguity as a result of unclear indicators and lack of compliance instruments to ensure implementation.[34]

Studies have demonstrated that the extent of EU influence, specifically in the political sphere, is limited in the post-accession period.[35] During the accession phase, EU institutions have greater leverage to suggest humanitarian reforms, as compliance measures are limited once states are full EU members. In many of the remaining post-communist countries, however, there is much less incentive to comply with international norms as the prospect of membership is not guaranteed and quite distant. For many Eastern European candidate countries the domestic costs of compliance are quite high, as compared to the 2004/07 enlargement process. To meet the terms of EU accession criteria would require considerable domestic reforms and democratization in Eastern Europe. EU conditionality on many issues requires an interrogation of national identity, and may involve the risk of unfavourable domestic public opinion.[36]

For political conditionality to be effective and influential is dependent on the interaction of domestic and international factors. Norm socialization processes such as emulation and persuasion generally do not triumph over domestic opposition to democratic and human rights reform. Schimmelfennig's case study on the subject of the consistency and effectiveness of political accession conditionality in Croatia, Serbia, and Turkey demonstrates that monetary support and association agreements provided by the EU are viewed as minimal incentives to compliance. States need to be assured of making

[34] Guglielmo, R. and T. Waters. "Migrating Towards Minority Status: Shifting European Policy Towards Roma." *Journal of Common Market Studies.* 43.4 (2005): p. 847
[35] Sasse, G. op.cit., p. 843
[36] Epstein, R. and U. Sedelmeier "Beyond conditionality: international institutions in post-communist Europe after enlargement." *Journal of European Public Policy.* 15.6 (September 2008): 798-799.

progress toward accession soon after complying with EU conditionality requirements, or in contrast, will be rejected from membership in case of non-compliance.[37]

For example, in the case of Serbia, association discussions were suspended in 2005 for non-cooperation with the ICTY. Serbia's position with the EU differed in many respects from other Eastern European accession countries. In 2005 Prime Minister Kostunica continued to promote Serbian nationalism appealing to conservative segments of the population. He criticized the ICTY as an 'anti-Serbian American court' with illegitimate legal status and objected to Milosevic's extradition to The Hague. Kostunica's partnership with the EU was a matter of political necessity rather than a wish to participate in the European community. Furthermore, a minority parliament in 2004 with the Socialist Party limited manoeuvrability in complying with the EU. Thus, political factors such as forming coalitions and attracting votes can sometimes take precedence over association or conditionality incentives. New coalition agreements between Serbian political parties in 2007 improved relations with the EU and cooperation with the ICTY, allowing for the reinstatement of association discussions.[38]

In summary, this section described various instruments the EU has utilized to influence state compliance on Roma inclusion. In discussing structural fund implementation and challenges, the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion,' and conditionality measures it was demonstrated that EU instruments have not been effective. While the EURoma Network offers an opportunity for coordinated transnational action, similar challenges that exist at the domestic level have impacted effective policy implementation at the international level. Primarily, there is no long term strategy to develop and evaluate structural fund activities. Furthermore, there is limited cooperation and coordination among the various local, national, regional actors involved. It is also important to take into account the diversity within Roma communities; thus policies adopted in one country may not offer the best solution in another.

[37] Schimmelfennig, F. "EU political accession conditionality after the 2004 enlargement: consistency and effectiveness." *Journal of European Public Policy.* 15.6 (September 2008): p. 920
[38] Ibid, pp. 929-930

The ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion’ as an international initiative has not been effective in addressing Roma exclusion and discrimination. Participating states, although adopting action plans on education, employment, health and housing have provided only limited financial resources and personnel. As reported by ‘Decade Watch,’ current programs regarding Roma inclusion are not comprehensive and very limited. Furthermore, it is disappointing to note that while some progress is made on Roma initiatives during the accession period, once EU membership is attained, international influence and domestic reforms diminish. In discussing EU membership as an incentive to develop and implement Roma inclusion policies, the issue of conditionality measures required further analysis. The EU has often maintained a vague policy on minority protection that has lead to the development of unclear indicators for accession countries. Moreover, an inherent ‘double standard’ regarding ratification of the FCNM and politicized annual reports provide an illegitimate basis for criticizing minority exclusion. Accordingly, the aforementioned EU instruments utilized to influence state compliance on minority protection, and specifically Roma inclusion, have not been effective.

6.5 The Council of Europe (CoE) and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

As mentioned previously the European Union has relied on two main international institutions, the OSCE and CoE, to develop and implement minority policies in candidate and accession countries. The following section describes the role and various instruments related to Roma policy in each institution. Within the CoE, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) as a legal mechanism has contributed significantly to the advancement of Roma rights. The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) has less frequently been an effective body in promoting Roma issues within the Council of Europe. The OSCE, primarily the High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) since 1993 has focused attention on Roma within the context of migration. Eventually,

the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) came to be the main organization within the OSCE to address the community's situation in Europe.

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

In joining the Council of Europe, countries ratify the European Convention on Human Rights, thereby consenting to the authority of the European Court of Human Rights, which by providing binding decisions verifies that participating states adhere to and protect convention principles. Increasingly, the Roma community has reframed systemic discrimination and violence as a human rights violation and presented cases to the ECHR. As the exclusion and stigmatization of Roma was understood as an issue of ethnic and racial discrimination, it concurred with the expansion of legislation on this issue in Europe, which was previously undeveloped. Until recently, the European Convention did not include a provision for individual cases of discrimination, mainly due to the lack of national legislation in this area. Protocol 12 of the European Convention ensuring non-discrimination (2005) and the Race Equality Directive (RED) (2000) prohibiting 'direct' and 'indirect' discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity are important legislative advancements in the field. Furthermore, the RED requires the establishment of specific institutions in Member States that encourage and implement anti-discrimination measures. However, many challenges still exist in presenting cases of human rights violations concerning the Roma community.[39]

Primarily, Roma representatives and claimants have often demonstrated a distrust of government institutions, and do not always have comprehensive information regarding individual rights. Second, legal proceedings can be expensive and time consuming after exhausting domestic and international judiciaries, as legal assistance is not widely available to Roma communities. Third, class action suits representing a minority group may be forbidden, often courts do not evaluate empirical evidence that is essential to proving cases of racial and ethnic discrimination. Finally, in many Eastern European countries, the legal profession is highly prejudiced toward Roma communities which

[39] Goldston, J. "The Struggle for Roma Rights: Arguments that Have Worked." *Human Rights Quarterly*. 32 (2010): 315-316.

does not allow for an unbiased and fair decision. Despite the aforementioned challenges concerning advocacy on behalf of the Roma community, important progress has been made. In light of overwhelming evidence in the form of court applications, international organization and NGO reports, the ECHR began to denounce government violations pertaining to racial discrimination. An important part of influencing ECHR jurisprudence was the comprehensive documentation of discrimination toward the Roma community, which then led to successful outcomes in cases such as DH v. Czech Republic (2007).[40]

The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)

The ERTF began as an initiative of Roma activists lobbying for a pan-European body of elected Romani representatives. Several Member States of the CoE agreed that further discussions on Roma issues were required at the European level and could be facilitated by creating one unified Roma entity. President Halonen of Finland lobbied intensively to construct a new European perspective on addressing Roma issues. The Council of Europe seemed an appropriate venue to build the foundations of a representative and democratic body that would assist Member states in supporting Roma communities. The ERTF became operational as a NGO, funded by the Council of Europe in January 2005. The organization would have special status with the CoE, as an expert forum on Roma issues, and hopefully, a partner organization with other European institutions such as the EU and OSCE.[41]

[40] Goldston, J. op. cit., pp. 317-325. DH v. Czech Republic: The ERRC in the period 1996-1999 advocated on behalf of 18 Roma students from the Ostrava region in the Czech Republic. The applicants had been assigned to special schools for children with learning disabilities, thus receiving an inferior education. In 2006, upon appeal, the ECHR decided in favour of the claimants finding they had suffered discrimination when denied the right to education. The ERRC is an international public interest law organization established in 1996 to address racism and human rights violations of Roma through legal research and defence of cases, publications, advocacy, policy initiatives, educational training and seminars. See "D.H. and Others v. Czech Republic," April 24, 2010, Available: errc.org

[41] Nirenberg, J. "Romani Political Mobilization from the First International Romani Union Congress to the European Roma, Sinti and Travellers Forum," in *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-liberal Order*. eds. Nidhi Trehan and Nando Sigona. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 103-106

In 2005, the ERTF became the largest body representing Roma issues in Europe, incomparable to any other Romani institution. Hundreds of organizations in the majority of CoE states became affiliates of the ERTF. The general assembly of the ERTF is composed of representatives from each national forum. The leadership of the ERTF as a democratic and representative body was to be chosen by the general assembly at the preliminary meeting of the organization. However, the ERTF has followed traditional Roma governing structures by granting a few members honorary titles and permanent status within the general assembly. Moreover, while the ERTF has 'special status' within the CoE, it is not viewed by international organizations and Romani activists as 'the institution' representing Roma communities in Europe, to the frustration of many of its leaders. The ERTF is only sometimes requested for recommendations that do not necessarily influence CoE policies on Roma issues. Instead, MG-S-ROM, a group of government appointed experts develop Roma-related policies for the CoE, and have limited cooperation with the ERTF.[42]

The Committee of Ministers in 1995, established an Expert Group on Roma within the Council of Europe, with the acronym MG-S-ROM. It was the first inter-governmental body focusing on the specific situation of Roma in Europe on a systematic basis. The group consists of both Roma and non-Roma participants. Its primary activities are to support and advise the Committee of Ministers on various issues concerning the Roma population. The body also seeks to 'push' activities currently implemented within the Council of Europe, as well as encouraging new proposals. MG-S-ROM has developed recommendations to support governments in formulating legislation and policies. Furthermore, the group conducts studies and field work in post-conflict regions to focus attention on particularly vulnerable Roma populations. The Group has existed for ten years; an idea initially proposed by the Dutch delegation and key Romani activists. The activities of the group are essential to highlighting the Roma issue on not only European agendas, but other international agencies such as the World Bank, UNHCR, and UNDP. The group seeks to establish itself as the main forum for government representatives to

[42] Ibid, pp. 106-108

discuss good practices and learn from past experiences. Furthermore, the group seeks to provide specific support to countries that have not yet developed a national action plan on Roma inclusion, or in instances, where Roma are not acknowledged as a national minority. Although MG-S-ROM denotes the importance of 'hearing from the ERTF on what still needs to be improved,' there is the understanding that the forum exists as the main body to provide consultation to participating CoE states.[43]

As argued by Nirenberg, the ERTF is predominately composed of Romani individuals that do not generally participate in international policy discourse, and lack comprehension of international organizations' structure and communications. Members of the ERTF have minimal knowledge of international lobbying tools, or realize the need to read background materials prior to making an informed opinion. Those Roma activists and leaders already engaged with international institutions generally are not members of the ERTF. Many Roma NGOs feel excluded from international arenas as 'there are many Europeans at the conferences, but not Roma.' [44] In this way, it is believed that Roma are not accepted as equal members. Roma are denied a role in policy making, simply 'managed' by someone else. [45] According to the European Roma Travellers' Forum (ERTF) there is an oligarchy among the official European institutions concerning Roma inclusion. In relation to facilitating dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, there is powerful asymmetry in constructing the discourse on Roma inclusion.[46] This division is indicative of the general trend in domestic and international arenas between educated, professional Roma, and those leaders purporting strong community support with a focus on 'grassroots organization.' Although the ERTF is the largest entity on Roma issues, it

[43]Guet, M. "MG-S-ROM – Council of Europe Group of Specialists on Roma, Gypsies, and Travellers: 10 years Experience Behind and New Challenges Ahead." *Roma Rights Quarterly*. 2-3, 2006, 49-51.
[44]Representative Asmet Elezovski Roma National Congress, International Conference on the Implementation and Harmonization of Policies for Roma, Sinti and Travellers: Guidelines for a Common Vision, Warsaw, Poland, October 2006
[45]Ibid
[46] Representative of the ERTF, International Conference on the Implementation and Harmonization of Policies for Roma, Sinti and Travellers: Guidelines for a Common Vision, Warsaw, Poland, October 2006

may be an ineffective body that has minimal influence due to its lack of professionalism and expertise.[47]

The Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE)

The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) initially focused on the issue of Roma in 1993, as EU enlargement was unfolding and Roma migration from eastern states was perceived as a potential problem. The 1993 HCNM report demonstrated an underlying concern with Roma migration from CEE countries despite similar issues of racial violence and discrimination in Western European states, generally depicted as refugee receiving countries. The Roma 'problematic' was conspicuously embedded in the overall context of analyzing discrimination and socio-economic difficulties of the community:

> "The aim, in short, should be to improve the 'quality of life' in migration-producing countries for the sake of such improvements, but also for the reduction in pressures on international migration. In addition to commerce, investment, and development assistance leading to economic opportunity, efforts at addressing the specific problems of the Roma, including discrimination and violence against them, will contribute considerably to improving their 'quality of life.' Such efforts are likely to encourage people to continue their lives where they already are."[48]

In the following year of 1994, the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) was established within the Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE, as the issue of Roma became more prominent on the European agenda. Primarily, the ODIHR's mandate was in the area of ethnic conflict prevention, and did not specifically focus on minority groups. Previous to the establishment of the CPRSI, the ODIHR had not incorporated a separate department on a minority issue. This was an important development, as the issue of Roma was reframed within a human rights context, perceptibly different from the area of ethnic conflict prevention.[49] The CPRSI in 1999 under the leadership of Nicolae Gheorghe supported and facilitated communication between the International Romani Union (IRU) and the Roma National Congress (RNC), as well as providing monetary and political resources to enhance

[47] Nirenberg, J. op.cit., pp. 112-113
[48] HCNM report (1993) in Guglielmo, R. and Waters, T. op.cit., p. 767-768
[49] Vermeersch, P. *The Romani Movement: Minority Politics and Ethnic Mobilization in Contemporary Central Europe.* (Berghahn Books: Oxford, 2006), pp. 185-190.

organizational and advocacy capabilities. Subsequently, the International Roma Contact Group was established composed of IRU and RNC members, as well as activists and experts on Roma issues. In 2003-2005, the ERTF was formed as a result of the collaboration among Finnish delegates to the OSCE, the Council of Europe and Roma representatives in the Contact Group. As argued by the former CPRSI department head, this pushed Romani activism to the regional, European level.[50]

The 2000 HCNM report signified an important change in rhetoric from a focus on the securitization of migration to a concern with integration in eastern and western European states. In contrast to the 1990s, the situation of Roma was depicted as a 'minority rights issue.' Further investments were made at this time, particularly through the EU Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) program which emphasized some factors of socio-economic exclusion in candidate countries, rather than a concern with Roma inclusion in the hope of thwarting the possibility of Roma migration in the short-term. However, as Eastern European states increasingly become members of the European community and as Roma 'migrants' are EU citizens, the outcome of a vague minority policy will have deep repercussions, as recently demonstrated by the actions of France in destroying and evicting Roma settlements. Despite rhetorical commitment and funding by the OSCE and EU to improve the situation of Roma communities, incoherency between internal EU minority policy and expectations of candidate states weakens the legitimacy of international policy on Roma issues.[51]

In 2003, 55 OSCE participating States adopted the *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti*. The CPRSI has initiated projects and studies in the areas of political participation, discrimination and racial violence, social exclusion, security of residence, anti-trafficking, and refugee protection. The department has promoted the establishment of institutional frameworks at the local and national levels to advise

[50] "The Decade of Roma Rights, Interview with Nicolae Gheorghe." *Roma Rights 2-3*, (ERRC: November, 2006)
[51] Guglielmo, R. and Waters, T. op.cit., pp. 769-774

governments and administrations on policy making.[52]There are many criticisms of the *Action Plan*– as stated by Gheorghe the document is quite complicated, and broad in its political and social aims. Additionally, OSCE participating states since its adoption, have not integrated many of the recommendations concerning Roma inclusion.[53]

Limitations of the OSCE's Human Rights Interventions

Johns evaluates the OSCE as an impartial 'watchdog for human rights' and the organization's contribution to EU progress reports on minority rights that influence the accession status of Eastern European states. In analyzing the impact of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, an inherent bias becomes apparent. While the role of the OSCE is to recognize the early signs of conflict and develop preventive strategies for states and minority groups in all 55 participating states, there is a focus on Eastern Europe, while Western European states are not scrutinized with the same intensity. Furthermore, the majority of recommendations target Eastern Europe. It was also acknowledged that the OSCE was reluctant to criticize participating states in the West that provided necessary funding to maintain permanent missions in the region, to collect information and conduct an assessment of the human rights situation. In addition, it was also recognized that many of the suggestions presented by the OSCE were subsequently included in EU progress reports as obstacles to be overcome to gain EU membership.[54]

Bakker argues the OSCE's efforts to improve the situation of Roma in Europe can only have impact in the areas of legislation and non-discrimination. In other spheres, policy implementation will only have impact in the long term. As political and economic exclusion are difficult to challenge, the socio-economic differences between Roma and non-Roma will persist. The actions of international institutions will not have desirable results in the short term, but as the author argues may lead to the unintended

[52] See OSCE-ODIHR-CPRSI website: osce.org/odihr.
[53] Gheorghe, N. op.cit. p.1
[54] Johns, M. "Do As I Say, Not As I Do: The European Union, Eastern Europe and Minority Rights," *East European Politics and Societies.* 17.4 (2003), pp. 689-690

consequence of 'ethno-political rebellion.'[55] As the OSCE and other international organizations continue to fund initiatives for NGO development, networking among Roma activists, and encourage the emergence of a strong cultural and political identity – it facilitates the prospect for collective action. Although a small minority of Roma are involved in political activism, this group may contribute to the progressive understanding within many Roma communities that their precarious existence is no longer tolerable. This consciousness, the author argues may lead to growing discontentment and result in militant political action. He states "the difference between the more successful efforts to increase the capacity for political organization and the less successful efforts to decrease political, economic, and cultural discrimination and – to a lesser extent – political instability contains a potential security risk and deserves our attention."[56] Although emphasizing that Roma should not be further stigmatized as a 'potential security risk,' essentially the author is advocating that international institutions, specifically the OSCE, as a security organization should play an integral role in preventing potential conflict.[57]

Bakker, alongside other academics and international policy makers, while highlighting the precarious situation of Roma communities, and the important role of international organizations in capacity building, debilitates the emancipatory potential of Roma communities. As mentioned by a NGO activist in Serbia, the involvement of international institutions concerning the situation of Roma serves to support political stabilization in the region, as well as preventing the migration of Roma searching for a 'better life' in Western Europe.[58] Most recently, the ERTF President and Romani activist Rudko Kawczynski has discussed how the political protests and reforms occurring in the Middle East were 'inspiring;' giving the Roma 'the courage to change' their situation. Kawczynski stated the need to not only participate in meetings and draft policies, but advocated a more active stance, acknowledging that changes were required

[55] Bakker, E. "Roma policies in Eastern Europe. Success and its side effect." *Helsinki Monitor*, 2003, pp. 171-172
[56] Ibid, pp. 171-172
[57] Ibid, p. 171-172
[58] Interview with Nenad Vladisavljavic, Roma Students Association, Novi Sad, Serbia May 21, 2009

by Roma and non-Roma populations.[59] The ERTF President has also warned that eventually the marginalization of Roma in Europe will result in violence, stating "it will blow up, as Roma have no rights at all."[60] Kawczynski also noted the increasing antagonism of Romani youth as a result of segregation, unemployment and other forms of alienation. The inaction of European governments and pervasive anti-Gypsyism, the activist argued, will radicalize Roma youth. Furthermore, as noted by Kawczynski, Roma adolescents do not have faith in Romani leaders, often perceived as symbolic tokens employed in European institutions, but were not able to instigate reforms and promote Roma integration.[61]

Roma activists and leaders have advocated for a coherent minority inclusion policy that applies to candidate and member states alike. The 2000 HCNM report although contextualizing Roma inequality within the frame of security and migration provided the impetus and tools for Roma activists and organizations to channel their claims within other international arenas, such as the ECHR. The inconsistency between EU accession conditions and actions of Member states has effectively demonstrated the impasse of rhetoric and implementation. As minority inclusion policies are consistently pushed in accession discussions, and evaluated within EU progress reports, EU states may be entrapped by their rhetorical commitments. It is important to now consider the interrelation between civil society and international organizations to analyze if Roma activists have been successful in pursuing their claims.

6.6 Trans-national Advocacy Networks: Interaction between International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations

In addressing the question of how social movement actors and international institutions seek to influence and change Roma inclusion policy in Macedonia and Serbia, it is

[59] Kawczynski, Rudko 'Europe Needs Spring Revolution' Council of Europe: Human Rights Europe website. March 30, 2011 available: humanrightseurope.org/2011/03
[60] Ibid
[61] Kawczynski, Rudko. "Alienated Roma Youth Are Ready to Explode." Council of Europe: Human Rights Europe Blogspot. October 20, 2010 available: humanrightseurope.blogspot.com/2010/10

helpful to refer to the literature on transnational advocacy. As argued by Keck and Sikkink (1998) domestic protest groups may seek recourse at the international level, when their government refuses to recognize their concerns. Transnational advocacy networks are most likely to appear concerning issues where: 1) the linkages between domestic groups and governments are restricted or when communication paths are ineffective for conflict resolution 2) activists believe that networking will strengthen social movement campaigns and further promote the issue 3) international conferences and contacts create opportunities for network building.[62] Thus, 'transnational advocacy networks' are defined by the international actors that share common values, discourse, information and services on a specific issue. Furthermore, alliances between civil society actors, states and international organizations allow for increased linkages to international resources that activists can utilize in domestic protest activity.[63]

It is not evident in the context of this study that the EU as an international actor 'shares common values, discourse, information and services'[64] on Roma inclusion. As discussed previously, EU norms on minority protection are ambiguous and lack consensus. Furthermore, although the European Commission and other organizations funded by the institution have advocated for non-discrimination and inclusion of Roma communities, the actions of EU member states, such as Italy and France challenge the idea that the European Community shares common values. This suggests that the EU does not share a 'common discourse' on Roma inclusion as demonstrated by comparing the statements of the President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding, and political leaders such as Sarkozy and Basescu. Regarding 'information and services,' as mentioned in the discussion of 'structural fund implementation' often times, international organization activities over-lap and there is a lack of coordination between the ESF/national/local programs on Roma inclusion. The EURoma Network in the future, in this respect, may offer better opportunities for networking and cooperation among government authorities and civil society organizations.

[62] Keck, M. and K. Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 12
[63] Ibid, p. 2
[64] Ibid, p. 2

International-NGO Interventions on Roma Inclusion

The literature on transnational advocacy networks has demonstrated a strong link between the influence of international organizations and legitimacy of civil society organizations, thus facilitating NGO and activist access to national political arenas.[65] As the situation of Roma increasingly became an important issue on the European agenda and defined within the context of 'minority and human rights,' pro-Romani activists and NGOs gained legitimacy and support by international institutions. Although EU conditionality criteria has not led to significant improvements concerning Roma inclusion, it has led to significant links between international and civil society organizations, as well as highlighting the situation of Roma on domestic agendas. Without the support of international organizations, and vice versa, the participation of civil society, the issue of Roma would not have entered the debate on EU membership.[66]

During the accession period, the EU has supported NGOs in various ways to promote and impact policy making on Roma inclusion. EU funding to Roma NGOs increased substantially in the 1990s and EU bodies continue to support programs for Roma communities in the SEE region. Funding was predominately provided through the EU PHARE program; an estimated 100 million € supported the creation of Roma positions and offices within national government bodies, and NGO projects.[67] International pro-Romani organizations such as the ERRC, ERIO, and ERTF have also been the recipients of EU funding. Overall, EU funding enhanced the visibility of Roma political activism in international and national arenas, supporting a strong partnership with the European Commission and encouraging a prominent role for pro-Romani NGOs in EU

[65]See Risse, T. and Kathryn S. "*The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: introduction*," in *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change.* eds. Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink. (Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Khagram, Sanjeev, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink. "From Santiago to Seattle: Transnational Advocacy Groups Restructuring World Politics," in *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms.* eds. Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker and Kathryn Sikkink. (University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

[66] Ram, M. "Roma Advocacy and EU Conditionality: Not One without the Other?" Conference Paper for the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN) 2009 World Convention, April 2009, Columbia University, New York.

[67] Guy, W. op.cit., pp. 30-33

institutions. Various educational and training opportunities were offered to Roma activists to facilitate future contribution in policy discussions and effectively represent the community's interests.[68]

NGOs have also supported the EU by providing essential information about Roma communities in various states. The EU, especially in the mid to late 1990s had minimal knowledge concerning the situation and concerns of the community. Without the input of NGOs, the EU could not establish conditionality requirements for candidate states regarding minority inclusion, and the situation of Roma may not have been considered during the accession process. Pro-Romani NGOs have undertaken the important task of monitoring during the accession period. Organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the ERRC have contributed frequent evaluations and press releases enabling the EU to effectively assess progress on conditionality criteria. NGOs have also acted as lobbyists, emphasizing certain issues for the EU to address with national governments. The EU has sometimes used Roma and international NGOs to reinforce EU policies or highlight politically sensitive issues the institution cannot discuss. EU officials, in turn, have often visited local communities legitimating Roma concerns. Conferences and seminars, in addition to highlighting the situation of Roma on the international level, also provided European Commission officers and other international organization representatives an arena to network with Roma activists and leaders.[69]

Research has demonstrated that the results of developmental programs are a function of transnational linkages. A re-occurring problem of international organizations and NGOs seeking to provide support is the limited avenues available to collect information about the target group. Often transnational connections are weak, thus the monitoring and enforcement mechanisms of external organizations are limited. There are often asymmetrical power relations in terms of holding international NGOs and organizations accountable for their actions. International intervention is more effective if it involves

[68] Ram, M., op.cit, pp. 10-13
[69] Ibid, pp. 20-25

local agencies. Bruszt-Vedres' findings significantly challenge negative perceptions of the EU's role as an external actor in supporting non-state actors. Thus, "the EU can alter the status quo from within, using political opportunities in a new transnational arena."[70]

Bruszt-Vedres analyzing the effectiveness of local agency in international development programs conducted a case study of EU interventions in East and Central European regional development programs. From 1996-2004 the EU launched massive pre-accession programs to support the foundation and improvement of local agencies. After 2004, regional development programs were nationalized, without any requirement to include local actors. The participation of local actors in the development and implementation of regional programs was dependent on their advocacy and lobbying abilities at the national and international levels. In order to participate as effective members in policy making and implement changes, local actors had to build alliances, mobilize resources, and bring attention to the international obligations between the EU and national governments.[71]

The literature on EU conditionality has demonstrated that national governments in the post-accession period are no longer motivated to implement changes, especially regarding political reforms. Thus, accordingly, the study interrogates local agency in the post-accession phase as EU intervention is no longer as pervasive. The research demonstrated that quite to the contrary, local organizations were heavily involved in national development programs. In addition, local organizations were also more likely to access EU funding in the post-2004 period. Although agencies may have access to grants, it is important to question if they were effective as 'agents of change.' The study found however, that as non-state actors were viewed as significant players and essential to the policy making process, it led to increased developmental agency. Furthermore, as active participants in the EU structure, local agencies were able to build transnational links, international partners also enabled greater agency. It was also interesting to find, that the resource capacities of the organization – in terms of personnel and funds – was

[70] Bruszt, L and Vedres, B. "Local Development agency from without." Under Review *Theory and Society*. 15 March, 2010, p. 23
[71] Bruszt, L. and Vedres, B. op.cit., p. 7

not an important factor in developmental agency. It was noted, however, that progressive funding (EU projects) as monetary leverage was important for continued activation. In addition, the amount of exposure to EU support in the pre-accession phases also developed the capacity of local actors.[72]

In Macedonia, international organizations have initiated alliances between political parties, state authorities and Roma groups. In areas where the participation of Roma proves difficult to encourage, primarily because municipal authorities are not obligated to elect minorities within their structures, international organizations have worked with Roma political and civic activists on issue-based advocacy campaigns. For instance, the *OSCE Spillover Mission in Macedonia* has held workshops to define the role of municipal committees for inter-community relations in mixed ethnic municipalities. Committees were created in 21 municipalities of the country. The discussion brought together lawyers, mayors, local officials and academics to discuss best practices and lessons learned on how these committees function and how municipalities can institute them in municipal statutes.[73] This would be an alternative to direct participation within municipal government, to participate in decision making processes at the municipal level.

In 2006, with the support of the *Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (ODIHR/OSCE)*, a Romani Women's Lobby Group was established in Macedonia. The group serves to put pressure on government institutions and the public to:

- achieve greater representation of Romani women in politics and public life, especially in the decision-making process
- improve the existing legal provisions with the purpose of improving the status of women, along with increased education concerning legal rights
- provide greater participation of women in local self-government
- raise the awareness of women about the power of voting (exercise of voting rights)
- create awareness of the need to create equal opportunities. In 2000, the Women's Lobby Group successfully promoted and secured a legal obligation of political

[72] Ibid, pp. 20-24
[73] "OSCE Skopje Mission supports municipal committees for inter-community relations," Press release: March 28, 2006. Available: osce.org

parties to include 30% of female candidates on their lists at the national election.[74]

The previous discussion has illuminated that while the EU lacks consensus on Roma inclusion initiatives, there has been some progress in the pre and post accession phase, as international institutions and NGOs forge transnational links to influence domestic policies on Roma. While the literature on EU conditionality suggested that reforms in the political sphere were limited in the post-accession period, it is important to note that non-state actors as 'agents of change' can have an impact on national development programs. As previously discussed, however, while Macedonia, Serbia and other SEE countries have developed substantive action plans and program activities with the support of Roma NGOs and activists, it remains to be seen if implementation without EU funding can be accomplished on Roma inclusion initiatives. It is important now to consider how transnational advocacy networks can support protest group activities regarding i) issue creation and agenda setting ii) influence on the discursive positions of states iii) influence on institutional procedures.[75]

Issue Creation and Agenda Setting: 'Framing' the Roma Issue

The previous discussion highlighted EU-NGO cooperation that was essential to influencing domestic agendas concerning Roma inclusion. An important step in 'issue creation and agenda setting' is also the construction of a 'cognitive frame' that can enhance movement appeal to the wider public, supporting a better understanding of protest group goals and interests. Framing is defined as the simplification of our 'lifeworld,'[76] by emphasizing and encoding objects, experiences, situations and actions that are part of past or present environments. Collective action frames can be used as a tool to support or amplify the injustice of a social condition or re-conceptualize as an

[74] Jasanova, Sarita. "Political Participation of Romani Women in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." *Good Practices in Promoting Roma and Minority Women in the Political and Democratic Process: Experience of Romania in the OSCE Context.* Bucharest, 15-18 April 2004.
[75] Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, op.cit., p. 25
[76] See Habermas in Steven M. Buechler *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 83-85.

unjust condition what was perhaps viewed as a tolerable situation. However, 'framing' an issue as immoral is not sufficient to justify a social movement cause, rather one has to specify blame, or convey responsibility for the rectification of a social condition.[77] Roma politicians and activists have been effective in framing socio-economic inequalities and impoverishment within Roma communities as a humanitarian issue; deserving the attention of domestic governments and international organizations. Roma leaders have contested their identity as a subservient ethnic and social class, reconceptualising their 'tolerated' status within European societies.

Roma have been successful in constructing a 'cognitive frame,' that has appeal at the domestic and international level. One way the movement has been able to raise consciousness and change how Roma are perceived by mainstream society, the state and international bodies, is the reformation of their 'political identity.' Across Europe, the Roma have had multiple identities in various states, such as 'Gypsy,' 'Tsigani,' that have derogatory connotations. Various anti-racism campaigns and programs have utilized the term 'Roma' to contest negative images of this social group. Although the term 'Roma' does not have resonance with the general 'Roma' populace in Macedonia and Serbia, the emergence of 'Roma' as a collective identity at the international level has enabled the emergence of specific organizational policies and programs that target discrimination and alleviate social inequality regarding this social group.[78] Roma have also adopted nationalistic cultural symbols such as a flag, and anthem to assert their collective identity. Roma have renegotiated their political identity, as well as reconstructing historical and present discrimination. It is only recently that the

[77] Snow, D. and R. Benford. "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers of Social Movement Theory*. eds. Carol Mueller and Aldon Morris. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 137

[78] See for example, the Council of Europe Dosta! Campaign, website: dosta.org, and Barany, Zoltan D. *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 77.

persecution of the Roma during the Holocaust has been memorialized in texts, museums and concentration camps.[79]

However, Roma leaders and activists have not been successful in creating an innovative, resonant 'master frame,' essential to the success of a social movement, and without which mass mobilization is highly unlikely. It is important to consider that movement tactics are not only constrained by structural considerations, but also the initial 'master frame' constructed by the protest group. If the 'master frame' does not resonate with social movement constituents it will lack appeal, and be dismissed.[80] Presently, the 'master frame' is an elite driven process that only resonates with a small number of Roma activists and intellectuals, participating in international arenas through transnational advocacy networks. As discussed previously, the majority of Roma in Serbia and Macedonia are not aware of their 'human rights,' and lack knowledge of the various domestic and international instruments utilized to contest Roma rights violations. It was also noted by a Roma activist that as the younger generation of educated Roma occupy positions within government and international institutions, there is a widening gap between leaders of the movement and the general Roma populace.[81]

Secondly, it is important that the 'master frame,' be consistent in the values it advocates. As discussed previously in the empirical chapters on Roma activism in Macedonia and Serbia, Roma politicians often present a disunited public image, lacking a common platform to advocate effectively for Roma inclusion. Roma politicians once elected do not represent the community's needs; personal ambition and conflict within political parties often takes precedence. The monopolization of information and resources, and undemocratic politics practiced by many Romani leaders, does not serve to establish a

[79] Acton, T. and Klimova, I. "The International Romani Union: An East European answer to West European questions?" in *Between past and future: the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe.* ed. Will Guy (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), p. 163
[80] Snow, D. and R. Benford, op.cit., pp. 147-148
[81] Communication with Enisa Eminovska, Roma activist, Skopje, Macedonia, February 2009

participatory framework that enables a mass movement. Thus, the 'master frame' lacking 'potency,' among target constituents does not enable movement longevity.[82]

As the 'master frame' does not have resonance with the general Roma community, 'competing frames' are more easily able to demonstrate the irrelevance or limitations of the 'master frame.'[83] For example, mainstream nationalist political parties in Serbia can more easily practice voter intimidation and co-opt Roma political parties, having knowledge there is a lack of consensus among Roma politicians. As suggested by many Roma politicians and activists, fracturing the Romani vote among various political parties has debilitated efforts to push the Roma agenda in national assemblies.[84] A further example of a 'competing frame,' was recently constructed by the Romanian government attempting to oppose and renegotiate the Roma political identity. Stipulating concerns of possible confusion between the words 'Roma,' and 'Romania,' the parliament attempted to change the official name of the Roma to 'Tigan,' a derogatory name widely used in the SEE region, and also associated with the enslavement of Roma in Romania from 1385-1856, as well as forced deportations in WWII. Many activists believe the name change could promote further discrimination.[85]

This section argued that Roma activists and political leaders were effective in reframing the marginalization of the community as a humanitarian issue, highlighting its importance on domestic and international agendas. Furthermore, Roma activists and leaders have successfully constructed a cognitive frame renegotiating their subordinate social and ethnic identity. However, it has been difficult to construct a resonant 'master frame' having mass appeal as Roma activism is predominately an elite driven process that does not enable the emergence of a collective 'Romani identity,' nor does it present a common platform. Thus, 'competing frames' are better able to oppose movement goals.

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[82] Snow, D. and R. Benford, op.cit., pp. 148-149
[83] Ibid, p. 150
[84] Interview with Vitomir Mihajlovic, Member of Parliament Democratic Party (DS) and President of the National Council for Roma, Belgrade, Serbia, June 6, 2009 and Interview with Srdjan Sajn, former Member of Parliament and leader of the Roma Party, Novi Sad, Serbia May 29, 2009
[85] Murray, R. "Romania's Government Moves to Rename the Roma." TIME, November 30, 2010.

Influences on Discursive Positions of States: Does International Influence Matter?

Although many international initiatives exist, to what extent can international organizations influence Roma-related policy and programs within a state if there is reluctance on the part of domestic actors and institutions? In 2008- 2009, Serbia presided as the chair of the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion.' As the Serbian chairmanship began, the mayor of Belgrade evicted a Roma community from the centre of the city and demolished the settlement.[86] The 'Decade of Roma Inclusion' like many international initiatives appears as a conduit to strengthen the Roma movement, but as other Roma-related policies have demonstrated, what appears on paper is lacking in implementation. As a former presidential advisor in the province of Vojvodina noted "the Roma issue is not high on the priority list of the Serbian government, even if it is on the agenda."[87]As in the case of Macedonia, the creation of institutional positions, National Strategies and Action Plans are limited achievements in the absence of political will and interest to create sustainable long term policies and programs that effectively address Roma issues.

Similarly, Klimova-Alexander's study demonstrates that Roma activists have been successful influencing the UN agenda, but are unable to implement procedural/institutional reforms that have political impact. Perhaps even more striking, in contrast to the EU, there has not been a specific body or commission on Roma issues at the UN, nor has the community been the focus of discussions regarding minority and ethnic conflict issues in Europe, despite activists' efforts in the past decade. UN member states have demonstrated a lack of commitment by declining to sign legally binding commitments to address the situation of Roma. The limited success that has been achieved at the UN level, in regards to agenda setting, is predominately due to the efforts of a few individuals – Roma elites and non Romani professionals. It is not surprising there have been few structural developments, provided that Roma activism, in general, is constrained by limited finances and human resources; as well as corruption and conflict

[86] For further information on the eviction of the Roma community from Block 67 in Belgrade, Serbia see "Serbia: Aid Evicted Roma," April 8, 2009 available: hrw.org/en/news/2009/04/08/

[87] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009

between leaders in the community. However, it is important that initial steps have been taken to push Roma issues in the UN structure, effectively paving the way for further negotiations.[88]

Domestic Rhetoric on Roma Inclusion

It has been argued that the EU with the support of Roma NGOs played an important role in influencing domestic agendas on Roma inclusion. Although the EU may have used conditionality as a tool to improve the situation of Roma communities, target states may only establish a 'rhetorical commitment' to international norms. As the literature on the socialization of international human rights norms has discussed, it is through international declarations and statements that states are effectively 'entrapped' by their discourse. Macedonia as a candidate country and Serbia designated the status of potential candidate have provided symbolic tokens of Roma inclusion, such as signing and participating in international initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, and with the guidance of the OSCE created national and local action plans on improving the situation of Roma. The respective states have 'instrumentally adapted,' engaging in 'rhetorical communication' to demonstrate a concession to international norms.[89] Initially, instrumental adaptations are viewed as minimal concessions to a larger goal, such as EU membership, but eventually may lead to the internalization of international human rights norms.

[88] Klimova-Alexander, I., op.cit., p. 147 Romani activism and interaction with the UN structure is focused on the initiatives of a few Roma leaders, and two main organizations – the International Romani Union (IRU) and European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). The IRU is the sole Roma organization with formal access to the UN structure. Roma organizations have either acted independently or as a subsidiary of the IRU to address issues within the UN. The ERRC is an international public interest law organization established in 1996 to address racism and human rights violations of Roma through legal research and defence of cases, publications, advocacy, policy initiatives, educational training and seminars. The ERRC has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN. The interaction of the IRU with the UN system is a complex narrative; this thesis is limited to only providing an overview of some international initiatives on Roma issues and cannot provide an extensive analysis of each organization's contribution (Klimova-Alexander, I., op.cit., p. 17)

[89] See Risse, T., Ropp, S., and Sikkink, K., op.cit., and Schimmelfenning, F., "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union." *International Organization.* 55.1 (Winter 2001): 47-80.

The second phase of norm socialization is the process of argumentation and persuasion. As noted in previous chapters discussing domestic political opportunities and constraints in the respective countries, there has been the creation of government positions and bodies in regards to Roma inclusion to demonstrate progress on international commitments. The combination of fulfilling instrumental interests, in addition to engaging in international discussions on Roma issues in various high-level meetings and conferences, has led to a long term commitment to satisfy international political obligations. Numerous pro-Romani organizations, activists, and Roma leaders seek to provide constant criticism while states justify their instrumental priorities, leading to further argumentation and persuasion. Moreover, although the EU does not have a coherent minority rights policy, Roma activists can still refer to EU human rights declarations to encourage beneficial policy direction on Roma issues.

States, however, may exercise 'rhetorical action'[90] that compromises international values, reframes ideas in accordance with individual priorities, and utilizes alternative international norms to support their perspective. For instance, some states have used the idea of Roma integration as a collaborative, 'pan-European initiative' to absolve national responsibility for the situation. Greater institutional involvement on the part of European organizations is not the problem, but rather the re-framing of EU interest in Roma by some political actors as a way to further categorize and exclude the community. By viewing Roma as a 'European minority', they are no longer citizens of the state, deserving of socio-economic equality. Additionally, as the Roma community is viewed as the recipients of generous EU funding it may exacerbate the divide between Roma and domestic populations.[91] Well known Romanian Roma activist Nicolae Gheorghe has noted:

> **"**The mass Roma migration since EU accession has served the purpose of getting the Roma people out of the local communities. This approach tolerates the idea of the Roma "becoming European" on the assumption that the Roma will leave, the westerners will take on the burden and will then

[90] Risse, T., Ropp, S., Sikkink, K. op.cit., p. 16
[91] Vermeersch, P. "Between Europeanisation and Discrimination: the Roma as a Special Focus of EU Policy." Conference Paper for Romani Mobilities in Europe: Multidisciplinary Perspectives, January, 2010, Oxford University, Oxford.

> start to "understand our bitterness". The Roma as an EU citizen is a subtle argument but the solution has to be found here, in Romania. The Romanian government recently announced the intention to adopt a new strategy for the Roma. I think this is a bad idea because it will enable the Romanian authorities to shirk their responsibilities towards their fellow Romanian citizens by "Europeanising" the problem, in other words passing the problem onto the EU institutions and other member states."[92]

Rhetorical action such as reframing the Roma issue within the context of Europeanization allows for member states to maintain a consistent image without damaging their international reputation. This signals potential candidate countries such as Macedonia and Serbia to follow similar processes of norm socialization, as the outcome will not necessarily lead to the habitualization or institutionalization of Roma inclusion policies.

Influences on Institutional Procedures

International organizations are presumably committed to working with government bodies to address Roma-related issues. While this approach seems to be conducive to national governments taking responsibility for minority related concerns, a major problem is institutional inertia within post-Communist states. Roma activists as well as international organization representatives noted the lack of implementation as an issue of institutional reform in both Macedonia and Serbia. Institutional reform in post-communist states is especially a concern as with the creation of Roma-related departments and positions within Macedonian and Serbian political structures, institutions have become the main avenue to address Roma issues, leading to few achievements. One would expect that democratization would allow for institutional innovation and discontinue previous patterns of institutional conduct.[93] However, many empirical studies demonstrate that "institutional arrangements that developed in Eastern

[92]Nicolae Gheorghe, Romanian Roma Activist and former OSCE-ODIHR-CPRSI Senior Advisor, "Romania is shirking its Roma responsibilities." November 3, 2010, available: guardian.co.uk,

[93]Thelan, K. "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analyses," in *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies*. eds. Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelan. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 209

Europe before and under Communist rule remain salient even after the disjuncture of 1989 and continued to shape distinctive trajectories in the post-Communist period."[94]

As described by Thelan, institutional survival is often dependent on institutional transformation in order to adapt to the changing social, political, and economic context.[95] However, institutional transformation does not necessarily point to institutional innovation. The National Strategies and Action Plans are limited amendments to create the appearance of Roma inclusion in Macedonian and Serbian societies and political structures.[96] The inclusion of Roma-related departments and positions within the Macedonian political structure is a way to appease EU human rights regulations in order to join the European Union and the international community.[97] Comparatively, in Serbia, the former advisor to the President of Vojvodina commented

"*the pressure of the EU upon our government doesn't bring any influence; it only causes the need to resist among Serbian people*."[98] Specifically, in regards to EU-Serbia cooperation he noted "*the problem is that Serbia is structurally unprepared to cooperate with the EU because institutions are not ready to initiate projects with the EU. The government would prefer to just get the money and do what they want with it*."[99]

Furthermore, foreign aid and intervention in Serbian affairs is often perceived as negative, as noted by the Director of Women's Studies and Research

"*in Serbia currently, there is prejudice concerning foreign donors. As if they are enemies. So, if you say that you get money for instance, from the United States then, answer will be 'yes,' but they were bombing us ten years ago*."[100]

Macedonian and Serbian political institutions are a construction of old and new structures and policy legacies that have only transformed *slightly* to accommodate

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[94] Ibid, p. 210
[95] Thelan, K. op.cit., p. 211
[96] To review the National Strategies and Action Plans, refer to the Decade of Roma Inclusion website, romadecade.org
[97] Interviews with Ljatif Demir, Government Advisor to Minister without Portfolio and National Coordination Office for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Roma and Decade Action Plans, Skopje, Macedonia, February 5, 2009 and Ramiza Sakip, Coordinator RNVO 2002, Skopje, Macedonia, January 23, 2009
[98] Interview with Dusko Radosavljevic, Former Advisor to the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Professor of Law, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2, 2009
[99] Ibid
[100] Interview with Svenka Savic, Director Women's Studies and Research, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 17, 2009

changes within the external social and political context. These structures are now shaping opportunities and threats for protest group and government action in the contemporary period. As stated alternatively by an OSCE representative in Serbia:

"One has to take into account that this is a country in transition in general -- economically, socially, and constitutionally I think that all reforms are being affected by the inertia which exists within the ministries. We have this problem now for example with the Roma National Strategy Secretariat in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. There are four staff members -- and there's now a freeze on the recruitment of new staff because of the financial crisis. But, at the same time they have dozens of drivers, and support staff. The institution itself needs to be reformed. If there was a reform of the institution it could create possibilities both to recruit needed staff -- in this case the Roma, but also free up resources to be used for initiatives such as Roma inclusion. So, there is a general problem of the institutions themselves. I mean we've had that now with the Ministry of Education for example, where we have a very dynamic state secretary in the Ministry of Education. Along with a number of key staff who are very dynamic. But, the reality is that majority of the staff have been working there for many years and they are the staff of the old regime. It's a different mindset -- so achieving change is a bit of a struggle sometimes."[101]

Change within Macedonian and Serbian political institutions is difficult but not impossible. In order to conform to international human rights norms and become an EU member state, changes proposed by international organizations have been accepted to some degree regarding the formulation and implementation of Roma inclusion policy and programs. But, there has been a lack of initiative and will to implement major structural reform and have real impact within Roma communities. Thus, the formation of transnational advocacy networks that facilitate NGO and activist access to national arenas has not been effective in promoting Roma inclusion. Although Roma activists and NGOs have gained attention at the international level through various mechanisms of the EU and initiatives such as the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion,' the domestic political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia is 'closed,' due to repressive and unstable government regimes, political corruption, discriminatory attitudes, and limited cooperation among various Roma inclusion offices, Roma civil society actors and politicians. However, it is not only domestic opportunity structures that offer limitations

[101] Interview with Matthew Newton, Director Roma Assistance Program, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

for Roma advocacy, the strategies of international institutions have also debilitated protest group activities.

6.7 International Organizations and a Needs Based discourse

Many international and government reports describe the situation of Roma in extensive detail, noting inequalities in housing, education, employment and social services. This information is viewed as important to include as state bodies and international organizations base funding allocation on statistics. State requirements for the official census serve the dual purpose of one, controlling a settlement and secondly, to make decisions regarding resources. This information then allows 'experts' to authenticate 'needs,' and allows for state institutionalization of these services. The needs discourse serves as a mediating connection between social movement actors and professionals to translate political claims into objects of state departments. The understanding and meanings assigned to needs are not viewed as problematic – rather it is natural that one becomes a 'client' of the state and as such, people are classified along class, gender and ethnic divisions. It is a continuous struggle between social movement actors and the state to interpret needs satisfaction.[102]

In Macedonia and Serbia, NGOs are unable to create and assert an alternative to hegemonic development discourses. Many that work on Roma issues have depoliticized needs and presented movement goals and objectives to be managed by the state and international institutions. It is not the purpose of this discussion to undervalue the specific challenges that the majority of Roma confront on a daily basis. However, it is important to note that the evaluation of 'needs' is separated from personal experiences and does not encourage political participation. It is thus, essential that social movement actors realize novel approaches to discuss needs satisfaction and therefore, redefine development discourse.

[102]Escobar, Arturo. "Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements." *Third World and Post Colonial Issues.* 31.32 (1992): p. 45.

Capacity building' and 'Small-Scale Projects' debilitating Roma Activism?

The domestic political opportunity structure is one factor accounting for the lack of implementation on Roma issues. However, it is also important to analyze the kind of influence international organizations are exerting as mediators and allies of the protest group. Macedonia and Serbia as 'closed regimes' will not become more 'open,' unless the strategies of international organizations are amended. What other factors can account for the lack of sustainable and effective change concerning Roma-related issues? One of the main strategies employed by international organizations is through the development of 'small-scale projects' and 'capacity building.' In the post-1999 period, subsequent to the Kosovo conflict, many organizations contributed to the building of a 'thriving' civil society in the South Eastern European region. 'Capacity building,' would resolve all challenges in post-communist states, especially in regards to ethnic/minority problems. Many times, however, the outcomes of 'capacity building' as international initiatives have been disappointing. There is, generally, minimal regard for the political environment in which the civic organizations are expected to implement programs. Furthermore, the role of civil society is often idealized – viewing it as one of the primary actors in processes of democratization and institutional change. Often times, there are too many expectations of civil society's role in ethnically based conflicts.[103]

There has been a proliferation of Roma-related NGOs funded and affiliated with international organizations that 'voice' the concerns of the community and advocate for their claims, acting as the main agent between domestic governments and the community. International organizations by providing financial and technical support, organizing conferences and meetings with domestic government representatives are a cheap alternative to helping democratize state structures, and contributing to the political participation of minority groups. Roberto Belloni, using Bosnia as a case study refers to a similar argument regarding the involvement of international organizations, and the development of civil society as a less expensive alternative to extensive institutional and

[103] Belloni, R. "Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Journal of Peace Research*. 38.2 (2001): p. 163.

economic reforms. As Belloni states "one is led to believe that the discourse on civil society is the new ideological antidote for the failures of official aid and the resulting diffuse sense of pessimistic attitudes toward the Balkans."[104]

Roma politicians and activists have observed how international funding has supported the proliferation of NGOs that seek to create a 'Romani industry' based on the humanitarian needs of a severely marginalized population.[105] Some have vociferously criticized actions of the international community in regards to NGO funding. One politician stated

"*to be honest the Roma minority never really benefited from those funds. If Roma problems were solved previously by these funds – directed correctly toward the Roma issue, Roma people still wouldn't be living in cardboard boxes or in unhygienic conditions*."[106]

There are over 1000 Roma organizations within Macedonia and Serbia, with very few effectively serving the needs of the community.[107] Furthermore, some NGO activists criticized international organizations for working on initiatives that did not correspond to the needs of the Roma community in Macedonia and Serbia. Civil society organizations were not solicited for information regarding the actual needs of the community, nor were their ideas taken into account.[108] Many international organizations adopt a top-down approach, with Roma activists merely acting as field workers implementing short-term projects with limited effect on the community.[109] If an NGO did have an effective program in place, at times, international organizations would withdraw funding, as it had been decided that other issues were a priority. The NGO would then draft an extensive project proposal in response to abstract 'project proposal calls' attempting to fit

[104] Ibid, p. 178
[105] Interview with Vitomir Mihajlovic, Member of Parliament Democratic Party (DS) and President of the National Council for Roma, Belgrade, Serbia, June 6, 2009
[106] Ibid
[107] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009
[108] Interview with Milena Cuk, Program Coordinator, Novi Sad Humanitarian Center, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 18, 2009
[109] Interviews with Jasna Kronja, Department Head, CARE Serbia Office, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 18, 2009 and Nadja Kocic, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009

international organization objectives rather than meeting the needs of the Roma community.[110] In general, NGO and international organization project proposals can seem quite extensive and convey the idea that Roma 'activism' exists. However, in essence, many of the projects implemented simply are not effective in meeting the needs of the Roma community and present a very deceptive view on paper.[111]

Emphasizing the role of civil society and its importance in building a social movement, serves to conceal the ineffectiveness of international institutions in promoting a stable government structure, and reconciliation between ethnically divided communities. It is often the case that international organizations want a short term 'fix' for complex societal problems and thus, do not always plan a comprehensive approach. International organizations are often criticized for advocating a hierarchical approach to implementing programs; international institutions by supporting civil society can belie an alternative sphere that empowers local communities.[112] It is difficult to focus on the empowerment of marginalized communities when international agencies are stressing NGO effectiveness and provision of services. Instead, the NGO sector are merely 'contractors' providing a temporary substitute for social and public services that should be under government auspices. NGO accountability, then, is no longer channelled toward representing the interests of a disempowered community. Consequentially, marginalized communities may not feel empowered as the NGO sector is viewed as an externally driven process, committed for only a short duration. As development goals and plans are formulated by international agencies, beneficiaries are not active agents and as such are alienated from projects, not enabling any value in contribution.[113] At times, international organizations prevent a participatory politics.

In order for civil society to present an effective, oppositional role, civil society actors must construct an independent political sphere, while continuously conflicting and

[110] Interview with Milena Cuk, Program Coordinator, Novi Sad Humanitarian Center, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 18, 2009
[111] Interview with Svenka Savic, Director Women's Studies and Research, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 17, 2009
[112] Belloni, op.cit., p. 167
[113] Ibid, pp. 173-174

engaging in argumentative discourse with state authorities, and without international organizations initiating the interaction. The coordination and facilitation of meetings between the civil sector and state authorities is generally the result of internationally initiated research and agenda-setting. Civil society representatives and Roma political activists are relegated to observational roles, acting within the confines of internationally conceived ideas and discussions. As noted by prominent Romani activist Nicolae Gheorghe

"The lack of confrontation is also due to the fact that we who are educated and took the responsibility to portray ourselves as leaders – in the sense of influencing perceptions of Roma and about Roma – are clients or employees of foundations and international organizations, sometimes beneficiaries of affirmative action policies, so we are not political fighters. I see a clear need for confrontation among ourselves and I think we are not urging such possibilities enough."[114]

It is not the intention of this argument to criticize international institutions for taking initiatives, but to focus on the need for Roma political actors to further develop an independent voice that is not guided by international institutions and their member states.

There is an additional difficulty with civil society not being viewed as an independent actor. In Serbia, specifically, there is considerable influence and intimidation on the part of nationalist parties concerning NGO activity and civil society development. International institutions are not always viewed as legitimate actors. Civil society activities are seen as a temporary intervention and superfluous, rather than a meaningful and integral part of the national political environment, influential in defining the state interest. The corrupt nature of Macedonian and Serbian political structures prevents the development of a thriving civil society that can influence political events and contribute to a tolerant and multicultural society.[115]

As discussed by many NGO and international organization representatives, what is lacking on the part of international actors is long term strategy and vision. Too often

[114] Gheorghe, N. op.cit, p. 4
[115] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

short term guidelines dictate Roma-related policies and programs that are changed frequently. The lack of monitoring and experience in the field is a major limitation of international organizations. The over-emphasis on paper work creates a very deceiving impression that Roma activism exists, but without implementation it ceases to be a social movement. As stated by a member of CARE International "there are too many politics involved, not only on the side of political parties, but also the international community."[116]

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the main international initiatives on Roma inclusion. The Roma community historically ignored by international institutions became the focus of discussion within the European Commission and Council in 2007-2008. The position of European institutions on the situation of Roma, however, has often remained vague and incoherent demonstrated in the use of ad-hoc policy instruments and disarticulation of a European Platform on Roma Inclusion. Furthermore, although European Commission reports evaluate and monitor EU candidate progress on minority protection, an inherent double standard is visible as often Member States do not promote the same humanitarian values. The prospect of EU membership is utilized as the main compliance instrument to adopt 'European values' in the remaining post-communist states. This, however, is not a very effective tool as while states may integrate conditionality reforms during the accession period, compliance deteriorates post-membership, specifically concerning humanitarian reforms.

In addition to compliance measures, the European Commission has funded various bodies within the CoE and OSCE to improve the situation of Roma communities. The ERTF, while the largest conglomerate of Romani organizations in Europe is not very influential in developing Roma inclusion policy due to the lack of professionalism and expertise among members. The CPRSI and ECHR have contributed significantly to the advancement of Roma rights. The former through the formulation of an *Action Plan on*

[116] Interview with Jasna Kronja, Department Head, CARE Serbia Office, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 18, 2009

Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti to which 55 participating states are signatories, as well as numerous projects implemented by OSCE field offices. The presentation of cases pertaining to racial violence and discrimination within the ECHR has provided further legitimacy to Roma concerns regarding government violations of their human rights.

The internationalization of Roma advocacy has allowed for the transpiration of transnational advocacy networks, such as the EURoma Network that seeks to support the diffusion of Roma inclusion policies and enhance cooperation between government authorities and civil society. The dual impact of EU and NGO involvement has influenced domestic agendas on improving the situation of the Roma community. Substantial funding by the EU has enhanced the visibility of Roma activism at the national and international levels, but monetary contributions through initiatives such as the EU PHARE program and NGO projects have no demonstrable effect in Roma communities. Additionally, NGOs have provided information and monitored government implementation of Roma inclusion policies, without which the EU would not be able to effectively evaluate humanitarian reform in candidate states. However, states may only instrumentally adapt to international political obligations, engaging in rhetorical commitments, which does not allow for the institutionalization of humanitarian norms.

Transnational advocacy networks as applied to the case of Roma inclusion in Macedonia and Serbia has only had limited success. Although NGOs and international organizations have formed strong links to influence domestic agendas, the lack of political will and institutional inertia in the respective states has not allowed for significant reforms. There are also many limitations to how international institutions contribute to building civil society in Eastern Europe; that would hopefully democratize closed political systems such as Macedonia and Serbia. ‘Capacity building’ and ‘small scale projects’ are ineffective strategies to implementing integrated national and international programs that would have long term results in post-communist states. International institutions should also allow for an independent political space in which civil society actors can engage in

meaningful discourse with government authorities and focus on empowering Roma communities.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

In concluding the thesis, it is important to revisit the initial aims and research questions of the project. Two main propositions were investigated to assess the divergent treatment of Roma communities in Macedonia and Serbia:

1) Roma mobilization is likely to succeed when the domestic political opportunity structure is favourable
2) A 'closed' domestic political opportunity structure shifts the focus of Roma activism to the international level.

In order to assess the effectiveness of Roma political activism in Macedonia and Serbia the following research questions were addressed:

- How has the political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia facilitated or constrained Roma advocacy?
- Do institutional mechanisms exist at the domestic level to promote Roma inclusion?
- Are Roma political parties and civil society actors coordinated in their actions to promote Roma issues?

Regarding the transnational sphere, the following questions were relevant:

- How has the internationalization of Roma advocacy affected movement activity?
- What instruments are available to international institutions to guarantee state compliance on international obligations and are they effective?
- How do international institutions and social movement actors (transnational advocacy networks) seek to influence and change Roma-related policy in Macedonia and Serbia?

In order to analyze, explain and compare the relative level of Roma advocacy success, the following factors of political activism were utilized:

- Degree of state repression/facilitation

- Level of institutional access
- Usage of influential domestic and international allies

In the following discussion, I will demonstrate how the case studies relate to the key concepts of brokerage, diffusion, and collective action. This will assist in comparing the various components of Roma mobilization. It is important to recapitulate what these concepts mean: Brokerage refers to the "*production of a new connection between previously unconnected sites*."[1] Diffusion is defined as the *"spread of a form of contention, an issue, or a way of framing it from one site to another."*[2] The mechanisms of brokerage and diffusion enable *coordinated action* defined as *"two or more actors' engagement in mutual signalling and parallel making of claims on the same object."*[3] An *upward scale shift* refers to coordinated action at a higher level;[4] that is, Roma activists and international institutions that seek to influence domestic Roma inclusion policy. *Emulation* occurs when structural conditions (internationalization and communication), social mechanisms (brokerage), and pathways (diffusion) are conducive to action.[5]

Finally, it is important to discuss, in relation to the study's main findings, if Roma mobilization and political activism can be designated and understood as '*coordinated action*.' The concluding chapter also includes a discussion of potential directions for future research, focusing on the political activism of Romani women, and policy diffusion regarding Roma inclusion.

The subsequent discussion will elaborate on the following conclusions:

[1] Tilly, C and Tarrow, S. *Contentious Politics*. (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), p. 31.
[2] Ibid, p. 31
[3] Ibid, p. 31
[4] Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. op.cit, pp. 93-95.
[5] Chabot, S. "Dialogue Matters: Beyond the Transmission Model of Transnational Diffusion between Social Movements," in *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects.* eds. Rebecca Givan, Kenneth Roberts, and Sarah Soule. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 103

- In regards to state repression/facilitation – Macedonia offers comparatively greater political stability and opportunities for democratic reform, specifically in regards to minority inclusion
- In considering 'institutional access,' Macedonia and Serbia have had limited success in promoting Roma inclusion initiatives within their respective state organizations
- In regards to influential domestic and international allies, the coordination of civil society organizations and political party participation proved *slightly better* in Macedonia as compared to Serbia
- Finally, this study expected to find that international advocacy would be a more successful avenue for Roma activists to pursue due to it being more open than the domestic context. However, the thesis' 'surprising' finding points to how this was *not* the case. Roma activists appear to face the same type of challenges domestically, as well as internationally.

Roma Political Activism: A Cross Case Comparison

7.1 State repression/facilitation

In the former Yugoslavia, distinctions between various national communities, rather than promoting the idea of 'brotherhood and unity,' perpetuated an ethnically based hierarchy that has impacted contemporary minority relations. The Macedonian nation, prior to 1944 did not exist, but upon recognition was made equal to other republics. Historically and presently, the idea of a 'Macedonian identity' has been contested. International recognition of Macedonian independence in 1991 was not easily attained; neighbouring states in the SEE region have consistently challenged its territorial sovereignty. However, the political and security situation in Macedonia is relatively stable. The 2009 presidential and municipal elections were peaceful, generally meeting international standards for democratic and transparent electoral procedures; leading to the victory of VMRO-DPMNE, a coalition of Macedonian, Albanian, and smaller minority parties.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001), approved by the international community, supported a resolution of the conflict between Albanians and Macedonians, as well as

introducing significant public administration reforms. Furthermore, it stipulated specific minority rights in the areas of propositional representation and use of language. It favours larger minority communities by requiring a 20% threshold for territorial division. This provision, however, does not provide for the adequate representation of smaller minority communities, such as the Roma, which only represent a majority in Shuto Orizari. Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement remains limited, due to inadequate finances and human resources. Thus, the Decentralization Act promoted as a mechanism for greater citizen involvement in municipalities has not facilitated minority inclusion. Accordingly, Roma are not adequately represented in the public service and government structures – significant public administration reforms are required.

Serbia as a former Yugoslav state, similarly promoted a hierarchical classification of ethnic groups within an 'institutionalized multinational state system.' In the mid-1980s, ethnic conflict in the region intensified as nationalist fervour led to ideas of a 'Greater Serbia.' In the early 1990s, political fragmentation along ethnic lines in the former Yugoslavia culminated in the outbreak of war. The Serbian national identity was reconstructed in opposition to other 'enemy' Yugoslav nationalities by political leaders, intelligentsia, and the Orthodox Church; focusing on state securitization, and perpetuating violence. In regards to the Roma community, inter-ethnic relations were especially precarious in the Kosovo region.

Political turbulence in Serbia has not facilitated a democratic transition. In the 1990s, nationalist, anti-Western parties continued to receive popular support; advocates of the Milosevic regime still had a pervasive presence in government structures. In 2003, Zoran Djindjic a proponent of democratic reforms was assassinated, mainly as a result of supporting the extradition of Milosevic to the Hague Tribunal in 2001. This consequently, led to further destabilization in the state. The 2000 election victory of the 18 party DOS coalition had significant challenges; personal and political conflict among members provided for an unstable government. The December 2003 elections marked the end of the fragile DOS coalition and the promise for reforming an autocratic, quasi-mafia state to a functioning democracy. The nation continues to be plagued by

corruption, organized crime, ethnic conflict, weak coalition governments and government institutions, and a political culture of intolerance and undemocratic values.

In comparing the political context in Macedonia and Serbia, it is evident that the former offers greater opportunities for democratic reform. Following the demise of the Milosevic government, Serbia has had numerous elections and political leaders, due to low voter turnout and lack of coalition building among minority political parties. In comparison, the political and security situation in Macedonia is more stable allowing for the government to focus on domestic and economic growth. The discussion will proceed to compare institutional access, political party and civil society organization, as well as the role of international institutions in the respective states regarding Roma inclusion.

7.2 Increased Institutional Access?

In Macedonia, the offices of the Minister without Portfolio – Nezdat Mustafa (MP) and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy are the main government institutions implementing the national strategy and action plans in the context of the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015).' As discussed previously, there is limited inter-departmental cooperation or *'brokerage'* between various government departments working on Roma inclusion. This prevents progress on initiatives for Roma communities. Romani government officials have not developed a collaborative approach to implementing the national strategy and action plans. Furthermore, the project-oriented approach to implementing Roma initiatives has short term effect and does not enable wider reforms necessary for substantive impact.

An additional difficulty is the delegation of responsibility for Roma inclusion programs to Romani staff in government institutions. This practice supports the idea that only 'Roma should be responsible for Roma issues,' without the effective participation of 'ethnic Macedonians.' Problems within the Roma community are only discussed among Romani government employees; effectively excluded from high level decision making channels. Furthermore, although the action plans and national strategy for Roma

inclusion cover four priority areas (employment, health, housing, and education), each ministry does not have a representative that focuses on the specific situation of the Roma community. These challenges inhibit the mechanism of *diffusion*, as the idea of Roma inclusion and ways of seeking solutions to Roma marginalization are not addressed among 'ethnic Macedonians.' The implementation of Roma inclusion policies is further limited by the racist and discriminatory attitudes of ethnic Macedonian staff in government institutions that perceive Roma as unprofessional and incompetent.

In Serbia, the main government institutions concerned with Roma inclusion policies and programs are the National Council for Roma (Republic Council for National Minorities), Office for the Roma Decade League, Agency for Human and Minority Rights, and Secretariat for the Roma National Strategy. Similar to Macedonia, institutional reforms regarding the inclusion of Roma communities in Serbia have resulted from participating in the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion,' and subsequently, the development of national strategies and action plans for Roma communities. Pro-Romani civil society organizations have criticized the National Council of Roma extensively, mentioning the difficulty of working with staff and exclusive membership criteria based on political party and interest group affiliations. Challenges also arise due to the general incoherence of national minority council functions and responsibilities. Furthermore, as national minority representatives are responsible for funding various Roma initiatives, monopolization has disallowed a participatory and democratic politics. Thus, the mechanism of *'brokerage'* has not transpired.

There are many similarities in comparing the institutional structures for Roma inclusion in Macedonia and Serbia. Primarily, it is the limited cooperation or absence of *'brokerage'* between government bodies concerning Roma initiatives that have debilitated progress. It is also important to note that government officials working on Roma inclusion in both Macedonia and Serbia recognized the often unclear mandates and responsibilities of various government institutions that further constrained the effective implementation of the national strategy and action plans. Furthermore, personal conflicts between Romani government officials and differing political party affiliations

have not led to a coordinated approach in implementing Roma inclusion initiatives. An additional difficulty is the monopolization of resources and information, as well as exclusive decision making promoted by Romani leaders in government institutions that does not lead to democratic representation and effective advocacy of the diverse problems within Romani communities. Thus, ineffective communication among Romani political leaders has led to the absence of *'diffusion'* within the relevant government departments.

Some important differences were recognized in comparing government structures implementing Roma inclusion policies and programs. In Macedonia and Serbia thus far, the institutionalization of Decade initiatives, limited funding and resources has not led to significant improvements in Roma communities. However, it should be mentioned that strategically locating the Secretariat for Implementation of the National Strategy in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights in Serbia has enabled better communication with government departments. Comparatively, in Macedonia, as in other SEE countries, the creation of the Unit for Implementation of the National Strategy within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has not facilitated synergies with relevant government bodies, debilitating the mechanisms of *brokerage and diffusion*. It is important to acknowledge, however, that while the Secretariat for the Implementation of the Decade exists at the national level, Belgrade has yet to establish a Roma inclusion office providing services specifically for the Roma community. Additionally, academics and government officials noted the limited institutional cooperation among regional/national/local bodies on Roma inclusion in Serbia. Although national initiatives exist, discrimination among municipal authorities and lack of implementation at the local level seriously debilitate actions to improve the situation of the Roma community.

In discussing Roma inclusion initiatives with government officials in Macedonia and Serbia, it was interesting to find that Romani personnel in Serbia were less likely to critically evaluate government actions. Romani government representatives in Serbia, in distinction to Macedonia, did not present an opinion concerning discrimination or racism within government structures. It was also recognized that 'Roma were responsible for

Roma issues' in Serbia as well; however, there was no discussion of this bias during the course of the interviews. Instead, a rather optimistic opinion of government cooperation and communication was presented. One of the main limitations noted in Macedonia was the lack of a long term program structured approach that integrated Decade action plan activities within all government departments. It is uncertain, however, whether institutional developments in Serbia indicate there may be more effective coordination among the government agencies that should be involved with Roma inclusion initiatives. Thus, institutional access has only had limited success in Macedonia and Serbia – the absence of *brokerage and diffusion* has not led to *'coordinated action'* among relevant government bodies.

7.3 Influential Allies for Roma Activism? (The Role of NGOs and Political Parties)

Romani NGOs

Many Roma NGOs in Serbia and Macedonia have focused on meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of the Roma community; implementing short term projects, rather than investing in the long term development of communities. Short-term strategies have consequently, led to limited improvements in the lives of Romani people. Romani NGOs, often in response to abstract 'project proposal calls' by international organizations, engage in a diverse array of projects, rather than implementing 'in-depth activities' in accordance with NGO capacities that are congruent with the interests of the Roma community. Roma NGOs need to construct an alternative political sphere that enables continuous engagement with state authorities and empowers marginalized communities.

As conflict subsides in the SEE region, international funding for humanitarian issues will recede. It thus becomes increasingly important to coordinate, network and agree on a common platform; pooling resources and expertise to effectively advocate for Roma inclusion. NGOs in the future will need to find alternative sources of funding, as there is a lack of transparency and accountability for limited state resources. International

organization representatives often mention the lack of organization, advocacy skills and professionalism among Romani NGOs in Macedonia and Serbia, resulting in the distribution of funds to non-Romani led NGOs. Although criticisms are not unwarranted, this characterization of Roma civil society perpetuates negative stigmatization of community leaders and activists, without reflecting on internal conflict among non-Romani personnel in NGOs and international institutions.

In Macedonia and Serbia, Roma students are increasingly employed in NGOs and international organizations that offer lucrative short-term contracts. This is an appealing offer as the transition to a market economy in post-communist states has resulted in high unemployment especially among recent graduates. However, there are many reservations with this approach, as a professor at the University of Novi Sad noted, several students frequently do not finish their academic studies, and while obtaining skills in project development will not have the necessary credentials to find long term employment in other industries. Furthermore, as Roma from the NGO sector are increasingly employed within government positions created to implement the national strategy and action plans in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion; it may be challenging to critically engage on issues of concern and lobby effectively.

Although many limitations of the NGO sector have been discussed, it is necessary to recognize that some progress has been made through the involvement of Roma and pro-Romani organizations. Without an NGO presence, supported by international organizations, there would be minimal activity on Roma inclusion, as Macedonian and Serbian government authorities have no interest or political will to improve the situation of the community. The above examples have demonstrated how new 'sites of contention,' in the form of alliances with government authorities and international organizations, has facilitated Roma activism, but also presents challenges unless an alternative political space is created. Thus, the mechanism of *'brokerage'* is present.

It is also important to take into consideration the political context in which Roma NGOs are expected to fulfill their mandates. In many post-communist states, the idea of 'civil

society' is novel. Government authorities do not always view NGOs as legitimate actors' integral in providing a critical perspective of state policy, thus enhancing democratic reforms. Often, and especially in Serbia, political parties intimidate civil society actors, or attempt to influence NGO activities. In the case of Macedonia, Roma political parties envious of NGO-international organization partnership have also attempted to take ownership of NGO activities, or actively tried to destroy organizations. There are some successful examples, however, of NGO activities, such as Sumnal in the Roma settlement of Topaana in Skopje, providing much needed assistance to school age children. Other examples of successful coordination and planning are RNVO 2002, an amalgamation of numerous NGOs working on issues such as discrimination, employment, housing and healthcare initiatives. Thus, while *brokerage* is present, *diffusion* and *coordinated action* has not transpired, as there is limited communication and consensus among pro-Romani civil society and political party representatives. Furthermore, the closed political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia does not facilitate the effective participation of civil society organizations.

The current decentralization process in Macedonia has devolved greater responsibility to municipalities. This may offer opportunities in the future for integrating Roma issues in local development initiatives. In Macedonia and Serbia, coordinators have been hired to enhance cooperation between Roma NGOs and the local government. Presently, many constraints recognized at the national level hinder progress on Roma inclusion at the local level, such as political party/NGO conflict, and corruption among councillors hired in Roma information centers. Specifically, effective leadership and greater community involvement could build Shuto Orizari, the world's largest Romani settlement into a thriving municipality. Similarly, in the case of Serbia, local coordinators are not familiar with problems in the Roma community, or lack knowledge of local politics and government structures. As noted by an employee within the provincial government of Vojvodina, Roma associations in local municipalities do not cooperate on initiatives, debilitating progress on Roma inclusion.

The model of decentralization as applied in neighbouring SEE countries under the direction of international organizations has not been very successful. In Serbia, currently, international organizations are taking piecemeal steps to reduce the number of negative consequences. Institutions in Serbia as in other post-communist states are slow to implement reforms.[6]Local municipalities are confronted with a severe shortage of funding as national authorities have not taken into account the differences between local economies. Each municipality will receive the same percentage of national funding to implement programs and services placing an additional burden on local governments to raise funds within the municipality.[7] In regards to the implementation of Roma-related programs, as noted previously, severe discrimination and inaction on the part of local authorities has led to minimal improvements concerning the situation of the Roma community. Decentralization is the key to ensuring that the National Strategy and Action Plans on Roma have an impact, as priority areas such as employment, health, education and housing are best addressed at the local level. However, as state funding to municipal governments decreases, local authorities are unlikely to find a source of funding to improve the situation of the Roma community.[8] Thus, a closed domestic political opportunity structure, and the absence of *brokerage and diffusion* do not lead to positive outcomes for Roma activism within municipalities.

There are many similarities in comparing the limitations of civil society organizations in Macedonia and Serbia. However, there are some important differences that should be mentioned. It is widely recognized among Roma politicians and activists that civil society organizations are well established in Macedonia and perhaps, as compared to other countries in the SEE region, the most effective and organized. It should be acknowledged, however, that in discussing Roma political activism in Serbia, conflict in the region (1990-1999) prevented any action on humanitarian issues. Thus, there has not

[6] Interview with Nadja Kocic, Country Facilitator Serbia and Montenegro, Roma Education Fund, Belgrade, Serbia, June 5, 2009
[7] Ibid
[8] Interview with Andrea Colak, Executive Director, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, Serbia, May 7, 2009

been extensive NGO activity on Roma inclusion in the state, and it is only quite recently that organizations have initiated programs.

It is also important to take into account the debilitating effects on inter-ethnic relations in Serbia due to nationalist and discriminatory rhetoric perpetuated by the Milosevic regime. This was especially apparent in the Vojvodina region, which compared to other areas of Serbia, was historically portrayed as a tolerant, multi-ethnic society. As a result of state centralization, rescinding former areas of provincial autonomy, the Milosevic regime contributed to changing minority relations. It will take some time to engender peaceful reconciliation among the different minority communities, and subsequently, to provide institutional support through state-funded NGO projects. As noted previously, there have been some initiatives in this respect, through the Roma Inclusion Office in Novi Sad, Vojvodina, and Roma national minority boards. However, the situation of the Roma community, as in other regions of Serbia, remains precarious.

Civil society organizations in the provisional state of Kosovo under the auspices of UNMIK, Serbian and Kosovo governments deserve special mention as advocacy for the Roma community has been very challenging in this region. There is no comparison to be made in relation to Macedonia, as the Roma community in Kosovo has suffered immensely as a result of Milosevic's intervention in the region, as well as the further politicization of minority relations subsequent to the conflict. International institutions have not supported the development of Romani civil society, rather efforts of the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) minority to effectively participate in the political system and decision making bodies are constrained. Implementation of a 'human rights approach' has at times exacerbated ethnic differences as international donors reinforce the divide among various political organizations. International funds have also contributed to increased tension between ethnic communities, specifically as Roma NGOs are thought to derive special benefits. Furthermore, Romani activists are often unable to effectively advocate for the community using the political language and discourse of international institutions, further marginalizing their participation.

Thus, in comparing the similarities and differences of Roma civil society organizations in Macedonia and Serbia, it can be surmised that due to the exceedingly repressive tactics employed by the Milosevic regime and consequently, the ramifications of the conflict on inter-ethnic relations in Serbia, specifically in the regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo, the establishment and coordination of pro-Romani civil society organizations in Macedonia was more effective as compared to the Serbian case.

Although *brokerage* has presented some opportunities for Roma activism in Macedonia and Serbia, *diffusion and coordinated action* has not transpired. It is important to note that both mechanisms led to similar (negative) outcomes in the respective states. Additionally, in comparing the political opportunity structures in Macedonia and Serbia, it is evident that the former provided many challenges, debilitating civil society organization. It is also important to note that although international funding is decreasing in the SEE region, Macedonia may increasingly be eligible for EU structural funding; specifically for minority inclusion and Roma communities. Comparatively, Serbia is not in a similar position, as EU candidacy will not be forthcoming in the near future.

Roma Political Parties

In Macedonia, minority and Roma political parties generally form coalitions with VMRO-DPMNE. The Albanian-Macedonian political struggle has however, often led to the exclusion of other minority groups in the political process. Moreover, the absence of *brokerage and diffusion* has not led to *coordinated action* among Roma political parties. Specifically, personal conflict among Roma political parties has debilitated efforts to present a common political platform and effectively advocate on behalf of the Roma community. Fragmented political leadership and limited knowledge of community concerns do not allow for effective representation, and presents a weak public image. Generally, Roma political parties have limited financial and technical resources; difficulties are further compounded as leaders lack political knowledge and acumen.

Constitutional recognition in Macedonia since 1991 has not improved the situation of Roma communities. Ethnic Macedonians as ‘founders’ of the state seek to assert

national identity and territorial sovereignty, as neighbouring states have aggressively opposed the idea of an autonomous nation. The disintegration of Yugoslavia along ethnic lines, promoted an 'ethnic party system' in many states, demanding the assertion of a strong public identity that Romani political parties have not represented. Furthermore, Roma political parties, as compared to those of the Albanian minority have not used the Ohrid Framework Agreement to advocate for additional political rights, perpetuating the idea that Roma are easy allies for ethnic Macedonian political parties to utilize. Although the Roma community is often the decisive factor in determining the election outcome between VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, Roma political parties have not used this as a bargaining tool to gain concessions. Thus, while a connection has formed between mainstream and Roma political parties in Macedonia, *diffusion* has not transpired, or more specifically, framing the issue of Roma votes to negotiate further political rights, and reduce inequalities in Roma communities.

In comparing the abilities of Roma political parties to advocate effectively, there are many similarities in Macedonia and Serbia. Many interviewees in Serbia noted the lack of effective organization, financial, and professional capacities within Roma political parties. Personal conflicts among Roma political leaders, often in public political spheres, demonstrated their limited cooperation, which similar to the Macedonian case, does not enable effective representation or the negotiation of concessions from mainstream parties. Thus, the occurrence of *brokerage* – realization of a 'new site of contention' between mainstream and Roma political parties did not lead to mechanisms of *diffusion and coordinated action,* as Roma political leaders were not able to capitalize on Roma votes or present a common platform.

There are many important differences, however, in comparing Roma political representation in Macedonia and Serbia. Primarily, the new election law introduced in Serbia in 2008, presented many technical and financial difficulties for minority political parties, not enabling democratic participation. In addition, Roma politicians and international organization representatives have criticized mainstream political parties in Serbia for practicing 'vote buying' in Roma communities. Comparatively, in Macedonia,

2009 OSCE-ODIHR election reports noted fair election proceedings in various ethnic communities. It is important to note, as stated by Vitomir Mihaljovic (MP) Roma Social Democratic Party, that although Roma political parties have not coordinated their efforts to advocate on behalf of the Roma community, one of the main limitations for effective political representation and participation is the repressive tactics of mainstream political parties in Serbia.

It is also important to discuss the cases of Roma political representation in Kosovo and Vojvodina, as special circumstances in the two regions required further discussion. In Kosovo, the intervention of the international community has not been conducive to the representation of the RAE community during final status negotiations, regarding political party leadership or as previously discussed, Roma civil society organizations. As stated by Roma activists, internationals have supported only one Roma politician representing the United Roma Party of Kosovo (PREBK), without constituency support who has not promoted the equal representation of community members in public administrative roles or decision making bodies. In the case of Vojvodina, Roma activists and academics criticized the undemocratic actions of the Roma Inclusion Office, mentioning that the department head as a participating member of parliament for the Democratic Party (DS) has often accredited Roma inclusion initiatives to the party, which have been the initiatives of individual activists and NGOs in the region. The Roma Inclusion Office has been criticized for promoting a specific party ideology, and funding of NGO projects is not a transparent process.

The occurrence of *brokerage* and absence of *diffusion* led to similar (negative) outcomes in Macedonia and Serbia. That is, the lack of *coordinated action* among Roma political parties in presenting a common platform and negotiating with mainstream Macedonian and Serbian political parties. As the mechanisms of political activism have a similar outcome in the respective states, it becomes apparent that the domestic political opportunity structure in Serbia as compared to the Macedonian case, presents additional challenges for Roma activism.

As discussed previously, fragmentation along ethnic lines in the former Yugoslavia created an upsurge of nationalism that has not been conducive to promoting a multi-ethnic and tolerant society. Many Roma political leaders and activists are of the opinion that repressive tactics challenging minority representation are a remnant of the Milosevic period that promoted nationalism and discrimination in Serbian politics. It is also evident as discussed in the introductory chapter, that while the Roma community attained limited social mobility during the Communist period, there were very few examples of political participation for minority communities in the former Yugoslavia; mainly, as a result of general ethnic identity suppression. Thus, while Macedonia is one the few Yugoslav nations that has recognized Roma as an 'ethnic community' in the constitution, the Albanian-Macedonian rivalry, as well as the lack of consensus among Roma political parties has consequently, not led to effective political representation and advocacy on behalf of the community. In comparing the situation of Roma political parties in Macedonia and Serbia, however, it is the conclusion of this study that Milosevic's legacy, repressive election laws, and the often undemocratic actions of mainstream political parties have been excessively debilitating to effective Roma political participation. Thus, presently, the Macedonian political opportunity structure provides *slightly better* possibilities for minority inclusion.

In suggesting reforms to improve Romani political participation, Roma politicians in Serbia mentioned the need to set up a forum to mobilize Roma political parties, pro-Romani NGOs, and intellectuals that are involved in the emancipation of Roma communities. It was emphasized that those participating in the forum should not promote their political affiliation; rather it should be a 'transparent process' with a specific agenda and democratic election to important bodies. It was recognized in Macedonia and Serbia, that the mainstream political parties did not have an agenda for vulnerable groups. It was also acknowledged that Roma political party coalitions with mainstream ethnic Macedonian and Serbian political parties were not effective. In order for political parties to effectively advocate for the Roma community, it was essential to remain independent. Furthermore, the 'movement' should be representative of all Roma

from varying socio-economic, cultural and national backgrounds. Most importantly, it was noted that Roma political leaders had to agree on a common political platform, only then could a difference be made.[9]

7.4 Transnational Advocacy and Roma Mobilization

Are Transnational Advocacy Networks Effective in Promoting Roma Mobilization?

This chapter discusses the effectiveness of 'transnational advocacy networks,' facilitating access to domestic political arenas by creating links between civil society and international organizations. As noted previously, transnational advocacy networks predominately appear regarding issues where:

1) the linkages between domestic groups and governments are restricted or when communication paths are ineffective for conflict resolution
2) activists believe that networking will strengthen social movement campaigns and further promote the issue
3) international conferences and contacts create opportunities for network building[10]

Three main mechanisms were noted in order to analyze the internationalization of Roma mobilization: *diffusion, scale shift, and emulation*. In this regard, it is useful to differentiate between *relational and mediated diffusion*. *Relational diffusion* refers to "emulation of new forms of contention on the part of actors with pre-existing relationships of trust, intimacy, or regular communication."[11] *Mediated diffusion* is defined as the "emulation of new forms of contention on the part of actors with no pre-existing ties to those who have initiated those forms through intervention of third parties who maintain relationships of trust with both initiators and adapters."[12] *Scale shift* as described earlier refers to coordinated action at a higher level than its initiation, and

[9] OSCE meeting of Roma politicians, Belgrade, Serbia, June 11, 2009
[10] Keck, M. and Sikkink, K. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p.12
[11] Chabot, S. "Dialogue Matters: Beyond the Transmission Model of Transnational Diffusion between Social Movements," in eds. Givan, R. Roberts, K. Soule, S. *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 103
[12] Ibid, p. 102

involves new actors and institutions.[13] *Emulation* is defined as the ability of multiple actors to adopt similar ideas and practices leading to greater influence and dissemination of protest goals. Moreover, *emulation* occurs when structural conditions (internationalization and communication), social mechanisms (brokerage), and pathways (diffusion) converge.[14]

Chapters four and five demonstrated how the political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia is closed, presenting various challenges for Roma activists. The factors of political activism (state repression/facilitation, institutional access, civil society organizations, and political parties) described why Roma mobilization has not been successful at the domestic level. Roma activists were thus required to circumvent the state and organize at the international level – forming alliances with the European Union and affiliated organizations to influence domestic policy on Roma inclusion. This process subsequently leads to the formation of 'transnational advocacy networks.'

As described in chapters four and five, there is limited cooperation among pro-Romani civil society organizations and political parties. In addition, there is minimal cooperation between various government departments working on Roma inclusion. Thus, *relational diffusion* has not transpired, as various domestic actors are not able to network and agree on a common platform. *Relational diffusion* is further complicated as the closed domestic political opportunity structure presents activists with many challenges for political and public participation. Rather, *mediated diffusion* – the emulation of new forms of contention has occurred with the support and participation of third parties (such as the EU, OSCE, and COE) that attempt to coordinate Roma activists and politicians, Western NGOs and government authorities. For example, advocacy networks supported the substantial funding of Roma inclusion projects and national offices. NGOs, in turn, supported EU initiatives by providing information about Roma communities and monitoring progress in candidate countries. Developments at the regional level, for

[13] Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. Contentious Politics. (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), p. 93-95
[14] Chabot, S. in Givan, R. Roberts, K. Soule, S. op.cit., p. 103

instance, the participation of Roma NGOs in Hungary, Romania etc. have been integral to highlighting Roma issues at the EU level.

Although the 'international opportunity structure' as described through the various actions and policies of international institutions in chapter six is more 'open' to Roma claims-making, it has not been very effective in influencing domestic policy and programs on Roma inclusion. The European Union has attempted to influence Roma inclusion policy at the domestic level through various conditionality measures. This has not been effective, however, as instrumental adaptation does not impact domestic norms on Roma inclusion.

The incoherence of EU minority inclusion policy and the actions of Member States inhibit a legitimate basis for accession conditions in states such as Macedonia and Serbia. The EU as an international actor lacks consensus on Roma inclusion, as demonstrated by the often repressive tactics employed by EU member states, such as Romania and France. As EU accession and member states have not institutionalized suggested political and humanitarian reforms, there has been minimal activity on Roma-related policies and programs, leading to 'general inertia.' However, international attention and 'commitment' to the development of various policies and programs has provided Roma activists with the relevant tools to advocate for inclusion in European governments and society. European states are effectively 'entrapped' by the discourse on minority and Roma inclusion.

In regards to Roma activism, a *'downward scale shift'* has not enabled coordinated action at a more local level than its initiation. Rather, an *'upward scale shift'* involving coordination of collective action at a higher level (national, regional, international) has occurred, moving contention beyond its local origins, integrating the interests and values of new actors.[15] By providing information to the EU and other international agencies, activists' goals were absorbed by international institutions and programs. This shift of focus has debilitated Roma advocacy.

[15] Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. op.cit., pp. 93-95

International organizations while integral to highlighting Roma issues on domestic agendas, have promoted an elite-driven activism. Often local Roma NGOs are merely viewed as implementing partners, with minimal participation in decision making processes. Additionally, many international organizations adopt a top-down approach, implementing vague project proposals without taking into account the political context or community interests, preventing a participatory politics emerging. Civil society development viewed as a short-term, externally driven process does not allow for community involvement, or the creation of an alternative political space, necessary to promote effective opposition to state policies. At times, the international community has adopted a 'one size fits all' policy that generally applied to all ethnic groups in the state – this has many consequences, and as noted by the director of OSI Roma Education "we are losing money, time, energy, and people's lives," by continuing within this frame of reference.[16]

The *'upward scale shift,'* has promoted the institutionalization of Roma advocacy. Thus, according to Kriesi, the institutionalization of a movement organization results in the formalization of a SMOs internal structure, moderation of its goals, adoption of a more conventional action repertoire and integration into established systems of government. Institutionalization involves a shift from the direct participation of a movement's constituency to delegation to professional organizers. Thus, the possibility of commercialization becomes apparent, that is the transformation of a movement organization in the direction of a service organization.[17] As argued by Trehan, the 'NGOization of human rights' has not led to the emergence of an independent voice among Roma communities in Europe.[18] The promotion of neo-liberal values and the 'human rights approach,' as advocated by international institutions in post-communist

[16] Interview with Slavica Indzevska, Director, Roma Education Fund, Skopje, Macedonia, January 26, 2009

[17] Kriesi in Tilly, C. and S. Tarrow, op.cit., p. 129

[18] Trehan, Nidhi. "The Romani Subaltern within Neoliberal European Civil Society: NGOization of Human Rights and Silent Voices," in *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neo-liberal Order*. eds. Nidhi Trehan and Nando Sigona. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 51-71.

states, may have diminished the opportunities for informal activism among Roma communities that may have resulted in a more transformative politics.

In analyzing *diffusion and scale shift* as integral mechanisms of transnational advocacy networks – it becomes obvious that *emulation* will not be an outcome. Although the international opportunity structure is more 'open' as compared to the political opportunity structure in Macedonia and Serbia, political and humanitarian norms in regards to Roma inclusion have not been institutionalized by accession or Member States within the European Union. Moreover, conditionality measures have only influenced domestic Roma inclusion policy in an instrumental fashion. The EU's ambiguous minority protection policy has not led to clear indicators to evaluate accession state progress on conditionality requirements. Moreover, while European Commission progress reports criticize candidate states' non-ratification of documents such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), there is an inherent 'double standard' as many EU Member States have not ratified the document. In addition, studies have demonstrated that while the EU may exert influence during the accession process, compliance is difficult after state membership, specifically within the political sphere. The domestic consequences of obtaining EU membership are often too high; thus, norm socialization processes are not influential when considering ramifications such as unfavourable public opinion and electoral defeat at the national level. Thus, while *brokerage* has enabled new sites of contention – connecting Roma activists and EU institutions, the structural conditions for emulation to occur are largely absent.

The mechanism of mediated diffusion has supported networking among pro-Romani NGOs, government authorities and international institutions. *Mediated diffusion* has enabled the construction of a 'cognitive frame' that supports a better understanding of Roma mobilization. Re-framing Roma problems as a 'human rights issue,' has directed attention to impoverishment within Roma communities, as well as reconceptualising the Roma identity as an oppressed underclass. However, the absence of *relational diffusion* – consensus and organization among pro-Romani activists and politicians at the

domestic level, as well as the coordination of Roma political activism at the international level *(upward scale shift)* has not led to *emulation*.

In addition to many of the political and social challenges discussed, one of the main obstacles to realizing contention at a local level *(downward scale shift)* is the limited cooption of the general Roma populace in Macedonia and Serbia as participants fear repression by authorities. In relation to Roma in South Eastern Europe, historical and ethnically based repression by majority groups can dissuade potential participants from protesting. As stated by Keck and Sikkink, one of the most important features of network issues is their inability to sustain mass mobilization. Thus, the problematic of constituent mobilization is one reason for the prevalence of advocacy lobbying tactics in lieu of mass mobilization campaigns.[19]

While the mechanism of mediated diffusion is present; upward scale shift, limited structural conditions and the absence of relational diffusion did not lead to emulation – that is, the process of multiple actors adopting similar ideas and practices to influence Roma inclusion policy and disseminate protest goals. It is thus, the main finding of this study that while opportunities exist at the international level for Roma advocacy; transnational advocacy networks are not effective in influencing domestic policies on Roma inclusion.

7.5 Roma mobilization: Coordinated action?

In seeking to provide a conclusive summary of Roma political activism in Macedonia and Serbia, it is useful to recall the definition of *coordinated action* as "*two or more actors' engagement in mutual signalling and parallel making of claims on the same object.*"[20] The above discussion noted that in regards to institutional access, Macedonia and Serbia were both limited in facilitating Roma claims. Despite various institutional arrangements in government agencies; developing national strategies and action plans

[19] Keck, M. and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 204
[20] Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. op.cit., p. 31

resulted in limited progress on Roma inclusion initiatives. This was primarily due to limited cooperation between government bodies, minimal funding for Roma inclusion initiatives, unclear mandates and responsibilities in implementing Roma inclusion policy, lack of a long term strategy, personal conflict and differing political ideologies among Roma government officials, as well as the monopolization of resources and information by some Romani politicians. The absence of brokerage and diffusion did not lead to *coordinated action* among relevant government bodies.

Regarding Roma civil society organizations in Macedonia and Serbia, NGOs have frequently focused on short term strategies having minimal effect on improving the situation in Roma communities. There is also limited coordination and networking among Roma NGOs. Competition between them does not facilitate effective advocacy or support resource mobilization. Other difficulties include the repressive political context in which Roma NGOs are expected to perform, as civil society organizations are not always viewed as legitimate actors. At times, political parties in Macedonia and Serbia have attempted to sabotage NGO activities. Without the involvement of pro-Roma and Roma NGOs, however, there would be minimal activity on Roma inclusion at the national level, as state authorities lack interest and political will. Although *brokerage* presented some opportunities for Roma activism in Macedonia and Serbia, *diffusion and coordinated action* did not transpire. Taking into account the ramifications of inter-ethnic conflict on community relations in Vojvodina and Kosovo, it was surmised that the political opportunity structure in Serbia provided additional challenges for civil society organization. Thus, civil society development and coordination is more effective in Macedonia in distinction to Serbia.

Concerning Roma political parties, mobilization efforts have not been effective, as disunity and personal conflict fragment Romani leadership. There are limited organizational, financial and professional competences within Roma political parties debilitating efforts to mobilize the Roma community and advocate effectively. In discussing alliance formation, Lipsky conceives of protest activity as a 'bargaining process.' For powerless groups engaging in protest activity, it can be difficult to activate

other actors to bargain with the protest group, as there are limited political resources to trade.[21] As noted previously, mainstream parties in Macedonia and Serbia often require the Romani vote in order to ensure electoral success. However, Roma political parties have not utilized constituency support to gain concessions. In the particular case of Serbia, it is important to consider the repressive tactics of mainstream parties that practice 'vote buying' in Roma communities, thus debilitating the political participation of Roma representatives. In general, according to Roma activists and politicians, Milosevic's legacy on inter-ethnic relations in Serbia, has consequently prevented the effective participation of minority parties in Serbian politics. The occurrence of *brokerage* and *absence* of diffusion led to similar (negative) outcomes in Macedonia and Serbia. Roma political parties were not coordinated in presenting a common platform and negotiating with mainstream Macedonian and Serbian political parties. It was concluded, however, that Macedonia, in regards to political representation, offered a slightly 'more open' opportunity structure in comparison to Serbia.

In regards to international allies for Roma mobilization, transnational advocacy networks have facilitated the ability of Roma activists in Macedonia and Serbia to highlight the precarious situation of Roma communities on domestic and international agendas. Although international institutions and NGOs have been essential in conducting research and compiling reports on discrimination and socio-economic inequalities regarding the Roma community, it is questionable if the international community has made a concerted effort to comprehensively address Roma inclusion in Eastern Europe. International organizations have expended considerable monetary resources on Roma inclusion. In the 1990s, an estimated 100 million € supported the development of NGO projects, and Roma inclusion offices in national government institutions. These activities however, have not been effective – as domestic rhetoric, short term projects, and an incoherent EU minority protection policy often lead to minimal progress on Roma issues. *The mechanism of mediated diffusion* has supported

[21]Lipsky, M. "Protest as a Political Resource." *The American Political Science Review*. 62.4 (1968): pp. 1145-1146

networking among pro-Romani NGOs, government authorities and international institutions. However, the absence of *relational diffusion* – limited communication among pro-Romani activists and politicians at the domestic level, as well as the coordination of Roma advocacy at the international level *(upward scale shift)* has not led to *emulation.*

In comparing institutional access, political parties, civil society organizations and the role of transnational advocacy networks in Macedonia and Serbia, it is the conclusion of this study that Roma activism has not led to coordinated action. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the while *brokerage, diffusion, and emulation* led to similar (negative) outcomes in Macedonia and Serbia, it is the closed political opportunity structure in Serbia that presents additional challenges for Roma activism, and subsequently led to the conclusion that Macedonia offers *slightly* better opportunities for coordinated action. While Roma have been effective in establishing organizations and networks, recruiting participants, and coordinating public meetings and demonstrations, – the actions of Roma activists and politicians have not presented a sustained challenge to power holders in Macedonia and Serbia. As stated by prominent Romani activist Nicolae Gheorghe

"Roma are still taking a rather comfortable approach to politics, and this is a criticism not only to my generation but also to the next generation as well. We still tend to believe that rights are granted somehow mechanically by laws and policy documents. After 15-20 years of such "resolution-driven" Romani activism, we could learn that the adoption of such documents, while useful, is far from being enough."[22]

According to Gheorghe and other leading Romani activists, Roma organizations are not yet a 'social movement.' The activist noted

"we don't have enough followers because the discussion about Roma issues takes place among ourselves, Roma activists, and to tell you frankly, I see a serious, even widening disconnection between us, the 'clubs' of Romani (national and international) political elite and the Romani communities in each country and in the world Romani Diaspora. It

[22] "The Decade of Roma Rights, Interview with Nicolae Gheorghe." *Roma Rights 2-3*, (ERRC: November, 2006), p. 29

is a reminder that we may generate a movement only if we manage to find ideological tools and messages to capture the feelings, the interests and the social imagination of the population in the grass-roots Roma communities and/or in the general public (as, for example, various groups of mainstream human rights activists).''[23]

Research Directions for the Future

Romani Women Activism

In conducting research on Roma activism, it was readily apparent that women were not well represented as political actors. While the thesis generally focused on the effectiveness of Romani activism in Macedonia and Serbia, an important aspect to include in the future, as Romani women's activism progresses, are their mobilization efforts at the domestic and international levels. As recognized by Oprea, when prominent Roma activists are mentioned, there is no acknowledgment of the notable and groundbreaking work of female Romani activists in the sphere of international, national and Romani politics. Often the gender dimension is not discussed in international and national discourses on Roma exclusion. There are considerable difficulties in 'becoming' an activist as a Romani woman, but also in contributing to NGO activities as frequently their work is defined as peripheral to 'mainstream Romani issues.' By advocating for women's rights, it often means challenging the hierarchical relationships within their families and communities, or disconnecting from loved ones. Romani women are often conflicted with presenting a 'united front' in challenging racism and discrimination, limiting their ability to discuss inequalities in their community. In order to participate in the 'Roma movement' Romani women must frequently choose to marginalize gender issues in a racist society, consequently suppressing their exclusion in their own communities. In addition, although female Romani staff are present in Roma organizations – they often do not participate as leaders. Furthermore, as Oprea argues, western feminist discourse has generally ignored Romani women as significant political

[23] Ibid, p. 29

actors while promoting universal gender emancipation. [24]

Initiatives by Romani women activists to discuss the inter-relationship of gender, racism and exclusion were considered by Romani men as a challenge to their leadership and dominance – an opposition to patriarchal community structures. Frequently, it is quite difficult for Romani women activists, to defy traditional norms. Many women in the Roma community are silent voices, and do not consider interrogating patriarchal structures and relations. At times, the activism of Romani women is viewed as an exaggeration, thus as stated by one conference participant "women's rights are an excuse by women who are unable to express themselves in other ways. I do not think that anyone has the right to interfere with the life of a family."[25] As a NGO representative and Romani women's rights activist commented "this was one of our challenges: to try to find the real way to deal with Roma women's issues without attacking frontally the patriarchal structure of Roma families and communities."[26]

Presently, as the issue of Romani women is increasingly discussed in international and domestic policy arenas, there is the criticism that analyzing the particular exclusion of Romani women on the basis of race and gender, excludes Romani men from European policy discourse. This is an interesting suggestion as Romani women activists often have to contend with the dilemma of criticizing patriarchal community structures, without supporting negative stereotypes of Roma.[27] Similarly, Oprea argues that Romani women activists have been criticized for negatively portraying 'Roma culture;' reinforcing the Western perception of the Roma community as 'backwards,' and 'primitive.' However,

[24] Oprea, A. "Re-envisioning Social Justice from the Ground Up: Including the Experiences of Romani Women." *Essex Human Rights Review* Vol.1 No. 1 (2004) pp. 29-39 Available: projects.essex.ac.uk/ehrr/V1N1/Oprea.pdf
[25] Mihalache, I. "Romani Women's Participation in Public Life." *Good Practices in Promoting Roma and Minority Women in the Political and Democratic Process: Experience of Romania in the OSCE Context*. Bucharest, 15-18 April, 2004, p. 60
[26] Ibid, p. 60
[27] Oprea, A. "Intersectionality Backlash: A Romani Feminist's Response." *ERRC* 27 April, 2010 available: errc.org

as Oprea argues, it is important to interrogate patriarchal structures as a 'natural' element of the Romani culture.

Although international institutions have focused on Roma rights, the specific violations of Romani women's rights have remained inadequately addressed. International discourse concerning discrimination and racially motivated violence has not included a discussion of domestic violence, trafficking and gender discrimination in Roma communities. In general, there are very few studies on Romani women in Eastern Europe. Access to limited information is further complicated by the reluctance of the Roma community to discuss issues within the 'private sphere,' regarding gender and sexuality.

In analyzing the Decade Action plans on housing, employment, health and education, Oprea acutely recognizes the omission of gender based inequalities within Roma communities as a priority concern. A comprehensive overview is required to analyze the impact of various issues on Romani men and women. Specifically, in relation to women, there is no acknowledgment of issues such as premature marriage, virginity tests, domestic violence, prostitution, and access to birth control. The Action Plans although referring to inequalities in education and employment, fail to address the particular role of patriarchal structures that undermine Romani women's access to education or employment. While many of the Decade Action Plans have mentioned in the final paragraph that priority areas should be considered in relation to gender issues, there are no specific goals or indicators that would measure specific strategies for gender equality. Many of the national action plans, by only referring to the overall inequalities, obscure the multi-faceted discrimination of Romani women.[28]

Policy Diffusion and Roma Inclusion

This study has utilized the literature on social movements to examine the domestic and international factors impacting Roma mobilization. Transnational advocacy networks

[28] Oprea, A. "Child Marriage a Cultural Problem, Education Access a Race Issue? Deconstructing Uni-Dimensional Understanding of Romani Oppression." 21 July, 2005 available: errc.org

enabled an analysis of the inter-relationship between states, NGOs, and international organizations, demonstrating that international influence has not led to significant domestic reforms in Macedonia and Serbia. Research in the future could be expanded to analyze the policy mechanisms of international organizations to influence domestic policies and action on Roma inclusion.

Research studies on the policy diffusion process have demonstrated the arbitrary nature of policy making. Policy leaders do not always engage in a systematic, logical assessment of external models in the international arena. In an influential study on the policy diffusion process concerning pension privatization in Latin America, Weyland refers to cognitive psychology studies that discuss the use of 'inferential short cuts' to facilitate the analysis of extensive information and avoidance of uncertainty. Hence, the abundance of information available dissuades individuals from actively searching for alternative models, although a rational approach would suggest otherwise. Consequently, drawing inferences and filtering information allows for analytical bias that impacts the quality of decision making.[29] The following discussion will focus on the diffusion mechanisms that impact adoption of a particular policy in a country and provide further clarification on how domestic and international actors interact to influence the policy process in a state.

An important aspect of the study on policy diffusion regarding Roma inclusion could include an analysis of coercive diffusion, analyzing how powerful nations can influence policy preferences in weaker countries by exerting control through international and nongovernmental organizations; manoeuvring which opportunities and constraints are available. To initiate policy reform in the target country, coercive measures may include the controlling of information/expertise, as well as the availability of financial resources. Dominant countries take advantage of power asymmetries to enforce their policy choices on weaker nations, assuming that without external influence target countries would resist

[29] K. Weyland. "The Puzzle of Policy Diffusion," in *Bounded Rationality and Policy Diffusion*. (Princeton University Press, 2007) pp. 5-6

policy reform. The willingness and ability of the powerful actor to manipulate the choices of the weaker player is central to the coercive diffusion process.[30]

Additionally, learning and emulation mechanisms could provide alternative theoretical explanations. In reference to 'learning,' Hass refers to the creation of social knowledge as 'the sum of technical information and of theories about that information which commands sufficient consensus at a given time among interested actors to serve as a guide to public policy designed to achieve some social goal.'[31] Knowledge diffusion among 'epistemic communities' regarding effective policies is especially influential in the learning process. This mechanism involves common communication networks that support 'policy innovation,' and the frequency of contact among elites impacts policy diffusion. In this regard, international organizations provide the space to exchange ideas, persuade, negotiate and influence policy transmission. Generally, the probability of policy reform domestically is influenced by the evidence of achievements or limitations in comparable countries.[32] In regards to emulation mechanism, policy analysts speculate on *'best practices'* concerning specific issues, but are not always able to evaluate which policy is most effective. This perspective on policy diffusion suggests that "theory and rhetoric often serve as the basis of decision making. But theory and rhetoric change over time, and as they do, social meaning is constructed and reconstructed. Thus, the same policies can have different meaning over time."[33] Ideas concerning which policy players are involved, and subsequent actions, especially concerning human rights have diffused globally. Countries often sign international declarations to support humanitarian norms, although various organizations demonstrate on-going rights violations in those areas. Thus, adopting global norms may serve a symbolic purpose, although countries are not able to implement them (i.e. due to resource and capacity limitations). For advocates of the emulation approach, how policies are adopted as social norms is important to

[30]B. Simmons, F. Dobbin, G. Garrett. "The International Diffusion of Liberalism." *International Organization.* 60.4(Autumn, 2006), p. 791.
[31] Hass in Simmons, B. Dobbin, F. Garrett, G. op.cit., p. 795
[32] Ibid, pp. 797-798
[33] Ibid, p. 799

analyzing their diffusion. Similar to the learning process mentioned above, 'epistemic communities' consisting of academics and NGO representatives can promote a policy and provide an 'objective' evaluation. Experts can support governments in finding solutions, but also in defining problems.[34] It may be difficult to evaluate the mutually inclusive mechanisms of coercion and emulation when analyzing the impact of dominant countries.

Concepts within the policy diffusion literature allow for greater comprehension in analyzing the process of norm internationalization and the concurrent adoption and adaptation of Roma-related policies in Macedonia and Serbia. However, scholars of policy diffusion have not yet developed a comprehensive framework and many concepts are based on generic assumptions. For instance, the influence of coercion, learning, competition, and emulation mechanisms is not viewed as variable, dependent on the type of government and political context. The model also assumes that each mechanism has equal value in influencing policy adoption; it is questionable, for instance if learning and coercion have comparable impact. It is likely multiple mechanisms of policy diffusion are shaping policy adoption in a country.[35]It is also important to take into account domestic context and how this impacts policy diffusion. Ideological preferences and perceived political opposition or approval influence how political actors expedite and adopt policies. 'Best practices' incompatible with domestic ideologies, electoral success or legislative approval are unlikely to be adopted. Thus, it is essential to understand how political factors influence policy diffusion.[36]

[34] Ibid, pp. 799-800
[35] Meseguer, C. and F. Gilardi. "What is New in the Study of Policy Diffusion." *Review of International Political Economy.* 16.3 (August 2009) p. 531
[36] Ibid, pp. 533-534

APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions –

Questions for State Departments

1) When was the National Strategy Secretariat created? Are there any other government agencies/departments that are specifically related to minority and Roma groups?

2) Which action plans/legislation exist specifically relevant to Roma populations?

3) What measures does the action plan/legislation include that is relevant for Roma populations?
    - Combating racism and discrimination
    - Social rights (adequate housing, living conditions, access to health care)
    - Economic rights (access to employment)
    - Education policies
    - Participation in public and political life (i.e. voting rights)

4) Does anti-discrimination law exist?
    a) Which areas of discrimination are included? Does it cover specific segments (housing, employment) or does it cover all spheres of life?
    b) Is the establishment of a specialized body included in the law?

5) How often is the action plan/legislation reviewed?
6) Does a specialized office exist to oversee implementation of the Action/Plan legislation?
7) Does an independent support structure that includes Roma exist (Ombudsman, specialized body, human rights institution)?
8) What mechanisms have been established at the national level to implement the action plan/legislation at the local level? And to promote accountability of local authorities to citizens belonging to the Roma community?
9) How is the action plan/legislation monitored?
10) Are there any effective policy measures to recommend as 'good practices' regarding the Roma community?
11) Has the action plan been publicized? Does the general Serbian population know of its existence?

Roma- Majority Relations:

12) Has the department conducted any surveys among the national populace concerning their opinion of minorities and Roma in particular?
13) Do any integration/multicultural educational programs exist to promote inter-ethnic tolerance?

International influence on domestic policy:

14) Has international policy on human rights impacted the formulation of legislation or policy/programs on Roma?
15) Has the state increased program funding, commissioned studies, or created consultative bodies to respond to increasing concerns of the Roma population?

State-Roma, IO coalition building:

15) Which NGOs are working on Roma – related strategies in the country?

16) Has there been any state-NGO cooperation regarding the formulation and implementation of Roma – related policy and programs?

17) Have state departments concerning minority affairs contacted or developed policy/programs with international organizations?

Questions for Roma NGOs

1) Does the NGO have accessibility to state authorities dealing with minority affairs? (Has the political system been conducive to Roma asserting their claims)?
2) Does the state make available funds for Roma NGO programs?
3) Has the state initiated any educational initiatives concerning the Roma community?
4) Does the mainstream education curriculum include anti-racism, diversity programs?
5) Do Roma based NGOs network with other human rights NGOs, Roma initiatives in other states? And does this influence NGO program formulation/implementation?
6) Have there been any coalitions/alliances with religious groups, domestic NGOs, or other minority groups to promote Roma issues?
7) Have international organizations supported Roma activism? By making funds available? Coalition building with other Roma NGOs/activists? Or setting up meetings with state authorities?

8) As Serbia seeks membership in international organizations such as the EU, has this benefited the community (greater publicity for the Roma issue, more resources for programs)?
9) Is there a wide gap between NGO activity/programs and impact on the Roma population?
10) Do the existing state policy/programs on Roma have an impact on the community?
11) Have Roma protest activities/reports/discussions with state authorities had any impact on minority rights in Serbia/Macedonia?
12) What challenges and limitations does the NGO encounter?
13) Do NGOs and individual activists share the same concerns/issues or are there differences among activists within the Roma community as how to advance Roma issues?
14) Has Roma NGO/activism and international attention improved the situation of the community?
15) What contesting/opposing groups exist that may counter NGO activities/strategies?
16) Has there been any survey/report conducted on how the mainstream population views the Roma community?
17) Has the Roma community been reactive to increasing nationalism, xenophobia, racism in the country?
18) Has the media contributed to promoting a positive view of the community or has it enticed anti-Roma sentiment?
19) Has the issue of Roma refugees in the country impacted how the community is viewed by the general population? (i.e. greater discrimination)
20) Have processes of democratization, transition to a market economy hindered Roma integration, mobility and access to basic services?
21) Roma activism has only recently had a platform at the international level, to what extent has activism existed locally (from 1989-present)?
22) Has there been any leadership in the Roma community?
23) Has state identification of 'Roma' as a minority changed their status?
24) Has there been construction of a Roma identity in the country?

Questions for International Organizations

1. How has (name of organization) been supportive to the Roma community in this country? What programs currently exist?
2. Have international organizations been able to influence domestic state policy/programs concerning Roma?
3. Has (name of organization) supported coalition building among mainstream and Roma political parties?
4. Has there been the promotion of alliances with other human rights NGOs/communication at international conferences and informal networking to promote Roma issues?

5. Has there been communication/cooperation with domestic state agencies?
6. Have state authorities been receptive to formulating and reforming Roma/minority policies, legislation and programs?
7. How has the media viewed the Roma community?
8. Have Roma activists/NGOs had impact on international organization program development and implementation? Have Roma been able to participate in formulating and highlighting priority concerns of the community?
9. Should Roma concerns be presented within the general human rights framework? Or should state/international organizations view Roma as a specific issue to deal with?
10. Has the European Court of Human Rights (Roma cases) been able to influence domestic state policy?
11. Has the Decade of Roma inclusion—national action plans helped to advance the community's concerns regarding education, employment, health, housing, poverty, discrimination, and gender?
12. How successful has the Decade of Roma Inclusion been in promoting Roma issues?
13. Has state identification of 'Roma' as a minority changed their status?
14. What counter-movements or challenges/limitations does the Roma community face?
15. Has a Roma 'political identity' emerged?

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