

Poverty, Discrimination and the Roma: a Human Security Issue

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The article examines the living conditions of Roma communities throughout Europe through the prism of a human security approach. Protracted deprivation of human needs along with growing intolerance and discrimination Roma people face represents a human security concern that needs to be addressed accordingly. The prolonged and systematic violations of human rights along with the lack of opportunities and advancement of quality of life deepen the human insecurities of Roma. Five sets of security concerns shall be examined: economic, health, personal, community and political security threats, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive, multi-sector approach towards tackling the issue. The human security model can serve as a basis for further policy and reforms in this area. Furthermore, this framework can provide a universal structure along which different agents, governments and international organizations can cooperate and coordinate their efforts.

I. Introduction

The following analysis examines various forms of insecurities and discrimination against Roma people and treats them as a human security issue in Europe. Understanding the protracted deprivation of human needs as a human security

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concern is necessary in order to generate a viable long-term resolution of the issue. The human security discourse and concepts underpinning human security can play a normative role at international, national and local levels. Human security of Roma in this regard can be examined as a normative-political issue that has the potential to influence states' conduct towards individuals and to eventually influence public policy. In order to investigate the way in which a human security approach could help tackle the problems Roma people face, five different security threats shall be examined: economic, health, personal, community and political security threats.

Roma communities throughout Western, Eastern and Southeast European countries are experiencing poverty, socio-economic marginalization with additional increasing intolerance and violence from the majority population. This marginalization involves exclusion from labour markets, exclusion and segregation within the education system, difficult access to services including healthcare services, extreme forms of spatial segregation; in a word, exclusion from the right to exercise active citizenship. In addition, Roma people are experiencing very concrete security issues such as: police brutality, racism, intolerance, violent outbursts against them and discrimination. One blatant example of such discrimination is a public statement identifying the Roma as “‘*socially unadaptable population*’ with a high birth rate of ‘*children who are poorly adaptable mentally, poorly adaptable socially, children with serious health disorders, children, simply, who are a great burden on this society*’.”²

All of these elements together establish the different cases of insecurities and discrimination Roma people face, as a human security issue, which consequently needs to be answered as such. One way of addressing this issue is through the principle of “*emancipation as security*” that will be argued in section four in the text. This concept has emerged in the post Cold-war period and it is closely connected with the concepts of liberty and equity; recently, emancipation has been connected to the processes of protection and empowerment by human security doctrines.³

² Statement given by Slovak Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar in 1993, as quoted in Barany, Zoltan, *Orphans of Transition: Gypsies in Eastern Europe*, in: *Journal of Democracy* (Volume 9, Number 3), July 1998, pp. 142-156, at p. 153.

³ On the thoughts of emancipation, liberty and equity see Booth, Ken, *Security and Emancipation*, in: *Review of International Studies* (Volume 17, Number 4), October 1991, pp. 313-326; On protection and empowerment, see Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, New York, 2003.

As Neufeld defines it, the strategy of emancipation “*is one which focuses on the more ‘empirical’ question of how security issues are framed in political discourse*”.⁴

Illustrative examples are presented from documented cases in a number of countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania. The theoretical framework is employed from two branches of political science literature: literature on “*securitization*”, as a discourse used in order to identify something as a (security) threat and attach a label of urgency upon that issue, and literature on human security and human development.

II. The Concept of Human Security in Theory and Practice

The concept of human security represents a radical degree of expansion for the existing concept of security.⁵ Human security treats the following parameters: individual and humanity as a whole represents referent object; values at risk include a number of different categories starting from survival of the individual, to quality of life and other human rights; possible source of threat can be states but also globalization’s impact.⁶ The difference between previous notions of security, including “*societal security*” and the concept of human security, is the fact that human security takes a step further, treating the need for development as a need for security, as well, “[*job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime, these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world*”.⁷

Human security addresses the link between human rights and sustainable human development. The goal of human development is “*growth with equity*”; the human security approach adds an additional dimension called “*downturn with*

⁴ Neufeld, Mark, *Pitfalls of Emancipation and Discourses of Security: Reflections on Canada’s ‘Security with a Human Face*, in: *International Relations* (Volume 18, Number 1), 109-123, 2004, at p. 109.

⁵ Møller, Bjorn, *National, Societal and Human Security: General Discussion with a Case Study from the Balkans*, in: UNESCO (eds.), *What Agenda for Human Security in the Twenty-first Century?*, Proceedings of the First International Meeting of Directors of Peace Research and Training Institutions, Paris, 27-28 November 2000, pp. 41-62, at p. 43.

⁶ The theory of ‘securitization’ is a theory of search for referent object, or according to Buzan’s argument, “*Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization*”. Cf. Buzan, Barry et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner, London, 1998, at p. 23. Securitization is particularly concerned with three questions: security of whom (or referent object); security of what (what are the values at risk) and security from whom or what.

⁷ Møller, Bjorn, *National, Societal and Human Security: General Discussion with a Case Study from the Balkans*, at p. 41.

security” meaning that prolonged and systematic violations of human rights of a certain group greatly undermine development and can cause a massive setback in people’s standards of living, drastically limit their choices and opportunities and cause insecurities.⁸ Human security treats different types of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, creating a synergy between them and offering a multidimensional and all-encompassing solution: “*It introduces a practical framework for identifying the specific rights that are at stake in a particular situation of insecurity and for considering the institutional and governance arrangements that are needed to exercise and sustain them*”.⁹ In the case of the Roma, this framework likewise can be used, not only to identify rights at stake, but also for adequate institutional and policy actions that governments in cooperation with national and international non-governmental organizations can undertake.

The following analysis shall be looking at Roma communities throughout European countries, their protracted deprivation of human needs, which had been further exacerbated with extremism and anti-Gypsyism¹⁰, through the prism of human security. As mentioned earlier, even though the human security approach is often used in situations of post-conflict or natural disasters-struck areas and communities, the attempt shall be to illustrate ways in which the Roma issues can be treated as human security issues, and consequently addressed as such.

The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security report identifies several types of human security threats:¹¹

- Economic security: persistent poverty, unemployment;
- Food security: hunger, famine;
- Health security: deadly infectious diseases, unsafe food, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care;
- Environmental security: environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters, pollution;
- Personal security: physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence, child labour;

⁸ United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security in Theory and Practice*, 2009, at p. 9. Available online at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HS_Handbook_2009.pdf (All websites used in this article were last checked on 3 November 2010).

⁹ United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security in Theory and Practice*, at p. 9.

¹⁰ There is no recognized or widely accepted definition of anti-Gypsyism available; however it can be considered as a distinct type of racist ideology. See Nicolae, Valeriu, *Towards a Definition of Anti-Gypsyism*, European Grassroot Roma Organization (ERGO), 2006. Available online at: <http://www.ergonetnetwork.org/antigypsyism.htm>.

¹¹ United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security in Theory and Practice*, at p. 7.

- Community security: inter-ethnic, religious and other identity based tensions; and
- Political security: political repression, human rights abuses

These identified threats shall be taken as parameters for our further analysis;¹² assessing the level of insecurity for the Roma communities in each of these areas can represent a starting point for an academic debate within this area and a baseline for further policy considerations. This human security approach towards issues Roma people face may be the beginning of a broader research project. It is important to note that all areas are intertwined and very often insecurity arising from one area affects the security within other areas.

III. Roma People in Europe Today: Challenges, Discrimination and Poverty¹³

There are about ten million Roma in Europe, spread throughout every country on the continent. Roma communities vary in culture, traditions, languages, religions they practice and other characteristics. Due to occurrences of anti-Gypsyism and increased outbursts of violence against them, many Roma have been experiencing various insecurities on a daily basis, starting with personal and community security threats to socio-economic hardship. Breaking the stereotypes and enabling Roma people to fully exercise their rights is one of the priorities that European countries need to address. The following analysis treats five different camps of security threats, starting from the most urgent deprivation of human needs.

A. *Economic Security: Persistent Poverty*

Taking into consideration Liebel's argument that unequal power relations contribute to economic insecurities, the shift in political systems that took place in the 1990s in Central and Southeast European (CEE and SEE) countries and the transition period (which in some countries is still ongoing) shifted power relations as well: "*Exploitation takes place in all societies in which there are unequal power relations, and the powerful section of society is able to tap the productive potential of those excluded from power*".¹⁴ In the light of new power relations, new forms of poverty

¹² For further analysis some of the identified areas shall be omitted or annexed with another group of identified threat; food security as such shall be treated as part of economic security and health security (nutrition, etc), while environmental security shall be also considered under health security (consequences of pollution and living conditions).

¹³ The author would like to thank Dr. Nidhi Trehan for her thoughts and comments on the initial abstract and for her overall support.

¹⁴ Liebel, Manfred, *A Will of Their Own: Cross-cultural Perspectives on Working Children*, Zed Books, London, 2004, at p. 202.

and structural changes destabilized communities all over CEE and SEE countries, especially destabilizing hitherto already vulnerable groups (such as women, minorities, Roma communities). As Barany argues: “[t]hrough entire sections of society (unskilled laborers, pensioners, and so on) have been hurt by the marketization processes that began nearly a decade ago, none has been more adversely affected than the Roma”.¹⁵ In addition, Barany also identifies one positive change in the post-communist period in the CEE countries, this being the decrease of Roma political exclusion and the opportunities to politically organize themselves in the new multi-party political system; however without much success to do so.¹⁶

Looking at more recent developments, one can argue that this situation is a “downturn with security”,¹⁷ i.e. the economic crisis as such exacerbated the already fragile situation of the Roma communities. The economic crisis has evident human development implications that reach beyond the direct consequences, “decreasing employment and income opportunities with negative mid- and long-term implications for education, health status, housing security, and other human development indicators.”¹⁸ Roma are one of the groups that are most affected by the economic crisis in the European Union countries. They live in poverty and social exclusion and are facing substandard living conditions and unequal treatment as citizens compared to non-Roma and majority communities.

Poverty and unemployment are two of the most salient and urgent issues that fall into the category of economic insecurities. The percentage of Roma people experiencing poverty (and the percentage of Roma living in conditions of extreme poverty) is considerable and it is always much higher than of the general population. In addition, Roma are generally employed in sectors that demand low-skilled labour and sectors that are less paid. The following examples illustrate the situation in number of countries within the European Union as well as SEE countries.

There are 108,193 Roma living in Serbia, according to the 2002 census (on a population of 7,3 million people); the Roma community is recognized as a national minority in Serbia and formally enjoys human rights as well as minority rights.¹⁹

¹⁵ Barany, Zoltan, *Orphans of Transition: Gypsies in Eastern Europe*, at p.142.

¹⁶ Barany, Zoltan, *Orphans of Transition: Gypsies in Eastern Europe*, at p. 147. The issue of political representation shall be discussed further on, in section III.E. of this article.

¹⁷ United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security in Theory and Practice*, at p. 9.

¹⁸ Ivanov, Andrey, *The Economic Crisis as a Human Development Opportunity*, Development and Transition, Published by the United Nations Development Programme and the London School of Economics and Political Science, July 2009, at p. 23.

¹⁹ Rakovic, Slavisa, *Affirmative Action as a Policy Answer to Roma Inclusion in Public Education in Serbia*, in: Lozanoska, Jana and Dimitrovski, Slavco (eds.), *Integrating*

However, the majority of Roma people in Serbia live in poverty or extreme poverty: 60.5% of Roma in Serbia are regarded extremely poor; Roma unemployment rate is 2.5 times higher than that of non-Roma; out of 593 Roma settlements registered in 2005 in Serbia, 43.5% were slums.²⁰ In neighbouring Macedonia the average Roma poor are 32% lower below the poverty line, while the average ethnic Macedonian poor are 9% lower below the poverty line.²¹ When analysing socio-economic factors determining overall vulnerability, 25% of the Roma population has been defined as highly vulnerable.²²

In Romania, the Roma population comprises up to 10% of the total population (or 2,2 million people). It has been noted that 75% of Roma are living in poverty, as opposed to 24% of Romanians in general and 20% of ethnic Hungarians, the largest minority in Romania.²³ Among Kosovo's diverse ethnic communities, Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian (RAE) are the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups; their number is estimated between 35.000 and 40.000 with further estimates of 70.000 to 100.000 people living abroad as refugees.²⁴ Their socio-economic situation is devastating with around 40% of them living in extreme poverty with less than one USD per day.²⁵

Economic insecurity leads to exclusion in other spheres of life; Roma experience low levels of educational enrolment, employment, and access to services. This exclusion intensifies poverty, contributing to poor health, which again makes socio-economic inclusion even more difficult to achieve. Another very important aspect of the Roma communities is their health situation and discrimination they experience in receiving various healthcare related services.

Differences Human Rights, Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion in the Balkans on its Road to the EU, Euro-Balkan Institute, Skopje, 2009, p. 181-199, at p. 182.

²⁰ Rakovc, Slavisa, *Affirmative Action as a Policy Answer to Roma Inclusion in Public Education in Serbia*, at p. 182.

²¹ Bartlett, William, *People Centred Analyses, Regional Development, Local Governance and the Quality of Life*, United Nations Development Programme, South East European University, Tetovo, March 2009, at p. 41.

²² Bartlett, William, *People Centred Analyses, Regional Development, Local Governance and the Quality of Life*, at p. 41.

²³ Amnesty International, *Housing is a Human Right, Treated Like Waste Roma Homes Destroyed and Health at Risk in Romania*, January 2010, at p. 2.

²⁴ Tmava, Milena and Beha, Adem., *Helplessness Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian Forced Returnees in Kosovo*, RAD Centre, Prishtina, 2009, at p.18.

²⁵ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report Kosovo 2004*, Pristina, 2004. Available online at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/europethesis/kosovo/kosovo_2004_en.pdf.

B. Health Security: Accessing The Healthcare System

According to the Communication of the European Commission “*Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU*”,²⁶ Roma are amongst the most vulnerable groups experiencing health inequalities. Some of the key facts include estimations that life expectancy among Roma is 10 years less than that of the majority population.²⁷ There is a higher occurrence of communicable diseases that could otherwise be prevented by regular vaccination. As stated further, segregated Roma communities and settlements often lack the necessary infrastructure, including healthcare infrastructure, preventing access to healthcare services. Additionally, Roma people often face discrimination and ill-treatment by medical personnel and public administration for services connected to healthcare.

Lack of data regarding the health situation of the Roma population and furthermore lack of specific information and knowledge among healthcare professionals regarding special needs and practices Roma people have, additionally burdens the situation: “*As in most of the countries in the region, for Macedonia also it represents a major challenge to provide official data on demographic, socio-economic, vital and health indicators and parameters for the Roma population, mainly due to the fact that the vast majority of the data is not recorded by ethnicity*”.²⁸ It is very important to note that if the overall health of the Roma population is threatened by number of influences, the health of Roma women is especially fragile due to their unfavourable social status to begin with. Thus, Roma women have a lower level of education, lower or no income and are taking care of the household, children and other family members. Regarding the situation of sexual and reproductive health of women, grave violations of human rights have been discovered of coerced sterilization of Roma women in Slovakia in the past decades; similar cases have been discovered and documented in the Czech Republic and Hungary.²⁹

²⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee of the Regions, *Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU*, COM 2009, at p. 3. Available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/socio_economics/documents/com2009_en.pdf.

²⁷ European Commission, *Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU*, COM 2009, at p. 3.

²⁸ Milevska-Kostova, Neda and Enisa Eminovska, *Situation of the Roma Population in Macedonia: Housing and Health*, Advocacy report, HCAR Mesecina and USAID, January 2008, at p. 26.

²⁹ Center for Reproductive Rights, *Report on Coerced Sterilization in Slovakia Leads to Exposure of Issue throughout the Region*. Also see Center for Reproductive Rights, *Body and Soul: Forced Sterilization and Other Assaults on Roma Reproductive Freedom*. Available online at: <http://reproductiverights.org/en/press-room/report-on-coerced-sterilization-in-slovakia-leads-to-exposure-of-issue-throughout-the-reg>.

The situation of Roma health in Romania is similar, with the Roma population experiencing comparable health issues caused by lack of access to healthcare. Roma persons suffer more often from chronic illnesses than the general population and not all children are included and covered through vaccination campaigns: “25% of children already declare they have a chronic illness, 38.7% blame dental problems in the last week, 42.8% blame some sight problems, and 35.5% some hearing problems while at school”.³⁰ In Kosovo, the Roma and Ashkalia Documentation Centre (RAD Centre) has recorded growing numbers of people infected with Tuberculosis in the Ashkali community in Dubrave, a village of the Ferizaj/Urosevac municipality. According to medical specialists, the TBC is caused by bad hygienic circumstances in the settlement, lack of sewerage systems, lack of clean water, and bad food; furthermore, the people of the settlement do not have any medicine or healthcare available.³¹

The root of institutional inequalities and obstacles leading to these documented conditions can be traced to lack of health insurance of the Roma population, which is a result of unregulated citizenship documentation, a lack of birth certificates, a lack of identification card and permanent living addresses.³² This situation is mostly present in the former Yugoslav countries, where the issue of citizenships has been an issue also for the general population.³³ However, the situation as such is also present in European Union countries due to migration of the population.

The deteriorated health conditions of the general Roma population causes considerably impaired working ability. Since a significant part of the Roma population works in the informal sector and lacks healthcare insurance, any inability to work decreases the family income. The socio-economic situation and health are thus strongly interrelated, causing “an existence of the vicious circle poverty – impaired health condition – poverty in the Roma [population]”.³⁴ The social exclusion of the Roma population does not end within the institutional sphere; the

³⁰ Iovu, Mihai-Bogdan, Paul Haragush and Maria Roth, *Education and minority children. Findings from a Romanian survey*, in: Lozanoska, Jana and Dimitrovski, Slavco (eds.), *Integrating Differences Human Rights, Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion in the Balkans on its Road to the EU*. Euro-Balkan Institute: Skopje, 2009, p. 263-275, at p. 271.

³¹ Tmava, Milena and Adem Beha, *Helplessness Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian Forced Returnees in Kosovo*, at p. 18.

³² Milevska-Kostova Neda and Enisa Eminovska, *Situation of the Roma population in Macedonia: Housing and Health*, at p. 26.

³³ The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the ethnic conflicts that took place throughout the 1990s caused movement of population as refugees and internally displaced persons.

³⁴ Pavlovski, Borjan, *Health, Healthcare and Impacts of the Health of the Roma in the Republic of Macedonia*, Association of Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of Republic of Macedonia – ESE, 2008, at p. 12.

attitude of the general population towards their Roma co-citizens represents a graver problem.

C. Personal Security: Discrimination and Extremism

Another growing problem that Roma people face is increasing discrimination and open aggression towards them, which not rarely ends in physical violence and assaults against them. Within the Roma communities there are groups of more vulnerable members, such as women, children and sexual minorities, which are even more difficult to protect and empower. The paradoxical situation is that even though there are numerous anti-discrimination and anti-violence campaigns, the cases of violence against Roma persons can no longer be considered as a series of isolated cases. Hate speech³⁵ is often present and sometimes even used by mainstream media, contributing to the continuation of certain stereotypes regarding Roma people.

Discriminatory media discourse against the Roma population has been documented in Slovenia; large majority of media texts reporting on Roma have been motivated by some problem or have criminal connotations.³⁶ Furthermore, it is important to note that Roma only rarely appear in Slovenian media as individuals and are mostly placed in predetermined categories: *“using generalization and stereotyping, Roma people are presented as culturally different (they are lazy and rely on social aid), deviant (stealing is presumably their inherent trait), and as being a threat to our cultural pattern and in turn to the majority population”*.³⁷

There has been a growing number of hate-motivated assaults and killings of Roma in Hungary in the past year. Those assaults include attacks with deadly weapons, such as petrol bombs, hand grenades and other small weapons. A Romani couple was killed in November 2009 in the town of Pecs, Hungary by a grenade thrown at their house.³⁸ The latest victim of such assault is a 54-year old man who

³⁵ The Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation 97(20) on hate speech defines it as follows: *“the term “hate speech” shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin.”* Webber, Anne, *Manual on Hate Speech*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2009, at p. 3.

³⁶ Kuhar, Roman, *Media Representation of Minorities*, Mediawatch Edition, Mirovni Institut, Slovenia, 2006. Available online at: <http://mediawatch.mirovni-institut.si/eng/mw18.htm>.

³⁷ Kuhar, Roman, *Media Representation of Minorities*, at p. 148.

³⁸ Amnesty International, Report 2009 Hungary. Available online at: <http://thereport.amnesty.org/en/regions/europe-central-asia/hungary>.

was shot at his chest at his doorstep in the town of Tiszalök in April 2010.³⁹ In such situations and without any legal or state protection mechanisms, it is inevitable for the community to turn to itself for protection.⁴⁰ The RAD Centre on Kosovo, has identified cases in which some Ashkalia people feel discriminated against or threatened if they leave their village; such fears may cause the community to further isolate itself.⁴¹ During the month of September 2009, Amnesty International reported about different attacks on Roma that occurred in August and September 2009 on Kosovo⁴². As in Hungary, the security situation of Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptians on Kosovo is further aggravated due to the lack of response from authorities and punishment for the perpetrators.

Even when discrimination is not expressed through open aggression, this phenomenon exists and is expressed through avoidance and creation of social distance. For example: the most unwanted social groups in a role of neighbours in Slovenian society are: drug addicts (79.5%), alcoholics (78%), political extremists (68.5%), homosexuals (60.3%) and the Roma (53.5%).⁴³ In Macedonian society, there is the following situation: 21% of citizens believe that Roma are permanently discriminated against, 31% believe they are frequently discriminated against, 24% stated that Roma are rarely discriminated against, and 21% that they are not discriminated against at all; 19% of citizens feel uncomfortable around Roma persons; Roma are acceptable as neighbours for 53% of the population while 27% provided negative answers.⁴⁴ The focus group identified a number of situations where Roma persons are being discriminated on daily basis: “[...] *unequal treatment by the police; different treatment in regard to communal services’ payment collection (electricity); unequal treatment of Roma children in the education, in the*

³⁹ Nadler, John, *Murder Mystery: Who's Killing Hungary's Gypsies?*, in: Time Magazine Friday, May 01, 2009, Available at: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1895255,00.html>. Tensions in Hungary are growing bigger after the formation of a national paramilitary civilian group, which calls itself the *Magyar Garda* (Hungarian Guard) and purports to protect Hungarians against Roma crime.

⁴⁰ The Observer Guardian, *Hungarian Roma Take to Streets in Self-defense*, May 2009. Available online at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/03/roma-hungary-race-discrimination>.

⁴¹ Tmava, Milena and Adem, Beha, *Helplessness Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian Forced Returnees in Kosovo*, at p. 11.

⁴² Tmava, Milena and Adem, Beha, *Helplessness Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian Forced Returnees in Kosovo*, at p. 11.

⁴³ Erjavec, Karmen, Basic-Hrvatini, Sandra and Kelbl, Barbara, *We about the Roma*, Mediawatch Edition, Mirovni Institut, Slovenia, 2006, at p. 148. Available at: <http://mediawatch.mirovni-institut.si/eng/mw18.htm>.

⁴⁴ Simoska, Emilija et al, *How Inclusive is Macedonian Society*, Foundation Institute Open Society Macedonia, 2008, at p. 93. Available online at: <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00005343/01/FIOM-Istrazivanje-Inkluzivnost-na-MK-opstestvo-ANG.pdf>.

*enrolment and grading procedures; mistrust, refusal to be served in shops; closed doors for employment, even in cases of people holding higher education degrees; refusal of social allowance; no assistance in solving residential or health problems; humiliating attitude from other ethnic groups, especially from Macedonians and Albanians”.*⁴⁵ The following section deals with some of the most severe forms of community insecurities Roma populations face.

D. Community Security and Spatial Segregation: Education and Housing

Apart from the personal insecurities of Roma people, community security issues are even more greatly manifested, notably through extreme forms of spatial segregation. The two most common forms of spatial segregation are reflected in education and housing policies. Personal insecurities at larger level are manifested through community isolating itself further.

Segregation of Roma children in the school system is an issue present across Europe. Within the Czech Republic, Roma children have repeatedly been placed in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities, without the actual need for these children to be placed in such schools.⁴⁶ In Bulgaria the material conditions in many segregated Roma schools are at low level. Furthermore, in a public opinion poll, 86% of non-Roma citizens responded that they would not want their children attending school where pupils are predominantly Roma.⁴⁷ The material conditions of majority-Roma schools are similar in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania and involve lacks of equipment and teaching aid, worn out furniture, schools located in buildings that do not comply with official standards and inadequate conditions for children to spend their time.⁴⁸

Anti-discrimination mechanisms and provisions are rarely used, sometimes due to a lack of such mechanisms, thus discrimination of Roma pupils and students continues. Research conducted by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) reveals discriminatory practices, such as placing Roma pupils in back row seats in the classrooms for, supposedly, other pupils do not wish to sit next to Roma children; furthermore, teachers take no notice of racist behaviour towards Roma and often themselves practice such behaviour.⁴⁹ All of those practices eventually lead to

⁴⁵ Simoska, Emilija et al, *How Inclusive is Macedonian Society*, at p. 93.

⁴⁶ Open Society Institute EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP) OSI, *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, OSI, Budapest, 2008, at p. 11.

⁴⁷ EUMAP, *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, at p. 62.

⁴⁸ EUMAP, *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, at p. 57.

⁴⁹ European Centre for Minority Issues, *Toward Regional Guidelines for the Integration of Roms*, Narrative Report Submitted to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, February 2004, at p. 35. Available online at: <http://www.ecmirom.org>.

a substantial disparity between the level of education of the majority and the Roma population: almost a quarter of adult Roma have no education; there are high estimates as to the number of Roma children who do not attend school; dropout rates from primary school among Roma estimated are as high as 49%.⁵⁰

Spatial segregation in terms of housing policies, segregated settlements, and occurrences of forced evictions⁵¹ are frequent throughout urban areas in Western European, CEE and SEE countries. In Romania forced evictions or threats of evictions for Roma families have been present and followed by a decrease of quality of life for the families: “*On the occasions when alternative housing is offered by the authorities, it is often built in very precarious conditions and lacks basic facilities such as water, heating or electricity. In recent years, Romani communities have been evicted and relocated next to garbage dumps, sewage treatment plants or industrial areas on the outskirts of cities*”.⁵² In addition to the newly created situation and often worsened living conditions, Roma families also experience intolerance and hostility by their new neighbours.⁵³ Hazardous living conditions for the Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptians are also present on Kosovo, where the situation is exacerbated by recent conflict and environmental degradation; the communities located in camps in Mitrovica are lead-polluted areas where the lead contamination is particularly high.⁵⁴

A study conducted on poverty housing in Macedonia states that the poorest housing conditions are found among the Roma communities living in urban peripheries.⁵⁵ Traditionally, Roma settlements are observed to be located within the city centre, while more recent settlements tend to be located on the outskirts of the cities, in places that are difficult to access with little or no infrastructure. Roma

⁵⁰ Open Society Institute EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP), *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma* (Volume 2), 2007, at p. 168.

⁵¹ Author's note: the latest case of forced eviction took place on March 19, 2010 in the Municipality Airport located within the City of Skopje, Macedonia. Mr. Aljush Eminov, his four under-age children, his wife and old father were left homeless after the municipality tore down their house due to lack of proper documents. The family has been living on that property since 1963 and regularly paid taxes. Information obtained in conversation with Mr. Aljush Eminov.

⁵² Amnesty International, *Treated Like Waste Roma Homes Destroyed and Health at Risk in Romania*, EUR 39/001/2010, 26 January 2010, at p. 2. Available online at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR39/001/2010/en>.

⁵³ Amnesty International, *Treated Like Waste Roma Homes Destroyed and Health at Risk in Romania*, at p. 2.

⁵⁴ Tmava, Milena and Adem, Beha, *Helplessness Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian Forced Returnees in Kosovo*, at p.10.

⁵⁵ Centre for Regional Policy Research and Cooperation ‘Studiorum’, *Report on Poverty Housing Situation in Macedonia*, Skopje, June 2004, at p. 15. Available online at: <http://studiorum.org.mk/en/?p=242>.

communities live in settlements that are spatially and socially segregated, often located near industrial zones and often in temporary settlements that hold that status for many years or even decades:

“As a result, almost all cities and towns of any size in Romania, Bulgaria, former Yugoslavia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (which are also countries of the Decade) now have at least one peripheral shantytown predominantly settled with Roma population; their advantage of coming closer to the opportunities of the urban settlements is little compared to the disadvantages of this type of isolation and ghettoization [sic]- inappropriate living conditions devoid of water supply and sanitation, lack of access to education and healthcare and other social services, which together with the resulting lack of access to employment in the city, again close the vicious circle of poverty, exclusion and marginalization.”⁵⁶

Various forms of spatial segregation also represent part of the vicious circle: segregation of children within the education system may lead to dropout and certainly leads to lower quality of education; consequently, it leads to lack of skills and accordingly decreases employment opportunities. Segregation of communities in terms of living conditions in the cases depicted above leads to deteriorated health of the communities living there. Discrimination and insecurities cause mistrust of the people regarding other communities and the states where they live.

E. Political Security: Political Representation and Active Citizenship

Finally, after having presented various forms of insecurities that Roma communities experience throughout European countries, the issue of political security is to be addressed. Political representation, giving voice to those communities to enter the decision-making process in one country, to enter the political battle is a mean to consequently improve the situation of their communities. Representation and political recognition can be considered as a first step to exercising active citizenship.

Political engagement of Roma needs to be traced to the creation of intellectual Roma elites as community leaders. In the past ten to fifteen years, the revival of the civil society sector in the post-communist countries brought the creation of non-governmental organizations that are dealing with various socio-economic issues of the Roma. The civil society sector has acted as a starting ground

⁵⁶ Milevska-Kostova, Neda and Eminovska, Enisa, *Situation of the Roma Population in Macedonia: Housing and Health*, at p. 8.

for Roma activists to engage in or form a political party. In other cases, informal community leaders have decided to pursue a political career and represent their community through political party creation. What is important to consider is the degree of political liberty, which respective countries have given to various ethnic minorities, including the Roma population.

The situation in the former Yugoslav countries for example, varies from one country to another and the degree to which multiculturalism as such is respected in the country.⁵⁷ At the moment, the political representation of Roma in Macedonia is the following: there is one Member of Parliament from the Roma Alliance of Macedonia party; one Mayor in the Municipality Shuto Orizari and the Minister without Portfolio in the Macedonian Government. The Minister without Portfolio and his office act as the coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Macedonia, the international initiative by number of organizations and government to improve the situation of Roma throughout Europe.

In Bulgaria, likewise, Roma elites have demonstrated an increased concern in their community's culture and organisation in the post-communist system of political party pluralism.⁵⁸ Moreover, it can be noticed that the Roma elites have been encouraged by external intellectuals, to take upon this role and represent their communities.⁵⁹ A study conducted in Bulgaria describes that some Roma people are politically active either in non-Roma parties, such as the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) or in Roma political formations, *EvroRoma*, a Roma party of leftwing orientation and *Tsar Kiro*, and *Kupate*, right-wing Roma formation.⁶⁰

The political party diversity of Romania is also rich with Roma political parties: in 2001 up to thirteen Roma political parties has been registered in Romania.⁶¹ As in Bulgaria, Romani votes are scattered among Roma political parties and other non-Roma political parties. The oldest and best established Roma political party in Romania *Roma Party* is supported by 29% of the total Romani votes, while

⁵⁷ Friedman, Eben, *Political Integration of the Romani Minority in Post-communist Macedonia*, in: Southeast European Politics (Volume 3, Number 2-3), pp. 107-126, November 2002, at p. 113.

⁵⁸ Giordano, Christian and Boscoboinik, Andrea, *Roma's Identities in Southeast Europe: Bulgaria*, The Ethnobarometer Working Paper Series, 2003, at p. 20.

⁵⁹ Giordano, Christian and Boscoboinik, Andrea, *Roma's Identities in Southeast Europe: Bulgaria*, at p. 20.

⁶⁰ Benovska-Sabkova, Milena, *I am a Pure Gypsy. The Roma Individuality in the Distorted Mirror of Group Stereotypes*, Roma's Identities in Southeast Europe: Bulgaria, The Ethnobarometer Working Paper Series, 2003, at p. 78.

⁶¹ Tarnovschi, Daniela, *Roma from Romania*, Roma's Identities in Southeast Europe: Romania, The Ethnobarometer Working Paper Series, 2008, at p. 31.

others such as *Roma Civil Alliance*, the *Alliance for Roma Unity* and *Roma Christian Centre* are less known and supported.⁶²

The mobilization of Roma people and their organization in political parties and civil society organizations needs to be acknowledged as an important element and step forward improving the overall situation of Roma and enabling them to fully exercise their civil rights. According to the human security paradigm, it is emancipation and protection that ultimately leads to sustainable human development and security.

IV. Application of the Human Security Approach: Emancipation as Security

The notion of “*emancipation as security*” has been described by Neufeld as a critical and emancipatory strategy focusing on the empirical question of how security issues are structured in political discourse.⁶³ One can argue that it was Ken Booth that introduced this concept in the early 1990s setting a basis for further discourse:

*“Emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do. War and the threat of war is one of those constraints, together with poverty, poor education, political oppression and so on. Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation, not power or order, produces true security. Emancipation, theoretically, is security.”*⁶⁴

One can consider emancipation as the enlightenment thought of the 20th century that continues up to date. As Booth argues, the struggle for freedom and emancipation has been going on in different parts of the world and for different individuals and groups – in post-colonial societies, post-communists societies, among the feminist movement, among the sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, immigrants, consumers and different stakeholders – and this struggle has been more successful for some groups than others.⁶⁵ One can argue that in today’s Europe the efforts that Roma activists are pursuing are ones of emancipation.

⁶² Tarnovschi, Daniela, *Roma from Romania*, at p. 31.

⁶³ Neufeld, Mark, *Pitfalls of Emancipation and Discourses of Security: Reflections on Canada’s ‘Security with Human Face’*, in: *International Relations* (Volume 18, Number 1), March 2004, pp. 109-123.

⁶⁴ Booth, Ken, *Security and Emancipation*, in: *Review of International Studies* (Volume 17, Number 4), October 1991, pp. 313-326, at p. 319.

⁶⁵ Booth, Ken, *Security and Emancipation*, at p. 320

In order for one individual or a group of people to pursue emancipation, those people firstly need to feel protected and to feel empowered to do so. In the past decade, emancipation has been connected to those two concepts. According to the Commission on Human Security, emancipation can be also understood as protection and empowerment of people: “*Protection shields people from dangers. It requires concerted effort to develop norms, processes and institutions that systematically address insecurities. Empowerment enables people to develop their potential and become full participants in decision-making. Protection and empowerment are mutually reinforcing, and both are required in most situations*”⁶⁶ Those two components are can be regarded as parts of the emancipatory process. As parts of human rights and emancipation, Henry Shue distinguishes two sets of basic rights: “*‘subsistence’ which includes social and economic rights, and ‘security from violence’ which includes civil and political rights*”.⁶⁷ One cannot argue which set of basic rights precedes the other; for example drinking water and food, which falls into category of economic and social rights, are far more urgent needs than empowerment and civil and political rights issues; however, the political and civil rights are equally important and necessary as the daily bread, since without them the individuals cannot fully exercise their freedom.⁶⁸

Emancipation can only be achieved when the two sets of rights are fulfilled, i.e. when people are protected from fear and want and empowered to take action and choose among opportunities. Furthermore, as Booth argues freedom or liberty is the core value of emancipation, while “*emancipation implies an egalitarian concept of liberty*.”⁶⁹ In that sense, emancipation requires full social inclusion within the society for the group that is the subject of emancipation.

Granting specific group rights as part of the emancipation package leads to the “*societal security dilemma*” which is seen as a situation where “*one group’s security spells insecurity for the others*.”⁷⁰ The question which arises is: can emancipation represent a zero-sum game where each player can only gain at the expense of others? In cases of prior conflict between minority and majority groups (or between two groups in general) and in case of contested identities the emancipation of one group can spill danger for the other group: “*The constitution of identities is often a reciprocal process. As each subject seeks to perform its identity,*

⁶⁶ Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, New York, 2003.

⁶⁷ Dunne, Tim and Wheeler, Nicholas J., *We the Peoples’: Contending Discourses of Security in Human Rights Theory and Practice*, in: *International Relations* (Volume 18, Number 1), 2004, pp. 9-23, at p. 18.

⁶⁸ Freedom fighters, national liberation movements and emancipation movements throughout history have supported this argument.

⁶⁹ Booth, Ken, *Security and Emancipation*, at p. 321.

⁷⁰ Møller, Bjorn, *National, Societal and Human Security: General Discussion with a Case Study from the Balkans*, at p. 48.

it threatens others, whose identities are consolidated in response."⁷¹ As an example one can regard the public debates and xenophobic discourses towards immigrants in one society or reforms in terms of granting rights to sexual minorities. The situation of Roma throughout Europe in their respective countries does not register minority-majority armed group conflict, except for the personal and community insecurities depicted above. Even when, there is no prior conflict between two groups, affirmative action policies as part of emancipation can be perceived as a zero-sum game by members of the other community.

Before examining the carriers of emancipation, one ought to consider the limits to emancipation. Neufeld points out to the problems that this approach carries and those are the dangers of going into abstract utopianism and elitism; the first "*abstract utopianism*" – "*a utopianism which stripped its theorizing of its critical content*", and elitism by "*viewing ordinary people not as active and reflective partners in the process of emancipatory change, but as empty vessels to be filled with our objective truths, once again losing sight of the fact that it is not ideas but people who change circumstances.*"⁷² Both problems identified are correct in portraying the concept as distanced and detached from reality. However, when activists and policy-makers initiate reforms in line with the discourse of human security and employ the concept of emancipation the results are considerable.⁷³ Therefore, one should focus on the "*role of security discourse in policy-making, implementation and legitimation*".⁷⁴

Finally, there is the issue of the state's role in emancipation and the role of consolidated democracy and civil society as a framework for emancipation. There are rather opposing views of the state's role and ability to emancipate. According to the social-democratic view, "[d]emocracy produces a more responsive state that can appropriately chaperon its people through the development process, as opposed to relying on outside aid."⁷⁵ However, when it comes to the question of the state's

⁷¹ Weldes, Jutta et al. (eds.), *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999, pp. 1-33, at p. 15.

⁷² Neufeld, Mark, *Pitfalls of Emancipation and Discourses of Security: Reflections on Canada's 'Security with Human Face'*, at p. 111.

⁷³ Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's Minister for Human Resources (1995–7) attempted to initiate a major renewal of Canada's social programmes, in line with the current discourse of human security: "As Axworthy presents it, the rethinking of security was a government initiative occasioned by policy-makers' own recognition of the limitations of the traditional notion of security". See Neufeld, Mark, *Pitfalls of Emancipation and Discourses of Security: Reflections on Canada's 'Security with Human Face'*, at p. 115.

⁷⁴ Neufeld, Mark, *Pitfalls of Emancipation and Discourses of Security: Reflections on Canada's 'Security with Human Face'*, at p. 111.

⁷⁵ Gough, Mark, *Human Security: The Individual in the Security Question - The Case of Bosnia*, Contemporary Security Policy (Volume 23, Number 3), 2002, pp.145-191, at p. 147.

ability as emancipator and protector there is a different argument as to which “[i]n the brave neoliberal world order, however, we are now instructed that domestic progress towards the good life is a luxury we can no longer afford. The purview of the discourse of progress and the good life has been restricted to the international realm.”⁷⁶ How can emancipation as security in case of the Romani issues be achieved and who would be the primary actor in this endeavour? International and national non-governmental organizations have already initiated this process by advocating for respect of human rights, human dignity and quality of living of the Roma communities. Education, health, employment and housing are the four pillars defined by the Decade of Roma Inclusion.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the framework of human security can serve as a universal structure along which different agents, governments and international organizations can cooperate in advancing the issues Roma communities face throughout Europe. In the overall discourse and search for meaning of what emancipation represents, one should not forget to look at the grassroots human needs, which ask for real, concrete actions to be conducted.

V. Conclusion

The present analysis focused on Roma communities throughout European countries, their protracted deprivation of human needs, exacerbated with extremism and anti-Gypsyist manifestations, through the prism of a human security approach. The concepts underpinning human security can play a normative role at international, national and local levels. Human security of Roma in this regard can be explored as a normative-political issue that has the potential to eventually influence public policy and initiate reforms to improve the protection of human rights and reach quality standard of living. Contemporary Roma issues can be treated as human security issues, and consequently addressed as such. Illustrative examples are presented throughout the analysis from documented cases within different countries: Bulgaria, the Check Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania.

Five sets of identified threats were taken as parameters for the analysis: economic, health, personal, community and political security. It is important to note that all areas are intertwined and very often insecurity arising from one area affects the security within other areas. Poverty and unemployment are two of the most salient and urgent issues that fall into the area of economic insecurities. The percentage of Roma people experiencing poverty and extreme poverty is considerable. The impoverishment reflects negatively upon the health of Roma

⁷⁶ Neufeld, Mark, *Pitfalls of Emancipation and Discourses of Security: Reflections on Canada's 'Security with Human Face'*, at p. 121.

⁷⁷ Decade of Roma Inclusion. Official web-site: <http://www.romadecade.org/about>.

communities and vice versa: deteriorated health condition of the general Roma population causes considerably impaired working ability, thus intensifying poverty. Personal insecurities of Roma people are on the rise with growing numbers of documented cases of violent and racist outbursts against them. Community security issues are manifested on a large and often systematic scale, through extreme forms of spatial segregation. Two most common forms of spatial segregation have been identified in education and housing policies. Political representation and recognition for the Roma communities, as a first step to exercising active citizenship, is present throughout the countries; however a more organized approach by Roma intellectual elites needs to be undertaken.

Discrimination and insecurities cause mistrust of the people regarding other communities and the states where they live and prevents them to fully exercise their civil rights. Assessing the level of insecurity for the Romani communities in each of these areas may represent a starting point for an academic debate and as a baseline for further policy considerations. The human security approach on issues Roma people face can be a beginning of a broader research project. A multidimensional approach offered by the human security paradigm for protection and empowerment of Roma communities throughout Europe needs to be recognized as a priority.