

SOCIAL AND ETHNIC DISTANCE TOWARDS ROMANIES IN SERBIA *

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Abstract. *The research results have almost entirely confirmed the proposed hypotheses, that is, the general hypothesis that the Romanies in the transition processes of Serbian society are still discriminated so that their social exclusion, segregation and (to a small degree) assimilation are evident. The obtained data unambiguously lead to the conclusion that the social, ethnic and racial distance towards the Romanies in Serbia is very large so that energetic measures have to be undertaken through educational, socioeconomic and political programs. The sample has comprised 13 nations, though only five of them have been statistically significant, namely, Serbs, Romanies, Muslims, Hungarians and Yugoslavs. Measured by the classical Bogardus's scale the results have, depending on the assumed social relation, showed an outstanding regularity, namely, those unwilling to get married to a Romany (depending on a given nation) amount to between 55% and 79,5%. Those who would not have a Romany as a friend amount to between 13% and 24%; Romanies would not be accepted as neighbors by between 16% and 59% of the examined. Finally, those who would not like to live with them in the same state amount to between 6% and 16%. The data from Bogardus's scale combined with the other sets of questions show an evident racial discrimination against the Romanies. The sexual intercourse would be rejected by about 50% of the examined; the direct blood transfusion would not be accepted by between 30% and 40% of the examined. It should also be mentioned that, in some cases, the Serbs express a greater distance towards Albanians and Muslims but this is far from being comforting since the other national minorities exhibit a high degree of distance towards the Romanies.*

Key words: *Romanies, segregation, assimilation, discrimination, social exclusion, social distance, ethnic distance, racial distance, adaptation, integration, identity.*

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The Romanies (or Gypsies) in Europe, as confirmed by many research projects, represent a marginalized ethnic group that, at the moment, scarcely has a chance to be integrated into a wider social environment. Still, the above-mentioned former research projects have also shown that the social, legal, political and cultural status of the Romanies is not identical in all the countries they inhabit. A special problem appears in the post-socialist states of the Central, Eastern and South-East Europe. The transition processes have - while re-evaluating former values and common attitudes in economics, politics, culture, ethnic relations and other fields - conditioned an atmosphere of anomie and the creation of an ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor (and/or the newly-rich and the newly-poor). Some of the negative consequences of these processes have mostly stricken economically, socially or ethnically marginalized groups that have even before been in an unfavorable position, thus limiting their already frail mechanisms of an adequate social integration. A special problem has come up among exceptionally multiethnic, multiconfessional and multicultural communities in which inter-ethnic and inter-confessional intolerance has become more radical (former USSR and Yugoslavia). In Serbia, besides the Serbs and Montenegrins and those who declare themselves as Yugoslavs, there are 12 ethnic minorities - of them all, regarding their number, the Romanies are in the fourth place (according to the official data from the 1991 population consensus).¹ The statistical and scientific results have also pointed to the fact that the Romanies were placed as the last, in the last few decades, regarding the level of education, professional and economic status, social and political participation and power.

Among the Serbs, there is a widely spread misconception that they are, as a nation, highly tolerant of members of other ethnic communities they come into contact with, whether they live within the country or outside it. The real sociological situation is, unfortunately, quite different.² As the breakup of the former Yugoslavia was permeated with bloody ethnic conflicts, the fact that ethnic distance is nowadays stronger in all ethnic communities comes as no surprise. However, in "the Romany situation" we may pick out certain specificities. In particular, they were never in real conflict with any other ethnicity, they never demanded anything which might in the long run jeopardize the integrity of the newly-formed states; however, the rate of ethnic distance towards them has remained very high. Reasons for this should obviously be sought elsewhere. Decades and centuries of their exclusion and segregation are manifested in all segments and on all levels: residential, economic, political, educational, cultural etc. in all countries they live in. Since their first arrival in the Balkans, towards the present day, the Romanies have

¹ Based on the 1991 Census, the number of Romanies in Serbia with the provinces is 140,237, whereas demographers and experts believe the real numbers are 400,000-450,000. This makes them the largest ethnic minority group, second only to the Albanians. Estimates for four Balkan countries - Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia, range from 3 to 4 million Romanies. For the number of Romanies in Serbia and Yugoslavia refer to: Ruza Petrovic, "Demographic Specificities of Romanies in Yugoslavia" and Vladimir Stankovic "Romany in the Light of the Data of Yugoslav Statistics" in *Development of Roma in Yugoslavia - Problems and Tendencies*, Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Belgrade, 1992, pp.115-127 and 159-178.

² Certainly, one should bear in mind this is not only Serbian "specialty". We find this, one way or the other, in other ethnic communities in Serbia. Therefore we may describe the nationalism of minority groups which can sometimes lead to the growth of ethnic distance, irredentism or separatism, of which Yugoslavia is a good example. The Romanies themselves also often express high ethnic distance, especially towards the Albanians.

faced two major problems. On the one hand, they have suffered from assimilation into other ethoses and cultures, and, consequently, they have lost their specific ethnic and cultural identity. On the other hand, they have constantly been segregated from the majority population in their environment. Whenever they were able to preserve their cultural and national individuality, they paid the high price of segregation, poverty and underdevelopment. In "the Roma phenomenon" it seems that there is a very striking causal relation between the acquisition of normal social status and the loss of authentic identity, and vice versa. This is why, not deliberately, the Romanies have developed a special sociocultural mentality – "the ghetto consciousness", which operates in two ways. First, and positive, this mentality helps them preserve their identity, and second, negative, it therefore makes them even more distant from other nations they have to cooperate with. On the other hand, one might still notice that such mentality is not exclusively caused by the objective position of the Romanies in the social structure, but it is also influenced by authentic archetypes the Roma once brought from their homeland.³ In addition, historical circumstances in the period of their arrival in the Balkans in 14th century, probably contributed to the creation of hostility, stigmatization and prejudices associated with the Romanies. The fact they were coming along with the Turkish conquerors, who were most certainly not welcome, made the locals perceive them as strangers, coming "from the middle of nowhere", with different skin colour, culture and daily habits.⁴ This "historical subconsciousness" is incorporated in the social, ethnic and racial distance towards the Romanies in Serbia even today.

The fact one should certainly point out is that the Serbs (as a majority nation) and other ethnic group members express a higher degree of ethnic and social distance towards the Albanians than towards the Romanies. On the other hand, this degree is equivalent, and sometimes even higher, towards the Muslims. The background of such attitudes is not difficult to track. It was shaped first by the war with the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then by the conflict with the Kosovo Albanians (and the bombardment of Yugoslavia). However, one should here recall that there had been substantial ethnic distance towards the Muslims and Albanians even before the Yugoslav wars. It was induced by the popular attitude that the Muslims were actually the heirs of the former conquerors (Serbia was liberated from the Turks in the second half of the 19th century), whereas, in that view, the Albanians⁵ were also Islamic, and therefore the Bosnian Muslims' natural allies. In addition, the Muslims,⁶ as members of nation/confession express the highest degree of ethnic and social distance towards other ethnic community

³ Bogdan Djurović, Social Segregation and Ghettoized Consciousness of the Romanies, in: *Gypsies/Romanies in the Past and Today*, Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Belgrade, 2000, pp.89-95.

⁴ "The conquerors were accepted with no enthusiasm, but with some respect (and fear) by the people, but it came to pass. Those who remained were the Romanies, and they had already been given the mahala, a separated place, to live in by the Turks. Therefore, spatially isolated, with unprofitable, originally not distinguished occupations, the Romanies were seen as outsiders." Aleksandra Mitrović, "The Social Status of the Romanies", in: *Gypsies/Romanies in the Past and Today*, Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Belgrade, 2000, pp.72.

⁵ The original plan of the research included the Albanians, but the conflict made us unable to do field work in Kosovo. The hypothesis is that they would, similarly to the Muslims, express high ethnic and social distance rates.

⁶ During Tito's reign in Yugoslavia there was an unusual precedent. In 1971, what was by then a confessional term "Muslim", became a term for a nation, with the capital "M".

members, as well as the highest rates of authoritarianism and conservatism. Even though this research did not look into this matter in greater detail, it is very likely that such an attitude is conditioned by very strict cultural and religious patterns of behaviour and the demand of their religion not to mix with non-Muslims. Some polls may lead us to conclude they do not even see themselves as primarily members of a specific nation, but they rather believe they belong to a wider entity – the planetary Muslim community.

The main problem that the research aimed to highlight refers to the ways of the Romany population adaptation in the current post-socialist transition processes in Serbia. Besides, our intention was to discuss the problem of the "fluid" Romany identity and discover its background. Namely, we tried to find an answer to the question why the Romanies take to (assumed) negative adaptation models (assimilation and segregation) or, more precisely, whether this springs from the objective conditions in the surroundings as well as from the pressures caused by the ethnic and social distance and discrimination or if it is - and to what extent - the consequence of the specific "ghetto consciousness" and self-underestimation of their own ethnicity. The research results have almost entirely confirmed the given hypotheses as well as the general hypothesis that the Romanies in the transition processes of the Serbian society are still discriminated so that their social exclusion, segregation and (to a small degree) assimilation are evident. The obtained data unambiguously lead to the conclusion that the social, ethnic and racial distance towards the Romanies in Serbia is very large.

The research project applied the methods of the functional analysis, the comparative method, the analytical-deductive method, the statistical method and the sampling method. The techniques of observation, interviewing, questionnaire and content analysis were used, while the Bogardus and Likert scales were used as instruments (adapted to the regional cultural model) as well as Seeman's concept for measuring five varieties of alienation, and two scales for measuring personal religious identification and confessional membership.

The basic set that was comprised by the research project should consist of the population of the Republic of Serbia (with its autonomous provinces) of over 18 years of age. The sample will include 1,400 examines, of which 700 (50%) Romanies, 400 (28,5%) Serbs, 100 (7,1%) Hungarians, 60 (4,3%) Muslims, whereas the remaining 140 subjects were allowed for the surveyors to choose. The sample slightly favored the participation of Hungarians and Muslims, regarding the fact that the former ones make up the most numerous ethnic minority in the autonomous province of Vojvodina, while the latter ones make up the largest ethnic minority in central Serbia. In this way, partial stratification was done on the general level - based on the proportional participation of the most numerous ethnic minorities, while within special strata the choice was done by the random choice method. Despite the fact that the sample comprised 12 nations, only five of them were statistically significant, namely, Serbs, Romanies, Muslims, Hungarians and Yugoslavs.⁷ The quota sample comprised the first four of them while the Yugoslavs, though not to a high percentage, imposed themselves. The sample was realized in 20

⁷ The population Census from 1991 shows that about 10% of the citizens declared themselves as "Yugoslavs" refusing to define their nationality more precisely. The assumption is that this percentage is now less but it is still important in the ethnically-mixed communities (such as Vojvodina).

regions, namely, fourteen in central Serbia and six in autonomous province of Vojvodina. Individual interviews were used as the basic research technique with standardized questionnaire for asking questions and recording answers.

Sociopsychological researches on the Romanies in Serbia, social and ethnic distance, stereotypes and prejudices, have so far been performed on small samples, with groups limited in terms of their profession and age (pupils, students). There were, however, researches with representative samples, but they only touched upon these problems. Even so, it is quite obvious that the degree of social and ethnic distance towards the Romanies is more evident than the one towards other nations. Research results show that hostility, prejudices and stereotypes towards the Romanies were, in most of the researches, underrated. Using the classical Bogardus's scale we have obtained the following results, namely, those unwilling to get married to a Romany amount to 4/5% of Serbs, 92% Muslims, and more than a half Hungarians and Yugoslavs.⁸ They would not be suitable friends for 1/4 of Serbs and Muslims, 1/5 of Hungarians and 13% of Yugoslavs. As neighbours, they would not be favoured by 1/3 of Serbs, 3/5 of Muslims, and about 1/6 of Hungarians and Yugoslavs. Not to share the same company with Romanies would be the choice of almost 1/5 of Serbs, 1/4 of Muslims, and about 10% of Hungarians and Yugoslavs. A Romany would not be a desirable boss for more than a half of Serbs, 3/5 of Muslims, and nearly 1/6 of Hungarians and Yugoslavs, whereas not sharing the same town with them would be the preference of 1/6 of Serbs, almost 1/4 of Muslims, 5,2% of Hungarians and 6,5% of Yugoslavs. Finally, to share the country with Romanies is undesirable for 15% of Serbs, 14% of Muslims, 6% of Hungarians and 6% of Yugoslavs (see table 1).

Table 1. (percentage is given for negative attitude)

nationality	marriage	friends	neighbor	company	boss	town	country
Serbian	79.5%	24.0%	30.0%	18.0%	51.5%	16.9%	15.0%
Muslim	92.0%	23.5%	59.0%	25.5%	60.8%	23.5%	14.0%
Hungarian	55.0%	20.0%	17.0%	10.5%	15.6%	5.2%	6.0%
Yugoslav	58.0%	13.0%	16.0%	9.7%	16.1%	6.5%	6.0%

The conclusion is unequivocal, namely, the greater assumed social closeness, the greater social distance is. The arithmetic average regarding particular modalities makes a regular curve from 8th to 70th item (%). The confirmation of these data as well as a discriminatory attitude towards the Romanies can also be found regarding the assumed important social functions. To have a Romany as the police department head is discarded by 62% of Serbs, 82,4% of Muslims, 19% of Hungarians and 26% of Yugoslavs. To have a Romany as a high military officer is discarded by 56% of Serbs, 82% of Muslims, 18% of Hungarians and 22,6% of Yugoslavs. The proposal to have Romanies at the Ministry positions is rejected by 59% of Serbs, 80,5% of Muslims, 13,53% of Hungarians and 16%

⁸ Concerning sex, with regard to the most intimate social relationship (marriage), the situation is even worse. Namely, a Romany would not be taken in marriage by 89% of Serbian women, 100% of Muslim, 69% of Hungarian and 60% of Yugoslav women.

of Yugoslavs. The data point to the conclusion that, except for the Muslims, the greatest social and ethnic distance towards Romanies is manifested by the majority population, namely, the Serbs whereas the least one is expressed by those who most partake of the internationalist spirit or Yugoslavs. This regularity is present in most of the measurements done in the research. On the other hand, and this is not a big comfort to anyone, including the Roma, social and ethnic distance towards Albanians (for reasons given earlier) is even greater. Reluctant to marry an Albanian are 84,5% of Serbs, 65,8% of Romanies, 80,4% of Muslims, 59,4% of Hungarians and 61,32% of Yugoslavs, while not living in the same state with them would be the best solution for 40% of Serbs, 40,9% of Romanies, 29% of Muslims, 7,3% of Hungarians and 9,7% of Yugoslavs. Although the distance towards the Muslims is a bit smaller than the distance towards the Albanians and the Romanies, it is still very conspicuous. Among those who would not marry a Muslim are 77,9% of Serbs, 50,5% of Romanies, 45,8% of Hungarians and 48,4% of Yugoslavs, while those who would not live in the same country with them amount to 31,3% of Serbs, 25,6% of Romanies, 7,3% of Hungarians and 9,7% of Yugoslavs. As one may notice, the Romanies also express a rather high degree of ethnic and social distance towards other nations, so that the widely believed stereotype of their interethnic tolerance should be questioned, as well.⁹ Actually, segregated and discriminated in their areas¹⁰ and all ethnic environments, they are compelled to express tolerance, and sometimes even »learnt politeness« in everyday communication. However, in deeper layers of their cultural and ethnic identity, they can also be seen to be as much liable to prejudices, stereotypes and ethnic hostility as other nations. Similarly, they also tend to boast the greatness of their own ethos. For example, the statement that »their nation has qualities which raise it above other nations« is (completely or partly) supported by 55.5% of Romanies and 55.3% of Serbs, and it is much less favoured by Hungarians (16.7%) and Yugoslavs (13%). The Romanies consider themselves brave (71.5%), and diligent (61%), whereas 81.5% of the Romanies agree with the statement that they possess some traits (nonchalance, joyfulness, love of nature) which make them special in comparison with other nations.

Ethnic and social distance towards the Romanies is usually combined with racial distance, which further enhances hostility towards these people and prevents their adequate integration. In Serbia the process of segregation of the Romanies is dominant. Even assimilation is impossible, due to the latent, and sometimes even manifest discrimination of the Romanies by members of other ethnic communities. The Romanies are aware of the fact that even when they accept the cultural model of the dominant ethos, they will never become »real Serbs«, due to their visible antropobiological traits and the awareness of their environment that they belong to a different ethnic and racial group. They are especially hurt by the fact that, even when they completely surrender to the other culture with the intention to become equal to the members of the majority community,

⁹ 71,3% of the subjects consider Romanies tolerant in interethnic relationships.

¹⁰ "Hostility towards the Romanies was created step by step, but it was not followed by rage, as one could expect. Contrary to other parts of the former Yugoslavia or other European countries, Romanies in Serbia were not exposed to large scale collective repression. Hostility was here much more subtle, generally taking the shape of insisting on our own "superiority". A. Mitrovic, Z.Gajic, *Romanies in Serbia*, Centre for Antiwar Action and Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade, 1998, pp.51.

they are actually never fully accepted (73.5% of the Romanies believe Serbs and others see them as second rate citizens). When you ask the Romanies who declare themselves as Serbs, if they are actually Roma or Serb, they answer that they are also Serbian orthodox, their children attend Serbian schools too, their sons go to the army and war etc., and thus they avoid a direct answer. The reason for this is discrimination itself, ethnic and racial distance they want to annul by melting with the other ethos. The measurement of racial distance gives us results which are also not very encouraging. A sexual intercourse with a Romany is rejected (or accepted only in the drunken state which is highly humiliating) by more than a half of Serbs, 2/3 of Muslims, 1/3 of Hungarians and more than a half of Yugoslavs. The direct blood transfusion from a Romany would be rejected or accepted only in the most immediate danger by 40% of Serbs, 40% of Muslims, 30% of Hungarians and 32% of Yugoslavs. In women, racial distance is even greater. Thus, sexual intercourse with a Romany is not an option for 76% of Serbian women, 96% of Muslim women, 48% of Hungarian women and 60% of Yugoslav women (see table 2). A direct blood transfusion would be rejected or accepted only in the most immediate danger by 52% of Serb women, 42% of Muslim women, 36,5% of Hungarian women and 40% of Yugoslav women.¹¹ Therefore, the fact that the present discrimination towards the Romanies is caused by both the social-ethnic as well as the racial distance towards them.

Table 2.

nationality	willingly		it depends on the situation		only when drunk		under no circumstances		I don't know	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
Serbian	17.0%	2.0%	39.0%	9.0%	4.0%	0.5%	25.1%	76.0%	15.0%	12.5%
Muslim	3.8%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	34.6%	95.8%	3.8%	4.2%
Hungar	17.5%	6.8%	25.5%	18.2%	2.0%	2.3%	21.6%	45.5%	24.0%	27.0%
Yugoslav	33.3%	4.0%	33.3%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	60.0%	0.0%	16.0%

By extending the research field to the sociopsychological and political relations, we can unambiguously perceive the standard stereotypes and prejudices in addition to a not so small number of those offering some extreme solutions. The belief that the Romanies live hard since they are lazy and irresponsible is shared (completely or partially) by 68% of Serbs, 84% of Muslims, 60% of Hungarians and 35% of Yugoslavs. The belief that the Romanies are not to be trusted and that they cannot be counted upon is shared by 57% of Serbs, 72% of Muslims, 57% of Hungarians and 39% of Yugoslavs. The belief that the Romanies should be moved out of Europe and be given a chance to create their own states on some (bought) free land in Africa or Asia is shared by 18,% of Serbs, 6% of Muslims, 5% of Hungarians and 6,5% of Yugoslavs. Due to different forms of segregation and discrimination, and their highly unfavourable position in all areas, the Romanies are

¹¹ "In the research 'Cultural Patterns of Sexual Behaviour and the Risk of AIDS', the Romanies are seen as a dangerous carrier of this sickness – 25% of high school students (from a 2200 sample) consider them a prime risk group, which further contributes to spreading prejudices against the Roma" K. Savin, V. Korac, Are Romanies a New Risk Group, in: *Gypsies/Romanies in the Past and Today*, Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Belgrade, 2000, pp.128.

almost completely alienated from politics – 91% of the sample are not members of any association or political party, and only a third (31%) believe the newly-formed Romany political parties can help improve their position. On the other hand, only a fifth (21.6%) of the Romanies believe their representatives, those in contact with state institutions, fight for their interests in the right way. Another fifth of the Romanies think their representatives only care for their own, personal interests. A (competent and reliable) Romany would not be voted for an MP, even if he was a candidate of the party they support, by 51% of Serbs, 85% of Muslims, 5.3% of Hungarians and 20% of Yugoslavs. Here also, ethnic distance is higher towards Albanians and Muslims. Among those who would not vote for an Albanian are 78% of Serbs, 85% of Muslims, 10.5% of Hungarians, 40% of Yugoslavs and 79% of Romanies, whereas a Muslim would not be a good candidate for 67% of Serbs, 10.5% of Hungarians, 20% of Yugoslavs and 64.3% of Romanies. Romany associations and (those few existing) political parties do not trust each other, which further instantiates political seclusion of the Roma. The research available (that before the political changes) points to the conclusion that, politically, Romanies are either undecided or supportive of the authorities. Having in mind their unfavourable position, there might be some grounds to the interpretation of such attitudes as subconscious defense – as an instrument against further endangering their status and inducing the rage of those in power. Their political apathy is manifested in the lack of any organized political action, even though many are aware such an action would probably represent a major step forward towards a more systematic appreciation of and solution to their problems, as well as towards the awareness of their ever growing presence and influence in Serbia and in the Balkans. They generally gather in the so-called 'cultural-artistic' associations, which was tacitly supported by the previous authorities, probably because this was an appropriate way for their (possible) political energy to be directed in a harmless direction. There are some indications that the new authorities are trying to approach their problems differently, but it is still too early to bring any conclusions. It is warranted to suppose the Romany problems will soon again be those least important, unless the Romanies themselves become better organized and unless they put some pressure on the current authorities.

The image of the Romanies would surely be incomplete without the stereotypes of the Romanies, which should include self-perception or self-stereotypization. Here we will present this image with a median for non-Romanies and a separate percentage for the Romanies. The Romanies are considered lazy by 51% of non-Romanies and 19.2% of the Romanies. They are too noisy for 78.5% of the others and 68% of the Romanies, too quarrelsome for 70.4% of the others and 38.5% of the Romanies. They are cunning according to 60% of the others and 35% of the Romanies, whimsical for 69% of the others and 30.5% of the Romanies. They are greedy in view of 57% of the others and 36% of the Romanies, they disobey laws as claimed by 59% of the others and 14.4% of the Romanies. They are slovenly, say 57% of the rest and 36% of the Romanies, and ill-mannered (65% of the rest and 16% of the Romanies). Here are some examples from the set of positive stereotypes. 60% of the rest and 85% of the Romanies consider them tolerant of other nations. They are seen as tolerant of other religions by 52% of the others, and 80% of the Romanies. They are seen as hospitable by 71% of the others and 94% of the Romanies, whereas they are temperamental and joyful for 71% of the others and 77%

of the Romanies. Finally, they are musically endowed, as thought by 90% of the others and 97% of the Romanies (for particular percentage see tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

nationality	lazy	noisy	quarrelsome	cunning	whimsical	greedy	disobeying law	slovenly	ill- mannered
Serbian	59.3%	83.3%	74.0%	59.1%	68.2%	58.1%	62.4%	77.6%	61.6%
Romany	19.2%	68.0%	38.5%	35.2%	30.5%	36.1%	14.4%	34.1%	16.1%
Muslim	58.8%	96.1%	88.2%	62.7%	86.3%	45.1%	54.9%	96.1%	96.1%
Hungarian	58.3%	77.1%	64.6%	61.5%	65.6%	69.4%	66.7%	69.8%	59.4%
Yugoslav	32.3%	58.1%	58.1%	54.8%	51.6%	48.4%	54.8%	64.5%	41.9%

Table 4

nationality	ethnically tolerant	religiously tolerant	hospitable	temperamental	musical
Serbian	56.2%	52.5%	72.5%	75.8%	92.5%
Romany	84.4%	79.8%	94.5%	77.1%	97.0%
Muslim	80.4%	74.5%	76.5%	98.0%	100.0%
Hungarian	51.9%	46.9%	64.6%	68.8%	92.7%
Yugoslav	51.6%	35.5%	67.7%	71.0%	77.4%

Considering negative stereotypes, socio-ethnic and racial distance towards the Romanies – we should not wonder why they are segregated, discriminated and socially excluded in residential, educational, professional, political realms – which practically means every aspect of their social lives. So far harmless, the stereotypization of the Romanies in Serbia is caused by the idea of superiority of the majority population as well as by the mechanism of establishing a hierarchy in relation to other nations, such as: "We do not live very prosperous lives indeed, but there are Romanies whose life is even worse". Recently one can notice a tendency, which is by no means omnipresent, that some Romanies have become very rich, which could only enhance the negative stereotypes and stigmatization. This could easily call for locating a scapegoat in this ethnic community, which is a basis for chauvinist and racist view of any social turmoil, ending as a rule in a tragedy for the ethnic group. For, as long as a minority group "looks" and "acts" according to the accepted stereotypes of the majority group, it is liable to harmless or 'benign' discrimination (though such discrimination is hardly benign for the Romanies themselves). However, when certain members of the minority group cannot be described with any of the stereotypes, the most common majority reaction is the pile up of negative energy and its transformation into much more aggressive, often tragic, patterns of behaviour.

One of the starting assumptions in planning our research was that the Romanies, by making special defense mechanisms, also build a specific sociocultural model that would probably be able to protect them from the negative attitude of the environment they live in. One of the defense mechanisms is building an authoritarian character that is exhibited and rationalized as non-conflict behavior and tolerance towards the majority environment, that is, the government established within it. In doing it, the authoritarianism of the Romanies is built in into their social mentality, that is, the social character of the Romany

population. On the other hand, conservatism is consciously (publicly) and subconsciously cherished in Romany families and social relations for other reason as well. Namely, faced with the centuries-old assimilation or segregation, they respond to it by glorifying the traditional social and cultural relations thus accidentally achieving two goals. The first of them is expressed through strengthening of the in-group and inter-ethnic cohesion, while the other is expressed through the authoritarian model of the family/state ratio thus giving the authoritarian attitude the status of the widely-accepted one.

The instrument for measuring authoritarianism and conservatism was made up by several sets of questions though some question sets otherwise primarily used for measuring the social exclusion and the ethnic and social distance have also been used for determining the given attitudes (for instance, the attitude towards minority rights). In all the cases the Romanies have shown a high degree of authoritarianism and conservatism while in their attitude towards the other nations the given degree has been different for, on average, 30-40%. What should be noted here is that in most cases this percentage is higher among the Muslims than among the Romanies. As for expressing the patriarchal attitude that "man should have the leading role in the household", the results are the following. The attitude is completely or partially accepted by almost a half of Serbs, 5/4 of Romanies, 90% of Muslims, 1/3 of Hungarians and 10% of Yugoslavs, while it is partially or completely rejected by, again, almost a half of Serbs, 13% of Romanies, 10% of Muslims, 3/5 of Hungarians and 4/5 of Yugoslavs. The attitude that "a woman's place is in the house" is entirely or partially accepted by 1/3 of Serbs, 2/3 of Romanies, more than 2/3 of Muslims, almost 1/4 of Hungarians and 13% of Yugoslavs, while it is completely or partially rejected by 2/3 of Serbs, 1/3 of Romanies, 1/3 of Muslims, 72% of Hungarians and 84% of Yugoslavs (see Tables 5 i 6).

Table 5. (the man who should "have the leading role in the household")

nationality	agrees completely	agrees partly	undecided	disagrees partly	disagrees completely
Serbian	19.3%	28.5%	4.5%	19.3%	28.5%
Romany	65.5%	18.2%	3.2%	6.1%	7.1%
Muslim	58.8%	31.4%	0.0%	3.9%	5.9%
Hungarian	10.4%	24.0%	5.2%	16.7%	43.7%
Yugoslav	0.0%	9.7%	9.7%	19.4%	61.3%

Table 6. ("the woman belongs in the house")

nationality	agrees completely	agrees partly	undecided	disagrees partly	disagrees completely
Serbian	14.4%	17.2%	3.8%	21.2%	43.5%
Romany	46.1%	18.6%	4.5%	15.3%	15.5%
Muslim	19.6%	49.0%	0.0%	9.8%	21.6%
Hungarian	8.3%	14.6%	5.2%	22.9%	49.0%
Yugoslav	3.2%	9.7%	3.2%	9.7%	74.2%

The pre-marital sexual relations would be allowed to one's son by 2/3 of Serbs, 1/2 of Romanies, 1/4 of Muslims, 2/3 of Hungarians and 87% of Yugoslavs, while it would not be approved under any circumstances by 9% of Serbs, 27% of Romanies, 1/2 of Muslims

and 6% of Hungarians. Among the Yugoslavs there is not such a prohibition. The premarital sexual relations with one's daughter would be approved by 40% of Serbs, 15% of Romanies, 2% of Muslims, almost a half of Hungarians and 3/5 of Yugoslavs, while it would not be approved under any circumstances by 1/4 of Serbs, 2/3 of Romanies, 88% of Muslims, 15% of Hungarians and 6% of Yugoslavs (see Table 7).

Table 7.

nationality	premarital sex with the son			premarital sex with the daughter		
	by all means	perhaps	by no means	by all means	perhaps	by no means
Serbian	64.9%	26.4%	8.7%	40.5%	34.8%	24.7%
Romany	51.1%	21.7%	27.3%	15.3%	20.2%	64.5%
Muslim	23.5%	23.5%	52.9%	2.0%	9.8%	88.2%
Hungarian	66.7%	27.1%	6.3%	46.9%	37.5%	15.6%
Yugoslav	87.1%	12.9%	0.0%	61.3%	32.3%	6.5%

Except for the Muslims, the results point to the fact that the Romanies exhibit a high degree of conservatism (about 65-85%) which surely leads to a greater possibility for their social exclusion, on one hand, and to further strengthening of their in-family and inter-group cohesion, on the other. Different socio-psychological research projects have shown that conservatism (which is also etymologically clear) freezes the existing relations both within the group and towards the outside. Viewing the present situation as well as the problems faced by the Romanies, it is evident that an outstanding conservative trait in their sociocultural mentality finds the status quo suitable, that is, that the problems would further deepen if not made more sharp. On the other hand, the outstandingly-supported attitudes that "a woman's place is in the house" while the girls are discriminated against the young men regarding their sexual freedom would maintain a very unfavorable situation in the educational field. The abandoning of schools after several years of study as well as an early marriage would continue to present a problem among the girls (and later women) of the Romanies' population. It is also worth noticing that the women within the Romany population, likewise to a high percentage, support the conservative attitudes that further reinforce their subordinate position even within their own nation (74% of women agree that man should have the leading role, while 57% of them think that a woman's place is in the house; the same ratio among the Serbian women is 30% and 22%).

The attitude that it should be "known who the main authority is and who must be unquestionably obeyed" in the state is completely or partially accepted by 50% of Serbs, 80% of Romanies, 96% of Muslims, 37% of Hungarians and 10% of Yugoslavs while it is partially or absolutely rejected by 40% of Serbs, 9% of Romanies, 4% of Muslims, 50% of Hungarians and 68% of Yugoslavs. The view that the most important decisions in the state should be made by the man "adamant, with no redundant talking" or the same type of men occasionally consulting others is held by 23% of Serbs, 48% of Romanies, 49% of Muslims, 17% of Hungarians and 3% of Yugoslavs while the attitude that one single man cannot under any circumstances bring about the most important decisions is held by 40% of Serbs, 15% of Romanies, 14% of Muslims, 31% of Hungarians and 48% of Yugoslavs.

Once again with the exception of the Muslims, we see that the Romanies hold the first place regarding the authoritarian issue. They have been exposed to discrimination, segregation and general-social exclusion for centuries; for this reason they have different

mechanisms of mimicry built-in into their sociocultural mentality with the aim of preserving whatever was allowed to them within different states, namely, little freedom, little independence and little personal joy. As the second-rate citizens, they have never had any confidence in any government whatsoever and this fact has made them particularly sensitive to all sorts of danger regardless of where they come from. Their reluctance towards radicalism or revolutionary mentality is drawn from cruelty and lack of sympathy on the part of the communities they live in. Their honest or more frequently false loyalty to the authoritarian systems and leaders actually represents an effort to restrain themselves from any sort of exposure that might anger the powerful ones. Though subconsciously, they declare themselves and behave according to the slogan "In Rome Behave Like a Roman." In addition, since the majority populations in the Balkans also express authoritarianism, it is not surprising that they do the same. On the other hand, it can be noticed that the authoritarian traits of their sociocultural mentality are not conditioned only by their reaction to the pressures coming from the outside. Very much expressed conservatism, present in the Romany family relationships, is also a very fruitful ground for developing authoritarianism within the social character of this ethnic group. The analogies of the type "One head at home - One Head in the State" and "Firm Hand at Home - Firm hand in the State" are also very prone to interpreting the social reality as well as for delivering oneself from individual responsibility. Besides, in view of the extremely unfavorable position of the Romanies in all the spheres - especially the educational structure of their population¹² - it is not surprising that their submission to the traditional and simple models of exerting power is considerable.

The view that the Romanies are always siding with the government regardless of what it is like is held by 55% of Serbs, 77% of Romanies, 58% of Muslims, 35% of Hungarians and 23% of Yugoslavs while it is altogether rejected by 11% of Serbs, 9% of Romanies, 2% of Muslims, 7% of Hungarians and 19% of Yugoslavs. The attitude that the majority population in all states must make the most important decisions, regardless of the national minorities' disagreement, is entirely or partially supported by 2/3 of Serbs, 1/3 of Romanies, 1/4 of Muslims, 15% of Hungarians and almost a third Yugoslavs while it is entirely or partially rejected by 29% of Serbs, 40% of Romanies, 69% of Muslims, 78% of Hungarians and 65% of Yugoslavs (see Table 8).

Table 8. ("majority population should make all decisions")

nationality	agrees completely	agrees partly	undecided	disagrees partly	disagrees completely
Serbian	37.6%	26.6%	6.6%	14.8%	14.4%
Romany	16.7%	17.4%	16.1%	17.0%	32.9%
Muslim	2.0%	23.5%	5.9%	27.5%	41.2%
Hungarian	6.3%	8.3%	7.3%	16.7%	61.5%
Yugoslav	3.2%	25.8%	6.5%	16.1%	48.4%

¹² "The number of Romanies among the illiterate population is comparatively the highest – 35%. There are 79% of the Romanies who have not completed elementary education (as compared to 45% in all other ethnic groups), there are 4% of the Romanies who graduated in secondary school (as compared to 25% of the others), and there is only 0.2% of the Romanies with higher education (6% of the others). A. Mitrovic, Z.Gajic, *ibid*, pp.62.

All the above-given data clearly show that the Romanians realistically estimate their attitude towards the state, that is, the government. Therefore, the majority of them consciously choose the option that they must not, under any circumstances, cause "any turbulence" or arise public attention; such a behavior pattern is also cherished among their descendants as well as within the Romany community at large. They think, feel or know that any form of merging with those against the government may bring them great problems; thus they most often choose to support the existing government "regardless of what it is like." In addition, they express a high degree of authoritarianism regarding the making of more important social decisions despite the protests of other national minorities they otherwise belong to. The acceptance of the existing and the respect for the power and the government, therefore, represent one of more important characteristics of their sociocultural mentality.

The view that the national minorities and the ethnic groups are given too many rights in our society is held (entirely or partially) by 59% of Serbs, 19% of Romanians, 25% of Muslims, 17% of Hungarians and 19% of Yugoslavs while it is absolutely or partially rejected by 27% of Serbs, 62% of Romanians, 53% of Muslims, 66% of Hungarians and 55% of Yugoslavs. Concerning the question whether the Romanians should have the same rights as the other peoples and national minorities, the following percentage scale is obtained: it is entirely or partially accepted by 85% of Serbs, 97% of Romanians, 100% of Muslims, 83% of Hungarians and 84% of Yugoslavs.

The fact that one fifth of the Romanians think that the "national minorities and the ethnic groups are given too many rights" and that almost all the Romanians claim that they have the same rights as others (that is, as the majority population) is only an apparent paradox. Their instinct for self-preservation is evidently manifested in this case as well. The knowledge that in the last decade the conflicts between the minority rights and the majority rights brought about bloodshed in which the minorities were most often the victims raises caution in them as well as the so-called "diplomatic attitude." Some of them (19%) go even so far as to claim that "we should not exaggerate with the minority rights" while, at the same time, the Romanians "should have the same rights as others" (97%) including the majority itself. It can be concluded from the given data that the Romanians, with the support of the other minorities and the majority population, could considerably improve their legal-political status and afterwards all the other social positions. Of course, this could be achieved if there is an agreement about undertaking positive discrimination against the Romanians as the most deprived minority in our state.

If an arithmetic average is found for certain sets of questions the following results could be achieved: the greatest degree of conservatism is manifested by Muslims (80%), then Romanians (75%), Serbs (40%), Hungarians (29%) and Yugoslavs (12%). Regarding authoritarianism the order is identical, namely Muslims (72%), Romanians (64%), Serbs (37%), Hungarians (28%) and Yugoslavs (7%).

The research done so far has shown that the Romanians in Serbia in the last several decades are the last on the educational, professional and economic status scale so that their responses to the social environment are different from those of the other nations and minorities. The hypothesis given in the research project, namely, that the Romanians, compared to the others, are more prone to conservatism and authoritarianism is completely confirmed. Comparing the obtained data about the Romany population with the ones obtained in the majority (Serbian) population, it can be seen that the Romanians

are to a considerable extent (30-40%) more conservative and authoritarian than the Serbs (regarding some other nations and minorities this percentage is even greater). The basic reasons for this should be looked for in their attitude towards their own tradition and culture as well as in their troubled adaptation to the existing dominant social and cultural models. One of the responses they give is the model of "the least resistance", that is, the desire to avoid being singled out for any reason within their environment.

Taking into consideration the research done so far that has pointed to a high degree of the Romanies' social exclusion as well as a discriminatory attitude towards them in all the environments they live in, this research has confirmed their troubled adaptation in Serbia as well. Exposed to discrimination and negative stereotypes they (subconsciously) create various defense mechanisms thus building their own sociocultural model that would probably alleviate the effects of the negative attitude towards them. Still, this model would, on the other hand, contribute even more to their segregation or assimilation while, at the same time, it would create among other nations a prejudice about the impossibility of their integration. The research data point to a very high degree of the social, ethnic and racial distance towards the Romanies in Serbia and this has, unfortunately, confirmed almost all of our hypotheses. Only the hypothesis that "the Romanies, regarding the majority population and the other ethnic minorities, exhibit a higher degree of alienation (anomie and political powerlessness)" has not been confirmed and this may appear, at first sight, slightly intriguing. However, any careful analysis would lead us to conclude that a high degree of alienation even among the other nations actually represents a result of the devastating policy of the former regime that, so far as national affiliation is concerned, has not made any big difference among people; in other words, we were all in the same unfavorable position.

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SOCIJALNA I ETNIČKA DISTANCA PREMA ROMIMA U SRBIJI

Bogdan Djurović

Rezultati istraživanja su skoro u potpunosti potvrdili postavljene hipoteze, kao i generalnu hipotezu da su Romi u procesima tranzicije srpskog društva i dalje diskriminirani i da su njihova socijalna isključenost, segregacija i (u manjoj meri) asimilacija evidentni. Dobijeni podaci nedvosmisleno vode zaključku da je socijalna, etnička i rasna distanca prema Romima evidentna i da je, u vezi s tim, neophodno preduzeti energične mere kroz obrazovne, socijalne i političke programe. Uzorkom je obuhvaćeno 12 nacija, ali se samo pet pokazalo statistički značajnim: Srbi, Romi, Muslimani, Mađari i Jugosloveni. Mereno klasičnom Bogardusovom skalom, rezultati su, u zavisnosti od pretpostavljenih socijalnih odnosa, ukazali na izrazitu pravilnost. Onih koji ne bi stupili u brak sa Romima je (u zavisnosti od nacije) između 55% i 79,5%, a onih koji Rome ne bi želeli za prijatelje između 13% i 24%. Rome kao susede ne bi rado prihvatilo između 16% i 59% ispitanika i, konačno, u istoj državi sa njima ne bi zivelo između 6% i 16%. Podaci iz Bogardusove skale, kombinovani sa drugim baterijama pitanja, ukazuju i na evidentnu rasnu distancu prema Romima. Seksualne odnose sa Romima ne bi prihvatilo oko 50% ispitanika, a direktnu transfuziju krvi bi odbilo (osim u neposrednoj životnoj opasnosti) između 30 i 40% njih. Potrebno je napomenuti da, u određenim slučajevima, Srbi ispoljavaju veći stepen distance prema Albancima i Muslimanima, ali to bitno ne menja negativan odnos prema Romima, jer i ostale nacionalne manjine ispoljavaju relativno visok stepen distance prema njima.

Ključne reči: *Romi, segregacija, asimilacija, diskriminacija, socijalna isključenost, socijalna distanca, etnička distanca, rasna distanca, adaptacija, integracija, identitet.*