

THE SOCIAL REALITY OF THE ROMA IN BULGARIA (FROM THE VALUE OF DIFFERENCES TO EMPOWERED RELATIONSHIPS)

The policies for the protection of the different ethnic communities of the European Community are integrated into national law. But the legal institutional framework is not enough to create a better world for "the different." The report classifies the peculiarities of the social reality of the Roma. The results of an empirical study of the problems of cohabitation of Bulgarians and Roma in Kremikovtsi, Garmen, are presented. An inductive approach has been used in which the localized case provides recommendations for resolving the pressing problems of minority inclusion towards universal values and ensuring equal working conditions. It is proposed to change the management approach by respecting the differences.

JEL: A12; A13; J01; J14; J15; J24; M14; M51; M54

1. Introduction

The policies for the protection of the different ethnic communities of the European Community are integrated into national legislation. The legislative framework, however, is not enough to create a better world for "the different". Public, regional, national and urban initiatives and projects prove their vital role in addressing the pressing problems of minority inclusion towards universal values and ensuring a level playing field for training and work. It is necessary as a society to give ourselves a chance, to accept and understand the differences between us so that we can learn from them in order to be prudent and responsive. Above all, we must hear the "strangers" to help them develop themselves according to their desires and dreams, in harmony with our goals and dreams. Through good-faith dialogue and mutual tolerance, joint, purposeful and consistent efforts can achieve social and economic success as well as shared prosperity.

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2. Characteristics of the social reality of the Roma

Roma are the third largest ethnic group in Bulgaria with a tendency to increase. According to data from the National Statistical Institute (NSI), the population census in 2011, with 325343 people or 4.9% of Bulgarian citizens being identified as Roma. According to unofficial data from Roma organizations that have carried out their own census, the Roma population in Bulgaria exceeds about twice the official number, i.e. about 700,000 people, making them the most numerous minority.

The main characteristics of the social reality of the Roma are poverty, low standard of living, domestic violence, lack of perspective and lack of vision for the future. Problems with Roma illiteracy are a major factor in their segregation. There is a serious imbalance in the education of Bulgarians and Roma. The illiterate persons in self-identified as Roma are 11.8%, while for Bulgarians they are 0.5% (NSI, 2011). Roma report as reasons why they tear their children out of school – lack of clothing and teaching material; children take care of younger children or work; lack of motivation to learn as the school does not integrate them and children feel isolated, especially when they do not understand Bulgarian. Parents do not understand the role of the school in shaping the character and the values of the child. Education is not a conscious necessity and is not a value to most Roma. Roma do not see the importance of education due to the existing discriminatory attitude of employers and weaker opportunities for employment.

Roma are a specific vulnerable group characterized by low educational and professional levels, lack of built-up work habits for full inclusion in the labor market, which in turn leads them to their economic and social disintegration. The Partners of Bulgaria Foundation (2005) conducted a survey according to which "two-thirds of the Roma who have never worked are women". The results of a 2007 Amalipe Center survey on the status of the Roma woman support these data and strengthen them as a trend. According to him, only 31% of women work. The percentage of women retired by sickness (6%) is also relatively high (Kroumova and Ilieva, 2008).

Roma women who have completed primary and secondary education are respectively 36.9% and 4.23% of the Roma community (Pamporov et al., 2008). The main reasons why early Roma women drop out of school are: the status of the Roma woman in the family and its unjust position, which are determined by the ethnocultural model and the strong patriarchal character of the Roma community; the main traditional role of a woman related to childbirth, raising and upbringing. Their illiteracy or low education influences the child's educational aspirations and school success.

Some parents do not let their daughters at school for fear they will be stolen. Sexual maturity occurs when leaving school and marrying at a minor age. About 80% of Roma create families before the age of majority (Vassileva, 2009). According to data from the Amalipe Center Survey (2011), the average age of the first cohabitation for Roma people with unfinished primary education is 16 years.

Nearly two-thirds of the total number of Roma in Bulgaria are children and young people up to the age of 30, which determines the higher birth rate. During the period 2001-2003 it

is 26.7 per thousand (Tomova et al., 2004). In 2011, UNICEF (2016) found "the trend of increasing the number of girls born under 16.

The conclusion is that Roma are a community with the earliest marriages and family cohabitation in the country. This leads to the early dropping of Roma children from school, to their systematic fallout from the labor market, to mass and deep poverty, to living in segregated neighborhoods in poor housing conditions and diminishing control, hampering their socialization and transferring the values and norms of the macro-society.

3. The co-existence of Bulgarians and Roma with empirical research in comparative terms

The authors of the survey are inspired by the international initiative "Decade of Roma Inclusion", the European Parliament's Resolution on European Roma Strategy, the National Strategy and the Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society. The aim of the survey is to outline the main viewpoints of Bulgarians and Roma (majority/minority) about their relationships, values, attitudes and practices in the period 2015-2017. The subject of the survey is the Roma in Kremikovtsi, Garmen, Blagoevgrad region. The subject of research is the relationship and co-existence between Bulgarians and Roma in this region.

3.1 Methodology of the study

The basis of the study is the idea of social attitude based on the chance to act in a certain way. An important focus of the study is the attitude toward another and the degree of closeness. For the purposes of the study, social attitude is seen as a "subjective chance" when two actors have oriented their behavior bilaterally and orient their own actions to expectations. Social attitude is understood as an "objective chance" when an observer observes and "transcribes" that there is a mutual orientation between acting and social action as a "face-to-face".

Qualitative and quantitative methods have been applied in the process of empirical research. Quantitative research measures respondents' attitudes, attitudes, and behaviors by studying their socio-demographic and psychographic profiles. Qualitative research focuses on Roma and their real experiences. Reveals their conscious or unconscious attitudes or perceptions. The methods used for contacting the respondents are a direct personal interview and group discussions. In this way, the limitations of the two methods are overcome and the strength of the qualitative approach of research is increased. The aim is to understand the attitudes and practices of the Roma community in depth, to explore their perceptions of equality and integration of the Roma, to identify their needs for integration, training and work. The qualitative research attempts to explain the behavior of the Roma - "why" they act in one way or another, one or another choice is made, the motivation is established. Through the focus group the attitudes of people with Bulgarian citizenship to the Roma education and work opportunities were studied.

3.2 Results of the study

Roma as an ethnically different community in Bulgaria

From a historical point of view, it is valid the idea of the Roma as people who are in a non-privileged position with regard to the other European different peoples – "... with the first attempts to construct the Bulgarian national identity the Roma appear in the position of the stranger, of the stigma another ... characteristic of the medieval Christian worldview, which, based on the Scriptures, divides the peoples of the world into three types - heirs of Noah's sons Sim (Asia), Ham (Africa) and Japheth (Europe) and the sin of his father Ham was cursed to be the slave of Shem and Japheth (Bit.9: 25-27). Behind such a mythological order is the hidden social notion that Gypsies are ethnos, which is below the rest of European peoples. "(Grekova, 2002). Although it is a mythological perspective, the idea of who/what is rom is knowledge that is transmitted without questioning from generation to generation.

In our modern state, the modern state claims that all people are equal, but at the same time it creates the thinking of ethnic difference as defining the alienation between Bulgarians and Roma. The language (mother tongue), domicile and name give grounds for identifying (outside) and/or identifying (inside) ethnicity. By meeting and already self-identifying through the ethnic in "us" also arouses and roots the desire to think, feel, speak, act like through the ethnic. "Ethnic self-awareness among Gypsies has a complex hierarchical structure, as well as a peripheral orientation towards other ethnic communities. The main model of ethnic self-consciousness among gypsies is three-tier - awareness of belonging to a group, awareness of belonging to the gypsy community and consciousness of belonging to the macro-society in which they live or lived before "(Pamporov, 2006).

Roma as a minority

The concept of "minority" arises on the basis of political emphasis on the importance of a particular social definition. People who are a minority are negatively marked "... as a difference shared by a number of people and / or attributed to them as significant. In fact, it is significant for us – "we" are normal because we have somehow been in the position of normative. "Minority" is a kind of "imagined community," but the essence is who, how, and why does it think it as "community": "inside" or "outside"... "(Grekova, 2002). The difference between a group of people is marked by origin. Outwardly, this distinction is called with certain and established features that are "known" to be typical of each "representative" of a particular minority, and that knowledge is passed on. By meeting and recognizing the other as belonging to a minority, he/she is misled under the appropriate type, and unqualified knowledge is reproduced.

Roma as different and therefore foreign

People from minority groups are identified through a negative distinction from "me" and others like me. The municipality of Gotse Delchev, the municipality of Garmen and the municipality of Hadjidimovo are places where Bulgarians, Bulgarians-Mohammedans,

Roma and Turks live in relative union – in school and factory, in the field, together celebrate their holidays. Nonetheless, the difference often sets a notion of the majority (the Bulgarians) of foreignness, not of "us", and consequently leads to the closure of "us" and the non-admission of the others.

When the difference of the other acquires a negative value for "me", i. whenever the world is enclosed in "our" world, I distinguish the other as a foreign one... "the alien yields characteristic dimensions – it is not everything that is different from" our "but only that which is different from ours, which ours labeled as alien .e. as incompatible, unacceptable, "abnormally different".

Relations between Bulgarians and Roma

Since the time of settling in Kremikovtsi, relations between them and the people living in the villages of Marchevo and Garmen have been maintained. By looking at the relationship between Bulgarians and Roma as time-consuming to understand the closeness between them, we distinguish a relationship with a knowledge and past experience with and for the Other, and we can together make a project about the future and entering the relationship with the other, with whom I have neither past experience nor knowledge.

Cultural difference

The cultural difference becomes a problem only in a specific interaction where one social actor looks at the interaction through the prism of his "cultural" specificity. Recognizing the "other" and perceiving it as a culturally different inevitably "he" becomes not of "our".

If I (the group/community/culture) sets the norm of action, behavior, practices, etc., in recognizing the other as being different to "our" we label the label as non-normal, "odd," and " my interest "

The cultural specificity was not observed in two variants:

- when the other is important to me only when doing something;
- when I treat one another as another - a unique human being.

Cultural difference is not a problem:

- when interactions are avoided with "abnormally" different;
- when interacting with a representative of the other cultural tradition;
- when the cultural identity is not noticeable or not significant in the interaction.

According to the survey, the following results are outlined as a barrier to relations between Bulgarians and Roma:

R: The neighborhood is separate from above. They took us all the fields there... They began to take in allowing themselves to pick from the ginkgo, vineyards and everything else that

is being grown by the people of Marchevo. They, even before the fruit is ripe, have been cut off, and we all, including us, have been forced to give up our lands there and leave them without sewing them.

I: In your opinion, why is the "theft"?

R: Hunger ...

... (Interview with a woman (former teacher) from Marchevo village)

In the narrative above, there is an attribution of guilt: "they took our lands," that is, the fault falls on the people living in Kremikovtzi district. People from the neighborhood take fruits, vegetables and other sown things from "foreign" gardens, and respondents of Bulgarian origin call it hunger. The reason is not enough when it comes to "their lands" and humanity is lost in the opposition "ours". Through this opposition, as Maya Grekova (1996) asserts, relations with others are being built. Admitting "them" not as "us", but at the same time in their "space", the knowledge "here and now" comes to life for them in "my experience."

"I" as an acting individual in the context of the other is immersed in ours – it is taken out of the flow of what is actually going on. The contact with the alien, as much as it is transmitted in itself ... however regulated, by the usual system, attitude, together with the contact with the foreign - immediately given and concrete individual. It is these particular experiences in the neighborhood between people of different ethnicity that turn into stories in the field of "our". Returning from "there" and telling "Me" for there-then, understands the story, but without the subjective meaning of the action and the experience of the past. And from this narrative that "I" speaks of his action with another "there and then", the other "here and now" has the opportunity to accept it because it is closer to "me" because I am (or objection), or to doubt, for the reason that he has ever told other things like "I", which are "false": "But if you tell me about what you have done action... there-and-then, as long as you do not / do it "here and now", I can understand your narrative (the narrative as here-and-now yours but not the subjective meaning of your "there-and-then" action. Or rather, I can "understand" your action there-and then, leaning it under some kind ... "

Concrete relationships between specific people "there-and-then" become stories that turn into transmitted knowledge. Here the question arises for interchanging of views: In what circumstances is it possible to put in place the other and when my "here" and its "out there" can be mediated by a common subject of interest?

In excerpts of the interview seems to be an attempt to understand the subjective motive, which carried further – why detaches fruit from a foreign land (P: Hunger), perhaps in past experience 'I' was also placed in similar situations or imagine if so, what would you do? When the land in question is "mine", there is no attempt to understand the Other and the action it has ever done – and the other is misled by the type.

This is an example of how it influences the environment in which individuals are and how integrated it is. Investigating the location of the neighborhood was an emphasis on the ring road, which was built about four years ago. The reason for the neighborhood, moving to the village of Leshten or Kovachevitsa, is the increased tourism. This intervention "from the outside" makes it possible to ask questions about the situation in the village of Garmen and

the quality of work of the municipality. In the past, the shops in the village of Marchevo and / or Gurmen have provided an environment in which Roma and Bulgarians are recognized, met and communicated. While "now" their relations are limited, because twenty-five years ago in Kremikovtsi quarter, a shop was built (by Bulgarians). To date, the shops are two, and this reduces the chance for meetings between Bulgarians and Roma in another place, except in an institution like the school. Based on measurement of social distance seems to be another field of analysis, so-called. "Aliens," which are people moving into the area "Padarkata" implemented conflict-free relations with the "old settlers."

3.3 Conclusions and recommendations from the study

Ethnic groups, tolerance and acceptance of differences

The integration of the Roma population is a two-way process – it requires the participation of both the minority and the majority and does not exclude the preservation of diversity. Integration is focused on development – the minority has the same opportunities for personal and professional development as the majority population only if they have the chance to be in the same place (see Garmen case). Integrated people can identify themselves on the basis of ethnic or national origin, without creating tension or provoking intolerance. Under the social adaptation of the Roma, we understand the process of active adaptation to a particular environment, resulting in a balance between individual living activity and the environment.

Ethnic Tolerance in Job Selection

The culture of accepting differences in people and the diversity of ethnicities is a world cultural heritage. All Member States of the European Union are adhered to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (1969), which includes the term "racial discrimination" - color, race, origin, national or ethnicity. The European Social Charter states that "everyone has the right to the right conditions for vocational guidance to help him choose a profession commensurate with his personal abilities and interests," and the countries that have ratified the charter are committed to "worker to make a living with a freely chosen job".

Europe is moving towards an equitable society, full of diverse people, reciprocal, respectful, and learning from one another. This goal is a challenge requiring more than creating regulations and laws. It is necessary to take measures in each country, town, village to encourage people to accept others with positivism and sincere curiosity about their opinions and views.

In Bulgaria, through the legislative framework that is synchronized with the European one, the prevention of discrimination against Roma is sought and, through positive measures, seeks to implement a policy of equal opportunities. Employers have the freedom to manage their employees, taking into account the specifics of each person; have the opportunity to create the same regime for everyone in the organization; determine the conditions for qualification and re-qualification of the personnel. However, the availability of laws and

policies is not a guarantee that the notion of equality has become part of the minds of employers. The disadvantage of a Roma woman on the labor market is evidenced not only by the empirical study of the authors, but also by other independent studies. For example, according to a survey by Partner Bulgaria Foundation (2004), two-thirds of the Roma who have never worked are women, and the 2007 Amalipe Center survey shows that only 31% of women work.

In order to improve employers' attitudes towards the diversity of ethnicity, it is proposed to change the management approach from perceiving "different as alien" to "respect for differences".

Change in management approach

The approach to respect for diversity draws people's attention to building empowered relationships that enable them to work in a coherent and interdependent way, stimulating initiatives to increase education and lifelong learning.

A model of management through respect for differences has five steps: 1. Eradicating stereotypes about Roma; 2. Acquiring the ability to hear and study differences in the assumptions of others; 3. Building meaningful relationships with the "different" (Roma); 4. Strengthening the personal empowerment; 5. Exploration and identification of ethnic distinctive features.

The five-step management model, through respect for differences, would help employers cope with the problems arising from the diversity of ethnicities in the work environment.

This model requires targeted planned events and actions of leadership in the organization related to personal growth and development. The first four steps may be done spontaneously, but heel actions are mandatory after completing work on the first four.

The model of respect for differences is based on the fact that people work effectively when they feel appreciated, i.e. when they believe that their individual and group differences are taken into account. The key to empowerment is the ability to acquire knowledge from people considered different. When people feel valued and empowered, they can build relationships in which to work coherently and interdependently. These principles shape the content and stages of the process that assists individuals in sharing their beliefs and assumptions with respect to others and their individual and group distinctive features.

Possible prudent actions to tackle the problems posed by ethnic differences are:

- Too often, people take the time to get to know, trust, and depend only on those people they feel the most comfortable – usually those they think they have the most resemblance. They do not take the time to build relationships with people whose distinctive features force them to feel uncomfortable. To overcome this stereotype, it is necessary to encourage leaders to work with their teams to build meaningful relationships with those they think are different – the Roma.
- Enhancing the degree of personal empowerment leads to an open learning from the differences of others;

- Identifying the differences of ethnicity that shape the values of people and their views on norms of behavior or their interpretation of the rules. In some cases, the group's distinctive feature may be a general perspective resulting from the way it was treated by another group.
- Work on acquiring knowledge to respect differences is best implemented in small, event-driven discussion groups. The small groups are the laboratories in which people help in exploring controversial issues created by differences with others. Valuable feel when they know they will be heard, this is also the leader's first responsibility. When they feel appreciated and their value adds value, people are motivated to do their best.

Achieving respect for differences can create people who have a different way of thinking and understanding of the world. Sometimes a person may never understand the "different," but he will still accept and respect them.

This model of governance not only focuses on affirmative action and equal recruitment but is also a way of helping the person to think through his / her proposals and expectations about all sorts of differences – individual, cultural, geographic, ethnic and organizational. Consequently, respect for differences is an approach that focuses both on personal development work and on activity to increase organizational productivity.

The more people are empowered to deal with the problems created by ethnic differences and to use their leadership skills and responsibilities, the more powerful the organization's position is to establish specific strategies in order to benefit from its diversity and the coherence of differences, as sources of collective growth, creativity and strength.

4. Conclusion

Working with "different" is a unique opportunity for personal and leadership development. The approach of management by respecting differences is a natural progression of core corporate values. Encouraging a direct and frank survey of assumptions and stereotypes about the people and groups to which they belong is almost always a highly intense, emotional work. Thus, managers learn to "provide security for the different" and how to help them discover "what they are useful for themselves and for the organization." This approach helps managers to identify and eliminate the obstacles that arise when working in a multicultural environment.

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