The Czech Republic: Minority Rights since the Days of the Habsburg Empire

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Czech Republic embodies a remarkable exception from the set of cases dealt with in this volume. From the macroscopic point of view, the Czech Republic resembles rather homogeneous country compared to Canada or Switzerland. Nationally and ethnically rather homogenous country[1] with considerable low level of religious alignments, low profile of ethnic-based political parties and peacefully departed from Czechoslovak federation does not look intuitively to be an appropriate object of scholar research aimed at minority claims and their political treatment.

Historical path towards the present situation, however, shows much colourful picture of a country struggling with multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, as well as multi-religious composition of the population. To simplify slightly, an observer can read the history of the second half of Czech 20th century as a history of de-complexification of Czech population. After extermination of Jewish population of Czechoslovakia, the German (and to considerable lower level Hungarian) inhabitants of Czechoslovakia were expelled, Ruthenia with Ukrainian-speaking (but with strong distinctive regional identity equipped) population was transferred to the Soviet Union and after partition of Czechoslovakia, the remaining Czech Republic left behind salient issue of Hungarian minority inhabiting Southern Slovakian regions. This short history is far from being a triumph of Czech politics of solving the ethnic and national disputes. It can rather serve as an example of how drastic measures were adopted in Europe only slightly more than half a century ago to achieve one of the ideals painted by enlightened concept of modern homogeneous nation that rules over a comprehensive territory of a nation-state.

Therefore, the important part of the study must be devoted to explanations of how the Czech lands once became multi-cultural, what problems it took along, what kind of conflict unfroze during periods of reluctant democratisation of the 19th and hasty de-democratisation of the 20th century and how the changing majority-minority configurations and clashed reached the climax in the turmoil if 1939-1945 period.

The partially coincidental, however fully accepted by political elite as well as public, strategy of violent homogenisation of the territory of the Czech Lands after the World War II did not remain without consequences for the recent politics of minority issues in the Czech Republic. By analysing the claims of politically relevant and in the same time contentious minority issues, such as situation of Czech Roma population and different strategies of its politicisation, the paper will not only show path dependency on experiences with violent unification and homogenisation of the Czech Lands but it will address important issue of how to cope with minorities, that are – for different reasons – unable to set the coherent political appeal of claims and to create sound minority. The experience with these "silent" but visible minorities with huge and risky potential of arousing political conflicts can bring some lessons for larger European Union of today.

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[1] 64 per cent of inhabitants are declaring to belong to the Czech nation according to the general public census from 2011 and if we put together Czech, Moravians, and Silesians who constitute something we might call historical nationalities, their share would increase up to 69 per cent. One quarter of respondents however did not answer the question concerning their ethnicity/nationality at all since it was not obligatory item of the census. The citizens had also right to mark two different nationalities as well such as Czech and Moravian. The question related to religiosity was facultative as well and 44 per cent of answer remained void plus roughly one third of respondents positively declared not to belong to any religion / church. You can find the data online (http://vdb.czso.cz/sldbvo/en/#!stranka=podle-tematu&tu=30719&th=&vseuzemi=null&v=&vo=null&void=), accessed 16 February 2015 (see table 111). The census from 2001 however showed that 94 per cent of inhabitants belong to Czech (90.4 per cent), Moravian, or Silesian nationality.

2 CZECH LANDS – A COUNTRY OSCILLATING BETWEEN THE DIALOGUE OF CULTURES AND CONFRONTATION

Leaving aside the ancient tradition of great migration of people, we must start the debate on historical tradition of multi-national settlement of the Czech Lands in the medieval period. Already during the 12th century, the migrants from Germany came to colonize vast sheers of land in peripheral regions of Bohemian Kingdom (first documented German settlement was set in Prague at the end of the 11th century) and created the most important minority living at the territory of Czech Kingdom.

Another important aspect increasing diversity of the Czech Lands was presence of **Jewish** settlement[2] in bigger as well as smaller cities of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. First appearance of Jewish tradespeople can be followed since the turn of the 9th and the 10th centuries AD but continuous settlement took place more than a century later, first in Prague and Brno. The Jewish inhabitants were seen all through the medieval and early modern period as a strange element and ever since the 11th century, the Jewish ghettos used to be rather regular objects of pogroms and they, as in other European countries, failed to achieve integration into the structures of majority society. This peripheral position was reproduced until the end of the 18th century[3] when the reforms of Joseph II emancipated not only Jewish but as well Protestant inhabitants of the Czech Lands. Full equalization in a sense of obtaining equal citizenship status and full set of civic and political rights was however achieved not before the adoption of December Constitution in 1867. The process was a part of general turn from neo-absolutist concept of rule over the subjects to constitutional governance of citizens. Development of independent political representation of Jewish population was hampered by the increasing politicisation of national / linguistic Czech-German cleavage. Those Jews who spoke German adhered to German (usually liberal) parties meanwhile the petty bourgeoisie, tradesmen and craftsmen from small towns at Czech and Moravian countryside aligned with Czech liberal or socialist parties.[4] The same situation applies for the interwar Czechoslovakia with very favourable citizenship policy towards the Jews but without incentives to mobilize the fragmented Jewish population[5] in a way of a single and distinctive political community. Religious freedom was granted and the level of anti-Semitism remained comparably lower than in the rest of Central-Eastern Europe but the Jews were expected to socialize with the mainstream Czech or German populations which they actually did already since the end of 18th century. The "Czech" Jews underwent the same processes of secularisation as majority society did and until the introduction of racist laws in late 1938, there was actually no need to raise specific claims of the minority. After March 1939, there was no possibility to do so. Some Jewish families succeeded to emigrate from Czechoslovakia before; some succeeded even in the years 1939-1941, the rest was persecuted in concentration camps. Vast majority of Jews from the Czech Lands perished during the World War II. Two thirds of circa 120.000 of Jews living at the territory of Bohemia and Moravia in the interwar period died. Most of them left the country for Palestine and Israel in 1945-1950 and after Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Today, less than 3.000 Jews are among citizens of the Czech Republic.

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[2] Comprehensive survey of history of Jewish population in the Czech Lands offers a book of Tomáš Pěkný (2001) on which this brief historical note is based.

[3] The last expulsion of the Jewish community from Prague to the country side took part as late as in 1745-1748 by enlightened Empress Maria Therese.

[4] According to 1900 public census, 55 per cent of Jewish population of Bohemia used Czech language of communication (*Umgangssprache*) and 45 per cent used German. In 1930, 46 per cent of Jews in Czechoslovakia declared to belong to "Czechoslovak" nationality, 31 per cent to German nationality and only 20 per cent to Jewish nationality (Pěkný 2001: 133 and 137).

[5] Creation of interwar Czechoslovakia collected in this new country not only traditional Jewish population of Bohemia and Moravia but also Eastern much deeper religious Jewish communities inhabiting territory of Ruthenia and Slovak Jewish population of bigger cities (closer to cultural patterns of Bohemian and Moravian Jews) and countryside (closer to Ruthenian pattern). These culturally remote segments of Jewish population were unable to create any homogeneous representation to voice common interest.

First historical evidence of presence of **Roma** population at the Czech territory stems from early 15th century.[6] Relations between nomadic Roma and settled majorities were problematic since the very beginning because Roma were perceived mostly as declassed segment detached form majority strongly bound on local status. Systemic de-legalisation and proscriptions of Roma by legal measures however did not part up until the 18th century. On the other hand, the legislation that emerged in this period aimed at complete expulsion of Roma nomads from territory of Bohemia and Moravia. Practical application of these drastic measures however proved to be complicated and waves of tacit tolerance and open repression followed one another. During the period of Maria Therese and Joseph II the state attempted at forceful and often violent assimilation of Roma with special emphasis of termination of nomadic way of life of Roma. Process of so-called "*sedentrisatrion*" (forced settlement) succeeded in Moravia. In Bohemia and Silesia remained vast majority of Roma nomads. In both cases, Roma remained on the fringes of society, poor and mainly illiterate[7], living in large families inhabiting peripheral parts of cities and villages (so-called "gypsy camps"). Legal measures aiming at assimilation and suppression of nomadic way of life were repeatedly implemented before as well as after the World War I (1888/1927/1939) and despite generally declared purpose to regulate through surveillance and constant police pressure nomadic way of life regulation of Roma population was the main rationale behind. During the Second World War, discrimination policies turned to extermination approach. Two concentration camps were built in summer 1940 to detent male who did not give up nomadic way of life. In Lety u Písku (Bohemia), 2.235 men and 1.614 men in Hodonín u Kunštátu (Moravia) were imprisoned. Roma constituted in different periods between 5-25 per cent of prisoners. There is no evidence of how many Roma were later on sent to die in extermination camps. Systematic holocaust of Czech Roma started in summer 1942. Extermination measures valid for the territory of German *Reich* were applied in Protectorate as well. During the second half of 1943, most of the Czech Roma was transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau (in sum 4.495 people). Among 6.500 Roma in protectorate, 4.870 were imprisoned and only 583 prisoners returned after the war (Nečas 1999: 83). The autochthonous Roma and Sinti population was thus practically exterminated.

The new wave of Roma migration, mainly from Slovakia, took part after the War. Main reasons of Roma migration to the Czech lands were poor living conditions there and possibility to find a job in the industry or construction services even as completely unskilled labour force. The dynamics of migration from Slovakia to the Czech Lands covers the following table.

Number of Roma inhabitants in the Czech Lands 1947-1989

Year	Number of Roma	As a per cent of population
1947	16.752	0,19
1967	59.467	0,60
1970	60.279	0,61
1980	101.193	0,98
1989	145.738	1,41

Source: Nečas 1999: 84.

Note: The figures are underestimated; actually the number of Roma population could be even two times higher.

The goal of official "Roma" politics remained assimilation but the violent methods were replaced with non-violent ways of discrimination like suppression of Roma language, disregard to declaration of Roma people to Roma nationality and administrative inclusion of Roma among Czech or Slovak nationality in population

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[6] Succinct description of history of Roma people in Bohemia and Moravia offers Ctibor Nečas (1999).

[7] Until 1945, only two Roma man completed the tertiary education (Nečas 1999:40). The entire population of Roma in the Czech lands reached several thousands.

censes, official usage of term "*Cikán*" with implicit discriminatory connotations in Czech. According to law from December 1958, nomadic way of life was completely prohibited. The law was strictly enforced although it disrespected the freedom of movement protected even by the socialist constitution. Level of repressions decreased since early 1970s, acculturation to the major society however remained the goal of official politics until the Velvet Revolution.[8]

As already indicated the biggest and politically most important was the **German** minority with its tradition of autochthonous continuous settlement since the early medieval period. The inflow of German settlers was strongly supported by the Přemysl Dynasty in order to inhabit and cultivate lands in the peripheral border regions of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. Because of this settlement as well as because of geographical proximity, substantial aspects of political, legal, and societal order in the Czech medieval and early modern kingdom were influenced by the example of German lands. This does not mean that mutual relations were only cooperative. Especially after raise of Hussite movement together with increasing relevance of religious cleavage in the Czech lands, the mutual Czech-German relations oscillated between mode of cooperation and mode of conflict. Emergence of Reformation in German Empire somewhat paradoxically shifted the salience of particular cleavages in a way of cross-cutting between religious and national cleavage (Brokl 1999: 49-52) and in a consequence, created for a short period of a turn of 16th and 17th centuries quite unique atmosphere of vibrant and free exchange of humanist ideas among different religious confessions and nations. Violent re-catholicisation under the Habsburg dynasty after 1620 however stressed religious as well as political differences between the Czech and German speaking parts of Czech Kingdom society and in a way destroyed the Czech feudal elite thus marginalizing political importance of Czech speaking majority in favour of different foreign feudal dynasties invited by the Habsburgs to take over properties of emigrated Protestant aristocratic families.

One of the tasks of Czech National Awakening, that entered its first period of "scholar interest" in Czech language and culture as early as at the turn of 17th and the 18th century (see Hroch 1999), was therefore to overcome this societal, economic as well as political inferiority of Czech population vis-à-vis the German inhabitants of the country.

Confrontation with as well as contacts with German environment proved to be the most powerful inspiration for the Czech national activists (see Křen 1996). Achievements of German science, arts, education, and politics were carefully mirrored in effort of Czech counterparts to demonstrate that the Czech language, culture, and political representation are of the same capabilities as the big German neighbours are.[9] Major German political stance towards the Czech nation remained unclear in a sense to what extent can and shall the Czechs be accommodated to and participate at creation of new liberal and constitutional German empire. Famous Czech historian and politician František Palacký was invented to take part at no less famous Parliament in Frankfurt in 1848 to represent Bohemia and Moravia as two potential parts of new Germany. His refusal drew not only the rationale for official Czech politics favouring seeking of compromise with the Habsburg monarchy but demonstrated how complicated the relations between Czech majority and German minority will develop in 1848-1945 period. Together with turning of the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy from neo-absolutist to constitutional monarchy, the Czech-German disputes took the form of party and parliamentary competition which increased on severity in the course of time. All attempts of moderate forces to find some compromise failed in Bohemia and in 1913, the Bohemian autonomous institutions were temporally cancelled because the struggle between Czech and German politicians paralysed them. Only in Moravia, the compromise

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[8] Roma were officially recognized as an ethnic minority as late as 1991.

[9] A famous Czech historian Josef Pekař remarked in 1929: "*[I]f we are further than other Eastern nations in economic and industrial capability, in administration, discipline, and diligence, we owe it especially to the German education*" (reprinted in Pekař 1995: 509-510).

was found in 1905. Thanks to it the regional Moravian politics continued. The price was however high: *de facto* separation of Czech and German speaking territories accompanied by strict segregation of autonomous institutions in selected policy field like elementary and secondary education.

Emergence of Czechoslovakia in October 1918 was unwelcomed by its prospective German citizens. German political representation claimed independence of four border regions with German majority to join Austria or Germany. This attempt failed of course in the emerging post-war international order but the relations between German and Czechoslovak political representations remained cool. Only slowly found members of some political parties the way to cooperation with the Czechoslovak majority in the parliament and later on as a part of coalition governments (1926-1938).

Cautious attempts at mutual rapprochement were undermined by the consequences of the Great Depression that stroke Czechoslovakia slightly later than Germany but remained longer and devastated especially fragile industry of so-called Sudeten, the territories inhabited by the German population. The level of unemployment and pauperisation promoted increasing support for extremist, nationalist, secessionist and fascist political streams that took clear lead among the German public in 1935 parliamentary election when pro-Nazi secessionist Sudeten German Party (SDP) obtained more than two thirds of German voters. Deterioration of mutual relations continued quickly during the second half of the decade remarkable by escalation of German political claims vis-à-vis increasing power of Hitler in the sphere of international relations to apex in 1938. According to so-called Munich Accord, the border regions of Bohemia and Moravia were ceded to Germany and became directly part of German *Reich*.[10] To evaluate the minority claims of German, Hungarian and other minorities, one needs to take into consideration basic principles of official minority policy of Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia granted the human and political rights comparable to the highest contemporary European standards to individual citizens but failed to meet the demands for collective rights raised not only by German and Magyar population but as well by Slovak political elites. Original promises of autonomy or home rule given at the period of emergence of a new country or even before by Masaryk´s representation of Czech nation abroad (so-called Pittsburgh Agreement presumed broad autonomy of Slovakia) remained unimplemented and proposals of self-government for the German lands, Slovakia and Ruthenia offered or realised in 1938 came too late to satisfy the claims.

War, German occupation and anti-Czech policies of occupation administration culminated in extremely hostile mood concerning the German population at the territory of post-war Bohemia and Moravia (see Brandes 2006). The "solution" and revenge shall be displacement of German population. At least tacitly agreed upon by Allied Powers, the expulsion took part in two waves. The first so-called wild transfers of spring 1945 were characteristic by partially spontaneous and violent expatriation of citizens of German origin which was not organized and which was typically very brutal. Later on, norms organizing expulsion of German population were legislated and the expulsion took organized, controlled and generally less brutal form. The scope of provided measures covered the entire German population with the exception of verifiable anti-fascists and experts who were necessary for industrial production. In sum, circa 3 millions of former Czechoslovak citizens of German nationality were expelled for Germany.[11] As an outcome, dramatic shift from multi-ethnic

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[10] Smaller territorial rectifications took part simultaneously or slightly later on in favour of Hungary and Poland on costs of northern and especially southern regions of Slovakia and Ruthenia. The Hungarian and Polish minorities living there were used as a good pretext for territorial expansion.

[11] Czech lands were not the only part of Europe to expulse its "unwanted" minority. In the case of Czechoslovakia, there were transfers of Magyar and Slovak inhabitants between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. German minority was expulsed from the territory of Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Romania. In sum, circa 7 million of Germans were expelled and further 4 million flew to Germany between 1944 and 1950 (Johnson 2002: 233).

(Czech-German-Jewish, not to count other minorities) to homogeneous population took part in Czechoslovakia after 1945-1946 times of Sudeten Germans´ expulsion.[12]

Unwillingness to solve problems with minorities by compromise can be demonstrated by the pace of Czech-**Slovak** relation after 1989. The first Slovak claims that the federation shall be reformed in order to foster Slovak autonomy. First claims to dismantle Czechoslovakia was raised in Slovakia as early as in December 1989 (Krapfl 2009: 184) and so-called "Hyphen War"[13] concerning the new name of Czechoslovak Republic showed great symbolical meaning of reinforcement of symbols of statehood and sovereignty among Slovak politicians and public. After long period of almost permanent negotiations which did not lead to anything but to a blind alley, it was the Czech representation symbolized by the Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus who actually declared that the debate is over and the division of Czechoslovakia can be the only solution in early summer 1992. The rationale behind the decision of the Czech cabinet was concern about feasibility of a confederation proposed by Slovaks and experience made with Slovak politicians lacking will to find compromise solutions. On the other hand, exit was again selected as the easiest and swiftest way how to cope with minority claims. Exit opted for against the will of majority of both Czech and Slovak population.[14]

There is certain path dependency that could be traced when one looks at development of majority-minority relations in the Czech Lands since the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Democratisation of politics was not accompanied with coalescent behaviour of political elites, thus emergence of mass politics lead to sharpening of ethnic and national disputes. The World War II and its aftermath brought about tragic lesson of violent homogenisation and ethnic cleansing (in form of holocaust of Central European Jewish population, Nazi plans of Germanisation of Bohemia and Moravia, or post-war displacement of German minority). The new generations of citizens born after the War were taught that the best way how to solve the problems with minorities is to get rid with them. Perhaps this experience, whose moral consequences remained undiscussed during the period of communist regime at all and are yet to be fully understood by the whole Czech society, helps us to understand relative quick pace of events since the emergence of Czech-Slovak dispute on the reform of Czechoslovak federation which broke out in March 1990 and which escalated to so-called "velvet" (peaceful, negotiated) divorce of Czechoslovakia in 1992/1993. We have to remember that the Czech political elite first raised the option to dissolve Czechoslovakia after 1992 elections once finding that reaching the compromise with Slovaks is probably too hard and too costly. Tendency to force out the minority problems and claims from public discourse is visible still, as we demonstrate especially on a case of Czech Roma minority. Tendency, that owes a lot to specific Czech historical pathway from humanist tolerance through baroque rigid strictness, enlightened cultural and religious attempt at assimilation to an allegedly supreme German culture,

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[12] After the Velvet Revolution, the topic of expulsion of Sudeten Germans regained some political prominence in the Czech politics. Extremist parties (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Rally for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia) boosted anti-German rhetoric and mobilized their voters by distressing with claims of expulsed citizens for their lost properties. After signing of Czech-German Declaration in January 1997 (the text of declaration can be found online at http://www.mzv.cz/file/198499/CzechGermanDeclaration.pdf; accessed 4 March 2015) which politically closed the official debate on the matter between Germany and the Czech Republic, the mobilization potential of "Sudeten Germans Question" dropped dramatically. It does not mean that this element cannot be found at all. In presidential election campaign in 2013, for example, Miloš Zeman used the argument concerning German descent of the wife of his rival Karel Schwarzenberg to doubt on his patriotism.

[13] Czech politicians preferred to return to the interwar name Czechoslovak Republic, Slovak representation wanted to insert the hyphen between Czech and Slovak parts of the title. Finally a clumsy compromise was reached by acceptation of the name Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (see Stein 2000 for details on history of Czech-Slovak "velvet divorce").

[14] According to the opinion polls, 59 per cent of Czech respondents disagreed strongly or partially with a division of the country (Kunštát 2003: 3).

increasing salience of nationalist cleavage in the era of mass politics to violent homogenisation of the Czech Lands caused by external pressures as well as internal demand of majority population.[15]

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[15] The Czechoslovak case of WW2 and Post-War ethnic homogenisation is far from being unique in the area of Central and Eastern Europe and the Czechoslovakia represents here an example, not an exception (see for example Snyder 2010, Lowe 2013: 187-268, or Applebaum 2013: 116-146).

3 DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITIES

According to the last data of general population census which was held in 2011, the Czech Republic is rather homogeneous country. Majority of inhabitants declared to belong to the Czech nationality (or Moravian or Silesian one that are compatible and denote mainly strong attachment to a regional identity) and the share of other minor communities remains low.

There are many ways how to define or perceive a minority community status. Minorities are usually only relative because the can become majority in other territorial, political, ethnic, or cultural context. Minorities can be conceptualised in ethnic, linguistic, religious, regional, cultural, sexual, habitual or other terms. Identity of these communities can be assigned by the other as well as felt indigenously by the members of a community. To make the analysis possible, we must first define which type of community matters in the Czech context to be analysed here. First criterion that we have to apply is criterion of political relevance. Since the goal of the paper is to analyse minority claims that enter political arena, we must focus on those minorities that can be conceptualised according to political cleavages or at least medium-term salient political dividing lines.

The development of Czech politics after 1989 was remarkable by quickly increasing dominance of socio-economic based left-right cleavage which determines main space of political as well as party competition in the country. Besides this cleavage, other political cleavages proved influential, such as post-communist cleavage democracy versus communism and, especially in the early 1990s, the (catholic) church – state cleavage[16] as well as cleavage between Moravian "periphery" and Bohemian "centre" (Hloušek – Kopeček 2008: 526-533). Therefore we will pay attention to changing patterns of dynamics of Moravian political representation in the 1990s.

Leaving the level of pure party politics, we can detect other salient issues that create community claims and political responses, such as ethnic and national minorities.[17] There are **communities** which can be labelled as **historical**[18]: German minority (19 thousands of inhabitants according to the last population census), Polish (39 thousands), and, in a way, Slovak (148 thousands).[19] Slovak minority has so far not demonstrated any significant minority claims since the level of integration with Czech majority is for the reason of language and cultural proximities very high. Minority claims (right to free association, cultural rights, and state support for primary and secondary education in their languages) were recognized in very early period of democratisation together with new fully democratic concept of human rights. Only minor political problem arose in the 1990s, particularly with regard to general questions of property restitutions (in a case of the Jewish community) and

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[16] Wider societal salience of which is, however, limited only to question of restitution of Church properties which was practically solved by the Law 428/2012 on property compensation of churches and religious associations

[17] For the purpose of the paper, we can omit claims of sexual minorities. The Czech Republic as a secular country did not experience stronger counter-mobilisation against LGBT claims. On the other hand, the process of recognition of special rights of LGBT communities took considerable long pace. The law on registered partnership was adopted in 2006 (Law 115/2006) after almost 9 years of attempts to pass the norm. The claims of LGBT activist to equalize possibility of children adoption for homosexual couples remain still unfulfilled.

[18] The term "historical" might be interpreted in different ways. Here it simply denotes a minority that has been present at the territory of the Czech Lands in a substantial numbers prior to the processes leading to democratisation of Czechoslovakia after 1989 and emergence of independent Czech Republic in 1993. We are definitely not claiming or applying any essentialist view on minorities and we are aware of historically contingent and changing definition of these minorities as well as the role of changes in the process of construction of these minorities in the time. Since we are primarily dealing with the recent situation and with the political claims raised vis-à-vis the Czech (or the EU) authorities, we can leave the questions on historical construction of these minorities aside.

[19] The data can be somewhat misleading, since there was an option to declare two nationalities at once used typically by communities. The number of respondents who used this possibility reached almost 164 thousands.

compensation for post-war persecution (German minority) (Gabal et al. 1999: 108-153; Mareš et al. 2004: 65-77).

The only topic related to community claims somewhat paradoxically touched upon the otherwise uncontroversial **Slovak** minority. Already during the second half of the 1990s, political claim of recognition of dual citizenship of Slovaks living in the Czech Republic was arisen and together with this issue, general question of dual citizenship (originally prohibited by the Czech Law) was debated. The matter became object of legal and political debates for a decade and a half demonstrating the slow pace of finding of political compromise concerning the minority issues. Finally, a Law 186/2013 on State Citizenship enacted possibility to retain dual citizenship as of 1st January 2014.

Special positions have communities without citizenship which concerns practically the **Ukrainian** community living in the Czech Republic. There are circa 54 thousands of inhabitants of Ukrainian nationality who possess status of citizens and full rights but the number of Ukrainians living and working in the long-term perspective at the Czech territory is two times higher.[20] The main reason for Ukrainian immigration is economic situation. Ukrainians belong also to nationalities whose members claim naturalisation the most frequently. The Ukrainians usually work as unskilled manual workers in construction, agricultural, and services sector. The Ukrainian community in the Czech Republic is rather fragmented and it is not raising any significant minority claims so far.

The other minority without political claims are the **Vietnamese**. Vietnamese came to the Czechoslovakia already during the communist period, especially since early 1970s to study and work here. After the Velvet Revolution, many Vietnamese decided to stay and live in the Czech Republic. Rough estimates show that there are up to 60 thousands of Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic, only couple of hundreds with citizenship status, most of them without. The Vietnamese community is rather closed and intensively interconnected but focused on economic and cultural self-organisation, not at raising the claims at the public space and political arena.[21]

According to the public census, only 5 thousands of **Roma** live in the Czech Republic. The data is inaccurate on the one hand, telling on the other hand. Number of Roma inhabitants is actually significantly higher, experts estimate that 150-200 thousands of Roma people live in the Czech Republics (Kašparová 2014: 27).[22] But the word "*Rom*" (and even more traditional form "*Cikán*" used regularly by right wing extremists because of racist connotation it bears) has pejorative meaning in colloquial Czech and Roma population do not create a homogeneous community[23] with a sound indigenous political representation. Therefore many Roma

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[20] According to data of Czech Ministry of Interior, 74 thousands of Ukrainians have status of a permanent resident meanwhile 30 thousands possess status of temporary resident (*Cizinci s povoleným pobytem* http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/cizinci-s-povolenym-pobytem.aspx?q=Y2hudW09MQ%3d%3d; accessed 4 March 2015).

[21] One of the outcomes of such a reserved position of Vietnamese representatives to entering the public arena is the fact, that the Vietnamese were incorporated to the governmental advisory body Government Council of National Minorities as late as in 2013. The Council encompasses 14 communities (Belarussian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian, Russian, Greek, Slovak, Serbian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese) which are consulted and which can use the minority status for claims for cultural, educational and other special rights granted by the Czech administration.

[22] Other sources estimate the number of Romani inhabitants of the Czech Republic even higher up to 230 thousands (*Progress Report 2013, the Czech* Republic, online http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9762_file4_cz-2013.pdf; accessed 13 March 2015.

[23] According to experts as well as Roma activist, we must differentiate among three main streams of Roma in the Czech Republic. First stream is composed by the Roma settled at the territory of the Czech Republic during the period of communist regime. These Roma although retaining usually Roma language as a tool of mutual communication are more socialized into the majority population that the rest. The second stream are immigrants from Slovakia who have

citizens are not declaring their Roma identity in terms of nationality; rather they perceive different forms and sub-identities of Roma-hood in ethnic, social and status categories as a quality that excludes them from majority and that almost automatically assigns them the lower social and welfare status as well as culturally peripheral position. In a way, the feeling of Roma identity is reinforced by the position of the majority population which (over)emphasizes differences between "the Czech" and "the Roma" people making thus the integration of Roma people into "the mainstream" more difficult. Another aspect that reinforces self-perception of Roma people as Roma is at least in some localities[24] the activities of NGOs aiming at preserving Roma ethnographical heritage, language, and culture and increasing the self-assertion of Roma people as Roma.

There are, however, relevant claims to be analysed and discussed here. Claims raised by Roma as well as non-Roma civil activists and handful of Roma politicians. The problematic response of majority to these claims must be therefore the main concern of presented paper.

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been coming since the early 1990s who are perceived as social peripheral even by the Roma who are settled in the Czech Lands for longer period. The third group, up to 10 per cent of the entire Roma population are so-called Olah Roma, originally nomadic Roma from Romania detached from the rest of Roma and building a strong exclusivist hierarchical community within the Roma community (Holomek 1999: 155-158).

[24] One interesting example offers activities of the NGOs that cooperate with the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno.

Position of Moravia as a part of the Bohemian kingdom was always relatively autonomous. Long tradition of home rule, lower influence of Protestantism as well as status of autonomous province during the Habsburg Monarchy and interwar period helped to develop strong feeling of regional identity and certain distinction from Bohemia. In the period of national awakening, Moravia opted finally for joint Czech national identity but minor political streams that stressed distinctiveness and autonomy remained vital. Even in the period of the Second World War, there was a small movement claiming to transfer parts of Southern Moravia to (nominally) independent Slovak State (Pernes 1996: 153-154). Removal of autonomous status of Moravia by Communist regime in 1949 put however these efforts to sleep. Only in the period of so-called Prague Spring (1968/1969), Moravian political claims for restitution of autonomy re-appeared and Society for Moravia and Silesia was founded to preserve specific features of Moravian folklore and especially to represent Moravian and Silesian regionalism. Normalisation buried such claims for another two decades to be unbound quickly after the Velvet Revolution. Society for Moravia and Silesia was restored and transformed to full-fledged political movement called Movement for Autonomous Democracy – Society for Moravia and Silesia (HSD-SMS).

Moravian Declaration adopted in April 1990 framed Moravian political claims in terms of regional community seeking restoration of autonomy destroyed by the totalitarian regime. In the same time, return to concept of Czechoslovakia composed from three (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, Slovakia) or four (Moravia and Silesia as two separate provinces) shall according to HSD-SMS solve the emerging disputes among Czech and Slovak politicians concerning reform of federation:

> To provide realisation and to establish the term of reconstruction of our country to Czechoslovak Federative Republic, we require the Federal Assembly to issue a law on rehabilitation of Moravian-Silesian Land prior to election [first democratic election scheduled for June 1990 - VH] which would correct injustice perpetrated at more than 4 million of its inhabitants by its abolition by a totalitarian power at 1st January 1949.

Moravian activists did not employ the rhetoric of a different ethnic or national minority but they provided actually peripheral mobilization along the regional cleavage. Under the slogan "At least one vote for Moravia", HSD-SMS succeeded in simultaneously held elections to both chambers of the Federal Assembly as well as to the Czech National Diet. In Southern Moravian Region, the movement obtained up to a quarter of the vote. Leaders opted for strategy of cooperation and participated at the creation of Czech government. But the claims for restoration of autonomous Moravian Land were seen as extreme by other coalition partners and HSD-SMS soon officially left the coalition but part of the deputies defected from the movement in order to remain in power and to pursue Moravian political claims for regional in more moderate way. After death of charismatic leader of the movement Boleslav Bárta in May 1991, the split of HSD-SMS continued. The party was able to get seats in 1992 Czech election but the club split very soon and the number of defected members increased quickly. The years 1992-1996 were a period of deterioration of Moravian movement. As an outcome, three Moravia lists run for the seats in parliamentary election 1996 getting together mere 1.14 per cent of the vote.

Moravian political parties fell almost to oblivion in the meantime but some activists continued under the label of Moravian National Party (1990-1997) and later on under the label Moravian Democratic Party (1997-2005) and, recently, political movement Moravians (since 2005). After experimenting with reframing of

Moravian claims from regionalism to ethno-nationalist ideology, the contemporary politicians try without any success to combine moderate Moravian nationalism with stress on "Europe of regions".[25]

The claims of Moravian movement and related political parties were primarily political. The Moravian activists and politicians wanted to restore self-government of Moravian (and Silesian) regions transforming the Czechoslovakia and later on the Czech Republic to a federation recognising specific position of Moravia (and Silesia) as one of the constitutive regions that share sovereignty together with the federation. The main argument for Moravian home rule was discrimination of political rights of Moravian citizens for autonomy. Later on, the claims put more stress to cultural issues. Politically marginal radical versions of Moravian movement attempted to construct separate Moravian **ethnic** to reframe and foster claims for independent political representation of Moravian "periphery", not merely regional identity. In order to argue in this way, somehow funny attempts to depict fundamental differences between Czech and "Moravian" language were provided.[26] None of these attempts however attracts any broader attention. In both of the cases of older Moravian regionalism and recent (but marginal) "nationalism", the claims for political autonomy were addressed to government and political parties through the channel of political and especially electoral mobilisation in a non-violent way. The levels on which claims were organised included regional[27] and national levels.

Partial solution of these claims was regionalisation and considerable decentralisation of state administration provided by the reform legislated in 1997 and launched in 2000. According to the reform, there are 14 regions with devolved administrative and some political competencies. The territory of Moravia and Silesia is divided among 5 regions which are, however, not always respecting the historical borders between Bohemia and Moravia.

The question why Moravian movement lost relatively quickly its prominence and virulence in the Czech politics of the 1990s can be answered with a multifocal perspective that takes into consideration not only radicalisation of Moravian movement and changing context compromising *any* regionalist claims after the breakup of Czechoslovakia, but changing context of Moravian regional politics and changing attitudes of Moravian citizens to the notion of specific (or even separate in radical version) Moravian identity unbound from the Czech one.

The most important reason of the fall seems to be inability to find common ground and common language among the various and often contentious personalities among Moravian leaders and activists. Too many different but mainly minor projects, aggregates and strategies were developed to build a sound organisational background for voters´ mobilisation and to become attractive coalition partner for other political parties.

Another reason of declining support for Moravian political claims was however clearly connected with changing tenor of argumentation why is Moravia a distinctive part of the Czech Lands that deserves self-rule and generally recognition of her specific features. Former regionalist discourse aimed especially at combination of two communication tactics (Moravia deserves autonomy because it already took place for centuries; establishment of Moravian-Silesian Province or Republic will solve the stalemate established during the "Hyphen War" between the Czech and the Slovak political representations) was in fact the strongest in the

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[25] See *Dlouhodobý program politické strany Moravané*. Brno 2013, online http://www.moravane.cz/o-nas/program; accessed 24 March 2014. The Moravians are members of the European Free Alliance.

[26] There are couple of online Czech-Moravia vocabularies and there is an attempt to "fix" Moravian grammar as distinguished from the Czech language. In fact, inhabitants of Moravia are using different dialects but they are part of the Czech language.

[27] Southern Moravian Region and its capital Brno were of the main importance as a place to integrate the bulk of supporters and followers of Moravian movement.

brief period of 1990-1992. Important feed for this argument was outcome of public census 1991 showing that there actually live more than 1,300,000 of Moravians in Czechoslovakia. Key impact on this strategy however had partition of Czechoslovakia in 1992 because reprise of any dualism (Czech-Moravian) was absolutely unthinkable after annoying experience with Czech-Slovak disputes. Ongoing radicalisation of Moravian activists was a crucial tactic mistake from this point of view.

One might pose a question why after the return to moderate regionalist discursive strategy (a turn provided around the beginning of the New Millennium), political party Moravians was not able to improve its minor popularity among Moravian voters to get from position of a marginal and in fact irrelevant party. Part of the explanation is based on major impact of left-right cleavage based on socio-economic issues as a backbone that shapes Czech party competition (Hloušek – Kopeček 2008), another part in lack of new, strong, and convincing political personalities among the leaders of the Moravians. One, however, must have a look at territorial composition of the population: vast majority of people with Moravian nationality are situated within one region (Southern Moravia with the capital of Brno). The ups and downs of numbers of Moravians according to the public censes (especially the downswing in 2001) shows moreover that for many people, Moravian identity is not firmly fixed and is based perhaps more on fashions within political discourse than on other reasons why one feels certain collective identity. In other words, Moravian politicians are extremely fragile vis-à-vis changing tenor of political discourse and they would need to invent something attractive to regain medial and electoral prominence once achieved in early 1990s. The contemporary program of Moravians stressing renewal of Moravian-Silesian province in the situation where recent regions achieved reasonable level of recognition among the citizens as well as political elites does not seem to bring such an impulse for refreshment of Moravian politics in the near future.

5 ROMA IN THE CZECH REPUBLICS

5.1 DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEMS

The Roma community embodies a minority that is perceived as ethnically detached from majority population which is the most important source of minority feelings (although not automatically coherent identity in the same time). Other source of problems is based on socially inferior position of most of the members of Roma population in the Czech Republic. The problems described below apply to the recent conditions of Roma in the Czech Republic. The same, however, could be analysed looking at the development of Roma community after 1989 (and in many aspects even before). The situation of Roma is an object of only a slow incremental change and the basic problems were set already during the period of democratic transition in the 1990s (see Říčan 1998, chapters 3 and 4). The majority society perceives living with Roma community as a problem and there is no substantial improvement of the majority position towards the Roma inhabitants in the course of time. The most important perceived source of difference is ethnic rather than social in the case of majority view on Roma population in the Czech Republic, although the situation of Roma is substantially influenced by their social exclusion (Gabal et al. 2008: 7-24)

The Roma citizens inhabit typically socially excluded localities. As a societal group, they score far above average in terms of achieved education or vocational training.[28] Therefore, the level of unemployment among the Roma population is constantly considerably higher than of the majority society. A sort of vicious circle of lower **education** dramatically limited occupational skills and out of this stemming social, cultural, economic as

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[28] Less than a third household members aged 20-24 in Roma families competed general or vocational upper-secondary education compared to more than four fifths in majority population (FRA 2012: 15).

well as political inferiority starts typically already during the period of compulsory school attendance since then Roma children visiting elementary schools are demonstrating lower level of command of Czech language and other skills possessed by majority population. For this reason, Roma pupils were extremely more frequently placed to so-called "special" basic schools instead of normal elementary schools (Kwadrans 2009). The "special" schools created originally for children with minor mental problems deserving special treatment were in many cases "solution" of the problems with Roma children whose intellectual capacity equalled the majority population but who demonstrated shortcomings in terms of preparedness to attend basic school.[29] For most of the children, the "special" school attendance prevented not only possibility to achieve any higher education[30] (because of lower standard of curriculum[31] as well as because of clear stigmatisation of "special" schools´ leavers.[32] According to the Czech School Inspection, more than 35 per cent of Roma children attended "special" schools prior to the reform 2011 (ČŠI 2012: 5) and in 2014, the share is still considerably high (28 per cent)[33].

Among other problems which generate claims, we can count already mentioned **social exclusion** and **racism** of the majority society. These problems were and still are politically thematised by extreme as well as majority political parties and they are dealt with by the state authorities. Therefore they will be analysed in the paper too.

As for the social exclusion of Roma people, one must bear in mind that the share of unemployment of Roma population is dramatically higher than average [34] where the reasons of considerably higher unemployment are besides the lower level of skills and education of Roma workers especially explainable by discrimination based on ethnic difference between Roma community and majority. High level of unemployment leads typically to low level of living standard including higher level of criminality in excluded districts inhabited by Roma people, the housing conditions and higher level of perceived material deprivation (see ÚVČR 2013: 10-14).

The manifestations of racism are not connected only with political and sometimes criminal offenses committed by the skinhead subculture and / or far right political activists. The majority population sees Roma

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[29] Only roughly one third of Roma children at the age of four are attending the pre-school educational facility compared to almost three quarters of majority population (FRA 2012: 13).

[30] Education does not belong to the set of traditional values preserved and stressed by Roma. Many Roma families are not supporting any higher education of the children because it is perceived as a factor excluding these people from the community. The argument works vice versa as well: the well-educated Roma are tending to socialize into majority society and not to be engaged in social and educational advancement of the Roma people (Holomek 1999: 157-158 and 165).

[31] Important problems in quality and composition of curriculum were ascertained by the Czech School Inspection during the complex investigation of the "special" basic schools network in 2013/2014 (ČŠI 2014: 30). Not only the Inspection but the international comparisons within the OECD countries generally evaluate the Czech education system as very selective where the study outcomes of the pupils are over-dependent on the socio-economic background of their families. This fact stresses the disadvantageous starting line for Roma children and given to the fact of strong path dependency within the Czech educational system as well as immanently lower chances at the labour market.

[32] The Law has been criticised by other national minorities as well because of high barriers that establish the condition for recognition and state support for education in minority languages. The Law *de facto* demanded high level of territorial homogeneity of community settlement which was applicable practically only to the Polish minority living in borderland region in Silesia and having thus network of kindergartens, elementary schools as well as secondary schools with Polish as the language of instruction (Mareš et al. 2004: 21).

[33] *Více než čtvrtina Romů navštěvuje zvláštní školy* (online http://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/domaci/skolstvi/vice-nez-ctvrtina-romu-navstevuje-zvlastni-skoly_308523.html#.VP2Mw6OwRI0; accessed 9 March 2015).

[34] Only 42 per cent of Roma aged 20-64 is in paid employment compared to 70 per cent of majority population (FRA 2012: 16).

community as external to the Czech society and ascribes this community with negative connotations such as Roma criminality, misuse of welfare policies, strange cultural behaviour, strange social habits etc.

Important problem related with rising and realizing political claims of Roma minority is based on the fact, that Roma minority does not possess intrinsic political representation. The attempts to build a sound political party to represent Roma community are older than the Czech Republic and can be traced to December 1989 where Roma Civic Initiative (*Romská občanská iniciativa* – ROI) was founded. After the breakup of the Civic Forum, ROI run independently in the parliamentary elections 1992 getting merely 0.27 per cent of the vote which was actually the best electoral result the party ever obtained. Factually, ROI ceased to develop any political activity in 2003 and it was terminated in 2009. Other attempts to create partisan representation of Roma came out even less convincingly (see Pečínka 2009: 63-83). The last attempt to create a party of Roma representation was undertaken in Northern Bohemia where Roma Democratic Party (*Romská demokratická strana*) has been founded. The party established only two regional lists and obtained mere 609 votes in 2013 parliamentary election.

Another tactic employed by the Roma politicians and activist is to run for the non-Roma parties or political movements. The number of Roma candidates was neither high nor they were placed at prominent positions of the party lists.[35] Only handful of Roma candidates appeared in the Parliamentary elections in the 1996-2013 period, usually (but not exclusively) on the lists of left wing political parties like the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, Czech Social Democratic Party, Christian and Democratic Union – People's Party of Czechoslovakia, the Green Party, and smaller left wing parties. The number of Roma candidates is typically slightly higher in the local elections in regions where the party believes that they can attract Roma voters by placing a Roma politician on the list. The results of Roma politicians are in fact rather disappointing. Only two Roma deputies were ever elected to the Czech Parliament ever since 1992: Ladislav Body (Communist, 1992-1996) and Monika Horáková (liberal Union of Freedom, 1998-2002).[36] Therefore, the Roma claims are typically addressed by non-Roma civil society activists, NGOs, or experts[37] and the autonomous Roma representation is yet to be developed. Low level of political **socialisation** and lack of political **representation** of Roma community could be thus added to other problems that are leading to claims in political and public discourse of the Czech Republic.

To sum up, Roma community in the Czech Republic is facing discrimination provided by the state as well as by the citizens or other social groups. State does not discriminate Roma directly; they face rather structural forms of indirect negative discrimination, especially in the area of education and social exclusion encountering mostly soft barriers of under-education and connected to it also as insufficient level of socialisation into the labour market which significantly reduces their living standard.

5.2 DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF CLAIMS

The Czech Romani population is executing rather passive approach to the citizenship. Therefore, majority of the claims are raised by the handful of Roma activist as well as by the external NGOs (supported by some

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[35] The electoral system for the local, regional as well as House of Deputies´ elections is based on party lists and proportional representation with relatively big electoral districts which favours the candidates placed on the top of the list.

[36] See Mareš et al. 2004: 37-50. In the years 1990-1992, there were 11 Roma deputies in the Federal Assembly and the Czech and the Slovak National Councils. Such a great number can be explained mainly with generous approach of both Civic Forum and Public against Violence (*Občanské fórum* and *Verejnosť proti násiliu*; Czech and Slovak umbrella democratisation movements) to representation of different minority political streams including Roma Citizens´ Initiative (Pečínka 2003). Summary of Roma party politics could be found in Kašparová 2014: 90-112 and Pečínka 2009).

[37] The trend towards "NGOization" of Roma rights issues is not limited to the Czech Republic, it is rather general tendency of weakness of Roma activists vis-à-vis "white" activism (see Trehan 2009).

official authorities such as Office of Ombudsman, or the Council for Roma Community Affairs) which aim not necessarily purely at solving of Roma-related issues. The situation is better on the local level where do the Roma local activists co-operate in some cases with authorities to solve the local sensitive problems in an incremental way. Generalising the claims, they are mostly oriented for further protection of existing rights (especially social rights) and their consequent execution and even more, the claims address the issue of discrimination of Roma in the everyday practices. The areas concerned are typically covering claims for improving of equal access of Roma to education, fighting the social exclusion of Roma people and related socio-economic issues and fighting the racism connected sometimes with violent attacks of extremists against the Roma. Particular claim related to racist and xenophobic elements present in the majority approach towards the Roma population is also related to history of Roma settlement during the WW2. Roma claim at least symbolical excuse for participation of Czech Protectorate administration on the process of Roma extermination. In particular, the Roma claim addresses creation of places of reverence in Lety and Kunštát, places of concentration camps imprisoning Roma (Sekyt 2001: 123).[38]

The claims on cultural and political socialisation representation are perhaps the most complicated to conceptualise given to the fact that Roma community did not established neither coherent cultural/societal nor political representation. Therefore, the claims in the sphere of cultural recognition and political socialisation and representation are raised in rather coincidental and non-systemic way by diverse set of actors including individual Roma intellectuals and activists as well as non-Roma activists dealing with Roma issues or generally with agenda. Once can observe a kind of bypass here: the (typically non-Roma) NGOs are often focused more on establishing the institutions of their own representation within the structure of executive institutions rather than on activation of autochthonous Roma political movement.

These claims are raised generally on national level but even more on the regional and local levels in particular areas where Romani population lives. The typical addressees are state or regional / local institutions, only in specific examples of individual claims related to general discrimination practises, the EU institutions are called. The typical channel of pursuing the claims is, because of rather passive approach to political citizenship, a lobby (or, precisely, a policy advocacy) channel completed in some individual cases with judicial way of pursuing the claims and achieving the goals. The claims arisen by Roma population and related NGOs are strictly nonviolent and focused on legal activities.

5.3 DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF SOLUTIONS

Let us start with the claim for (political) **socialisation and representation**. Relatively easily and quickly were fulfilled the claims on official recognition and support of the specific features of Roma culture. Museum of Roma Culture was established as an initiative of Roma intellectuals in 1991 supported financially by the State and becoming an institution financed completely by the state since 2005. The Museum fosters not only Roma culture but provides the background for research on Roma in the Czech Lands. Roma press as well as Roma radio broadcasting in the framework of public broadcasting was also established rather soon and has remained financially supported by the state ever since, although the circulation is rather limited.

As complicated and only little progressing we can evaluate extension of socialisation and indigenous representation of Roma in the Czech politics. The approach of the Czech government and administration to the Roma community has been object of changes in the period after the Velvet Revolution and breakup of Czechoslovakia. Roma community was represented at the Council of Government for National Minorities, an

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[38] Instead of claiming towards the Czech political system, in 1997-1999, significant number of Czech Roma decided for the exit option: number of Roma asylum-seekers in the UK and Canada increased dramatically. According to Roma who decided to emigrate, the main reasons for exit the Czech Republic were a mixture of racism of majority society, economic reasons, and poor chances of the children within the educational system (Trojanová 2001).

advisory body to the Czech government established in 1994. A new level of political recognition was reached in 1997 when special Council for Roma Community Affairs, an advisory body to the Czech Government to discuss to Roma-related issues and prepare concepts of government agendas in the field. The Czech Republic tries to cope with Roma claims by participation at international projects. In 2005, the Czech Republic joined the project Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 (http://www.romadecade.org/) to coordinate activities fostering enhancement of position of Romani communities in participating countries.[39]

Former assimilationist policy set already by the communist regime was replaced fully by integrationist approach based on multicultural paradigm in 2000 (see Kašparová 2014: 51-57 and 113-114). The conception adopted by the Czech government stressed necessity to take action especially in the fields of legal and police measures against racism, educational and welfare agendas.[40] Conception of Roma Integration has been regularly upgraded since the year 2000 with major revisions in 2005 and 2010[41].

If we compare the goals of 2000 and 2010 versions, we come to the conclusion that the approach set in 2000 has remained rather stable. The integrationist and multicultural approach are stressed in both of these documents together with focus on direct work with Roma community, strong role of NGOs in the process of implementation of "Roma" policy, support for targeted regional or local aid aimed at improving the situation of social excluded localities[42], and unwillingness to solve the disparities among majority population and Romani community by introduction of quotas. Similar are as well the areas of concern listed in 2000 and 2010 editions: racial discrimination and racial motivated criminality against the Roma, focus on requalification and enhancement of labour skills, support for cultural activities of Roma, education (dealing with Roma pupils as well as general completion of the basic schools´ curriculum with multicultural education). The 2010 edition is more precise in targeting specific sub-problems and goals and to some extent specifying indicators to measure potential progress as well as presenting brief examples of good practices[43] but generally, the problematic areas of Roma community and engaged activists´ claims remain the same. This can be interpreted in rather pessimistic way as an evaluation of slow pace of improvements and persistence of problems concerning life of Roma community in the Czech Republic and level of the community´s integration with the majority society.

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[39] According to the evaluation of the program by the Czech Government, the Decade of Roma Inclusion project is well implemented in the Czech Republic; however "*as far as the level of accomplishment of the Action Plan of the Decade … it is hard to identify impact of measures to situation of excluded Roma. Relevant qualitative and quantitative statistical data are absent which could be compared on the year-by-year base to follow the development of Roma situation in time*" (*Informace o naplňování Dekády romské inkluze 2005-2012 v roce 2012*, online http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/dokumenty/informace-o-naplnovani-dekady-romske-inkluze-20052015-v-roce-2012-113606/; accessed 13 March 2015). Apparently, the international framework shows similar weakness as the Czech programs: lack of exact and accurate ex-post evaluation.

[40] Vláda ČR (2000): *Koncepce politiky vlády vůči příslušníkům, romské komunity, napomáhající jejich integraci do společnosti*, online http://aa.ecn.cz/img_upload/ac73df0652aad2b828f9cf53d867ecf4/koncepce.pdf; accessed 13 March 2015.

[41] Minister of Human Rights (2010): *Roma Integration Concept for 2010-2013*, online http://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/roma_czech_republic_strategy_en.pdf; accessed 13 March 2015.

[42] In 2008, the government created Agency for Social Inclusion that operates as an intermediate between the state programs and regional and local authorities to implement and foster goals of state integration policy via targeted aiding the local and regional projects in the fields of housing, education, social work, employability and employment, security and family. The agency works as a partner with local authorities and it monitors the situation, prepares expertizes and helps the local authorities to develop and disseminate appropriate measures to fight the social exclusion.

[43] Comparison of these two conceptions shows clear improvement of Czech administrative culture during previous one and half decades, not inevitably it shows also improvement or success of Czech official policy towards the Roma citizens.

Reaction of claims concerning Roma **education** by the Czech authorities aimed at solving some technical aspects related to under-preparation of Roma children to attend basic schools, such as "zero-classes" aimed at increasing capacity to study in Czech language and special trained Roma pedagogical assistants (Kwadrans 2009). These measures certainly help to increase the capacity of Romani pupils to follow the mainstream education track; they however fail to address two important problems that hinder more substantial increase of better educated Roma: regime of sending the Roma "special" schools and lack of interest in education of children among Roma families.[44]

Rather successful strategy how to achieve the goals and how to persuade Czech authorities to cope with the education issues more intensively is Europeanisation of the issue. In November 2007, the ECJ decided ("D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic" case) that 18 former pupils of "special" elementary schools were discriminated by being paced to these schools although having no mental dysfunction at all. Because of the ECJ decision, the Czech Government must not only report each year about the conditions of education of Roma children but to adopt new measures eliminating the discrimination based on the ethnic origin of Roma pupils (see Smekal and Šipulová 2014 for details). Despite the new steps taken, the ration of Roma attendants of "special" schools remains considerably high which is criticised by domestic activists as well as by the Council of Europe.[45] Education of Roma people is mentioned regularly as an issue still to be tackled in regular country-specific recommendation regarding the strategy Europe 2020 for the Czech Republic.[46]

The issues related to the **social exclusion** are mainly dealt with by the local authorities of social excluded localities. These localities are not always inhabited only by Romani dwellers but specific situation of Roma is usually taken to account by employment of local Roma consultant who stems from the Roma community, possesses local as well as community-specific expertise and helps to aggregate claims as well as to implement solution. Roma consultants were established in 1997 at regional and local levels to assist the administration with dealing with issues sensitive for Roma community and to transfer understanding of the claims as well as related measures among the community and the authorities. The number of consultants was however considerably reduced in 2002 as a follow-up of the reform of regional governance in the Czech Lands. Because of the indifferent or even hostile attitudes of the majority public towards any significant increase of the cost of Roma policy and because of the afore discussed lack of Roma political representation to increase pressure, the government did not aimed at supporting the activities of Roma consultants and the scope of the activities now depends very much on interest and willingness of regional and local authorities to cope with the problems. The role of the state is mainly limited to co-ordination activities (via the Agency for Social Inclusion and via activities of interdepartmental coordination committee of the government that assists realisation of measures prescribed by the state Conception of Roma integration[47]) as well as funding or co-funding the local and regional project fostering economic and job equality.

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[44] These issues are rather inter-connected in a way that many Romani parents prefer to enrol the kids to the "special" schools because of far lower workload and expectation of being raised in Roma collective.

[45] *COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2015): CZECH REPUBLIC MAKES PROGRESS, BUT MORE ACTION NEEDED TO FIGHT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA CHILDREN'S EDUCATION, ONLINE HTTP://WWW.COE.INT/EN/WEB/PORTAL/ROMA-LATEST-NEWS; ACCESSED 15 MARCH 2015.*

[46] The last report called the Czech Republic to "*Ensure adequate training for teachers, support poorly performing schools and take measures to increase participation among disadvantaged children, including Roma*" (EC 2015: 6).

[47] The last version of the Conception presupposes interdepartmental coordination among the Minister of Human Rights, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Health as well as a wide range of other authorities such as offices of Regional Governments, Czech Statistical Office, Grant Agency of the Czech Academy of Science, Czech School Inspectorate, Czech Television and other public institutions. It is important to stress that the conception counts on co-operation of local, regional, and national authorities only with no overlaps to the EU level.

The measures that shall be adopted are not aimed at excluding Roma protection to some special and detached Roma policy but to consider special needs of the community in wide range of general social and welfare policies. This, on the one hand, helps to integrate the "Roma issues" into broader social and political context. On the other hand, the coordination of measures might be a complicated task to accomplish and the complex evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness of the measures taken according to the Conception is complicated as well.

The mainstream attitude of the majority population towards the Roma community is rather hostile. It does not mean automatically high level of anti-Roma **racist**-motivated violence. According to report of European Roma Rights Centre, there were "only" 47 attacks against Roma and their property with clear racist motivation in the period between January 2008 and July 2012 (ERRC 2012). Generally, we can assume that police and other institutions dealing with criminal investigation and prosecution are taking this issue seriously.

More problematic is the popular framing of Roma as criminals, idlers and „non-adaptable" (*nepřizpůsobivi*) people who cannot constructively live with majority population and up to its standards, habits and norms. In one of the recent opinion polls, 81 per cent of respondents claimed Roma to be "very unpleasant" and further 31 per cent "rather unpleasant" meanwhile only 4 per cent of respondents assessed Roma as very or at least rather pleasant. Roma scored even worse than Arabs (Červenka 2015: 2).

To illustrate this point, an example related to "exit" option preferred by some Roma inhabitants of the Czech Republic instead of rising the "voice" (see Hirshman 1990 for the concept) might serve well. Racist attacks as well as social exclusion have had driven some Roma inhabitants of the Czech Republic to seek asylum in other countries. United Kingdom and Canada are of particular popularity among the Czech Roma. Especially Canada appeared twice to be the "promising land" for the Czech Roma. The first larger wave of Roma migration was terminated in 1997 when Canada imposed visa on Czech citizens. The second wave went on in 2008-2009 just after Canada stooped visa restrictions in late 2007 and it was again terminated by introduction of visa regime. Visas for Czech citizens were lifted in 2013 and so far, no new mass wave appeared. The anthropological research done on Roma immigrants to Canada from the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia showed that the Roma seeking for asylum abroad are better educated and generally better situated than the Roma population average (see Vidra 2013 for details). Important for understanding of the prevailing majority stances was the popular reaction in the style: "let them go, without Roma the life is going to be better".

Another aspect of strategies of fighting anti-Roma racism is the project of support of multicultural education at elementary schools. In 2014, Czech Republic funded the program with 15 million crowns[48] but the money were distributed among 13 different minorities (including Roma) plus projects aimed at holocaust commemoration and general multicultural education. Compared to 16 million of crowns allocated in the same year to support activities increasing skills of Roma pupils, it is however apparent that the multicultural education is still more political slogan than realized policy measure (RVNM 2015: 28-31). We can thus conclude that the Czech policy against anti-Roma racism is based on good intention but in the same time, the intentions are not followed by many deeds, especially when it comes to issue related to Roma community. More focused and more generously funded educational policy would be welcomed as well as more self-ethically-driven deliberate effort of media to report on positive examples of majority-minority coexistence, not only on problems.

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[48] This equals roughly the sum of 535,000 euro.

6 LESSON TO BE LEARNED FOR THE EU

Let us start with assessment of the Moravian claims first. Experience with the rise and decline of the Moravian movement show foremost the importance of public / political framing of community claims as well as correct and appropriate understanding of the context (successful regional mobilisation made within the framework of debates of reform of Czech-Slovak federation that opened a window of opportunity to claim Moravian and Silesian regional autonomy versus compete failure of reframing the rhetoric of Moravian political claims in a way of constructing the separate national identity in the environment of newly independent Czech Republic). The more radical Moravia claims were, the less attention they provoked in the majority society. Strategy of administrative decentralisation was acceptable even for political opponents of Moravian movement; strategy of nationalistic language and policy of detachment from the Czech nation was un-applicable even for the previous supporters of the movement. Moderate regionalization of the Czech Republic in 2000 that reinforced decentralisation of some policies did not solve the symbolical quest for Moravian home rule but as a consequence, it transformed the political "playground" in a way discouraging further claims for autonomy.

More challenging is to take a lesson of the Roma issues. Discrimination of Roma community, related claims and offered solutions present broader and in a way more complex set of issues to feed EU debate on treatment of minorities and specific communities. First fact to be stressed is observation that Europeanisation matters. It means that once the communities achieve with their claims the level of the EU institutions (most typically with legal claims towards the ECJ), the additional pressure is raised to domestic political institutions to react. Monitoring, progress reporting and in general legal as well as political obligations of the local institutions vis-à-vis the EU level creates the environment that increases political salience of community claims and increases the likelihood of political action. It, however does not lead directly to any kind of solution which is still to be found and implemented on the level of Member State or regional / local level. The EU shall focus on broader political framing of the policy goals of its minority-related policies and it can be rather effective as well as a source of monitoring and evaluation of progress and a source of soft pressure on the MS to act.

On the other hand, the subsidiarity principle, as the Czech example shows, shall be implemented to the very lowest level of decision making. The Czech experience with Roma shows that implementation of any reasonable and sound anti-discrimination policy must be organized with substantial partnership with the local authorities. The municipal level is the most appropriate platform for finding solutions of the problem related with the Roma community as well as the platform for finding the most efficient solutions. Since the Roma inhabitants of the Czech Republic embody a non-territorialized minority within a kin-state of its own, the national-wide and even regional strategies often fail to address and solve the problems. The measures to improve inferior educational and social conditions of many Roma inhabitants are the most efficient at municipal and even sub-local levels. The role of regions, Czech state institutions as well as the EU thus shall be to provide financial aid for local authorities, to ensure respect towards basic principle of human rights as far as the local authorities´ measures are concerned, and to monitor the progress and facilitate the lesson learning and circulation of the best practices on voluntary base.

The marginalisation of Czech Roma is not only a product of racial discrimination, the whole problem is more complex covering related social, economic, and cultural aspects with differences among particular localities of social exclusion inhabited mainly but not only by Roma population. Therefore the exact knowledge of local parameters, focus on clearly defined issues and policies plus stress put on minor incremental change combined with long term effect and impact of local policies is the key to any visible change. The role of state and EU institutions is important but rather facilitating via funding and general political framing. Incremental

and focused approaches are leading to better results than (no matter how well-intended) efforts to politicise the community claims as part of general political debate.[49]

And there is one important lesson to be learned while dealing with Czech Roma. Majority population, politicians, NGOs and activist cannot solve the problems and cannot eliminate discrimination without substantial activation of the minority communities. Important source of discrimination of Roma people in the Czech Republic is the inferior educational and societal background of this community. Of course, there are many barriers created by the majority society but there are as well blocks and obstacles of cultural and habitual kind inside the Roma community such as disdainful opinion on the importance of education and development of skills. Education seems to be the essential precondition for any further integration of Roma minority, a prerequisite for better access of Roma to real execution of their political and economic rights and to foster recognition and self-recognition of Roma as the Czech citizens.

To put it in a nutshell, it does not help any more to present the Roma community as passive victim of majority-driven discrimination practices but to activate the members of the community to develop into citizens knowing their rights as well as obligations as members of broader community of citizens of the Czech Republic.

6.1 INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION

The Czech historical pathway led from multi-national society to rather homogeneous state. The problems of living together were typically "solved" by the majority with measures aimed at expulsion of it and forceful homogenization of the population of the state. Sometimes, the forceful homogenization was a product of external factors, such as in a case of the Jewish community during the Second World War. Sometimes, the split was assessed as a better solution than long journey towards the compromise such in a period when Czechoslovakia was divided. The historical experience of violent relations between majority and minority communities and the subsequent repercussions of ethnic cleansing and deliberate effort aimed at homogeneous society certainly did not help much to establish a preference of tolerance as the main principle driving the state policies towards the minority communities.

On the other hand, Europeanisation of the Czech Republic has led in long-term perspective to decent but certainly positive turn in the official policy aimed at minorities, as the progress of treatment of Roma issues shows. The specific Czech historical and political path of development makes the Czech citizens sceptical about grand strategies framed in general frames of multiculturalism and human rights agenda and therefore these grand strategies create massive popular resistance. This is not, however, a specific Czech approach, since it can be documented in at least all Central and Eastern European member countries. What makes the Czech situation slightly different from Hungarian or Slovak cases is ability to re-frame the Roma issues from general statements to concrete local policies that are incrementally trying to improve the living conditions of local people and, hopefully, doing so to bridge in a way the gap between the majority and the Roma minority. It is not a strategy that promises quick and shiny progress, however it is a strategy that can bring lasting positive results.

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[49] The current EU-policy on Roma related issues already recognises the importance of activation of and support towards the local authorities (see Council 2013, section 3) but the logic is still top-down instead of bottom-up in the respect to setting of priorities and local policy goals that can be realistically reached.

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