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Failure of the Roma children at elementary schools:

Overcoming cultural differences in the Czech educational system

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Declaration

I, Barbora Charvátová, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "Failure of the Roma children at elementary schools: Overcoming cultural differences in the Czech educational system", submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

Signed   ....

Date   ....

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PREFACE

"He returned to his office tormented by the certainty
that instead of a solution to so many problems,
he had found just the opposite;
new and different problems with no solution." [1]

G.G. Márquez

At the beginning, there was a simple wish to come up with a viable solution contributing to a peaceful co-existence of the Roma and the Czech cultures in one system of education. However, with each new article, with each new book, I was getting further away from this goal, discovering what a multilayered issue the education of the Roma children is.

Having read Pavel Barša, Will Kymlicka, John Rex and other think-tanks in the field of integration and multiculturalism, I wanted to show everybody what we could have instead of what we have, knowing that a concrete future vision is exactly what is needed. The experience of teaching Roma children, however, brought me into a slightly different world – one that has nothing to do with academic papers written by people who have never even met a Roma child. One, where it makes no sense to come up with a perfectly worked-out policies that should, in theory, ensure full integration of the Roma into the educational system. We do need a future vision, that is for sure. Yet, we can have as many guidelines and policies as we want, but until we change the way we think, until we learn more about the reasons that have put us where we are in the first place, all the policies will remain only words on paper.

Yes, we are different, we have always been but isn't it time for us all to stop perceiving ourselves in constant dichotomies of *us* versus *them*? Isn't it time for us all to try to understand that *us* and *them* relate to the same concept of people living in one country and, therefore, obliged to find a way to live together? To do so, it is of utter importance to understand the differences that separate us into the two camps in the first place since only from that understanding can we stop being afraid and learn that *different* can actually be good.

It is not possible to build a roof without having firm foundations for the house and I am persuaded that the firm foundations in our case mean to understand each other, to understand why the Roma mostly fail at the Czech schools, why they miss so many classes, have such poor results and consequently see school as a necessary evil that they try to avoid. Only by understanding our differences and by changing our preconceived ideas can we

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[1] Márquez 2007, 184-185.

actually set out on the way that brings about real changes. As Barša puts it: "In each conversation, we can misunderstand each other, but there is always a way how to, at least partially, understand such a misunderstanding."[2] If this paper contributes to erasing at least some of the stereotypes and preconceived ideas about the Roma children at the educational system and, by consequence, helps to understand that their potential failure has objective reasons that should be taken into account, its main ambition would be fulfiled.

I am, however, aware that this paper is unavoidably positioned. Even though trying to be as objective as possible, I am not glossing over my own identity. This paper has been, indeed, written by an ethnic Czech, but first and foremost, it has been written by a human being; a much more important status taking precedence here.

I believe this is the place to thank the Museum of Romani Culture where I finished an internship during which I was teaching Roma children English. By teaching the Roma children, by getting to know them personally as well as by getting to know their culture, I gained a first-hand experience of what I had been only reading about until then. I would like to thank especially my supervisor, Mgr. Marie Palacká, for her kindness and much heeded advice and support.

I would also like to thank my university supervisors, Markéta Šůstková and Martin Tamcke, for their ideas on the topic, their suggestions for bibliography as well as their patience and their professional guidance.

Introduction

Miro than odoj, jak mire nipi.

My place is where my people are.[3]

Will Kymlicka affirms that: "The ideological conflict between capitalism and communism has been replaced with an upsurge in conflicts between ethnic and national groups."[4] Indeed, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its one-size-fits-all ideology, there was suddenly an open space for new identifications. A legitimate question of where to go from now was being asked and a luring possibility in the form of nationalism promptly answered it. People were free to explore all the differences among them and they started to pledge allegiance to the roots that they considered theirs. Unfortunately, this process of re-creation of national identities took an expensive toll, one of the deadliest examples being the Balkan Wars. We should have realized one important thing already back then, from the events of the 1990s; namely that to pledge one's allegiance to one identity only can be extremely dangerous.

Twenty years passed and more than ever before, it is now a fact that different ethnocultural groups cohabit a single state and this cohabitation causes their distinctive cultures to clash. According to Kymlicka, "people are looking to political theory to shed some light on these conflicts, and help us identify morally defensible and politically viable solutions to them."[5] This paper tries to do no less than that, taking for its topic the clash of the Roma and Czech cultures at the level of elementary education, resulting in the potential failure and consequent exclusion of the Roma children from the process of education. Exclusion is, indeed, a well-founded word since before 2005, 75%-80% of Roma children were not educated in standard elementary schools, but were transferred to or directly enrolled in the so-called special or remedial schools.[6] This thesis cannot support any suggestions affirming that 75%-80% of Roma children in the Czech Republic are mentally handicapped and must be, therefore, educated in institutions devised for children with special needs. *There are, indeed, reasons behind the failure of the Roma children at schools and this thesis argues that these reasons can be found in the area of cultural differences. In case they are not taken into account, these cultural differences are substantial enough to influence a Roma child's performance at school to the point of potential failure.*

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[3] Hübschmannová 1991, 6. Transl. by the author.
[4] Kymlicka 1995b, 1.
[5] Kymlicka 1995b, 2.
[6] Nečas 2002, 112.

In line with that hypothesis, the main research question as well as the binding element of this paper is as follows: *What are the cultural differences behind the failure of the Roma children at elementary schools and how should they be taken into account by the Czech educational system?* The primary aim of this work is to answer the research question through a complex description and critical analysis of the situation, problems and developments in the education of Roma children in the Czech educational system. After the disclosure of the cultural differences responsible for the failure of the Roma children, this paper presents a proposal to accommodate these differences, a proposal whose basis lies in the educational incorporation of the cultural differences into the curriculum. The secondary aim of the work is to offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the concepts of cultural differences and their intercurrent role and relevance in the educational process. The thesis should contribute to the existing works dealing with the education of the Roma children in the Czech Republic, works coming from both Czech and international organizations as well as from individuals trying to urge the Czech government to take immediate steps in the matter.

A few words should be written on the relevance of the topic. The focus of this paper falls on the Czech Republic, a country that, within one week only, forms on Facebook a group counting 8 000 members sharing the opinion that the Czech Republic should be literally cleansed from the presence of the Roma.[7] These predominantly negative attitudes, way too often resulting in open violence, do, indeed, present one of the most pressing problems the Czech Republic is facing. The choice of the area of education is justified by the following reasoning, one that is very simple, yet, too often disregarded. Without a good education, there is no way that the Roma can find a decent job. Without a decent job, there is no way they can have a decent living and without a decent living and a proper job, there is no way that the Czechs will stop taking the Roma as unwanted guests feeding on their taxes. So far, too many people have insisted on separate education of the Roma based on their inability to keep pace with the traditional system of education. By educating the Roma children in non-standard educational facilities, the door to any further formation the children might pursue later on is irreversibly closed. The Roma consequently end up as workers at building sites or as cleaning ladies; occupations rarely chosen since the amount of social benefits in the country is certainly a more luring possibility. Hence the soaring unemployment rate that the Roma only are blamed for. The area of education is, indeed, the key elementant as well as the platform where the re-evaluation of the existing practices should start.

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[7] Kubálková 2009, 4.

Having clarified the main topic, the aims and the relevance of this paper, there are two more specifications to address; the time and the geographical focus. Regardless the necessary comments on the attitude to education from historical perspective, the time focus in this paper is on the present-day situation; in other words, on the last decade. All but one quoted reports dealing with the education of the Roma children in the Czech Republic were published after the year 2000. If a reference is made to the twentieth century or earlier, it is done in order to show what policies and approaches have already been tried out and proved inefficient. The task of focusing on the very recent years has been facilitated by the fact that, indeed, not much has changed in the past thirty or forty years with respect to the position of the Roma children at elementary schools. In any case, a clear attempt has been made, especially in the second chapter of this paper, to work with the most up-to-date data available. Finally, from the geographical point of view, only the borders of the territory of the Czech Republic have been chosen. It is true that the Czech Republic is not the only country trying to embrace solutions leading to a peaceful co-existence with the Roma at the educational level, but since the interest of this paper is the Czech and the Roma cultures in particular, there is no need to turn to other countries whose experience with the Roma has its own cultural, historical and political specifics and dimensions and would, therefore, only make the issue at hand less clear.

Quite undestandably, this paper is not the first one to deal with the cultural differences behind the potential failure of the Roma children and the possible ways of incorporating these into the educational system. A critical evaluation of the existing literature, especially the most important consulted sources, should, therefore, follow. An extensive research has been conducted in the library fund of the Museum of Romani Culture that, being the only institution of its kind in Europe, presents the biggest collection of the literature regarding the Roma in the Czech Republic and in other countries. Materials had been also found in Georg-August Universität in Germany as well as in Palacký University in Olomouc. From the theoretical point of view, this paper has been anchored in the work of Pavel Barša, John Rex and Will Kymlicka. All of them deal with the concept of integration of one ethnic group into another and with the alternatives that such a situation brings about. The sticky ground is the area of terminology since the same terms and concepts are used by these authors in a rather inconsistent way. These inconsistencies are addressed at the end of the Introduction where the commonly vague terms are clarified and given the meaning in which they are used in this paper. Pavel Barša's *Politická teorie multikulturalismu* is one of the most elaborate books on political theory of integration and multiculturalism ever published in the Czech Republic.

The book addresses directly the integration of the Roma minority into the Czech society, openly advocating and explaining the concept of multiculturalism. As the title itself tells us, the focus is on political theory. A multicultural society is, without doubt, something we should be heading for, but there is a huge gap between a theory and its implementation in practice, taking into account all the variables and particularities of different countries. This practical part – how to implement the core of multiculturalism, where and how to start etc., is not, for the purposes of this paper, properly addressed by Barša. Adopting the very useful typology of integration as well as the basic understanding of multiculturalism, this paper intends to take on the task and to offer a very clear position, a morally defensible, but also politically viable one, that shows how the cultural differences between the Roma and the Czech children at elementary schools can be eliminated, or at least limited.

To remedy a certain situation, we should have as clear understanding as possible of what the situation looks like; it is, therefore, absolutely necessary to provide a factual background to the situation of the Roma children in the Czech system of education. Since the law prohibits the collection of statistical data based on ethnicity, it is almost an impossible task. Fortunately, there is a wide range of international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), UNESCO, Open Society Institute or, for example, Roma Education Fund, all of them conducting their own surveys in various European countries and cosequently publishing the results as a part of guidelines, recommendations or reports. These include, for example, *Education of Roma children in Europe* (Council of Europe and UNESCO), *Roma Schools for the Mentally Handicapped in the Czech Republic* (ERRC), *Stigmata: Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe* (ERRC) or *International Comparative Data Set on Roma Education* (Open Society Institute). This paper has tried to make use of the most recent reports dealing with the education of the Roma children in the Czech Republic. These reports, usually depicting only a particular region, are far away from being the springboard from which general conclusions for the whole country can be made. Even if this paper is aware of their limitations these reports still remain the most accurate source on the exclusion of the Roma children from the mainstream education there is. Their value is, however, maily statistical – they provide numbers and percentages. The reasons behind the numbers are too general and too vague and each of these reports inclines to see the issue rather one-sidedly, with the Czechs being the perpetrators and the Roma being the victims. This paper makes use of the numbers that give us as close idea of where we stand as possible. It does not, however, take these as a final

point, but uses the numbers as an opening platform to understand what lies behind these, in many cases alarming data.

There are two extremely important names in the field of the cultural differences leading way too often to misunderstandings between the Roma and the Czechs; Milena Hübschmannová, one of the most prominent Romologists of her generation, the founder of Roma Studies in the CR and a former professor at Charles University, who died in 2005, and Helena Balabánová, a director of the elementary school of Přemysla Pittra in Ostrava, a school frequented mostly by Roma children. Relevant to this paper, their articles and books on the Roma culture and the Roma values have been read and re-read since both Hübschmannová and Balabánová provide what all the governmental programmes and most of the theoretical books lack – practical knowledge of the Roma culture and years of practical experience of what it means, especially for the teachers and school directors.

To mention some other names and their work relevant to this paper: the articles of Viktor Sekyt have been consulted for their interest in the commonly forgotten historical aspect and its influence on today's values of the Roma; the interviews with and the articles by Petr Klíma have been addressed in this paper as well since Klíma has been working for the past forty years as a psychologist, assessing the intellectual abilities of the Roma children and as such is an experienced think-tank on the topic; Tatjana Šišková, Marta Teplá or Hana Frištenská are yet other names that have been consulted for their valuable contributions in the field of the education of the Roma children in the Czech republic. To sum up, more and more people are aware of the important role that education has in the process of integration of the Roma into the society and the existing literature on the topic only documents this. As stated earlier, this paper, however, puts one proposal of how to achieve that above all the rest, this proposal being the educational incorporation of the cultural differences into the curriculum; a notion only vaguely commented upon in the existing literature.

As far as the division of chapters is concerned, this paper takes the following turns. The first Chapter anchors the topic theoretically. This paper argues that the best way how to deal with differences is not to be afraid of them, but to integrate them into the mainstream society. This is not the case of the Roma and the Czechs only, this is the case of many other ethnic groups with their own cultural expression that is, way too often, seen as a threat to the mainstream cultural expression and, therefore, pushed on the verge of society, marginalized and in some cases even disdained. Since the question should not be *whether* to integrate, but *how* to integrate, the main focus of the first Chapter is, therefore, on the alternatives of integration we have. An attempt to choose the morally defensible and politically viable

solution Kymlicka is talking about is made and by consequence, the concepts of multiculturalism and multicultural education are touched upon.

Narrowing the topic to the particular case of the Roma children in the Czech educational process, the second Chapter presents a factual analysis of the situation raising concerns. What is, therefore, the extent of exclusion of the Roma children from the mainstream education? If some of the Roma children are not allowed to be educated in the standard schools, where are they educated? Who decides about what child is fit and able to enter a standard elementary school and what child is not? What are exactly these non-standard educational facilities? All the available reports discovered during the research that are dealing with these topics have been brought to bear in order to have as real image of the exclusion of the Roma children from Czech schools as possible.

After a closer look at what the situation looks like, Chapter three turns to the reasons at the cultural level responsible for that situation. Starting from a commonly disregarded historical perspective, the focus remains on the innate parts of the Roma culture directly affecting a Roma child's performance at school. The attitude to education, the importance of different social setting, the role of different family upbringing as well as the innate differences in communication and decision-making are commented upon and directly related to the ramifications they have behind the school desk. Last but not least, the issue of Roma language, another innate part of the Roma culture, and its influence on the failure of Roma children is mentioned. The third Chapter goes on to show that the Czech educational system has been built on the doctrine of one pupil, rooted in Communism and afirming that all children are the same, starting from the same line. This a myth, but even though many more people are aware of this, not a lot has been done to take this fact into account. All children do not, indeed, start from the same line, some – the Roma children in particular – enter the first grade with a huge handicap that is responsible for their potential failure.

Having disclosed the differences that create such a handicap in the first place, the fourth Chapter deals with the question of how to eliminate these differences without forcing the Roma children to renounce the culture in which they are brought up – something that has been already tried and that has brought us to the point where we are now. There have been attempts to do so, but none of them has brought the coveted results. The second part of the fourth Chapter shows that the incorporation of the Roma culture into the curriculum presents just the one morally justifiable and practically feasible solution to the exclusion of the Roma children from the educational process.

Finally, the Conclusion puts together all the sub-conclusions reached in each Chapter and answers the research question. The cultural differences between the Czechs and the Roma manifest themselves in each aspect of a Roma child's life and from this point of view, they are an absolutely crucial element deciding about success or failure at school. The only way to deal with these differences is to disclose and understand them in the first place and to integrate them into the system of education that gives equal opportunities to all its pupils. Such an integration should be based on the concept of multiculturalism and multicultural education due to which the Roma children are being given a fair chance to recognize themselves in a system that had been devised for one cultural background only. By consequence, they would not feel as outsiders, but as legitimate members who have both the capacity and ability to contribute to the process of education.

The methods that have been used for the elaboration of this work are rooted in the empirical-analytical approach and include methods of analysis and description; for the Chapter number four, also the epirical method of observation has been used. This paper presents a descriptive and cultural analysis of the potential failure of the Roma children at elementary schools. Such an analysis has been supported by both academic research (Palacký University in Olomouc, Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, Georg-August Universität in Göttingen) and an internship in the Museum of Romani Culture. During the internship, which consisted of teaching Roma children English, the concepts of cultural differences were being scrutinized.[8] The originality of the internship lay in the fact that sixteen Roma children were, on an individual basis, being taught English from the materials not cut-to-size for the Czech or English culture (as it is always the case), but were rooted instead as much as possible in the Roma culture itself. The children, therefore, studied English from materials that were much closer to their hearts and understanding than those found in the Czech textbooks. Such materials had been prepared beforehand in co-operation with the Museum of Romani Culture (an institution documenting in all ways possible the cultural heritage of the Roma from all over the world). A textbook divided into fifteen topics had been prepared, used in classes and the reaction of the children was being observed. The internship lasted three months and since the reaction of children was very good, it was decided at the end of the internship that the textbook would be put on a DVD, copied and sent to other organizations tutoring Roma

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[8] The internship was never thought of as a platform for research, but rather as a natural way to get to know the specifics of the Roma culture and the role they play in the educational process – something that is hard to understand from scholarly articles only, but should be experienced. This internship accomplished that, helping to understand the possibilities of the concepts of cultural differences and their application.

children. Incorporating Roma culture into the curriculum, as opposed to other attempts already tried, seems to bring about positive results and might be, therefore, thought of as a potential tool to combat the exclusion that the Roma children are subject to at Czech schools.

Yes, we are different, we have always been. What is important, however, is how we perceive our differences. If we perceive them as something dangerous, if we continue to see the Roma as a dangerous element that came to the Czech Republic to enjoy the system of social benefits, we will remain stuck where we are right now, in a situation that neither the Roma, nor the Czechs are happy about. If everyone starts to accept his or her part of guilt, if we stop thinking in terms or a non-existent homogenious Czech identity that the Roma are only destroying, if we save some space for other cultures and we start with such savings in the area of education, we will discover that being different does not have to be bad at all; on the other hand, it is a source of richness that, in its final result, leads to a working integration of the Roma into the Czech society - into a society where individuals do not pledge their allegiance to their ethnic roots, but to more universal ones in which both Czech and Roma identities can find and express themselves.

Terminology

Since this paper deals with terms and concepts the meaning of which is very often vague and unclear, it is necessary to specify the way in which these terms and concepts are being used on the following pages.

The Roma

To define the group that lies at the center of this paper is unfortunately no easy task. According to Frištenská, the Roma are a group of people perceived in a somehow three-dimensional representation. First and foremost, the Roma are seen as an anthropological type; a trait easily recognizable simply by the colour of one's skin.[9] It is precisely this trait that so often triggers negative attitude towards the Roma that is based on preconceived ideas and stereotypes. Secondly, the Roma are a declared nationality.[10] To declare the Roma nationality has been possible since 1991. It must be stated, however, that mainly from distrust and fear of being discriminated against, only 32 903 Roma used this option; in 2001 the number of declared Roma dropped to 11 746.[11] The overall number of the Roma living in the CR, therefore, seems much smaller than it really is, which has very often lead to disregarding the issue whatsoever. The real estimate of the Roma population in the Czech Republic, however, vacillates between 160 000 – 300 000.[12] Thirdly, the Roma are perceived as a socially disadvantaged group living in its specific cultural background.[13] Such disadvantages come to light in the area of low professional qualification, high unemployment, dependency on social benefits, sordid living conditions or high level of criminality. It is mainly in this third sense that the Roma will be understood in this paper.

There is no clear-cut answer to the question *who are the Roma living in the Czech Republic?* David Mayall says that: "[the Roma] are and have been whoever people have wanted them to be."[14] The reality is that the Czechs, as well as other majority groups, have wanted them to be mainly nomads, scapegoats, peace breakers, ne'er-do-wells, thieves and troublemakers and the Roma have very often taken on these roles without protesting.

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[9] Frištenská, Haišmann and Víšek 1999, 494.
[10] Frištenská, Haišmann and Víšek 1999, 495.
[11] ERRC 2003, 103.
[12] Open Society Institute 2008, 1.
[13] Frištenská, Haišmann and Víšek 1999, 495.
[14] Mayall 2004, 276.

A national minority

The vague term of national minority has been given a solid legal basis by the 2001 *Act on the rights of members of national minorities*, no. 273, where is it specifically stated that a national minority is: "a community of citizens of the Czech Republic who live on the territory of the present Czech Republic and as a rule differ from other citizens by their common ethnic origin, language, culture and traditions; they represent a minority of citizens and at the same time they show their will to be considered a national minority for the purpose of common efforts to preserve and develop their own identity, language and culture and at the same time express and preserve interests of their community which has been formed during history."[15] According to that definition, cut-to-size for the Czech Republic, the Roma should be without doubt considered its national minority and that is also how they are referred to in this paper.

An ethnic group

In one of his books, Kymlicka argues that a national minority must be differentiated from an ethnic group, by which he means loose associations into which individual and familial immigrants coalesce, with the intention to leave their original community in order to enter another.[16] This understanding of an ethnic group would probably rule out the Roma from being called an ethnic group since most of them never planned to leave their original community and their culture, in order to accept the Czech one. There are, however, other sociologists, such as Thomas Eriksen, who have approached the concept of ethnicity from a different point of view. According to Eriksen, for two groups to be called ethnic, "[these groups] must have a minimum contact with each other, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. ... Ethnicity is essencially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group."[17] This understanding of ethnic group has been given preference in this paper; the Czechs are understood as an ethnic group of the Czech Republic, of which they constitute its majority; the Roma are understood as an ethnic group of the same country, of which they constitute a national minority.

Educational terminology

The traditional terminological division of education into pre-school (3-6), elementary (6-15), secondary (15-18) and tertiary (18 on) has been respected in this paper.

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[15] Act on rights of national minorities 2001.
[16] Kymlicka 1995a, 19.
[17] Eriksen 1997, 38-39 .

Culture

The extremely vague term of culture can be usually undestood in two senses. The more concrete and tangible one defines the output of our expression, let it be a painting, a sculpure or, for example, a book. The more abstract one refers to a complex system of norms, values, traditions and collective memories that are, through different carriers, passed from one generation to another. It is, of course, very hard – if not impossible – to say where one culture ends and another begins, yet, it is in the latter sense that culture is being understood in this paper.

Segregation

Whenever the word segregation is used in this paper, it denotes "a conduct that separates individuals or groups of individuals from others on the basis of their characteristics,"[18] in our case on the grounds of different ethnic origin based on which education in separate educational facilities is preferred.

Integration

Integration is understood in this paper as a process, by which ethnic, local or other groups get incorporated into different societies politically organized into states; such an incorporation being either intentional or unintentional.[19]

Multiculturalism

There is not a universally accepted definition of multiculturalism since its meaning adapts to the local situation and time period.[20] It does, indeed, depend on the given territory it refers to, its history, its people, relationships among those people, etc. The concept of multiculturalism differs in the USA, Canada or in Europe. The important thing is that the core of multiculturalism, the ideology on which it is based, remains the same. Roy Jenkins, the former British Home Secretary, defined this core as a model of integration that goes against "the flattening process of uniformity, but [supports] cultural diversity, coupled with equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance."[21]

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[18] ERRC 2007, 16.
[19] Barša 2003, 209.
[17] Bezáková and Lajčáková 2002, 815.
[21] European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2006, 7-8.

1. Theoretical perspective

Garuv tut mijel tel kandralo bur, al'e e balval pre tute na phurdela.

Hide even under a wide rose, the important thing is that you are protected from the wind.[22]

"Since the end of the Cold War, ethnocultural conflicts have become the most common source of political violence in the world, and they show no sign of abating."[23] These conflicts have been continuously bringing to the fore initiatives of re-thinking the understanding of democracy, national integrity, minority rights or theories of integration. The USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and many other states have formulated their policies towards immigrants or ethnic groups living on their territory. These policies differ in a lot of points, starting with the feasibility to obtain citizenship and to effectuate the related rights, ending with various language policies on the use of one's mother tongue. Both the European Union and the unsuccessfully tried-out practices of forced assimilation and segregation have made these states to accept that integration of different ethnic groups into the mainstream society is not a point of debate. The question is not, indeed, *whether* to integrate, but *how* to integrate. It is simply a fact that more ethnocultural groups inhabit the same territory and no political debates and theoretical proofs should be needed to persuade us that these groups must simply learn to live together. How to integrate one ethnic group, a minority, into another ethnic group, a majority, would for itself make a topic of a thesis. It is not our intention to provide the most elaborate explanation of theories of integration possible. It is, however, our intention to introduce these theories in order to see what alternatives there are to choose from. It is also our intention to see which of these can be considered as both morally defensible and politically viable ones.

1.1 Theories of integration: xenophobic nationalism or multiculturalism?

With a small degree of exaggeration, we can state that the whole nineteenth century was anchored in the conviction that homogeneity is the basis for stability. In line with Hegel's theory on the organization of humanity into nation states, the most common argumentative line of the nineteenth century was as follows: "The developed nations (...) have the right to 'civilize' savage ethnic groups and by doing so, bring them closer to their general human

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[22] Nečas 2002, 23. Transl. by the author.
[23] Kymlicka 1995b, 1.

destiny."[24] This approach had been best embraced by the French *mission civilisatrice*, a term nobly covering its assimilationist core. It was truly believed by the colonizers, and not only the French ones, that colonisation and all the atrocities it had brought about, were carried out in the name of a greater good that the savage people were not yet aware of. This approach was falling, slowly but surely, under heavy criticism. First of all, the year 1960, bringing independence to the formal French, Belgian or British colonies in Africa, then the storming 1960s and 1970s started to hamper its very core; the movement of African-Americans, the feminists, various religious groups as well as ethnic minorities wanted to leave the non-existent homogenious identity of the given states and wanted to be heard for who they are. It was from these heated debates that the theory on integration slowly came into being.

If we come back to our geographical focus, Europe was facing the same issues with relation to the waves of immigrants. Pavel Barša points out that: "Deciding between hardly feasible assimilation and potentially subversive acceptance of different cultures opened a fore for two alternatives of how to approach the immigrants to Europe – xenophobic nationalism on one side, and cultural pluralism or multiculturalism on the other."[25] Each state can be, according to Barša, placed somewhere in between these two extremes, depending on two variables; its historical tradition of approaching cultural differences and its specific notion of self-conception.[26]

To explore this notion more, an example of the Czech Republic and its Roma minority might be taken. Regarding the first variable, the Czech Republic is a country with a solid background for the first extreme – for xenophobic nationalism. According to Jan Michalík, when the second World War was over, the Czechs were not only the dominant culture, but basically the sole culture on the Czech territory.[27] The fact is, indeed, that the majority of Jews had their destiny sealed in the midst of the WWII, the Germans left or were moved after the war so the only three cultural elements that remained were the Czechs, the Slovaks and an insignificant number of the Roma.[28] The first two peacefully separated in 1993 so when the

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[24] Barša 2003, 210. Transl. by the author, original text: "Vyspělé národy (…) mají proto právo „civilizovat" zaostalé etnické kmeny, a tak je přibližovat jejich obecně-lidskému údělu."
[25] Barša 2003, 214. Transl. by the author, original text: "Toto rozhodování mezi stěží proveditelnou národní asimilací a potenciálně podvratným uznáním kulturní odlišnosti nastolilo problémové pole, z nějž vyrostly dvě protikladné alternativy přístupu k přistěhovalcům v současné západní Evropě – xenofobní nacionalismus na straně jedné a kulturní pluralismus či multikulturalismus na straně druhé."
[26] Barša 2003, 218.
[27] Michalík 2003, 75.
[28] There is no precise documentation on the number of the Roma who survived the WWII. None of the existing estimates is, however, higher than 1000. According to Ctibor Nečas, 583 Roma returned after the war. Nečas 2002, 83. The Roma were not, however, the only minority on the territory, there were also Hungarians and Poles, even though their numbers were even less insignificant.

Slovaks left the country, the equation got even tighter. In the meantime, however, the number of the Roma significantly increased and this fact blazed the trail for a sharp opposition between the majority, the Czechs, and the minority, the Roma.

As for the second variable, the notion of self-conception, the Czech Republic has not fared much better either. Barša, whose work had been on this point rooted in Anthony Smith, Jürgen Habermas or Ernst Renan, affirms that: "The more a nation is identified with blood relations or concrete cultural aspects, the less space is given by 'its' state to other cultures."[29] The Czechs, indeed, seem to hold onto a mythical identity lasting from the time of the Premyslids and going on, with short interruptions, until now. The year 1993, the birth of the new Czech Republic, was a year when the Czechs could identify themselves as, once again, a homogeneous nation. They did all they could to turn this wish into reality when the Czech government made it extremely hard for any Roma to get a Czech citizenship by means of *Law on the Acquisition and Loss of Czech Citizenship* (Law no. 40/1993). A Human Rights Watch Report specifically states that: "The law was aimed at limiting the Roma population's possibility of acquiring Czech citizenship because it imposed a set of requirements that are particularly difficult for this ethnic group to comply with."[30] This fact aroused harsh criticism especially from abroad and the law on citizenship had to be amended several times.[31] This is all just to prove that, based on Barša's two extreme alternatives, the Czech Republic is without doubt much closer to xenophobic nationalism than to multiculturalism. Especially due to the pressure from abroad regarding minority groups' rights, it is heading towards multiculturalism, that is for sure. It is, however, a thorny road. Let us now look at what alternatives of integration such a road offers.

1.2 Three-level integration

According to Pavel Barša, we can distinguish three levels at which one group (in our case the Roma minority) can be integrated into another group (in our case the Czech majority). These three levels are *cultural*, *socio-economic* and *political*; each one of them offering several possibilities of how to approach integration at that particular level. The next table, therefore, provides us with the necessary typology.

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[29] Barša 2003, 247. Transl. by the author, original text: "Čím více je národ ztotožňován s pokrevním příbuzenstvím či konkrétními aspekty kultury, tím méně „jeho" stát dává prostor kulturní různorodosti."
[30] Human Rights Watch 1996, 54.
[31] Since its enactment, the law has been amended three times in order to eliminate its alleged discriminatory basis against the Roma, so much criticized by the Council of Europe or the Human Rights Watch, the amendments being carried out in 1993, 1995 and 1996. They regarded, for example, the power to waive the requirement of clean criminal record for the past five years. Human Rights Watch 1996, 102.

Table 1: Three-level typology of integration

1) Cultural level	2) Socio-economic level	3) Political level
assimilation	full integration	assimilation
melting pot	partial integration	accommodation
cultural pluralism	segregation	segregation
multiculturalism		
segregation		

Source: Barša 2003, 240.

The socio-economic level, at which one group can be integrated into another, is related to the position that such a minority has in the basic layers of society. We can talk either of complete or partial integration based on the proportional representation of the minority in the areas of labour market, social status or revenues.[32] In the negative sense, we are talking about segregation, by which such a minority group is excluded from participation in, e.g. higher-paid cathegory of jobs.

At the political level, the degree of integration depends on how well the particular minority is represented at the political spectrum of the given country. If a minority is hardly represented or is not represented at all, we talk about monopolization of political process by the majority.[33]

The focus of this paper, the cultural level, offers four alternatives. Assimilation is usually understood as a form of integration by which the minority gets rid of the features that made it different from the majority, of which it becomes an integral part. This had been the policy of Maria Theresa and her son, Joseph II, who set about to erase the Roma culture by prohibiting the Roma to speak their language, to wear their traditional clothes or to practice their traditional crafts; the Roma were forced to settle, sometimes their children were taken from them in order to be brough up in non-Roma families. In its less drastic variant, it was precisely this assimilationist programme that was taken up again during the Communist regime.[34]

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[32] Barša 2003, 286.
[33] Barša 2003, 286.
[34] "After the search, confrontations and the promotion of often ill-assorted policies, the state embraced, in between 1948-1957, towards the Roma the policy of non-repressive assimilation." Transl. by the author, original text: "Po hledání, konfrontacích a prosazování mnohdy nesourodých postupů uplatnila se v desetiletí 1948-1957 ve státní politice vůči Romům koncepce nerepresivní asimilace." Nečas 2002, 99.

The second option, the concept of melting pot, had been created for the American environment which it never left. Defined best by St. Jean de Crèvecoeur, one of the most enthusiastic interpreters of the then new American identity, it presents the very idea on which the USA was built. Similar to assimilation, the difference being that each assimilated group supposedly brings something to the fore and enriches the society in its own way; all the potential differences being melted in a pot from which a new and better American identity rises. As luring as it might seem, this concept proved to be for many unrealistic and sowed a lot of criticism, especially from the 1960s on, as more and more people realized that what lies at the core of this supposedly melting cultures is actually a never melted Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity.[35]

Cultural pluralism, on the other hand, is reached when a minority keeps its cultural distinctions and its way of life, but economically and politically becomes an integral part of the society. In our case, the Roma have kept their cultural distinctions, but paradoxically because of these distinctions, they have never become an integral part of the Czech society. In other words, the Roma have never fully acquired the Czech culture to such an extent that they could equally participate in the political or socio-economic process. Finally, the principle of multiculturalism relies not only on accepting these cultural distinctions, but also on seeing them as something desirable, making it its policy to promote these differences in the framework of one common culture that each immigrant, or a member of a minority, must necessarily acquire.[36]

Since this paper is dealing with cultural differences at the level of education, we will focus more on the alternatives that unfold at the cultural level. The cultural level offers the alternatives of assimilation, cultural pluralism, multiculturalism or segregation (since the concept of melting pot cannot be, by definition, realized in the Czech background). It is high time to accept that both attempts of strict assimilation (Maria Theresa and later the Communist regime) have failed. The fact is that by trying to assimilate the Roma and by attempting to erase the Roma culture at all costs, we are now where we are. It is, indeed, high time to realize that if we do not give the Roma their space within the Czech society, they will keep on looking for it outside.[37] History shows us that opressed minorities that were not given enough space at the cultural, socio-economic or political level, started to define themselves

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[35] Barša 2003, 212.
[36] Barša 2003, 286-288.
[37] Barša 2003, 283.

outside the societies that they were living in and a surge of violent nationalism resulted in, for example, the already mentioned Balkan Wars.

If we put aside assimilation as well as the morally unacceptable segregation, what is left is either cultural pluralism or multiculturalism; a weaker and a stronger variant of building of what Barša calls dual identity.[38] In other words, we can either simply tolerate the cultural differences among us or we can deliberately support and promote them.

1.3 The concept of multiculturalism – promotion of differences

It is understandable that the concept of multiculturalism works with different intensity and meaning in different parts of the world. Its core, however, remains the same. One of the most original approaches to a multicultural society has been elaborated by John Rex. He comes up with the idea to distinguish between public and private domains of life; the former being law, politics, economy and the latter family, morality and religion. An ideal multicultural society is, according to Rex, one which "is unitary in the public domain but which encourages diversity in what are thought of as private or communal matters."[39] The public domain of law, politics and economy, therefore, presupposes a certain uniformity shared by all groups. Law, to start with, determines the rights of individuals and as Rex states, "in our ideal multicultural society, (…), we are positing that all individuals are equally incorporated and that they have equality before law."[40] The very same notion of equality should be valid in the remaining spheres of both politics, in terms of equal participation and excercise of political power, and economy, in terms of equal opportunities on the market. All individuals and groups of individuals in an ideal multicultural society should receive the same treatment in the public domain. Apart from this uniformity in the domain of law, politics and economy, a multicultural society should also provide space for a certain universality in the private domain of family, morality and religion; a universality in which the minority culture may recognize and express itself. Rex, therefore, anchors the understanding of an ideal multicultural society in this dichotomy of public and private domains even though he is very well aware of the fact that there are also other areas of everyday life that intrude into both of these domains; education being the best example.

Pavel Barša, on the other hand, prefers to define an ideal multicultural society from the point of already mentioned dual identity, in which one's political identity goes hand in hand

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[38] Barša 2003, 285. Dual identity expresses the imperative to stop pledging our allegiance to one identity only. It implies that we should all start thinking of ourselves as citizens of one country that encompasses more identities.
[39] Rex 1997, 208.
[40] Rex 1997, 208.

with a public acceptance of one's cultural identity.[41] The building of this dual identity is a double-sided process that should come from both the majority and minority cultures; the former providing more space for cultural differences, the latter acquiring the culture of the majority. Giving more space to other cultures is a way to combat the rise of nationalism that is very likely to occur if a minority culture is not given enough space inside the society it lives in. Multiculturalism tries to prevent that precisely by a public recognition of cultural differences and by a willing incorporation of these into the mainstream society. There are certainly some pitfalls with such an establishment. Barša gives examples of various cultural particularities, such as the traditional Hinduistic funeral on a pyre. On the grounds of hygiene, but also from the fear that some women might throw themselves on the pyre, such a funeral is simply prohibited in the UK. Multiculturalism is, therefore, also a matter of concensus, not a system of fixed rules to be followed. Whenever a cultural difference and an individual right clash, however, it is always the latter that should be given preference, exactly what Barša demonstrates by the example. [42]

Multiculturalism in Europe, influenced by the debates originating in the USA, Canada and Australia, goes against the principle of assimilation, xenophobic nationalism and ethnic persecution. As a descriptive concept, it recognizes the existence of culturally different groups. As a normative concept, it opens up a space for these to be expressed instead of suppressed and as opposed to merely tolerating these differences, a multicultural society makes it its goal to consciously promote them. As a personal attitude, it requires an open and supportive approach towards the very idea of being different. Such an approach is aware of the fact that an ethnically homogeneous society is a myth. Multiculturalism is anchored and promotes the so-called dual identity requiring the acceptance of the majority culture on one hand, but also comprising the minority culture on the other. These two cultures can meet and clash in several domains. It is now time to narrow our general findings down and to focus on such a domain – the domain of education.

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[41] Barša 2003, 89.
[42] Barša 2003, 245.

1.3.1 The concept of a multicultural education

One of the functions of education is to transmit knowlege that one uses later on in whatever field one might choose. Apart from qualification and experience, the educational process is also, to a certain extent, responsible for the transmission of values. Therefore, even if mostly public, the educational process is pretty much related to cultural and moral values of the given country and in line with Rex's definition, influences the private domain as well. If we take this into account and combine it with the principles of multiculturalism, a school has absolutely no right to assume the priviledge of teaching its students the majority culture only. Since school should be concerned with educating as many children as possible, it should be flexible and create such an environment in which this goal can be realized. In other words, school should reflect the cultural background of its pupils, all of its pupils. Of course, it is up to each school to what an extent this reflexion is carried out. The point is, however, that in order to secure a successful performance of children coming from different cultural backgrounds, the incorporation of such a background into the mainstream system *has to* take place. Instead of trying to make a child fit into a system, a system should be changed in a way that a child can fit into it. A multicultural education, therefore, means not only tolerance of other cultures by enabling these to participate in the process of education – that is not enough. It means a conscious and willing promotion and incorporation of these differences into the mainstream education.

In the field of education, to tolerate the fact that a child comes from a different culture is, indeed, not enough. Tolerance and understanding are for sure the springboard. Yet, more than that should be done. To embrace a multicultural approach, a school should incorporate the particularities that go hand in hand with a different culture into the educational system because by incorporating it into the school system, a process of incorporating those born into this culture will be started as well. If we allow the another culture to penetrate into the textbooks, the classrooms and the content of the lessons, we will create a space where the foreign children may recognize themselves, recognize who they are. They could see that their history and their traditions are a legitimate partner to the mainstream history and traditions; they would consequently start to respect themselves and by respecting themselves, they will respect the people around them. We should get rid of the idea that the Czechs are those whose parents are Czech, who were brought up in the Czech culture and who speak the Czech language. This is no longer true for this world; being a Czech might comprise many more identities and since mere tolerance of this is simply not enough, the best option is the concept of multiculturalism with multicultural education being the point to start from.

1.4 Roma minority – the question of tripple exclusion

So far, we have seen the levels at which one group can be integrated into another group. Having stressed that the interest of this paper lies at the cultural level, we have presented the alternatives to choose from. We have reached the conclusion that multiculturalism, and multicultural education, is the morally justifiable alternative we should be heading for in the area of integrating a minority group into the majority one. It is now high time to leave the theoretical background and to focus on the two ethnic groups that are at the centre of this paper – the Roma and the Czechs. There is no dispute that the Roma in the Czech Republic live on the very verge of society. At cultural, socio-economic and political level, their situation is still very close to segregation; a fact that is often referred to as a tripple exclusion.[43]

The Roma are, indeed, excluded from the political process, they are associated with lower socio-economic status, high criminality, low level of education resulting in soaring level of unemloyment and last but not least, predominantly negative attitude on the part of the majority often resulting in open discrimination and violent attacks on both sides. The case of Natálka Siváková, a three-year old Roma girl who suffered burns on 80% of her body during a racially motivated attact on her family in 2009, migh serve as just one example out of many. The ramifications of this tripple exclusion go further and further, creating a kind of vicious circle that seems to be very hard to break. There is only one part of the circle where this can be done and that is the area of education. School, indeed, is the only place that can give the Roma children a chance in life, a chance to find a decent job, to take their place at the market and to penetrate also into the area of political process and political representation. Education is the key. The Czech system, however, is at a loss regarding how to accommodate differences and how to integrate Roma children. Before we turn to these cultural differences and the best ways to accommodate them, it is necessary to have as precise an idea of what the situation in education looks like as possible. What are, therefore, the actual facts raising concerns and criticism? To what an extent are Roma children excluded from the process of education in the Czech Republic? The following chapter focuses just on that.

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[43] Barša 2003, 279.

2. Roma children in the Czech educational system

Ma dža odoj, kaj tut na vičinen.

Don't go where you are not invited.[44]

2.1 The present day situation

As recently as in 2007, the Council of Europe together with UNESCO published a report commenting on the situation of Roma children in educational systems of given European countries. It is specifically stated there that in some of these countries "between 50%-80% of Roma children enrolled in school are systematically routed into 'special schools' established in the 1950s and 1960s."[45] This fact is alarming. We are not talking about a segregational practice characteristic of one or two European countries; we are talking about a phenomenon of a general preference to educate Roma children in special educational facilities. Does that mean that the European educational practices are on the whole racially biased or does that mean that the Roma children are mentally handicapped and must be, therefore, educated in facilities that had been established for the purpose of educating mentally handicapped children?

Criticism directed to the former possibility has been more than abundant. International organizations such as the European Roma Rights Centre, the Roma Education Fund, the Open Society Justice Initiative, the Human Rights Watch, UNESCO and many others have been all literally bombing the given European countries with reports, recommendations, guidelines and other initiatives affirming that Roma children are not less intelligent than the majority population and that they should not be blamed for what had been caused by disfunctional educational systems. Based on the lack of indicators that would point to, at least, some lasting changes, it seems that the governments of these countries either do not have the intention to remedy this situation or they simply do not know how.

In this respect, the Czech Republic has been traditionally one of the most criticized countries. To prove that statement, the following table showing comparative data related to education of Roma children in other European countries has been chosen. Despite the unavailability of data on the Roma children who complete elementary education, we can clearly see that only 1,2% of all Roma children in the CR complete secondary education. Compared with other countries in the table, this number is the most alarming one. How is it possible that only such a small percentage of Roma children successfully finish secondary school?

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[44] Hübschmannová 1991, 33. Transl. by the author.
[45] Council of Europe and UNESCO 2007, 7.

Table 2: International Comparative Data Set on Roma Education – 2008

Country	Total popul. (official, millions)	Roma popul. official	Roma popul. estimated	Roma who completed element. educ.	Roma who completed second. educ.
Czech Republic	10.23	11,746 0.11%	160,000 - 300,000 2.25%	unavailable	**1.2%**
Hungary	10.1	189,984 1.9%	550,000 - 600,000 5.69%	60.8%	**12.9%**
Romania	21.7	535,140 2.47%	1,800,000- 2,500,000 9.91%	31.7%	**9.6%**
Slovakia	5.4	89,920 1.67%	350,000 - 370,000 6.67%	76.8%	**15.0%**
Bulgaria	7.68	370,908 4.83%	700,000 - 800,000 9.77%	46.2%	**7.2%**

Source: Open Society Institute 2008, 1.

The very same countries are being criticized in an unrelated report, this time coming from the office of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), where it is explicitly stated that: "Romani children in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia are denied equal dignity by a system of racially-based segregation in education."[46] It is true that the Czech government has been neglecting the issue of Roma education for a long time. The problem is that, according to the numbers, there seems to be no issue at all. In 2001, only 11,746 people declared Roma nationality; a number hardly big enough to raise any concerns. The reality is, however, very different. A generally accepted estimate is that there are at least 200 000 Roma living in the Czech Republic and this number is on the rise, taking into account the generally young Roma population and especially the high fertility of Roma women. There is, indeed, an issue at hand and it is sad that this fact has been acknowledged and addressed more by organizations from abroad rather than by the Czech government and the Czech people.

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[46] ERRC 2003, 9.

What is, therefore, the situation that should merit our attention? The fact is that until 2005, up to 80% of Roma children living in the Czech Republic were not educated in standard elementary schools, but were directly enrolled in or transferred to special remedial schools.[47] These schools had been established in the 1950s and 1960s in order to educate mentally handicapped children not able to keep pace with other children in class. The original idea, therefore, seems to be well-founded; in this way, even the mentally handicapped children can reach the maximum level of education possible. This system has been deeply rooted in the Czech lands and according to some experts, its practice even "served as a positive example for many European countries in the past."[48] The problem, however, occured when the number of the children sent to these facilities started to increase, as we can see in the following table, and when it became obvious that most of these children are actually Roma children.

Table 3: Number of children diagnosed with learning difficulties

Year	1975	1990	2005
Percentage of pupils diagnosed with learning difficulties	**1%**	**2.5%**	**6.5%**

Source: ERRC 2008, 23.

Unfortunately, there are no statistics on how many of these 6.5% of children in 2005 were Roma children since it is prohibited to collect data based on ethnicity. Suffice it to give an example of a field research carried out by the ERRC in 2002 in order to assess the level of integration of Roma children into the mainstream education. Three cities with high percentage of Roma population were scrutinized, namely Kladno, Teplice and Sokolov, with the purpose to find out the percentual representation of Roma children in both standard and remedial elementary schools. The report states that 72% of Roma children attending schools in Kladno were being educated in remedial schools. For Teplice, the number equalled 63% and in Sokolov, the percentage of Roma children in remedial schools soared to 83%.[49] Taking into account that school attendance in the Czech Republic is obligatory, do these results really mean that, on average, 75% of Roma children are mentally retarded?

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[47] Nečas 2002, 112.
[48] Roma Education Fund 2007, 25.
[49] ERRC 2003, 23-25.

Apart from the high concentration of the Roma children, directly referred to as segregation in all the above mentioned reports, the special schools have other particularities that must be mentioned. First of all, they follow a highly reduced curriculum that is usually two years behind a standard elementary school.[50] A child that passes successfully a special school has, therefore, very limited chances first to continue with a proper education and second to find a decent job. With luck, a special school student finds a job in manual professions; men as builders or workers, women as cleaning ladies. These professions are not well paid and consequently, a lot of Roma decide rather to stay home and to collect social benefits. Since a Roma family usually has more members, it is a well-known fact that collecting social benefits for three children and two unemployed parents brings in roughly the same amount of money, if not more, than one would earn at a building site. The unemployment rate among the Roma is, therefore, soaring.[51] Other actual spillovers of this exclusion of the Roma from mainstream education include rocketing crime rate,[52] gambling addiction, prostitution, withdrawal from the society they mistrust, negativism, inferiority complexes and last but not least, predominantly negative attitude on the part of the majority that sees the Roma as wasters feeding on the taxes other people have to work so hard to pay. It is, indeed, a vicious circle. Let us just not forget where it started in the first place, because that is exactly the one and only spot where it can be broken as well.

2.2 Education Act and an attempted curriculum change

In response to the wave of criticism and in an attempt to improve the situation, the Czech government adopted, January 1st, a new *Education Act* no. 561/2004, later amended with other legally binding documents and decrees. This Act consolidated the earlier regulations but its main aim was to stop segregation and discrimination against the Roma in the field of education. In practice, this means that special remedial schools were, as a type of educational facilities, formally abolished. All the schools that used to be called special remedial schools got a new name – practical schools. This initiative of abolishing special schools was, without doubt, a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, no radical integration-related changes happened and, as the conjoint report of several pro-Roma organizations affirms, "changes purporting to end the special school system and improve the integration of

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[50] ERRC 2008, 10.

[51] The average unemployment rate of the Roma in the Czech Republic is 70%, but in some localities, for example in Ostrava region, the number approaches 90%. Nečas 2002, 113.

[52] The estimates are that 20-30% of Roma gain their bread illegaly or that, for example, 95% of all pickpocket crimes are commited by the Roma. Nečas 2002, 113.

Romani children into ordinary schools have resulted in cosmetic changes only."[53] What changed was, indeed, the name. As far as the curriculum, teaching methods or the mentality of teachers and school principals is concerned, the new practical schools only took the baton from the special schools and went on running. Most of these schools have, indeed, continued to follow the same reduced curriculum and educate the Roma children in the same way as before.

In 2007, the Czech educational system underwent another cosmetic change brought about by a new educational programme. The task of the *Framework Educational Programme* (FEP) was to get the curriculum of practical schools nearer to the curriculum of standard elementary schools. A modification of curriculum is again a very good step in the direction of integration, but what should such a modification look like according to FEP? The joint ERRC report provides a very accurate answer to that, stating that: "(...), [the FEP] resulted in the inclusion of English language and some arts and crafts type classes for most schools."[54] Indeed, the most visible change that the FEP brought about was the inclusion of the English language from the third grade of an elementary school. Now, can we imagine what a shock that must be for a Roma child? It enters the first grade as a bilingual pupil speaking both Roma and Czech languages, none of them, however, properly. Such a child has two years to get used to a totally new environment that cannot be more different from what the child knows before he or she is asked to get to know yet another language. This would be hard for anybody, even with full social, emotional and financial support. It is, therefore, twice as hard for a Roma child that usually has none of these advantages. The point here is not that studying English and incorporating English into the curriculum from the third grade is bad, just the opposite – nowadays, it is even necessary. The point here is that such a change does not help to integrate the Roma children at all, just on the contrary. It only creates another obstacle for a Roma child to deal with. In its final result, therefore, the curricula of practical schools got nowhere nearer to standard schools as it was intended.

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[53] ERRC 2008, 2.
[54] ERRC 2008, 10.

2.3 Non-standard educational facilities in the Czech Republic

All elementary schools were after the 2005 law divided into standard schools and non-standard schools, most of the Roma children being educated in the latter type. We should, therefore, comment a little bit more on these facilities. In 2007, the Czech version of the ERRC's report opened with the following sentence: "In the Czech Republic, actual segregation at the elementary level of education is still an existing phenomenon."[55] Such an opinion is, indeed, more than well-founded. To prove beyond doubt that not much has changed since 2005, let us have a look at a more recent field research, conducted by the ERRC in 2008. With no special schools existing anymore, nineteen elementary schools in a Czech region were scrutinized and according to the report, "Roma children accounted for more than 80% of the student population in 8 out of 19 schools."[56] There is, therefore, no dispute regarding the current over-representation of the Roma children in particular schools. In informal speech, these schools have been even given their special label, they are called Gypsy schools;[57] ill-equipped delapidated buildings with high concentration of Roma pupils. Nowadays, there are four types of non-standard educational facilities, overviewed in the following table.

Table 4: Four types of non-standard educational facilities in the Czech Republic

Four types of non-standard educational facilities	
a)	**Elementary schools that used to be special schools** (Sekaninova elementary school in Brno)
b)	**Elementary schools with Roma children majority** (Grafická elementary school in Prague)
c)	**Classes for mentally handicapped within elementary schools** (Ivanovice na Hané)
d)	**Classes within elementary schools attended exclusively by Roma children** (Vranovská elementary school in Brno)

Source: Stigmata 2007, 16-19.

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[55] Stigmata 2007, 11. Transl. by the author, original text: "V České republice přetrvává faktická segregace romských dětí v základním školství."
[56] ERRC 2008, 8.
[57] Komárek 2009, 42.

a) Elementary schools that used to be special schools

These are schools based on the curriculum for mentally handicapped pupils, therefore, they follow the very same reduced curriculum that they had followed before 2005. To put it in other words, the former special schools have been renamed, but the pupils, teachers and teachers' attitude have remained the same. Usually, the Roma children intelectually surpass the level of this reduced curriculum and they do better than the pupils who are really mentally handicapped. But there is very little chance for them to further develop these intellectual abilities since the acceptace to a further educational facility is very unlikely. These schools have been built to produce underachievers. Through a process of under-education combined with absolutely no expectations, these schools do just the opposite of what they are supposed to do. To give a concrete example, a girl from such a school in Brno wanted to continue at a selective secondary school but since at her elementary school, they covered only half of the topics necessary to pass the entrance exams, there was no way for her to even stand a chance. Even if she attended special tutoring classes, there was simply too much to catch up with.

b) Elementary schools with Roma children majority

These types of schools are non-standard in their nature because of a high percentage of Roma children attending them. We are talking about schools located in areas where a lot of Roma live. Roma parents usually prefer to enrol their children there, whereas the Czech parents usully prefer to educate their children somewhere else, only deepening the abyss of segregation. This is, however, the right place to mention the efforts and very promising results of Helena Balabánová, a director of Přemysla Pittra elementary school in Ostrava. The school, founded in 1993, is frequented almost exclusively by the Roma children. Balabánová is persuaded that a school should not function as an educational facility only, but must have a social intention as well and this is mirrored in the general conception of the school. As Balabánová says: "The school serves to educate those children that come from a family background different than the standard one in the society or those children that are not able to adapt to a standard elementary school due to particular psychological or social reasons."[58] Balabánová knows very well that the Roma children grow up in between two war camps – a Roma home and a non-Roma school – and she is doing her best to accommodate this situation. Though the school of Přemysla Pittra would be classified as a non-standard

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[58] Balabánová 1996, 70. Transl. by the author, original text: " Škola slouží ke vzdělání dětem, které pochází z rodinného prostředí lišícího se od standardní rodiny ve společnosti nebo které z důvodů psychologických a sociálních nejsou schopny se přizpůsobit podmínkám v základní škole běžného typu."

educational facility, it might be, ironically, the best example of a school that is taking into account the particularities of the Roma culture and instead of ignoring them, makes them a tool to overcome the barriers that a Roma child faces. The Czech parents, unfortunately, hardly ever see it that way and prefer to educate their children somewhere else.

c) Classes for mentally handicapped within elementary schools

Ivanovice na Hané is a standard elementary school that has, however, two classes for Roma children that have been assessed as mentally handicapped. Due to their alledged special needs, they are being educated separately from other children with whom they hardly ever come into contact. The criticism here usually falls on the ground of assessing who should be considered as mentally handicapped and who should not. Since such a decision basically decides about a child's future, it will be discussed in more details later on.

d) Classes within elementay schools attended exclusively by Roma children

The last type of non-standard schools in the Czech Republic is represented by all-Roma classes of children who have not been assessed as mentally handicapped, yet, they do not study with Czech children, but are grouped in separate classrooms instead. One of the best examples may be found in Brno. Merhautova and Vranovská elementary schools are two hundred meters from each other. They were supposed to merge but such an initiative has not been completed yet and for now, Vranovská educates almost exclusively the Roma children from the area, whereas Merhautova elementary school educates almost exclusively the non-Roma children from the district.

From all of these examples, we can clearly see that it is still preferred to draw lines between *them* and *us* and to educate *them* separately from *us*. From one side, we hear: *The Roma children are less intelligent than our children so why should the whole class proceed at a slower pace because of them? Why shouldn't their children be educated by someone who is qualified enough to do that?Moreover, they would have bad influence on my child and I will not allow that.* From the other side, we hear: *Why should we put our children to classes where they are being despised right from the beginning for who they are? Why should we enroll our children among the Czechs when they regard our children less intelligent just because we don't share exactly the same values like them? Moreover, they would bully my child and I will not allow that.*

It is true, indeed, that the Roma and the Czechs do not see the world in the same colours; that is probably one thing that both sides can agree on. To overcome this and to find a space where the two cultures can peacefully co-exist, the cultural differences putting them apart must be disclosed, understood and accommodated. Before we attempt to do so, there is still one important issue that should be addressed. It regards the authority that makes the choice determining the child's future by deciding what type of school such a child should attend.

2.4 Pedagogical-Psychological Councelling Centers (PPCCs)

Around the age of six, each child undergoes an assessment test that is supposed to determine his or her intellectual, perceptive and social abilities regarding especially the competency to enter a first grade. To do so, various methods and various tests are being used by qualified pedagogues and psychologists and based on their results, the best educational facility is then recommended to the child's parents. One of the most experienced psychologists who specializes in the pre-school assessment of Roma children, Petr Klíma, affirms that these tests all come from American or European background and they have been, therefore, created in a particular cultural context that they automatically reflect.[59] They are, indeed, culturally biased and when we think about it, they must be since they are to decide if a child would fit into a culturally biased educational system. Klíma goes on to assert that from this point of view, the tests can be very reliable, being able to predict if a child will fare well at school or not.[60] But can they really do that? Based on a thirty-minute encounter with a child we had never seen before, can we really be sure that this particular child is not fit for a standard school? How can these tests predict the child's ability to adapt to new conditions? What if the child is having just a bad day, does not feel like answering our questions because it might be simply scared, angry or just not in the mood? We have already seen that once the track of a practical school is decided upon, there is hardly ever a way back. All these issues are certainly debatable, but from what Mr. Klíma says, it seems that we have just accepted the fact that nothing is perfect and this is simply the best way there is.

No one will ever say how many children with totally perfect mental abilities had been sent or later transferred to a special or later on non-standard school. No one will ever say how many children got their lives decided for them by people who have been working for the past forty years with the same tests devised for the same culturally uniform background. During

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[59] Klíma 1996, 16.
[60] Klíma 1996, 16.

these assessment tests the Roma children are required to perform things they might be doing for the first time in their life or to know things that they just cannot know. To give an example, it is a common thing to label a Roma child as mentally handicapped because the child does not know that the words *knife*, *spoon* and *fork* belong to the same category of *cutlery*.[61] If the psychologists knew the Roma language, they would be aware of the fact that hyperonyms are basically a non-existent phenomenon. Edita Žlnayová, who is interested in the linguistic clashes between the two languages in the area of education, explains that: "The Roma do not join related words under a single designation. These terms are usually expressed by a paraphrase or by ennumeration."[62] Even if the Czech word for cutlery is probably a part of the active vocabulary of each Czech child entering a first grade, for the reason meantioned above the same does not apply for the Roma children. Does that, however, mean that the child is mentally handicapped? It certainly does not. There might be many other examples of the same nature, all leading us to the conclusion that the Roma children do not actually stand a high chance to pass these tests.

Surprisingly enough, a lot of psychologists, including Mr. Klíma, admit this fact. They admit that these tests assess only the "school" intellect, not the social one, since the Roma children must be socially intelligent if, at the age of twelve, they are able to take care of five siblings when their mom is gone.[63] In an interview, Mr. Klíma comes up with the conclusion that a special school might be actually the best solution there is for the time being. He is persuaded that the Roma children are better off in a special school that does not expect too much from the child, is more friendly and the child can feel safer there since he or she is among other Roma children.[64] The same attitude can be found in the rows of the pedagogues as well. Marta Teplá, who had been a special school teacher for twenty years, also supports the idea of the Roma being better off in special schools because the teachers are more tolerant, qualified to deal with different mentality of the Roma children and they are not too demanding.[65] Now we should translate these arguments into English. The teachers are tolerant of the fact that they are dealing with students neither destined nor expected to ever achieve anything. And as for their qualification, we can only wonder how many of them are qualified enough to, for example, speak the Roma language. This hidden excuse of *doing the Roma a favour* helps, in reality, nothing else but to deepen the segregational practices.

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[61] ERRC 1999, 55.
[62] Žlnayová 1995, 9. Transl. by the author, original text: "Romům je spojování různých předmětů pod jednoslovný pojem cizí. Tyto pojmy se obvykle vyjadřují opisem nebo víceslovným pojmenováním."
[63] Klíma 1997, 69.
[64] Komárek 2009, 44.
[65] Teplá 1997, 47.

Reading similar opinions, and there is really a lot of them, we get the feeling that these people act upon their best conscience and they truly believe that a non-standard school is better for a Roma child. It is easier, that is for sure, but it is not better. We should get rid of the conviction that we are doing the Roma a favour by saving them from the traumatic experience at a standard school. We are not saving anybody, let alone the majority population.

2.5 Transfer to a non-standard educational facility

There are two ways for a child to end up in a non-standard educational facility. The first has just been described, the second happens by means of a transfer from a standard elementary school. This transfer might be provoked by several reasons; the most common ones are behavioural reasons – reasons unrelated to learning, such as hyperactivity, disturbing behaviour during classes, late arrivals, extreme isolation from other pupils or simply an inability to fit in.[66] The blame is, most of the time, put on the parents of such children, the arguments going along the lines of *they cannot even teach the child good manners*. Even with the best will, it can perfectly happen that a Roma child does not know that being late is bad. Our answer should not be, however, to label the child as a troublemaker and to wash our hands. Children are the most adaptable creatures and sometimes a more individual and friendly approach not based on *fixing-you* principle but rather on *talking-to-you* principle, can work miracles. To have a more concrete idea of how many Roma children end up in practical schools as a result of transfer from a standard school, let us have a look at a research conducted in 2008 in three Czech regions, where 180 Roma parents were asked about how their children ended up in a practical school.

Table 5: How the Roma children end up in practical schools

How the Romani Children End Up in Practical Schools			
Region (number of parents)	Transfer from a standard school	Directly into a practical school	Unclear
Ústecký (70)	80%	15.7%	4.3%
Středočeský (37)	62.2%	37.8%	N/A
Moravskoslez. (73)	61.6%	11%	27.4%

Source: ERRC 2008, 13.

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[66] ERRC 1999, 66.

From this research, we can see that that chances of a transfer, in case the children did not end up in a practical school right away, ran up to 80%. It is clear that only three regions and only 180 respondents cannot serve to make general conclusions valid for the whole Czech Republic, but since the Czech government does not involve itself in similar researches, the only option left is to turn to every piece of such reliable information that can give us an idea of where we stand. Even this rather smaller sample can tell us that it is not a good place.

We have presented other examples of the most important estimates coming from organizations involved in education of the Roma children in the Czech Republic. Because of the lack of statistical data, the work of these organizations is basically the only source that can give us some idea about the degree of exclusion the Roma are subject to. So far, we have assessed that degree as being, indeed, alarming and we have also seen that it is not getting any smaller; at least not by the cosmetic changes that the educational system underwent in 2005 and 2007. Roma children are still being over-represented in four types of non-standard educational facilities present nowadays in the Czech Republic. We are still using cultural tests that disadvantage the Roma children by not taking their particular cultural background into account and we still prefer to send those who do not fit to be educated outside the mainstream school system.

Knowing what the situation in education looks like, this is the right place to ask the core question of this paper. *What are the main reasons behind the exclusion of the Roma in the sphere of education?* Let us open this area by a quotation from *A Special Remedy paper*. It states: "Arguments about the cultural uniqueness of Roma easily become excuses for inactivity and tend toward speculation about the impossibility of education across the cultural abyss that supposedly separates Roma from the Czechs."[67] There is, indeed, a cultural abyss. The Czechs are standing on one edge, pathetically protecting their so much coveted Czechness; the Roma are standing on the other edge, comfortably accepting the situation, claiming that there is nothing they can do to change it anyway. What we need to do now is to disclose the cultural differences that had created the abyss in the first place. Disclosing them and understanding them is the only way we can learn that there is actually nothing to be afraid of and this realization is the springboard to a multicultural system of education where even the Roma culture and the Roma children might find their place.

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[67] ERRC 1999, 114.

3. Cultural differences in the field of education

Sako peskero rodel.

Everybody looks for what is his own.[68]

Is it even possible to define the concept of Roma culture? Or the Czech one for that matter? Who is capable to describe objectively cultural values of any community that considers itself different from other communities? If it is a member of that particular community, can such an account be even considered objective? Yet, if it is a person that does not belong to that particular community, can we take that account as a valid one? Ngugi wa Thiong'o affirms: "There is a gradual accumulation of values which in time become almost self-evident truths governing their conception of what is right and wrong; good and bad, beautiful and ugly, courageous and cowardly, generous and mean in their internal and external relations. Over a time this becomes a way of life distinguishable from other ways of life."[69] Having studied, analysed and critically assessed what wa Thiong'o calls a gradual accumulation of values, we should be, indeed, able to objectively describe that intangible set of values that makes the Roma who they are. Such a set of values has, in the Czech environment, its own term, provided by Milena Hübschmannová who talks, in the same context, about "similar expression."[70]

As ethnic groups, the Roma and the Czechs, indeed, seem to have different expressions, different sets of values that manifest themselves in all areas of everyday life – the area of education being no exception. On the following pages, an attempt will be made to critically analyse the values that form an innate part of the Roma culture and to assess their intercurrent role in the Czech system of education. A similar expression of a community is not, however, born overnight. It is a result of a specific historical experience and memories that such a community shares. This simple fact, as we will see, has a more substantial impact on the present-day situation that it might seem.

3.1 Historical perspective: its lasting influence on a Roma child at school

Different language, different mentality anchored in different culture, different history that has given rise to a different way of life and all of that coupled with a different appearance; the word *different* is repeated way too often not to cause a stir among the European nations that the Roma started to migrate to more than one thousand years ago. They

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[68] Hübschmannová 1991, 30. Transl. by the author.
[69] Thiong'o 1994, 440-441.
[70] Hübschmannová 1999, 18. Transl. by the author, orig. text: "podobný projev".

came from India, that is a commonly accepted fact. Only a few papers on the cultural differences between the Roma and the ethnic Czechs, however, elaborate more on this fact. This is a pitty because so many *different* things that do not make sense to us now, would do so after understanding what the historical cause of these differences is.

India used to be a country of plentitude; people did not have to put in too much efforts to survive. The nature, with its three harvests per year, provided everything people needed. The climate, however, did not allow for anything to last long. All was subject to a fast decay – food, clothes, palm tree houses.[71] Understandably, there was no reason to cling to the future since future was extremely uncertain and unpredictable, such as the sudden change of climate destroying everything one can possess was. People simply lived in present and when we think about that, a lot of Roma have maintained that way of life being focused on what is now instead of what will be tomorrow. Ctibor Nečas is one of those who confirm that life for the Roma means the present moment only; past is something that cannot be changed and future has not come yet so the only thing to worry about is where we are standing right now.[72] Contrasting that with the traditional European direction of plans and visions for better tomorrows resting upon the necessary investments, such as an investment into education, we get the first clash of the Roma and the Czech mentalities.

Another aspect that was characteristic of the life of the Roma even before they left India was nomadism; something judged as utterly undesirable on a continent that used all the means possible to prohibit the Roma from being on constant move. That was, however, precisely what the traditional Roma crafts used to require. Blacksmiths, kettlesmiths, basket-makers, horse traders, tinkers or musicians; all of these could not work at just one place and they were forced to travel in order to sell their goods or to provide services where necessary. Sekyt thinks that on the grounds of safety, these craftsmen started to group and travel together. Moreover, the not yet overpopulated India used to be a vast place full of exotic fruit right at hand so there were no worries about what to eat.[73] Yet again, this way of life immediately clashed with the European feudal system where pieces of land used to be owned as well as everything that could be found on that land. Even when the Industrial Revolution basically killed all the traditional crafts, the Roma kept on moving from one place to another, finding this a more luring option than to assimilate into other societies. It is understandable that with the whole family being on a constant move, attending schools on a regular basis was

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[71] Sekyt 1998, 70.
[72] Nečas 2002, 94.
[73] Sekyt 1998, 70.

out of question, as was any kind of institutionalized education. The implications for the present-day situation lie, therefore, in the area of different life style not allowing for the educational process to take a place of high importance. Even though nomadism is not longer an existing issue in the Czech Republic,[74] obviously not enough time has passed to erase this historical experience.

The last significant aspect originating directly in India and having impact on a Roma child's performance at school is related to the Roma language and the way of communication. Sekyt insists that: "As opposed to European languages, [the Indian languages] are full of interjections, onomatopoic words and ambiguous words that (…) get their meaning only in a proper context, when accompanied by right intonation, gestures, facial expression, gesticulation and at the same time empathy, even telepathy."[75] Needless to say that the Roma language shares these features. If you explain to a Roma child a particular topic and you do so without enthusiasm, liveliness and conviction that it is the most important thing there is to learn, the Roma child simply stops being interested and starts doing other things instead. When we cast our minds back to a high school desk when we were listening to a particularly boring history lecture, praying that the bell ring soon; this situation is five times that bad for a Roma child that is used to communicate and to accept information in a totally different way. The Roma language has, indeed, kept this emotional similarity with the Indian languages and this fact presents yet another clash between the two cultures. How many times have we got on a tram or a bus and heard some Roma shouting or at least talking way too loud? How many times have we witnessed Roma men or women crying in situations that reminded us of a theatrical performace rather than a real emotional breakdown? This emotionality has left its imprints on the Roma until now; they simply wear their heart on their sleeve and when they feel like crying, shouting, arguing, they simply do. The Czechs, or the European nations, on the other hand, follow an unspoken rule of conduct that, at least in public, goes against strong display of emotions. Everybody can be sad or simply in a bad mood, but as soon as one is among people, professionality kicks in and people are suddenly *doing very good*. Being impulsive is a big part of Roma's life, being rational is a big part of the Czech one. Tatjana Šišková, who focused in one of her articles on the communicative style of the Roma, reminds

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[74] In the Czech Republic, nomadism was officially prohibited in 1958.
[75] Sekyt 1998, 72. Transl. by the author, original text: "Proti evropským jazykům je [pro indické jazyky] nápadné množství citoslovcí a onomatopoií i mnohoznačnost četných slov. (…), význam vět je často pochopitelný až z kontextu intonace hlasu, doprovodných gest, mimiky, pantomimiky a souběžně probíhající empatie až telepatie."

us that one's presentation is influenced by words only from 7%.[76] The rest is the combination of our voice, body language, gestures, even the clothes we wear. From this point of view, a Rom is very often not taken seriously even before he or she says a single word.

The exodus of the Roma from India happened in several phases, the biggest one heading to Constantinople and from there to the Balkans and Europe. In the 11th century, there were people in Constantinople labelled as *Atsinganoi*, a word that gave rise to the most widespread name used for the Roma (in Czech *cikán*).[77] From there, the Roma started to migrate further to the west, coming to the Czech lands in the 14th century. From then on, their Indian traditional way of life has been disrupted and the very traditional culture shattered as well as enriched with new elements. This enrichment took, most of the time, the form of punishments, expulsion, persecution and in its final phase, transfer to concentration camps and mass killing. This modern history, therefore, added a few features – distrust, unwillingness, suspicion or hatred. All of these project into everyday life and the area of education is, once again, no exception.

3.2 The attitude to institutionalized education

Milena Hübschmannová says that one of the most common stereotypes about the Roma is that they do not want to be educated, that they are not interested in education.[78] Ironically, quite the opposite is true; they are interested in education, it is just not the same concept of education as the Czech one. The education for a Rom means education in *romipen*, which is understood as a set of values and norms highly respected and followed in the Roma community. This set of values has been always taught within, not outside, one's family. Apart from values and norms, education primarily used to refer to various professions and crafts that had to be mastered. The traditional Roma professions included horse trading, smithery, music activities, usury or small trades providing articles needed in every household.[79] An obligation of each father was, therefore, to teach his son how to master these traditional professions. A punishment for not knowing was not a bad grade but something more tangible and practical. For example, who did not know how to properly hold a hammer, hurt his fingers; who was out of tune when singing, became the laugh of the town.[80] Education leading to a certain profession, a certain career, has never been preserved in the form of books, abstract theories,

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[76] Šišková 1997, 407.
[77] Nečas 2002, 12-13.
[78] Hübschmannová 1999, 48.
[79] In the Czech Republic, these trades were given special names, based on the articles the Roma were producing. Nečas mentions, for example, *deštníkáře* (making umbrellas), *dráteníky* (tinkers) or *šlejfíře* (sharpening all kinds of weapons and knives). Nečas 2002, 51.
[80] Hübschmannová 1999, 49.

let alone institutionalized facilities, but in practical and direct teaching of a craft that was passed from father to his son.

This fact can be also proved from the linguistic point of view. *Romano Džaniben* published an article that explains the different connotations of the Roma verb *to learn*. There is actually not only one verb, there are two. The original one – te sikhľol - is derived from Hindi and describes an activity learned spontaneously and unintentionally, either by observing or by imitating; its meaning has nothing to do with the activity of intended learning from written material. Since, in the Roma language, there is a productive way to distinguish between activities carried out spontaneously, unintentionally and activities carried out by will, intentionally, another verb in a reflexive form came into being – te sikhľarel pes. Its meaning is better understood in the context of other similar examples.[81]

Table 6: Difference in meaning between a sythetic passive and a reflexive form with respect to the Roma verb *to learn*

Verb	Synthetic form – spontaneous, unintentional activity	Reflexive form – intentional activity
to lose weight	te saňol (to lose weight)	te saňarel pes (to go on a diet)
to drown	te tašľol (to drown accidentally)	te tasavel pes (to drown oneself)
to sweat	te khamľol (to sweat spontaneously)	te khamľarel pes (to sweat intentionally, e.g. when sick)
to learn	**te sikhľol** (to learn spontaneously, by observing)	**te sikhľarel pes** (to learn by conscious studying)

Source: Hübschmannová 1995, 40.

As we can see, following a productive linguistic pattern of the Roma language, a new verb had to be coined to express the new reality of learning through a formal study, a reality that the Roma have been asked to get used to since the time of Maria Theresa. Though the language created such a verb, the Roma never got used to its meaning. The education in romipen within the Roma community has never lost its importance since it is this kind of education that carries the basis of who the Roma are. The Czech system of education, as we know it, goes against this concept; books, libraries, the power of deduction and practical as well as abstract thinking are its core values. This type of education, the institutionalized education, is a totally new experience for the Roma; an experience that they have never been

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[81] Hübschmannová 1995, 38-39.

able to adapt to. The fact that there is absolutely nothing about the Roma history or about the Roma culture in the Czech educational facilities, neither in the textbooks nor in the curricula, the Roma children do not recognize themselves in what they are asked to learn; the Roma family has, therefore, remained the sole carrier of the Roma values. To put it differently, since the Czech culture has not provided any space into which the Roma culture could fit, where it could express itself, the latter was given no choice but to remain outside. It seems that the Czech educational system wants the Roma outside it and then punishes them for being there.

At the end of the day, consequently, we reach a mathematical conundrum; what to do if the family upbringing and the educational system actually go against each other? How to reconcile the fact that the Roma family strongly supports the notion of *te sikhľol*, whereas the educational system puts emphasis on *te sikhľarel pes*? Can we now imagine a little bit better the confusion that a Roma child faces when it enters the first grade and sees around neatly dressed white children that already know how to use a computer and that have already a bunch of books that they got to be read from each night before going to bed? The only way out of this, in case we do not prefer to send *this weird child* directly into a practical school, is to make sure that the family upbringing and the educational system do not contradict each other. To do that, we should understand some important aspects about the upbringing of a Roma child and the way they influence the child's performance at school.

3.3 Social setting and its impact on the educational process

A few centuries ago, Émile Zola formulated the doctrine of determinism according to which one cannot escape the biological features that we receive from our parents, on one hand, and the social milieu that we are brought up in, on the other. Zola dedicated a huge part of his life and his literary output to prove this theory. His arguments are very convincing, especially in books like *L'Assomoir*, *Nana* or *La Bête Humaine*, where he tries to prove that a person whose parents are alcohol addicted has no other choice but to become an alcoholic. Without being aware of it, we are using a very similar logic. When we hear the words *Roma child*, sensors of caution and mistrust are automatically activated. A Roma child means a child of its Roma parents, brought up in the Roma culture; that sounds scary as it is. Ninety percent of people told I was teaching Roma children, sympathetically answered *Oh my goodness, good luck!* None of these people have ever even spoken with a Roma child.[82]

Zola was right about the influence of both our genes and the environment we are brought up in. It is, however, a nonsence that having alcoholic parents gives us no choice but

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[82] Personal experience.

to become one. We might be prone to alcoholism, but since we do not live in a world without free will, we might just as well decide not to go in the footsteps of our parents. Following the same logic, being a Roma child should not automatically activate the stereotypes accumulated over the past centuries. Being a Roma child means to enter school with certain handicaps that can be overcome only if they are properly understood and taken into account, not mistaken as something that cannot be changed since it forms an innate part of who the Roma are.

It is now a commonly accepted fact that the background in which a child is brough up is one of the decisive elements regarding the future behaviour of that child. Out of many, also Eva Farkašová exploits more this notion. According to her, the social setting in which the Roma children are brought up is the main factor due to which most of the children are placed into non-standard educational facilities. Farkašová states that this particular social setting results in the following facts:

→ the Roma children don't have sufficient language skills, neither in Czech, nor in Roma language,
→ they have little or no experience with certain activities or with tools that are necessary for a first grader (drawing with pencils, playing with child bricks, …),
→ they show short-time concentration ability since their mental operations are more practical than theoretical, it is very hard for them to generalize,
→ the general informative load they know is much smaller than that of Czech children[83]

What chance of success at an elementary school can a child with these characteristics stand in the first place? Well, zero, if the educational system into which this child arrives is not flexible enough to accommodate, or at least limit, these handicaps – handicaps that the child is not even responsible for. The traditional way to accommodate these handicaps was to erase them altogether in the sense that the child was either able to fit in and get used to a totally new environment on its own, or he or she would be transferred into a special school.

Let us remind that children are extremely adaptable creatures, but there must be good conditions for them to adapt into in the first place. If the educational system made more space inside so that the Roma children would not feel like strangers right from the beginning, their chances to fit would be much higher and their social setting would be a factor that just influences, not determines their behaviour. Even if Farkašová were not right regarding all four

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[83] Farkašová 2005, 89.

characteristics in which Roma children fall behind the Czech children, it is clear that each child fulfiling only one of the above mentioned characteristics will be facing serious problems and will need all the help from its family background possible. It is, therefore, necessary to know what such a family background in which Roma children are brought up looks like and what role it plays in helping the children overcome the mentioned handicaps. Such family background is, at the level of education, connected to the already mentioned concept of education in romipen, a concept that we will now comment on a little bit more.

3.4 Education in romipen

As touched upon before, the familial education in romipen is made up of two elements; the concrete one, referring to such things as how to prepare a meal, and the abstract one, such as how to behave. These present a core element in the Roma society and culture and as such pervade every part of the traditional Roma life. To give a more concrete example, it is not an uncommon thing for a Roma man to refuse to eat a meal that had not been prepared with enough care and love. In a traditional Roma family, there are still rules to behave, rules perceived almost as a code and as such, they must be learned. There are, however, no books that describe all the steps necessary for a woman to prepare a meal. There are no books that would describe what foodstuffs can be considered pure and impure or how the woman who is preparing a meal should behave. This is again something that forms an integral part of a very important process of education for the Roma and a very unimportant process of education for the Czechs. Generally speaking, this is not the type of pre-school education that most of the Czech children receive. The Czechs are being given pencils and taught how to draw, count and spell, construct brick chimnies and page through children books as soon as possible. On the other hand, it is not uncommon that a Rom, when entering school, had never held a pencil or constructed a chimney out of bricks before.[84]

Hübschmannová mentions that the basic education in a Roma family has always had one main function; to teach the child everything that contributes to a harmonious life in its family, community and village.[85] A harmonious life does not mean a rocketing career and a high-paid job, for which the traditional institutionalized education is usually needed. A harmonious life means a peaceful co-existence of family members and for that purpose, the education of girls and boys usually takes different paths. Generally, though, Roma children are led to independence since early age, especially as far as taking care of other family

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[84] Balabánová 1999, 339.
[85] Hübschmannová 1999, 49.

members is concerned; they are actually brought up as small adults and treated as equal partners very soon. Their thinking is concrete, situational and practical. Balabánová traces this behaviour back to the times when an early independence of children was a necessary precondition for the survival of the tribe.[86] Roma children are, therefore, brought up in a way that ensures the survival of the community on the whole. This principle, as Balabánová goes on to state, is in a sharp contrast with the responsibility that the European culture puts on the shoulders of each individual, responsibility for one's own life and for what becomes of it. "Collective decision-making and responsibility in a Roma family lead to the fact that an individual does not aim at any life ambition, which has influence on both school work and the future professional orientation."[87] This principle of assertive individual behaviour is simply missing in the way the Roma think. The real question is how to reconcile the principle of individualism that the Czech culture and education is based on and the basis of the traditional Roma upbringing directed towards one's community.

Another aspect related to romipen is the fact that the Roma live in a highly patriarchal society where men take care of the family, especially from the financial point of view and women take care of the children and chores at home. Both girls and boys are encouraged and required to help their parents with these particular tasks as soon as possible. It is a very common fact that a girl does not go to school one day because she has to look after her siblings when her mum is at work or simply absent. This behaviour might be very easily condemned by Czech mothers who would never leave their toddlers to be looked after by a ten-year old girl. This behaviour might also be very easily condemned by the teacher at school that considers such an absence unacceptable. We can get mad, but we have to understand that this is simply the way it works and we should try to find a productive solution to this situation. One possibility is to approach the parents and to explain the situation. It is, of course, an extra effort that not many people are willing to put in. Who has ever heard of meetings with parents so that their child would go to school? Yet, we have to understand that a Roma family simply works differently from most Czech families and we should try to make allowance for these differences since it is exactly these small steps that lead to big victories.

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[86] Balabánová 1999, 338.

[87] Balabánová 1999, 338. Transl. by the author, original text: "Kolektivní rozhodování a zodpovědnost v romské rodině vede k tomu, že jednotlivec nemá potřebu jakékoli vlastní individuální životní ambice, a to velmi citelně poznamená školní práci a budoucí profesionální orientaci."

3.5 The factor of decision-making and its relevance at school

Another sticky ground that results from the particular Roma family upbringing is represented by different perceptions of decision-making. Daniela Morvayová conducted a research in which both Roma and non-Roma pre-school children were supposed to answer various questions by drawing their answers. One of the first tasks was to draw their families. From the pictures that Morvayová published, we can see that all non-Roma children drew only their parents and/or siblings, if they had any. All Roma children, on the other hand, drew the whole family with uncles, aunts and cousins.[88] They took the time to draw all the members of their family because that is what they understand by the word. Hübschmannová supports this idea by saying that the Roma *fameľija* corresponds more to the Indian definition of a family rather than to the European one; it is the ensemble of three to five generations and of all members who married into this ensemble.[89] It is very important for the Roma to be part of this community, based on a commonly shared feelings of solidarity. As one of the Roma proverbs goes:

"Jekha bandurkaha pen šaj ulaven the dešdžene."[90]

One potato can be distributed among ten people.

This solidary is mirrored also at the plane of decision-making; all the decisions are, as a rule, made by the whole community, by the whole family, together. "Should a question arise, everybody voices an opinion and everybody is heard. Nobody is expected to solve the issue on his own."[91] In line with that, a Roma child might have problems working individually at school and might not understand why copying from a classmate during a test is so bad when that is exactly what the child had been taught at home. Independence, yet inability and unwillingness to make decisions on one's own since one has the whole community to share the burder with; Balabánová concludes that, by and large, a Roma child is scolded at school for what it is praised for at home and vice-versa.[92] The Czech teacher, of course, does not know all that and very often sees the child as yet another Roma scoundrel who is trying to cheat.

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[88] Morvayová 2005, 120.
[89] Hübschmannová 1999, 42.
[90] Hübschmannová 1991, 17. Transl. by the author.
[91] Balabánová 1999, 338. Transl. by the author, original text: "Vyvstane-li nějaká otázka, každý k tomu řekne své slovo a všichni jsou vyslyšeni. Od nikoho se neočekává, že úkol vyřeší sám."
[92] Balabánová 1999, 339.

3.6 The Roma language: a cultural tool and an obstacle in the process of education

Another element, an innate part of the upbringing of Roma children, is the Roma language. It is hard to make any general conclusions about the use of the Roma language in Roma families due to the lack of corresponding researches. The fact remains that some families prefer to use the Roma language as little as possible and they speak only Czech at home; with other families, it is the other way round. Since the majority of the Roma living now in the Czech Republic had come from Slovakia, there are still those that use the Slovak language on everyday basis. There are also Roma who had come to the Czech Republic from Romania or Hungary and who, therefore, speak the languages of these countries as well. The majority, however, are families that use half Roma, half Czech language, depending on the situation at hand. At school, English language is obligatory from the third grade and later on, depending on the choice that the particular school provides, children take up yet another language. This situation has several ramifications that necessarily influence a Roma child's performance at school.

According to Helena Balabánová, it is a common practice in England to advise foreign parents to speak their mother tongue with their children because if a child masters his or her mother tongue, it is easier to learn another language.[93] As stated before, it is very hard to generalize, but each Roma child is, to various extents, exposed to the Czech language. The problem is that, in many cases, it is not the standard, correct variety of Czech that is being taught at school. Even if the Roma family uses Czech in everyday speech, it is often the same Czech that the parents had been taught, somewhat of a non-standard linguistic mixture. Consequently, a striking majority of Roma children speak a variety of Roma-Czech, not knowing either of the two languages properly and projecting the structure of one language into the other. Their knowledge of Czech is in most cases simply not sufficient. Balabánová is not the only one proposing changes in this area by making sure the children master their mother tongue first and then acquire a second language, in our case Czech. Regarding the same topic, *Romano Džaniben* published on its pages parts of *Didactica Magna*, by Jan Ámos Komenský, emphasizing the following part:

"To teach somebody a foreign language before such a person knows his mother tongue is just the same as to teach a son to ride a horse before he can walk."[94]

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[93] Balabánová 1999, 339.
[94] Horešová 1995, 2. Transl. by the author, original text: "Chtít učit někoho cizímu jazyku dříve, než ovládá jazyk domácí, je právě tak, jako bys chtěl učit syna jezdit na koni dříve, než umí chodit."

Children with bad knowledge of the language of instruction are, of course, considered unable to enter standard elementary schools because there is a well-founded fear that they simply would not keep pace with the rest of the class, regardless of the intellectual abilities of such a child. When asked in an English class, what *a ruler* means, a Roma girl knew the answer, but she could not remember the Czech word and preferred to show the object she had in her pencil case instead. This does not mean that she is not intelligent, as a matter of fact this particular girl was one of the brightest pupils, this simply means that her mastery of the Czech language is not as good as it should be.[95] A practical school, however, is the last place where this could be fixed. Another example might be taken from the pre-school assessment tests. It is a commonplace that Roma children cannot even tell colours and yet again, this can be easily taken as a sign of mental handicap, or at least a sign that such a child is not yet ready to attend the first grade. Only a few realize, however, that it is very probable that the child just does not know the right word for the colour that he or she sees.

Even if a child passes the assessment tests and starts a standard elementary school, there is a high chance that the language barrier will cause other misunderstandings. Edita Žlnayová focuses in her research particularly on this issue. From a linguistic point of view, she scrutinizes both Czech and Roma languages in the field of education. Quite understandably, all vocabulary related to the institutionalized education had been practically non-existent in the Roma language and had to be borrowed from Czech or coined. Since the structures of both languages differ, it is of vital importance to make sure that a Roma child understands what is asked of him. As we have mentioned earlier, Žlnayová says that it is very rare for the Roma language to make use of hyperonyms. Words such as *parents*, *siblings*, *cutlery*, *vegetables*, *school tools* or even *pastry* are expressed indirectly, by ennumeration. *Parents* would be, therefore, *e daj o dad* (mother and father), *siblings* would be *phrala pheňa* (brothers and sisters) and *cutlery* would be *čhura roja* (knives and forks).[96] A teacher must, therefore, make sure that when telling children to bring tools for drawing, a Roma child understands what to bring. It would not be an uncommon case if the child brings only a paper or colours or simply nothing.

All of these language clashes can lead in the end to only one result; the child, if lost in class, stops being interested in it. It is restless, has trouble concentrating and simply does not feel good at school. This restlessness and lack of concentration is again, in many cases, interpreted as a minor form of mental handicap and the parents are advised to educate their

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[95] Personal experience.
[96] Žlnayová 1995, 9.

child in a class that goes at a slower pace. To be successful at whatever we do, we must feel good doing it. To be successful at school, a child must feel good there and a language barrier is one of the most common reasons why it is not the case.

This situation, however, cannot be solved by sending the Roma children to non-standard schools, but by getting ourselves ahead of the problem and making sure that the child knows, first of all, his or her own language and that it has the opportunity to learn the standard Czech. The successfully tried-out possibility is to hire a Roma assistant, someone who works as a mediator between the two cultures and the two languages, making sure that the Roma child understands and knows what to do. Such a person is very useful in any clashes that may occur between a Roma child and a Czech teacher and at the same time is perceived as someone who the Roma children can talk to and with whom they can discuss various problems more easily. Even though there have been some impressive initiatives, it seems that a lot of school directors still feel that a Roma assistant is a waste of money and most schools are still a long way from this multicultural tandem in class. It is very sad and shameful to come to such a conclusion but can there be any other facing the situation as it is now? Czech teachers do not speak the Roma language, it is not being taught at schools and there are no significant attempts to have it otherwise. Roma children have considerable problems speaking both their own language and the Czech one, using most of the time some kind of combination of both and therefore, from yet another point of view, being susceptible to fail right at elementary school.

3.7 Cultural differences in a more general perspective

This Chapter opened with a short contemplation on the feasibility to objectively group and describe the set of values that makes one community different from another. After having studied and critically analysed what Hübschmannová calls similar expression, the third Chapter has tried to bring to light all the seemingly insurmountable differences between a Czech and a Roma child that might be, and very often indeed are, responsible for the potential failure of Roma children at Czech elementary schools. We have tried to disclose the most important ones and we have tried to explain how they directly influence the performance of a Roma child in a Czech educational facility. Our findings are presented in the following table.

Table 7: Cultural differences influencing the performance of Roma children at Czech schools: overview of this paper's findings

Cultural difference		Impact on the process of education
Historical perspective	three-dimensional perspective reduced to PRESENT time	little/no ambition regarding future education/career
	nomadism	institutionalized education – not part of the system of values
	language – emotionality, different way of communication (shared with Indian languages)	often interpreted as disturbing and uncontrollable behaviour
	modern history added the feelings of distrust, suspicion, hatred	predominantly negative attitude towards the educational system
Present-day situation	different concept of education – education in *romipen*	*te sikhl'ol* x *te sikhl'arel pes* - intentional learning never part of the system of values (problems of adaptation)
	social setting – particularities that put the child into a disadvantaged position right from the beginning	- not sufficient language skills - little experience with certain activities - often insufficient material support - smaller informative load - short-time concentration skills - practical rather than theoretical thinking
	decision-making is collective	clashes with the principle of individual work at school – children don't understand why copying is bad when they are used to finding solutions as a collective
	language barrier	insufficient knowledge of both the mother tongue and the language of instruction, source of misunderstandings

Source: Author.

Pavel Pekárek,[97] who had devoted his whole life to the topic of Roma culture, has defined ten basic features of the social system of the Roma; ten features that, according to him, make the Roma precisely who they are and that, very often, present the core factors causing the already mentioned clashes with the majority society. Even if this paper focuses on the area of education, our findings can be compared with the general findings of Pekárek in order to see what part the former take up in the latter; in other words, how substantially the differences related to potential failure at school are reflected in what is considered to be the cornerstones of the Roma culture by an expert in this field.

Table 8: Pekárek's ten basic features of the social system of the Roma

1.	every decision-making is collective
2.	inability to be alone
3.	expulsion from the community is the worst punishment
4.	multiplicity is a precondition to happiness
5.	time means past and present, there is no future
6.	time has nothing to do with seasons
7.	continuous change of location enhances the chance to survive
8.	staying put at one place enhances danger
9.	bread-winning: trades and crafts are subject to continuous change
10.	the core of all knowledge is to escape from danger

Source: Pekárek in Balabánová 1999, 338.

Starting from the first point, we have, indeed, mentioned that the fact that all decisions are usually taken together in a Roma community has an effect on the behaviour of a Roma child in the classroom as well. We have reached the conclusion that the child is confused, not knowing why he or she is prohibited from working with others and has, therefore, problems with drawing the line between individual and collective thinking.

The second and the third features are closely related to this point. It is a considerable trauma for a Roma child to feel isolated and not part of the community, in our case a school collective. To be expelled from a Roma community, one must commit a horrible offence. The child instinctively feels it and when he or she is not accepted by the schoolmates or by the teacher, the child feels like having done something wrong. Consequently, the feelings of

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[97] Pekárek in Balabánová 1999, 338.

unrestlessness, anxiety and the wish to be at a more friendly place take over. As we have mentioned, this desire to be at a more familiar place where one does not feel excluded is the main reason why the Roma parents prefer that their children go to a school with higher concentration of Roma. The inability to be alone is not, however, one of the major cultural differences causing the potential failure of the Roma children at schools and as such, it is only touched upon in this paper.

We have seen that multiplicity as a prerequisite for happiness is mirrored in the area of education in a rather practical way. In the social background of the Roma, multiplicity means having a lot of children. That results in the need for people who can take care of them. If a Roma girl looks after her siblings, as she is required to, she very often misses school. This results in frequent absences and complains on the part of the teacher. The Roma girl obeys what she is told at home, but she is considered to be a mischief at school.

The notion of time in the fifth and sixth features is also very closely related to the results one achieves at school. Education has been traditionally understood in Europe as an investment into the future. Since the concept of future is practically non-existent for the Roma community, we encounter yet another source of problems. The question of lack of motivation, ambition and the specific attitude to education (education in romipen) already discussed in this paper would belong to this category as well.

The seventh and the eighth points are related more to the way of Roma life in the past. Due to the traditional crafts combined with the conviction that movement is safer than staying put at one place, nomadism became an iseparable feature of Roma life. In the Czech Republic, nomadism was prohibited in 1958; since then, all Roma should have a stable place of residence. Therefore, these two features influenced the area of education rather in the past, nowadays, in most cases, this in not an issue anymore.

The ninth point related to the traditional crafts of the Roma to which all the other issues must have given way, was also discussed in the historical perspective on education. Since the Industrial Revolution practically destroyed all the traditional crafts, the Roma do not travel for bread-winning anymore and even though this aspect also had an impact on the education of the Roma, such an impact is much more traceable in the past than now.

The last point, however, is very topical. An innate instinct to escape danger is responsible for the hight drop-out rate and no motivation to go against the odds. As soon as the Roma start to feel that something or someone is putting their children to danger, the first reaction is simply to pull back. Since the Czech school is usually perceived by the Roma parents as a necessary evil, the parents are the last ones to insist on their children going there.

Experience talking, a lot of parents do not mind keeping their child at home simply because the child does not feel like getting up that particular morning. One way out of this is for the school not to be perceived as a dangerous place that is better to be avoided.

We can conclude that from the general features characteristic of the Roma community, all of them have been, either directly or indirectly, touched upon in this paper and therefore affect the performance of a Roma child at school (only three features do not have impact anymore, due to the prohibition of nomadism and the natural extinction of most of the Roma crafts). This is a sad realization since the Roma children obviously fail for the reasons of who they are, or more precisely, for the reason that the school cannot accept who they are.

Vladimír Špidla stated in one of his speeches regarding the Roma that: "Les Roms ne sont pas moins intelligents que la majorité. Ils ne sont pas non plus des mendiants ou des criminels-nés."[98] Why is the reaction coming from the Czech political and especially educational climate so stubborn in refusing to accept that? The prevailing opinion still is that whether a Czech or a Rom, there is only one type of pupil. Starting from the same line, if one of them fails at school, it must mean that the intellectual abilities of such a child do not reach the required level and he or she must be, therefore, educated in an institution where there are special teachers, qualified to cope with the pupils' special needs.[99] The problem with this prevailing opinion is that, as we have tried to prove, its basic assumption is wrong. A Czech and a Rom do not start from the same line. Quite the opposite is true, they start from opposite ends and the school should not turn a blind eye on this fact.

Even though living in one country, we don't share the same cultural experience of this country. It should be, however, the aim of each school to educate as many pupils as possible. To achieve that, the school should know whom it is educating and should take these particularities into account. In case of the Roma living in the Czech Republic, there are several possibilities of how to do that and the next chapter will try to look at these alternatives more closely.

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[98] Špidla 2008, 1. "The Roma are not less intelligent than the majority. They are not born beggars or criminals either." Transl. by the author.
[99] Vzdělávání Romů v ČR 2002, 199.

4. Overcoming the cultural differences

Savore jekhetane!

All together![100]

All taken into account, the upbringing of Roma children does not fulfil the expectations that a Czech teacher and the Czech educational system at an elementary school have for a pupil of that age. In most cases, the Roma children basically stand no chance to get through the first years of school without considerable trauma and every party involved (school, Roma parents, the child) usually prefers to transfer the child into a school where this type of trauma can be avoided. This solution seems to be the easiest one, but we are deceived by appearances. By transferring Roma children to non-standrard schools, we only make sure that we destroy their chances of any future involvement in the society. Even though this routine is practically feasible, it is not morally justifiable at all. It would be so easy, though, to try to understand that the Roma children simply do not think the same way that Czech children do and that it is not their fault that they do not know how to draw a dog or how to build a chimney. We just have to care enough and try to accommodate the differences in cultural values rather than give up and say that separate education is the right answer. The last Chapter of this paper presents an overview of the most substantial initiatives trying not to ignore the cultural differences between the Roma and the Czech pupils, but to accommodate them.

4.1 Elimination of the differences – tried out initiatives

4.1.1 Pre-school education

One of the best ways to reduce the cultural differences is represented by pre-school education. Pre-school education in the Czech Republic is provided for children from three to six years by nursery schools as well as by preparatory classes. Both of these forms present an environment where the Roma children may naturally get in touch with both the Czech culture and the Czech language and as such, they can substantially lessen the cultural blow that the Roma children are likely to experience in their first year of school attendance. Zoltán Gál wrote a study report on Roma children and nursery schools in Hungary, in which he reached the conclusion that: "One of the reasons why Romany children are not successful at primary school lies in them missing nursery education altogether, or going to nursery only at an older age and only for a short period of time."[101] This conclusion holds true for the Czech Republic

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[100] Hübschmannová 1991, 42. Transl. by the author.
[101] Gál 2006, 75.

as well; most of the Roma do not, indeed, attend these preparatory facilities. There are several reasons for the Roma children missing out nursery schools. The most pressing one is probably the fact that in the Czech Republic, parents share the costs of a nursery school, except for the last year that is financially covered by the state. For most Roma parents, however, the shared fee is a reason enough to keep their children at home. Among other reasons, we can also think of long distance travelling or simply a wish to postpone the first contact with a non-Roma community to as distant a future as possible. Apart from the fact that a Roma child is brought up in fear of everything foreign, it is also true that most of the Roma parents, influenced by their memories and experience, despise the Czech school system and are afraid that their child might get hurt. Whatever the reason, the majority of Roma children come into contact with the educational environment of the majority on the very first day of school; and that is, of course, way too late.[102]

Shortly before 1993, an impetus was put to the fore by the representatives of Roma community regarding the so-called preparatory classes. They had in mind primarily the interest of Roma pupils who, as it was already obvious, failed in many ways during the first years of elementary school. This systemic step to create preparatory classes was supposed to eliminate the existing barriers, cultural, language and social, and to enable Roma pupils to enter the first grade without any handicaps. The first preparatory classes were, as a part of elementary and special schools, opened in 1993. As Balvín says, this fact aroused all kinds of reactions, the loudest one coming from the directors of nursery schools who took such an initiative as redundant and unnecessary since they felt the preparatory classes were fulfiling the same role as the last year of nursery schools.[103] The practical experience, however, brought about very positive results and proved their usefulness for the Roma pupils. "In April 2000, an expert committee of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the CR dealing with matters related to the education of the Roma affirmed that it was necessary to carry on with the experiment of the preparatory classes (...)."[104]

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[102] Koupilová 2009.
[103] Balvín 2004, 48.
[104] Balvín 2004, 49. Transl. by the author, original text: "V dubnu roku 2000 potvrdila expertní komise MŠMT ČR pro otázky vzdělávání Romů, že je potřebné v experimentu přípravných tříd pokračovat (…)."

4.1.2 Extra-curricular activities – tutoring outside school

In the Czech Republic as well as in other countries, there are organizations actively involved in helping the Roma children by providing them with school guidance councelling, free after-school activities as well as tutoring classes. The range of activities of most of these organizations is many times wider, yet, for the purposes of this paper, suffice it to say that they are responsible for the organization and implementation of programmes, workshops, leisure activities as well as of all types of education that may help the integration of the Roma into the Czech educational system. In the Czech Republic, two most prominent of these organizations include the IQ Roma Servis and the Museum of Romani Culture, both of them working mainly in the South-Moravian region, having their seats in Brno.

The tutoring activities of the Museum of Romani Culture consist of two permanent employees and a number of students of mainly Pedagogical Faculty who come to teach to the Museum to meet the requirements of their school regarding practical experience. The Museum is situated at Bratislavská street, one of the infamous parts of town with high concentration of the Roma. Apart from bringing the missing touch of culture to that street, the Museum's employees have established a personal contact with the Roma families in the area and consequently started a programme of tutoring their children. These tutoring activities consist of individual afternoon teaching of any subject matter that the children have problems with at school. The tutors make sure that the children have their homework written since the children's parents are usually not the ones to do so. They help the children understand and overcome any difficulties that they might come across and by doing so, the tutors are reducing and overcoming the cultural differences between a Roma child and a Czech school system. Individual approach based on constant reassuring that the child understands what it is asked to do and the incorporation of the Roma culture and the Roma language into the whole process of education have resulted in the fact that more and more parents are trying to enrol their children into these tutoring classes. We can, however, imagine that two permanent tutors are hardly enough for all the children in the area. Even if the Museum is not able, for the lack of financial means as well as manpower and space, to tutor all the children, its efforts should be mentioned here because they belong to the tried-out initiatives that have been proved as feasible and extremely useful.

4.1.3 Roma assistants

"Nane lačho, te sikhaven andre škola naprindžarde buťa naprindžardonaha buťaha: Avka pes ačhol, kana sikhavel čhavores kajso sikhľardo, so na džanel te vakerel leskera čhibaha. Te našťi khetane arakhen, sar pes te dothovel, u ča peske sikhavkeren le vastenca, so aver ačhaven, te na e Babilonsko veža?"[105]

Though not fully describing the situation of the Roma in the Czech Republic, the quotation above captures its core pitfall; Roma children are being taught things unknown to them by means that are unknown to them just as well. Another very useful tried-out initiative that helps to remedy such a situation has had the form of introducing to schools Roma assistants, working with the Czech teachers in a somehow multicultural tandem. Balvín highly praises the function of Roma assistants as those who reduce the cultural handicaps by the following means:

> → they optimaly help the children to overcome the psychological and verbal shock that a Roma child experiences when entering the first grade
> → they help to establish a successful communication between the school and the child's parents, related to that is the discussion on the importance of education with Roma parents
> → they help to create a positive relationship of the pupil to school
> → they provide a multicultural identity model that the Roma children have never had at school[106]

The introduction of Roma assistants to schools belongs to and well-founded initiatives that have also proved to be working in terms of reducing the cultural differences between the Roma children and the Czech educational environment. It is, however, a rather recent initiative that the educational system has not fully absorbed yet.[107] Even though the Ministery appropriates each year a certain amount of money to sponsor the initiatives trying to integrate the Roma into the mainstream society, the support for Roma assistants remains insufficient. During a 2009 conference in Brno entitled Education of Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Věra Koupilová, a referent for education of national minorities in the Czech Republic,

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[105] Horešovská 1995, 2. "It is late when something unknown is taught at schools by means of something just as well unknown, for example, when a local boy is given a foreign teacher that does not master the boy's mother tongue. Since they do not share a common means to communicate with each other and have only gestures to do so, what else are they building but a Tower of Babel?" Transl. by the author.
[106] Balvín 2004, 51.
[107] The very first Roma assistant was employed in 1993 in Přemysla Pittra elementary school.

gave a lecture in which she stated that there were 35 Roma assistants working in the South-Moravian region. She immediately voiced the need to employ more Roma assistants in the same function since, for the overall number and representation of Roma pupils in this particular region, the number is insufficient.[108] Mrs. Koupilová also proposed several other initiatives that she believes might help to integrate the Roma children into the educational process. She put emphasis on connecting all elements of the educational process in the sense of creating a successful communicative link between the school, the child and its parents. Apart from advocating the usefulness of Roma assistants, Koupilová talked about so-called field social workers – people put in direct contact with the child's family so as to gain their trust and to start a process of successful communication that would, in its final result, only benefit the child. This proposal has not been implemented yet and Koupilová herself was not very optimistic regarding its realization due to the lack of financial means. Yet, for the purpose of this paper, suffice it to say that her lecture was not structured in terms of whether to use Roma assistants or not, but in terms of how many more must be used.

4.1.4 Initiatives against over-representation of Roma children

In Chapter 2 (2.3), the non-standard educational facilities in the Czech Republic had been described. One of these facilities are non-standard in the over-representation of the Roma children attending them. An example of Merhautova and Vranovská elementary schools in Brno had been given. Though only two hundred meters from each other, one of them educates almost exclusively the Roma children from the area, whereas the other school educates almost exclusively the non-Roma children from the district. About five years ago, the director of both school, Petra Faltýnová, was trying to merge them and to intermingle the Czech and Roma pupils. Such an initiative, however, met with the racist views of Czech parents who immediately sent to Faltýnová a petition. "We ask you to create two first grade classes, Roma children in one and non-Roma children in the other. We warn you that in case there are more than three Roma children in one class, the aim of integration you had told us on the telephone, we will enroll our children to Zemědělská elementary school."[109] We can, therefore, see that even if directors are trying to change the situation in which Roma and Czech children are being educated separately, a big obstacle is presented by racially biased

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[108] Koupilová 2009.

[109] Komárek 2009, 41. Transl. by the author, original text: "Žádáme vás, aby byly vytvořeny dvě první třídy tak, aby romské děti byly společně a neromské také. Upozorňujeme, že pokud ve třídě budou více než tři Romové, takový záměr integrace jste nám sdělila do telefonu, přeřadíme děti na ZŠ Zemědělská."

prejudices coming from the part of Czech parents. Mrs. Faltýnová has not given up trying to change people's minds but it is absolutely clear that it is nothing short of a long-term process.

Kupkova elementary school in Břeclav, on the other hand, merged in 2004 with Sovadinova elementary school where the over-representation of Roma pupils became self-evident and there was an eminent danger of its cancellation since the Czech parents did not enroll their children there anymore. The elementary school has nowadays about 450 pupils, 8%-9% of whom are Roma pupils. Apart from employing Roma assistants, the new director came up with the idea to direct the school's activities towards various sports (ice hockey, table tennis and others). Nowadays, Kupkova elementary school participates in high level competitions in various sports and it is the only school that brings to these tournaments its Roma pupils who actively participate.[110] Finding a common ground in the form of physical education, where any possible differences might be forgotten, and making this one of the cornerstones of the conception of an elementary school is probably the first initiative of its kind in the Czech Republic.

Regarding the already tried-out initiatives that have for their aim to reduce the differences that Roma children are subject to at Czech schools, we should mention another elementary school, the school of Přemysla Pittra in Ostrava, established in 1993 and directed by Helena Balabánová. Balabánová is persuaded that the main problem of the current educational system lies in its bad approach to children who are equipped with different ethnic, social and language experience from that of the majority society. Instead of acknowledging these differences, the system places such children, based on psychological-pedagogical assessment tests to special schools (nowadays non-standard educational facilities) and therefore destroys their chances of any future involvement in society.[111] All the children who are about to start school, go at Přemysla Pittra to preparatory classes. There are also Roma assistants and the majority of teachers can speak the Roma language and know the Roma culture so as to be of assistance in case any clashes between the two cultures occur. Balabánová is one of the few directors who knows who she is teaching, who does not turn a blind eye on that fact, but just on the contrary takes that fact into account; it seems that she is one of the few who do not want to teach the subject matter, but the pupils.

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[110] Huleja 2009.
[111] Balabánová 1996, 72.

4.2 Elimination of the differences – proposed initiative

All of the above mentioned initiatives openly acknowledge the fact that more efforts than usual should be made and special measures should be taken to prevent the exclusion of Roma children from the educational process. In their own way, they all answer the question of *how* to accommodate the existing differences; so far, the main initiatives have had the forms of pre-school education, Roma assistants and non-profit organizations and individuals coming with their own conceptions of how to improve the situation (individual tutoring and other extra-curricular activities).

Chapter one presented several alternatives to choose from during the process of integrating a minority into a majority society. At the cultural level, the alternatives were assimilation, segregation, cultural pluralism and multiculturalism, the last concept having been chosen as the feasible and at the same time morally justifiable one. The core of a multicultural education, as we have concluded, should be the building of the so-called dual identity. A school should realize its responsibility since, as a transmittor of knowledge as well as cultural values, no school has the right to assume the privilage of transmitting the values of the majority culture only. In line with this, each school should take steps to make sure the cultural background of its pupils, all its pupils, is being reflected in both the curriculum and the methods of teaching. This declaration opens a way for another initiative that might help to diminish the abyss between the Roma and the Czechs; an initiative that this paper proposes to complement those already stated above, namely the incorporation of the Roma culture into the curriculum.

4.2.1 Incorporation of the Roma culture into the curriculum

The personal experience of teaching Roma children English had for its original aim nothing short of mere tutoring in order to help the children with compulsory English language. The originality of the project, however, lay in the fact that special studying materials had been created for that purpose; materials not cut-to-size for the Czech and English cultures, as it is always the case at schools, but created from what is preserved in the Museum (objects, pictures, posters, songs, proverbs, poems, photographs – all capturing the spiritual and material heritage of the Roma), therefore reflecting and being rooted in the Roma culture itself. Sixteen Roma children were being taught on an individual basis for the period of three months (September 2009 – December 2009). The following table gives an overview of different grades that the children attended.

Table 9: Different grades of Roma children attending English classes in the Museum of Romani Culture (September – December 2009)

Total number	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade
16 pupils (6 girls, 10 boys)	4 pupils	9 pupils	3 pupils

Source: Author.

Right at the beginning, a plan of various topics was prepared. It consisted of a simple set of fifteen topics starting with *Colours*, going through, for example, *the Alphabet*, *Numbers*, *Days of the Week*, *Human Body*, *Family*, *Animals* to the topic of *House*. These topics had four revisions in between and a grammatical part with vocabulary at the end. Ideally, one topic was covered in one class that lasted 60 minutes. All the children started from the beginning, from the topic of *Colours*. For those who were further at school, it was a revision, for those who were just doing the topic, it was new and we studied it together.

A teacher in such a position can discover almost immediately that there is no such thing as gratitude for free English classes. The parents usually do not care about the content of the classes their children attend and since they do not remind their children of going to the Museum, it is a commonplace for the tutors to go and pick the children up before the lesson starts. By going to the children's families, on the other hand, the tutor is given the most natural opportunity to actually meet the parents and to talk to them. The parents are anxious to enroll their children into the classes but they are not the ones to remind the children of going there on regular basis. Since this is simply how it works, the only option left is to *make the children interested* in going to classes on their own. One way to do that is to involve the children in some activities related to the topics. We, for one example, started with naming our place, the English Corner, and with decorating it.[112] Each child drew a star with his or her name in the middle and put it on the wall in between the English colours, numbers or greetings. By doing that, the children themselves created a place to which they liked coming back. Apart from two children who gave up, and who were replaced by other two children, all of the children kept on coming to classes, if it was not for an occassional case of family reasons or sickness.

As stated before, all of the topics shared one thing; they reflected, to different extents, aspects of the Roma culture, aspects that the children have not had the chance to see in

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[112] See Appendix no. 1.

textbooks before. Having incorporated the Roma culture into the studying materials, the children's reactions were consequently being observed. The results were very positive; most of the children were pleasantly surprised and proud when they could answer what colours there are on a Roma flag or when they knew the date of the Roma Day celebration. By recognizing themselves in what they were studying, they were much more interested than they would have been the case they had studied something very far away from their understanding. Incorporation of the Roma culture might be considered as yes another initiative that helps a Roma child get oriented in the topic of study as well as a perfect tool to catch the child's attention, motivate the child and make him or her feel as an equal partner in the process. Such an initiative comes at no risk to the subject matter itself since teaching English remains the priority; what changes is the means of achieving it. The following examples are used to prove that.

To revise colours, an exercise comprising the Roma flag was used.[113] Some children knew what colours there are, some did not but all of the children remembered next time the English words for the colours that can be found in the flag. The first reactions were surprised exclamations along the lines of *Look, that's the Roma flag!* The younger children did not know that the Roma even had a flag so we simply started a conversation on why the flag looks the way it does. The children were asked why they think there is a wheel and what is stands for. We ended up talking about where the Roma came from and what a long way they had to travel. The children were interested because we were talking about *them*.

Another example from the same topic was the use of one of the most known Roma folk songs that most of the children, indeed, recognized.[114] Those who felt like singing, sang that song, those who did not, simply tried to find a colour in there, all of the children succeeding. The next class, some of the children were asking if we would be singing Roma songs again and they sang this particular song, by heart. The most important thing is that the children were interested and there is a very high chance that they were interested because we were doing something that is a part of who they are. It is, indeed, extremely hard to keep the children's attention, but it is not impossible and using the Roma culture makes it even less so.

The most surprising reactions on the part of the children occured with the following example.[115] The children were asked what that picture meant, who was in the picture and when and where the picture was taken. A couple of minutes were, consequently, devoted to

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[113] See Appendix no. 2, Example 1.
[114] See Appendix no. 2, Example 2.
[115] See Appendix no. 2, Example 3.

discuss the traditional way of life of the Roma, and the children were asked to name in English at least five of the items that were needed for that traditional life. It was a kind of competition and the children liked it. It is not so hard to imagine what a nice change it must be for a Roma child to study the vocabulary related to one's family by actually seeing what they consider to be their family.

The following example, used for the topis of *School*, consists of a Roma proverb which says: Life is a reflexion of your wisdom.[116] Such an innocent sentence gives the perfect possibility to discuss why we are studying English in the first place, what benefits it might bring and why should we not give up. Most of the children figured the meaning; for those who did not understand what this proverb was saying, I tried to explain what a difference in life it makes if one studies or not and I was always giving examples from my life so that the children could relate; they were listening.

The last example combines the most traditional Roma figure – a Roma musician – and practical learning of the parts of human body.[117] This example has been chosen to show, once again, that it is absolutely feasible to enrich whatever part of the lesson by at least one exercise rooted in the Roma culture. Instead of a beautiful blond blue-eyed girl, an example of a Roma musician was used. Some children tell you that their father also plays the violin and since this simple fact is directly related to their lives, they might open up more to the content of the class.

These have been just minute examples, but in all of them, the end justifies the means; the children got interested. How hard might it be to incorporate a part of Roma history into a history textbook? Or to cook a Roma meal during cooking classes? Or to mention some of the particularities of the Roma culture in civil education? A lot of other examples starting from the school decoration and ending with its textbooks might be used here. The aim was, however, to show that incorporating the Roma culture into a class, in our example an English class, is not a difficult task at all. It helps to establish a conversation as well as a natural bond very important for the child to like its school, and of the same importance is that it also narrows down the abyss between two different cultural backgrounds and by doing so, eliminates the chances of a Roma child's potential failure at the educational process.

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[116] See Appendix no. 2, Example 4. Transl. by the author.
[117] See Appendix no. 2, Example 5.

Conclusion

Manuš nane nigda šoha dost goďaver, sajekh, hin so te sikhľol.

Man is never smart enought, there are always things to learn.[118]

"If we all had the same past, culture, traditions and experience, the communicative process would be very easy. However, we come from different backgrounds, we have different culture, different ethnic origin, different expectations, experience, ideas and wishes and so we do not react in the same way, neither do we 'read' the information channelled by the transmitter in the same way as others."[119] Being different from the majority in all of the mentioned points, the ethnic Roma on the territory of the Czech Republic have been subject to various kinds of exclusion. This paper looked closely at one of the domains of such an exclusion; the area of education of the Roma children at elementary schools. Being successful at an elementary school is a pre-requisite for a potential success in further studies and future employment. Being unsuccessful at an elementary school, on the other hand, one finds oneself in the situation in which most of the Roma live nowadays; high unemployment, soaring crime rate, sordid living conditions and a predominantly negative attitude on the part of majority often resulting in violent conflicts and discrimination.

This paper has been built on the hypothesis affirming that: *There are, indeed, reasons behind the failure of the Roma children at schools and this thesis argues that these reasons can be found in the area of cultural differences. In case they are not taken into account, these cultural differences are substantial enough to influence a Roma child's performance at school to the point of potential failure.* In line with this declaration, a research question has been asked in the Introduction to this paper. *What are the cultural differences behind the failure of the Roma children at elementary schools and how should they be taken into account by the Czech educational system?* To fully answer the research question, several sub-conclusions have been reached. In the first Chapter, we have discussed the alternatives at the cultural level at which a minority group can be integrated into a majority society. For the Czech environment, the options seemed to be represented by assimilation (making the Roma adapt to the Czech culture), cultural pluralism (understand the Roma culture and simply tolerate it), multiculturalism (understand, respect and promote the Roma culture) or segregation (educate the Roma separately from other children). We acknowledged the fact that it was the stubborn

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[118] Nečas 2002, 4. Transl. by the author.

[119] Šišková 1999, 405. Transl. by the author, original text: "Pokud bychom měli všichni stejnou minulost, kulturu, tradici a zkušenosti, byl by komunikační proces velice snadný. Pocházíme však z nejrůznějších míst, máme jinou kulturu, jiný etnický původ, máme jiná očekávání, jiné zkušenosti, představy a přání a tak nereagujeme všichni stejně a hlavně „nečteme" informace vysílajícího shodně jako druhá strana."

allegiance to assimilation that has brought about the current situation in the first place. Since, from the moral as well as legal point of views, segregation cannot be considered the answer either, we are left with the concepts of cultural pluralism or multiculturalism. This paper has first hinted and later tried to further explain that some cultural differences might be so substantial and determinative for an individual, such as the differences between the Roma and the Czechs are, that it is not enough to acknowledge this fact by simply tolerating it; more should be done, which leaves us with the alternative of multiculturalism. Having clarified what the core of multiculturalism consists of, we have reached the conclusion that a multicultural education is the one feasible and morally justifiable solution that we should be heading for. In the area of education, it is rooted in the conviction that no school can assume the right to teach the majority culture only since there is no such thing as a homogenious nation of one cultural background. More cultures cohabit a single state, children of these cultures go to schools together and the educational system should be able to reflect that.

This paper also drew attention to the very fact that until 2005, around 75% of Roma children were being educated in special remedial schools, separately from the Czech children. Even though these facilities got officially abolished by the new *Education Act*, the available statistics show that nothing has changed and we are still facing what is commonly referred to as segregation in education. Even though a lot of people, also on the academic ground, are wary to admit these segregational practices, it is an accepted fact that even nowadays, one fourth of Roma children go to the so-called Gypsy schools.

Commenting of the present day situation, this paper then tried to answer the first part of its research question by disclosing the reasons behind it. They have been, indeed, found in the sphere of cultural differences caused by a very particular historical experience of the Roma, by their traditional attitude to education, by their understanding of what family upbringing means, by the importance of their particular social setting and, last but not least, by the language barrier between the Roma and the Czech languages that presents for the children considerable setback right from the beginning of their school attendance. All of these specifics make the Roma children disadvantaged even before they start the elementary school, that is, if they even get there. Way too often, Roma children do not pass assessment tests devised to determine whether a child is fit to enter the first grade. As we have seen, these tests have been created in one cultural background that they reflect. The Roma cultural background has no place there, none of the cultural particularities of the Roma are taken into account and the impossibility to know a piece of information rooted in the Czech culture is taken for deficiency in intellect. Escorted by our comfortable excuses, these children are sent to non-

standard educational facilities and in the end, they are denied their right to full education in a standard elementary school. It is, apparently, still preferable to use one model of education cut-to-size for the Czech culture and simply reason that since the Roma are not able to keep pace with that, they have to be provided with a different type of education. Sadly enough, that is the solution that the Roma usually prefer as well, in order to make sure that their child studies in a more favourable and friendly ambience. Nowadays, such an ambience can be found in one of the four types of the so-called non-standard educational facilities functioning in the Czech Republic. All of them share two features; at a much slower pace, they follow a reduced curriculum and they educate the Roma children separately from the majority. We are deep in a circle and we are not sure what to deal with first; whether with the consequences or their causes.

The second part of the research question regarding how to accommodate the disclosed differences has been answered in the last Chapter. After presenting an overview of the initiatives that have tried to integrate the Roma children into the Czech system of education by taking into account who they are, a somewhat personal experience was added to this paper; experience that tried to prove the practical feasiblity of the incorporation of the Roma culture into the curriculum; an initiative proposed here as a complementary attempt to remedy the situation. Education of pupils with different cultural and ethnic experience has its specifics and these should be taken into account. In case they are not, the school becomes for such children a foreign place of different language, norms and values that the pupils perceive as diametrically different from their own. It is absolutely necessary for the school to understand these differences with which a Roma child enters its first grade and to take these differences not as something that must be eliminated as soon as possible, but as an innate part of the child's individuality and identity. Only by this can we achieve a multicultural education, an education in which all the children are studying together, not separated by their differences, but learning from them.

The hypothesis of this paper has been proved right; the reasons behind the failure of Roma children at elementary schools are, indeed, found in the area of cultural differences. The research question has been answered by disclosing these differences and by proposing a way to accommodate them in a multicultural education that leaves out some space for other cultures than just the Czech one.

It was not that many years ago when the Germans came with a claim that: "the Czechs were incapable of participating in the modern world except by [being assimilated] into the

German nation."[120] Look at where the Czech Republic is now. A small, but sovereign democratic nation quite capable of participating in the modern world. We proved the Germans wrong but like in a relay race, we took the baton from them and started to apply the same theory towards another group of people, just as helpless as the Czechs used to be. Are we aware of the fact that we are making the same mistake? Saving Roma from themselves by making them fit into the Czech society without seeing what consequences it will bring is careless and wrong. Understanding what makes us different and not being afraid of these differences is, on the other hand, the first step we all need to take. The education of the Roma can be without exaggeration seen as a pre-requisite for their full integration into the Czech society, but if we want to integrate the Roma children, we have to integrate first who they are. To do that, we have to accept that *being different* does not have to be bad; any other position will cost us all dear in the future.

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[120] Kymlicka 1995b, 6.

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Appendices

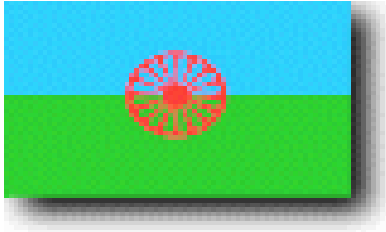**Appendix 1: The English Corner, Margitka and Emil**

Appendix 2: English materials rooted in the Roma culture

Example 1. Topic: Colours

Co vidíš na obrázku? Dokážeš říci barvy, které vidíš, anglicky?

(What do you see in the picture? Can you name the colours in English?)

a) ……………………………………………

b) ……………………………………………

c) ……………………………………………

Example 2. Topic: Colours

Znáš následující písničku? Zazpívejme si ji a zkusme v ní najít nějakou barvu…

(Do you know the following song? Let's sing it and let's try to find a colour there…)
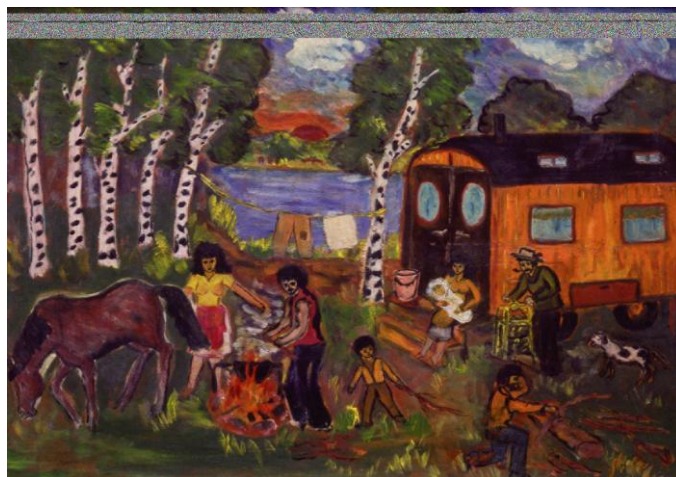
Te me mamo khere džava

Mire bala rozmukava, joj

Andre mire kale bala

Somnakuňi kangľi dava.

Example 3. Topic: Family

Kde vidíš na obrázku následující slova?

(Can you find the following words in the picture?)

mother   father   son   baby   horse   dog

Example 4. Topic: School

Co znamená následující přísloví?

(What does the following proverb mean?)

<p style="text-align:center; color:green;">Savi goď'i, avka dživel.</p>

Example 5. Topic: Human body

Kde na obrázku vidíš tato slovíčka?

(Where in the picture can you see the following words?)

hair   leg knee shoulders   fingers belly   mouth   ears   nose