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### **Czechs in plakhta and Swedes in kolt**

Representation of National Minorities in Swedish and Czech  
Cinematography

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MA Programme Euroculture  
Declaration

I, Olena Turchyn, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Czechs in plakhta and Swedes in kolt. Representation of National Minorities in Swedish and Czech Cinematography”, 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.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The term *national minority* conjures up a myriad of associations, depending on the context. Interlocutor's background is first and foremost likely to influence the images we have while speaking of the national minorities: from short and stocky Sami in colorful clothing in Nordic countries to shabby Roma settlements in Central Europe; from media discussion of Crimea peninsular tensions between the Ukrainians and Tatar minority to Basques in Spain. When it comes to *ethnic minorities*, the list of associations based merely on the knowledge from following recent media reports is likely to go on for pages, the Serbs in Kosovo, Gali and Akhalkori in Georgia or Turks in Cyprus being just few examples.

Moving on from the level of associations and friendly discussions to the world of legislation, international treaties, state and international resolutions and agreements, agencies, missions, commissions etc one will find that massive efforts have been undertaken in order to protect both national and ethnic minorities in many states. One of the most known documents to mention here is *The Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, which among other human rights states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.... Everyone is entitled to ... rights ... without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...."<sup>1</sup>

Major legal document that address the protection of national minorities specifically is the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*<sup>2</sup> (adopted and opened for signatures in February 1995), which followed upon the non-binding *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*<sup>3</sup> adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1992 and the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*.<sup>4</sup> A number of Governments worldwide have committed to ensuring the human rights of national and ethnic minorities by signing and ratifying the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging*

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (December 1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Articles 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe. (February 1995). *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. (Hereinafter: *Framework Convention*).

<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly. (1992). *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*.

<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe. *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Adopted on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1992, entry into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1998. (Hereinafter: *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*).

to *National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities* and the *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*, along with the commitments made at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (held in June 1993), the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen (in March 1995) and others.

Council of Europe and the office of OSCE High Commissioner on national minorities (HCNM) develop legal ways, launch projects and carry out missions aimed at helping states to deal with the conflict preventions or resolving as based on the minorities-majorities misunderstandings. European states often have separate Ministries or Councils dealing with minority issues and integration problems (Sweden, Slovakia, the Czech Republic are vivid examples). Endeavors and projects of national and international NGOs dealing with minorities issues as well as organizations of such scale as European Center for Minority Issues based in Germany, which conducts research and provides advisory services on minority-majority issues in Europe – all seem to be bringing an important input into the solution of minority-majority problems. Yet, despite countless efforts undertaken on different levels, national and ethnic minority-majority issues seem to remain a sensitive topic and a point of tension in many cases; minorities continuously suffer discrimination on the part of majority while majorities seem to find the fact of discrimination rather debatable.

European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS) was conducted during 2008-2009 in EU member-states and final findings were reported in December 2009 at the Fundamental Rights Conference in Stockholm, held under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency in the EU. The key findings of the survey “reveal evidence about the discrimination faced by minorities in everyday life; in the classroom, when looking for work, at the doctor’s, or in shops”.<sup>5</sup> These findings were discussed by 230 representatives of national governments, EU institutions, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, monitoring and data collection bodies, national human rights institutions and equality bodies from across the European Union. “Making Rights a Reality for All” was the motto of the conference, focusing on finding the solutions to protect and promote rights of the groups most subjected to discrimination in EU on the ground. Sweden’s Minister for Integration and Gender Equality Nyamko Sabuni stressed the

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<sup>5</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2009). *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Project Outputs and Key Findings*. Retrieved: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/eu-midis/eumidis\\_output\\_en.htm](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/eu-midis/eumidis_output_en.htm) (Hereinafter: EU-MIDIS 2009 Survey. *Project Outputs and Key Findings*.)

growing threat in the country for minority groups, particularly Roma and LGBT persons, on the part of the far right parties. The Czech Republic, Sweden's predecessor in the EU Presidency in 2009, represented by the Deputy Minister for Human Rights Czeslaw Walek ensured that the surveys data, showing high levels of discrimination against the Czech Roma, will be used "to secure political commitment to improve the situation".<sup>6</sup>

At the closing of the conference, the participants agreed on the following course of action: work towards development of a systematic approach to human rights implementation; promote community participation; support counteraction of labour market and encourage entrepreneurship within minority communities; emphasize and strengthen the role of local authorities as human rights actors; promote human rights education.<sup>7</sup>

However, my question here is whether these actions will suffice? The survey shows that those belonging to ethnic or national minorities faced discriminations of various types in their day-to-day contacts with the majority representatives. Can it possibly mean that the problem is in the attitudes and ideas we might often have about the minorities, without much reasonable grounds for them but merely as "inherited" knowledge of stereotypes or prejudices existing in our communities? And if so, then how do we acquire those discrimination-provoking ideas and views about the minorities? What are the information channels through which we form our views about the things, concepts, peoples we have never encountered personally? Can direct information channels, such as mass media and cinematography, be identified as such that dramatically influence our world views, including views about minorities representatives?

As Henry Giroux claims in his work *Breaking in to the movies. Film and the culture of politics*, cinematography plays a strikingly important role in constructing our mistakenly "own" views:

All films disseminate ideologies, beckon in sometimes clear and always contradictory ways towards visions of the future, encourage and stultify diverse ways of being in the world. But most importantly, film constitutes a powerful force for shaping public memory, hope, popular consciousness, and social agency and as such invites people into a broader public conversation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> EU-MIDIS 2009 Survey. *Project Outputs and Key Findings*.

<sup>7</sup> EU-MIDIS 2009 Survey. *Project Outputs and Key Findings*.

<sup>8</sup> Giroux, A. Henry. (2002). *Breaking in to the movies: Film and the culture of politics*. Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. p.15. (Hereinafter: Giroux, A. Henry. (2002). *Breaking in to the movies: Film and the culture of politics*.)

Indeed, cinematography is much more than one of the mighty ways of artistic expression. It may be disputed, though, whether cinema is rightfully called a reflection of reality and a source of constructing views about it, since subjectivity is unavoidable in the experience of all movies, even the most scientific documentaries. However, it would be difficult to contradict that, as a mass-distribution expression of art, cinema helps to record and spread ideas about existing reality which we cannot check out through our personal experience. Cinema is considered one of the most accessible and widely used ways of spreading knowledge of different kinds; knowledge of various cultures is, of course, right on top of the list.

From the Cultural Studies point of view cinema may be seen as an art form that enables the recording and revealing of physical reality. As claimed by G. Mast, cinema “embodies, communicates, enforces and suggests meanings,” which can be interpreted as an artistic way of capturing and reflecting reality.<sup>9</sup> The problem arises if the reality is captured from one-sided perspective and if that perspective becomes widespread to the extent of turning into a common knowledge. The one-sided presentation of Roma people as uneducated and shabby, for example, has a vast potential of forming the idea about them being so, even among those who have never met a single Roma representative. On the contrary, the objective and positive presentation of the same peoples could give them a chance to assert themselves in the views of a general public not as “worse” but merely as “different”. As suggested by the film and culture researcher Herman Gray:

... films play an important role in placing particular ideologies and values into public conversation, they also provide a pedagogical space that opens up the possibility of interpretation as intervention.<sup>10</sup>

The idea of H. Gray presupposes that intentional support of certain films could be used in educational purposes for the majorities’ cultures to better understand the national minorities representatives who they live side by side with in one country. Czech film *Kolja* seems to be a good example of such education and bringing-together attempt. Produced in 1996, shortly after Czech independence with dislike of the Russians among

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<sup>9</sup>Mast G., Cohen M. (1985). *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press. p.1.

<sup>10</sup> Gray, Herman. (1995). *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for “Blackness”*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. p.6.

Czech people still being strongly present in the air, *Kolja* among other awoke certain degree of sympathy and understanding towards the Russians, with the implied meaning that young generations do not have to carry the burden of the forefathers' mistakes and belonging to certain nationality should not make one an outcast in the country.

Perhaps the educational potential of cinematography could be acknowledged by the Ministries of Culture and other state institutions as one of the practical tools used in their attempts to improve minorities situations in the countries. Through supporting the production of cinematographic works that would depict minorities in a positive and objective perspective, shed more light onto the minorities cultures within the societies, illuminate the majority population about other ethnic groups in their countries, the responsible institutions could gain tangible results.

However, prior to engaging into the activities of the kind, one is to find out the ways minorities tend to be depicted in cinematography as compared to the majorities. In the attempt to do so, the following questions seem to logically arise: How are national minorities characters usually presented in movies as compared to the majority representatives? Can cinematography be considered one of the sources of stereotypic and discriminatory attitudes towards the minorities and by this, consequently, contribute its share to the problematic issue under discussion? And, at the end of the day, could positive and fair representation of national and ethnic minorities in cinematography influence the attitudes of majority representatives and by this accelerate the processes of change towards non-discriminatory ethnic relations in the societies?

To answer the questions above would require several diachronic studies and analysis in various fields in different countries. As to the given interdisciplinary Master's research, I intend limiting it to a small aspect of these questions and further, on the basis of the analysis of one fraction make the inductive reasoning about the functioning of the general picture. Specifically, my idea is to analyze the representation of minorities groups in the recent cinematography of two EU member states – the Czech Republic and Sweden, which were mentioned in the EU-MIDIS findings as the states having troubling situation with the national and ethnic minorities groups.

I intend to make visual semiotic and content analysis of three films produced in both countries and having a representative of national or ethnic minorities as one of the lead characters. The films selected for the research are movies created and released within the last 15 years time span; they have been widely accessible to the public as



compared to other home-produced films having national minority characters. These films also deal with complex and provocative subject matter, highlighting a number of important social issues and touching upon the values that could have provoked public controversy.

Swedish movies chosen for the analysis are *Kid Svensk* (depicting Finnish characters), *Sami nieida jojk (Sami Daughter Yoik)* (a road movie about assimilated Sami girl trying to return to her roots), and *Ett öga rött (One Eye Red)* (illustrating the problems of new immigrant minorities in Sweden on the example of few Moroccan families). Czech movies are *Díky za každé nové ráno (Thanks for Every New Morning)* (picturing assimilated representative of Ukrainian minority as one of the main characters), *Smradi (The Brats)* (brings up problems of Roma minority in the Czech Republic), and *Poustečna, Das ist Paradise (Town called Hermitage)* (a story of a small pre-border town with mixed national groups trying to co-exist, including ethnic minorities as well as new immigrants groups).

The analysis will be done on three levels. On the first level, minority representation patterns are analyzed in each individual movie. On the second level, the sum-up of minority depiction patterns in three films from each country will be done and the conclusions on the country level will be drawn. On the third level I will attempt to compare the countries results and trace the possible connection between the general mode of minorities representations in the films and public attitudes to those minority groups, reflected in the findings of EU-MIDIS survey. Is there a connection between the minorities who, according to the findings, face most discrimination and the ways these minorities are presented in the movies analyzed.

Taking into account the nature of the project, the research goals and the type of visual materials under analysis, following research methods seem to be sufficient:

- *visual content analysis*, described by Philip Bell as “a systematic, observational method used for testing hypotheses about the ways in which the media represents people, event, situations and so on.”<sup>11</sup> The analysis will allow us to define relevant *variables* of minorities representation and then further classify the samples into distinct

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<sup>11</sup>Leeuwen, T., Jewitt, P. (2001). *Handbook on Visual Analysis*. London: SAGE. p.14. (Hereinafter: Leeuwen, T., Jewitt, P. (2001). *Handbook on Visual Analysis*.)

categories. Content analysis allows for much freedom on the part of researcher in constructing and selecting the variables, which makes it possible to adapt the framework to minorities issues under research. After a set of variables is being defined, the analysis are then done methodologically and by following the recipe of earlier created frame of variables;<sup>12</sup>

- *visual cultural studies research method*, defined as a “specific sub-field of visual cultural studies” by the researchers Martin Lister and Liz Wells.<sup>13</sup> Visual cultural studies research method is regarded as being of unprecedented importance in contemporary society, since it is concerned with all kind of visual information and helps to set an agenda of issues and questions for addressing specific images.<sup>14</sup> It shall be used while identifying the variables along which the movies will be analyzed;

- *visual semiotics approach* of Roland Barthes will be employed for interpreting the variables of content analysis. The approach is based “on the idea of layered meaning”, which means that images consist first of all of a representational or denotative meaning layer (the layer of who and what are depicted here) on which is then applied a layer of connotative or symbolic meaning (the layer of what does it all mean).<sup>15</sup> By means of singling out the denotations and interpreting the connotations behind them, we will try to see what kind of results will be generated that would help us achieve the main aim of the paper – that is to define in what way minorities are presented in the movies under analysis as contrasted with the majority representatives. Practically, this type of analysis suggests that first the signifiers that fit the category of earlier established variables are picked from all movies and their denotative meaning is defined. The next step is deciphering the connotations behind those signifiers, that is to say defining the messages that are communicated;

- *social semiotic visual analysis* will provide an explicit method for analyzing the meanings established by the syntactic relations between the people, places and things depicted in images. Images are presented as interactional, that is as having certain

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<sup>12</sup> Leeuwen, T., Jewitt, P. (2001). *Handbook on Visual Analysis*. p.20.

<sup>13</sup> Leeuwen, T., Jewitt, P. (2001). *Handbook on Visual Analysis*. p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Rose, Gillian. (2001). *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: SAGE. (Hereinafter: Rose, Gillian. (2001). *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*.)

<sup>15</sup> Leeuwen, T., Jewitt, P. (2001). *Handbook on Visual Analysis*. p.3.

influence on the viewer. Carey Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama characterize social semiotics as “concerned with the study of images in their social context, and as a critical form of visual discourse analysis which does not necessarily stop at description, but may also seek to influence the semiotic practices it describes.”<sup>16</sup> This type of analysis seems fitting into our supposition that cinematography contributes its share into discriminatory representation of minorities in films, which then leads to biased attitudes towards minority representatives in societies.

In chapter II, prior to the films analysis I shall dwell upon the influence of cinematography on the ways people tend to percept “the other”. The material will provide an overview of the theoretical works on the topic and should make the selection of the research topic more explicit.

The discussion is to be followed by an overview (in chapter III) of the minorities situation in the Czech Republic and Sweden. I shall also examine the differences and similarities in defining *national minority* and in the approaches of dealing with the minority issues in the two states.

Afterwards, the movies analysis itself is to follow the theoretical chapters (in chapter IV). On the basis of the analysis, the conclusions about the representation of national and ethnic minorities in the recent cinematography of each country will be made in chapter V. Further, I will attempt to define similarities and divergences between two countries. In the conclusive parts of the last chapter, I will try to establish a possible link or acknowledge an absence of the link between the minorities characters portrayals in the films and attitudes towards those minorities by the majorities which are seen from the EU-MIDIS survey.

The choice of countries seems to be successful for several reasons: both countries were in certain way distinguished in the EU-MIDIS survey; both countries have a long-established and known cinematographic tradition which is continuously developing as compared to other European states; both countries have historical national minorities as well as new immigrant minorities groups living on their territories. Besides, the author of the thesis has a personal experience of living and studying in both countries, which brings personal interest and even bigger engagement into the research work.

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<sup>16</sup> Leeuwen, T., Jewitt, P. (2001). *Handbook on Visual Analysis*. p.3.

The potential usefulness of the present study could be its utility and possible practical application of the analysis research by the cultural and cinematographic institutions in the respective countries, such as Svenska Filminstitutet or Czech Film Center, as well as for the Ministries for Culture of both states.

If the minorities representation in the movies under analysis proves negative or in any other way discriminatory as compared to the majority, and taken as a proven fact that the mass culture has a grave influence on our perception of the outer world, then the Ministries of Culture could consider the ways to encourage unbiased and objective cinematographic representation of national and ethnic minorities. It could be done through certain programs or scholarship projects for the young artists and further through co-financing the screening of the projects on national or commercial TVs in order to reach a wider audience and present a more objective picture of the minorities in their own societies.

The optimal utility of the study would be its usage by cultural institutions or foundations of the international level for the encouragement of further research in the field as well as development of the support programs specifically meant for spreading objective and unbiased image of the minorities in the countries involved, urging to avoid stereotypical and non-critical presentation of minorities.

The results of the given study should not be over generalized due to the limited corpus of analyzed material. Therefore, full objectivity of the thesis analysis is not claimed. On the other hand, three films from each country seem to suffice for trying to trace whether there exist certain pattern of presenting minorities in positive, negative or neutral light as compared to majority.

## II. FILM ANALYSIS AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Most of the young people in the Western world nowadays have never known the world without TV. For the vast majority, television set has always been in the house, pretty much as mom or dad. Considering the high rate of divorces these day, TV set has all chances to outlast one of the parents in many homes. Such state of things signals that TV has a greater potential of influencing the young kids in forming their views and ideas than parents do. Besides, the exposure to TV viewing might in many cases be longer than exposure to common activities with the parents or time spent at school. Therefore, it is difficult to deny an important acculturative function of television in general and cinematography in particular.

If TV provides a broad inventory of cultural knowledge nowadays, then what exactly is cultural knowledge? *Culture*, as defined by anthropologists James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy, “consists of knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, expectations, values, and patterns of behavior that people learn by growing up in a given society. Above all else, culture consists of *shared* learning.”<sup>17</sup>

It seems hardly possible to name more shared source of information than media, television in particular, perhaps with the exception of the new social media like Facebook, Twitter, vkontakte or similar networks, which are becoming more and more popular in a number of countries. In contrast to education, it extends well beyond what we learn in school and much of the information that contemporary people share comes from their common exposure to the mass media. Television crosses demographic borders in the nations. It presents to diverse groups a set of common symbols, information and shared experiences. Televiewing involves men and women of different ages, ethnic groups, classes, and with different levels of educational achievement. TV is watched in cities, suburbs, towns and in the countryside.

The common information that members of a mass society come to share as a result of watching the same films, programs, series is definitely culture, according to the definition above. This culture that comes from television is shared by everyone, contrary to the “high culture” of education, appreciation of art etc. Therefore, since it is

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<sup>17</sup> Spradley, James P., McCurdy, David W. (1994). *Conformity and conflict: readings in Cultural Anthropology*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. NY: HarperCollins. (Hereinafter: Spradley, James P., McCurdy, David W. (1994). *Conformity and conflict: readings in Cultural Anthropology*.)

watched by almost everyone, television may be the most effective instrument of social solidarity in modern life.

Culture shapes our perception, attitudes and ideas and even the most unbiased of us are influenced by the surrounding culture in forming our views and ideas. Since television is an enormously important and large part of our culture and, in fact, it shapes modern culture more than any other constituent, then logical and simple conclusion is that it is televiewing that largely shapes our own attitudes, views and values. Film, the material of the given analysis, is of course being a significant part of televiewing.

Influence of the movie onto the attitudes in society is not a novel idea. It has been discussed by many philosophers, media scholars, sociologists and psychologists, some of whom will be referred to in the given paper. Popular culture in general, as well as films in particular, is important if not crucial sphere in which symbolic and material interconnections take place on the level of everyday life in shaping the meaning and ethical value people give to their lives.

It can hardly be denied that Hollywood has entered lives of many societies and even though it might be claimed that film is an art form, it can as well be stated that film is means of educating, directing, spreading of ideas or brainwashing, to put it in straightforward terms. By undertaking given analysis, I agree with Henry A. Giroux that

Instead of ignoring the public and political dimensions of film, academics need to reconsider how Hollywood films function as public pedagogies that offer a particular sensory experience and mythic mix of sight and sound as part of its efforts to shape public consciousness and legitimate a narrowly conceived range of social relations and institutional formations.<sup>18</sup>

While watching a movie, we can observe that knowledge is always linked to desire, power, and pleasure. Moreover, knowledge acquired through the massive distribution of moving pictures (Hollywood, Bollywood, national cinematography) plays a crucial role in connecting individuals and groups. Pedagogical functions of films, working on an extremely large scale, become difficult to deny. Therefore, acknowledging the potential of public pedagogy of cinematography, I find it interesting to employ this potential in a long term well-planned social project, supported by the state policies. The essence of the project could be in undertaking this kind of pedagogy for integrated representations of cultural and racial difference, for making accepted those groups in society who are

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<sup>18</sup>Giroux, Henry A. (2002). *Breaking in to the movies. Film and the culture of politics*. p. 298.

dissimilar or, what is relevant for the given analysis, groups that are smaller in quantity. The projects could also aspire to involve the minorities into creating productions which would reflect their own images of themselves. Provided the tools and support, the minorities could be empowered for active emancipated actions towards changing their own situation. *Sami nieida jojk* and *Ett öga rött* can be viewed as the examples of such productions.

As it is rightfully remarked by Henry Giroux,

It is important to recognize that Hollywood films do more than provide pleasure, escape, and entertainment; they also produce public transcripts that for better or worse animate images, representations, discourses, and ideologies that signal the need to reclaim public spaces in which dialog, critical reflection, and public engagement are crucial for people to engage in important social issues.<sup>19</sup>

In other words, movie industry greatly influences the popular imagination and public consciousness. The power and extent of its reach can be seen in a wide-spread example of using film references to sell popular souvenirs, tee shirts, fridge magnets and other pots and pans. However, unlike ordinary consumer items, film produces images, ideas, and ideologies that shape both individual and national identities, which speaks of borderless extent of its importance. At the same time, they provide a perfectly powerful medium to raise questions that are becoming more and more disregarded in the world of market relations. They might enable conversations that would connect politics, personal experiences, public life, civil education, public engagement with the larger social issues.<sup>20</sup>

Supportive to Giroux ideas are the views of Michael Parenti, who points out that dominant media, including Hollywood, has a deep interest in incorporating popular myths in their films. Touted as an art form, Hollywood films often build their plots on what appears to be commonsensical myths, such as “individual effort is preferable to collective action; free enterprise is the best economic system in the world; the ills of society are caused by individual malefactors and not by anything in the socioeconomic system; women and ethnic minorities are not really as capable, effective, or interesting as white males.”<sup>21</sup> According to M. Parenti, those incorporated messages position us to become complicit with the norms and practices of the dominant society. To my mind, it

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<sup>19</sup> Giroux, Henry A. (2002). *Breaking into the movie:.. Film and the culture of politics*. p. 240.

<sup>20</sup> Giroux, Henry A. (2002). *Breaking into the movies. Film and the culture of politics*.

<sup>21</sup> Parenti, Michael. (1992). *Make Believe Media*. New York: St. Martin’s Press. pp. 2-3.

is worth to discuss not only the grand Hollywood scale influence, but also the imprints of national media on societal or individual attitudes towards various issues.

This paper is an example of such discussion that evolves around the representation of national minorities in the national cinematography of Sweden and the Czech Republic. As based on the Giroux's and Parenti's ideas about Hollywood influence, I want to analyze how film can be used to define particular social groups through cultural representations in two European states in question and possibly verify film's function as powerful public pedagogies in social relations in those states.

To my mind, not only the art films can influence the general public by the implicit ideologies. Other film forms can have similarly significant effect, suppose they reach the same number of viewers. Many modern researchers acknowledge any film type as a great tool for introducing and spreading political ideologies. They also suggest that certain types of movies are used for shaping the history. The example of such would be *disclosive films* that are used to “produce an effect, not on the audience, but on history”<sup>22</sup>. However, the disclosive films are not employed in the present study. I chose to analyze two fiction movies from Czech and Swedish cinematography, as well as one documentary from each country. These movie genres have not lesser influence. As stated by Patricia Erens in *Images of Minorities and Foreign Groups in American Films: 1958-73*,

all films are politically biased, either explicitly or implicitly. A film need not be a serious drama to posit a political bias. Entertainment films from Disney to Kung Fu are fraught with political ideology for anyone caring to decode the film. (...)The majority of Hollywood films (in fact, the national cinema of any country) invariably reflects the dominant political and social ideas of the ruling class—the group that holds the reins of power.<sup>23</sup>

Similar view holds Norman Denzin, who describes movies as “a technology and apparatus of power that would organize and bring meaning to everyday lives. They would function as adjuncts to the twentieth century surveillance societies, deploying the cinematic gaze and its narratives in the service of the state.”<sup>24</sup> Moreover, if there are links between “exposure to media content (for example, violence) and individual behavior (hyperactivity, aggression, acting out), as James P. Spradley and David W.

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<sup>22</sup> Weiss, Paul. (1975). *Cinematics*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. p. 184

<sup>23</sup> Erens, Patricia. (1975). “Images of Minorities and Foreign Groups in American Films: 1958-73”. *JUMP CUT. A review of contemporary media*. no. 7. Retrieved: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinesays/JC07folder/MinoritiesErens1.html> (Hereinafter: Erens, Patricia. (1975). *Images of Minorities and Foreign Groups in American Films: 1958-73*.)

<sup>24</sup> Denzin K., Norman. (1995). *The Cinematic Society. The Voyeur's Gaze*. London: Sage Public. p. 15.



McCurdy state in their work *Conformity and conflict: readings in Cultural Anthropology*<sup>25</sup>, then manipulative and influential potential of any kind of movie is vast.

As far as documentary movies are concerned, here we can always have plenty of space for manipulation, depending on who is financing the objective information presentation in the documentary, that is who is a commissioner. However, assuming the definition of the documentary film given by Fred Baker and Ross Firestone, the analysis of the selected documentaries will enable us to receive an objective view of the situation of the Sami and the German minority in Sweden and the Czech Republic correspondingly. Those movie specialists define documentary as “a fact film in which the story stems out of a real and, therefore, realistic locale, photographed on location at the actual scene of the story and using the actual people concerned with that story.”<sup>26</sup>

The objectivity of documentaries has also been discussed by Leslie Devereaux and Roger Hillman who stated that “Documentary film acknowledges that the filmmaker’s perspective may be personal; the effect of documentary relies on the sincerity of the filmmaker not to fake it but to show us “what really happened.”<sup>27</sup> Aims of the documentary movies are to represent the culture and experience of a particular people in a particular space and at specific time span. However, even more do documentaries aim to represent “social intervention, and a critical commentary on aspects of our societies.”<sup>28</sup> They also provide, in our case the minority groups, with the potential of visual media to show their perspective of the situation in the society where they live.

To complement the view of Roger Hillman, in his essay *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology* Ruby states that

In each documentary project, film-makers, social researchers and the protagonists work together. Its members view social science and film to be instruments of social transformation, working towards a fairer and better society.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Spradley, James P., McCurdy, David W. (1994). *Conformity and conflict: readings in Cultural Anthropology*. p. 89

<sup>26</sup> Baker, Fred and Firestone, Ross, eds. (1972). *Movie People*. New York: Douglas Books Co. Quoted through Paul Weiss. (1975). *Cinematics*.

<sup>27</sup> Devereaux, Leslie and Hillman, Roger. Eds. (1995) *Fields of Vision. Essays in films studies, visual anthropology, and photography*. Collection of essays. Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 330.

<sup>28</sup> Pink, Sarah; Kürti, Laszlo; Afonso, Ana Isabel. eds. (2004). *Working Images. Visual Research and Representation in Ethnography*. Routledge NY.

<sup>29</sup> Ruby, J. (2000). *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

To my mind, the sincerity of the filmmakers of the two analyzed documentaries has no reasons to be questioned. Both films are low budget, so financial interest does not seem to be involved. They are shot by rather young directors, reflecting their view of the minority groups situations in their countries, without claiming any particular praise or objectivity, which makes the work also more trustworthy. Moreover, the filmmaker of *Sami nieida jojk* documentary belongs to the national minority group herself. Her attempt at creating the film about personal identity search as a minority representative seems to exemplify the observations of Faye Ginsburg in his essay *Mediating Cultures. Indigenous Media, Ethnographic Films, and the Production of Identity*. In his essay, written in 1995, Ginsburg states that “Over the last ten years, indigenous and minority people have been using a variety of media, including film and video, as new vehicles for internal and external communication, for self-determination, and for resistance to outside cultural domination”<sup>30</sup>. In the same study he also remarks that these new media forms are “innovations in both filmic representation and social process, expressive of transformations in cultural and political identities.”

This could be another supportive argument of the paper, proving the claim that cinematography is a powerful tool of public pedagogy and that it is deeply influential in shaping everyday issues around particular assumptions, values, and social relations. Therefore, certain way of representing the minority group can greatly influence the attitude towards it of the majority society, other minority groups, as well as of the depicted minority group itself, since self-hatred also occurs among many stigmatized minorities. Of course, it might be too bold to say that there is a direct correlation between what people see, hear, and read and how they act, as well as between the representations they are exposed to and the real happenings in their lives. But I do agree with the theoreticians claiming that film as a form of public pedagogy, be it conscious or unconscious, creates certain climate which contributes to shaping individual behavior and public attitudes in various ways.

In the countries with explicit and threatening minority-majority conflicts (like in the case of Roma in the Czech Republic), documentaries made by the Roma and about the Roma in a positive way might have undiscovered potential of changing societal

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<sup>30</sup>Ginsburg, Faye. (1995). “Mediating Cultures. Indigenous Media, Ethnographic Films, and the Production of Identity.” *Fields of Vision. Essays in films studies, visual anthropology, and photography*. Eds. Leslie Devereaux and Roger Hillman. p 256.

attitude. Moreover, positive representation might have long-term constructive results, as expressed by Zoltan Barany in his profound work on the East European Roma:

Societal perception and views of the minority group do make a difference in the types of policies state and government authorities formulate and implement. This is especially true for democratic systems in which elected politicians are accountable to their constituents. If a dominant population is supportive of a marginal group, the state (especially the democratic state) will be more likely to introduce pro-minority policies.<sup>31</sup>

The researcher further claims that the minority group that has sympathy and support of the majority may expect such support to result in more favorable treatment from the state. On the other hand, hostile or adverse majority view of a certain minority group may grow in less liberal and tolerant state policies. Therefore, we can argue that state policies towards minority groups are influenced, among other, by the societal attitudes.<sup>32</sup> The extent to which the movies can influence, in the long run, policy-making in the country can hardly be measured. Instead, in seeking to reveal something what is hidden, one can state that each movie has an explicit potential of personal and social impact.

It further means that film making is a tool for social transformation towards a fairer, inclusive society that will not ignore the quantitatively or in any other way “minor” ones. Films, and particularly documentaries, have a potential to engage into issues and problems and make big changes on various levels. In contrast to written texts, film is especially good at revealing marginal realities in the societies and it has greater possibilities of reaching significantly wider audience. However, their task is not always easy. In order to reach the audience, the films with fair representation of minorities, aimed at educating the audience, have to be shown. Here they risk appearing less popular and bringing less profit that might be a decisive argument in rejecting the screening. Moreover, even when the movies enter the scene and are available for public scrutiny, not everyone in the society wants to know the stories of marginal people and to be told that they have been until now mistaken in their judgments.

Despite the fact that there are many studies that hold up to the idea of films’ potential influence upon society and by that support my hypothesis that positive

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<sup>31</sup> Barany, Zoltan. (2002). *The East European Gypsies. Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*. UK: Cambridge University Press. p.408 (Hereinafter: Barany, Zoltan. (2002). *The East European Gypsies. Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*.)

<sup>32</sup> Barany, Zoltan. (2002). *The East European Gypsies. Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*.

depiction of national minorities could contribute to eliminating numerical majority-minority conflicts, there is of course a number of the opposing views. An American scholar Rochelle Wright, for instance, in her diachronic study of the representation of Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish films<sup>33</sup>, questions whether films depicting ethnic groups positively really have a desired effect in society. She provides an example saying that Sweden's official policy of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been to advocate tolerance and understanding to people from all ethnic backgrounds. However, many of the films that promote empathy and identification with ethnic outsiders were seen, especially during their initial release, by only a few thousand spectators. She also examines the reaction of some reviewers and comes to the conclusion that implied criticism of negative Swedish attitudes towards minority groups sometimes aroused resentment rather than elicited self-examination. In contrast, films that bring about negative clichés about, for example, Jews frequently drew bigger audiences. R. Wright, despite being supportive of the positive representation of national minorities in films for the sake of changing societal attitudes, claims that there is ample evidence that these efforts could be met with limited success.<sup>34</sup>

In her essay written about twenty years earlier, Patricia Erens seems to express no doubts that certain minority groups in the United States suffered more than others from the negative representation on the screen. Referring to the US milieu, the researcher suggests that an in-depth analysis of each minority group could determine how individual screen images are affected by the changing political priorities on the federal level, as well as by the shifting of those minority groups within the social and economic structure. Patricia Erens remarks that while many films aim at complex portrayals of the minority groups, be they positive or negative, others simply supply new stereotypes in their efforts to follow fashion or make profit.<sup>35</sup> Ms Erens suggests two approaches for dealing with the presentation of minority groups in film. First approach enables us to view films as a means of collecting objective data about minority images, whereas second approach gives us a possibility to analyze how the representation of minority groups change according to political exigencies. The purpose of the latter analysis is to “gain insight into the continued needs and motivations of film

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<sup>33</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala.

<sup>34</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala.

<sup>35</sup> Erens, Patricia. (1975). *Images of Minorities and Foreign Groups in American Films: 1958-73*.

creators and film viewers”<sup>36</sup>. The scholar also expresses her point of view onto the need of the intelligent analysis of the depiction of minority groups on the screen, which can serve as a valuable educational tool for “stimulating sensitivity in society”.<sup>37</sup>

Of course, the research of films and representation of someone or something in the film can be done in various ways and a number of things should be accounted for. One should bear in mind that films do not only represent certain things or views, neither do they have exclusively educational function. They are also the reflections of our deepest feelings and experiences, which are solely subjective. Perhaps if we spoke about them in general, than we could have talked about cinematography being the reflection of culture. Otherwise, individually taken films are the sources of information and reflection of subjective perceptions. Often, they are the reflection of the state of things at a given time period, therefore the influence of the external context on shaping the visual representation should be borne in mind. Besides, the fact whether the film director is a majority or minority representative might play a crucial role. Possibly different emancipatory effect of minorities’ depiction could be achieved if the films are made by the minorities themselves.

Analysis of what and how is being represented can be done rather technically and methodologically and provide relatively objective results. To attempt at undertaking such analysis by means of the methods discussed in the introduction part is the task for the following chapters of the given study.

To conclude the section about possible positive as well as detrimental influence of particular minority representation in the movies and ways of analyzing those representations, I find it both interesting and useful to briefly mention psychological approach to analyzing films. The essence of such approach would be in determining the ways of majority to ascertain and reveal itself through its portrayals of “the other”, for instance minority. Patricia Erens speaks about the magic which occurs when familiar images from our environment flash upon the screen. Those “magical images” reflect fantasies or distortions – truth which is usually not spoken about or shown on the screen openly.

Nevertheless, these truths are not personal fantasies of film producers and directors that are imposed on the public. Hollywood cannot force the audience to watch movies which they do not want to watch, since it would hamper the fulfillment of their

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<sup>36</sup> Erens, Patricia. (1975). *Images of Minorities and Foreign Groups in American Films: 1958-73*.

<sup>37</sup> Erens, Patricia. (1975). *Images of Minorities and Foreign Groups in American Films: 1958-73*.

main purpose of profit making. It cannot show films which are not in demand and which their audience is unwilling to pay for. The film-watching experience is a shared experience of both creator and viewer.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, popular films that tend to show certain, often stereotypical representation of minority groups (not only national minorities) can reveal a great deal about the majority culture and self-identification. Consequently, the study of minority groups can tell us as much about those groups as about the majority society. It might be compared to psychoanalytical dreams analysis, where the distorted dreams can often bear more information than those which seem absolutely normal.

Perhaps in the last two paragraphs I contradict myself and make doubtful the point of view I have been trying to prove throughout the whole chapter. Nevertheless, I find it useful to mention this approach solely for the purpose of presenting a different viewpoint, which runs as following: maybe minority groups are so often represented in a stereotypical way because majority audiences want to see them in such a way? However, the psychological film research is a topic of some different study, and we will not further dwell upon it.

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<sup>38</sup> Erens, Patricia. (1975). *Images of Minorities and Foreign Groups in American Films: 1958-73*.

### III. MINORITY GROUP, ETHNIC MINORITY OR NATIONAL MINORITY?

Prior to getting into the discussion of national minorities representation in Swedish and Czech movies, I find it necessary to explicate the term *national minority*. Further, in the country sections of this chapter, I shall dwell upon the situation of national minorities in the two countries of interest.

In sociology, for example, “a minority is a group that is outnumbered by persons who do not belong to it. This can be used to refer to people of a different language, nationality, religion, culture, lifestyle or any characteristic”.<sup>39</sup>

World Directory of Minorities suggests the definition of F. Capotorti, special rapporteur for the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which he worked out in his *Study on the Rights of Persons belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. According to Capotorti’s study:

a minority must be a non-dominant group; its members must possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population; and they must also show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.<sup>40</sup>

In the politics of certain nations, national minority is an ethnic group that is recognized as such by respective laws of their country of habitation. This group, therefore, has some rights that ethnic groups, which are not recognized by the state law, do not have (for example, the right to education and communication with the government in their mother language). At the same time, as stated on the website of the Organization for the European Minorities, not every ethnic group that is a minority in number is a minority in political sense. Some groups are, for instance, too small or too indistinct to justify the costs of providing these rights.<sup>41</sup> However, there are also cases when minorities are power elites in the country and they rule over majorities, like, for instance, the whites during the apartheid in South Africa.

Even in the attempts to define national minority for a particular state there are many problems arising, not to compare those attempts with the complexities of defining

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<sup>39</sup> Website of the Organization for the European Minorities. Retrieved: March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010.  
<http://www.eurominority.eu/version/eng/resources-definitions1.asp>

<sup>40</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group. p. XV.

<sup>41</sup> Website of the Organization for the European Minorities. Retrieved: March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010.  
[www.eurominority.eu](http://www.eurominority.eu)

national minority for a union of states or worldwide. Shall the state distinguish between old (traditional) minorities and the new ones? The issue of new immigrants minority groups is very topical, for instance, in Sweden, where the number of new immigrants from Iraq, Iran or Kurdistan is constantly growing. As to the Czech Republic, the immigration flow from the East or inflow of workers from Vietnam is also rather significant. Consequently, if we take into account new immigrants groups while recognizing *national minorities* in the state, what period of time is then adequate to qualify a certain minority as sufficient? Are there other reasons for such qualification?

As Michael Krugmann poses the question in his book *Das Recht der Minderheiten*, “Why should members of some “traditional” minorities have a higher level of protection than new immigrants?”<sup>42</sup> Moreover, it might often happen that the number of recent immigrants to the country well surpasses the number of traditional minorities in the country, like it is the case with the Turks or Kurds in Germany as compared to the representatives of traditional Danish, Friesian, Serbian minorities.<sup>43</sup> The example of Sweden can be a vivid one to explicate the new vs. old minorities differentiation. “In recent decades Sweden has treated immigrant and minority issues as closely related, for instance with regard to education, the right to interpreters in courts and in front of public authorities, financial support for cultural activities and activities aiming at the integration of these groups (immigrant and minorities) into Swedish society. Now it seems that the overall umbrella of multiculturalism is separated into two “umbrellas”: immigrant integration and minority cultures.”<sup>44</sup>

On the one hand, we can argue about the responsibility of Sweden towards its traditional historical minorities. However, how fair is the special treatment of the latter to the new immigrant groups, whose cultures are of no lesser importance “for the integration and respect of human rights of immigrants”<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Krugmann, Michael. (2004). *Das Recht der Minderheiten*, Duncker and Humblot. Berlin. p. 57. Quoted through Smihula, Daniel. (2009). “Definitions of National Minorities in International Law.” *Journal of US-China Public Administration*.. Vol. 6, No.5. (Serial #48). Illinois: David Publishing Company.

<sup>43</sup> Smihula, Daniel. (2009). “Definitions of National Minorities in International Law.” *Journal of US-China Public Administration*.. Vol. 6, No.5. (Serial #48). Illinois: David Publishing Company. (Hereinafter: Smihula, Daniel. (2009). *Definitions of National Minorities in International Law*)

<sup>44</sup> Åkermark Spiliopoulou Sia, Huss Leena. (2006). “Ten Years of Minority Discourse in Sweden.” In: Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Sia (main ed.) & Huss, Leena, Walker, Alastair & Oeter, Stefan (co.ed.s.) *International Obligations and National Debates: Minorities around the Baltic Sea*. Åland: The Åland Peace Institute. pp. 545-587. (Hereinafter: Åkermark Spiliopoulou Sia, Huss Leena. (2006). *Ten Years of Minority Discourse in Sweden*.)

<sup>45</sup> Åkermark Spiliopoulou Sia, Huss Leena. (2006). *Ten Years of Minority Discourse in Sweden*.



In his analysis of the attempts to define *national minority* in international law worldwide, Smihula analyzes the definitions suggested by many theorists in the course of drafting the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, *Charter of Rights of Ethnic Groups in the Member States of the European Communities* as well as in theoretical works of Krugmann and Pan.<sup>46</sup> Upon analyzing the abovementioned works and documents, the scholar arrives at the conclusion that a group can be classified as national minority if “it is numerically smaller than the rest population of the state or a part of the state; it is not in a dominant position; its culture, language, religion, race, etc are distinct from that of the rest population; its members have a will to preserve their specificity; its members are citizens of the state where they have a status of a minority.”<sup>47</sup> Smihula, however, agrees that it is extremely difficult task to come to the worldwide agreement as to the definition of national minority, the first challenge being the agreement upon the general term itself: *ethnic minority*, *national minority*, *minority group* etc.

In Europe, the term *national minority* seems to be adopted and is used more frequently than the others. Although, legally it has not been defined even in the main document concerning the protection of minorities rights such as *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. In the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* minority receives indirect linguistic definition as a group of people speaking minority language.<sup>48</sup>

In his keynote address at the opening of the OSCE Minorities Seminar in Warsaw in 1994, High Commissioner van der Stoep (1993-2001) stated that:

The existence of a minority is a question of fact and not of definition. (...) First of all, a minority is a group with linguistic, ethnic or cultural characteristics, which distinguish it from the majority. Secondly, a minority is a group which usually not only seeks to maintain its identity but also tries to give stronger expression to that identity.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Smihula, Daniel. (2009). *Definitions of National Minorities in International Law*.

<sup>47</sup> Smihula, Daniel. (2009). *Definitions of National Minorities in International Law*.

<sup>48</sup> *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*

<sup>49</sup> OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Mandate. Retrieved: February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010. <http://www.osce.org/hcnm/13022.html>

The European Commission for Democracy through Law recommended the following definition of the term *minority* in its 1991 proposal for the European Convention for Protection of Minorities:

*minority* shall mean a group which is smaller in number than the rest of the population of a State, whose members, who are nationals of that State, have ethnical, religious, or linguistic features different from those of the rest of the population and are guided by the will to safeguard their culture, traditions, religion, or language. Any group coming within the terms of this definition shall be treated as an ethnic, religious, or linguistic minority.<sup>50</sup>

The definition above was suggested accounting for the diversity of traditions, terminologies, and approaches regarding minorities in the European countries. However, it cannot be regarded as an explicit definition of the national minority in the Framework Convention. In the explanatory report to the Convention, the following text was included: “it should also be pointed out that the Framework Convention contains no definition of the notion of national minority”.<sup>51</sup> It was recognized that at that stage it was impossible to arrive at a definition that would be supported by all Council of Europe member states. Therefore, the countries accepting the Convention are left with the freedom to interpret the term *national minority* for themselves according to their legal system and specific conditions, accounting, however, on the implicit definition in the Framework Convention.

I find it necessary to mention that the term *national minority* should not be confused with *ethnic minority*, although the difference at times is slight and in certain cases the definitions of both terms are overlapping. *Ethnic group* usually designates the population that is “largely biologically self-perpetuating; shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms; makes up a field of communication and interaction; has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.”<sup>52</sup>

According to Lola Romanucci-Ross and George De Vos, ethnic group is rather “a self-perceived inclusion of those who hold in common a set of traditions not shared

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<sup>50</sup> European Commission for Democracy through Law. (February 1993). *Proposal for a European Convention for the Protection of Minorities*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe documents.

<sup>51</sup> Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and Explanatory Report. (February 1995). Strasbourg: Council of Europe documents. H (95) 10.

<sup>52</sup> Barth, Fredrik. (1969). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. pp. 10-11.

by others with whom they are in contact.”<sup>53</sup> By the traditions the authors mean folk religious beliefs and practices, languages, a sense of historical continuity, unbroken genetic generational continuity and place of common origin, perhaps even the mythological one.<sup>54</sup>

The key difference here is a subjectivity issue and self-perceived acknowledgement of one’s ethnicity, whereas when it comes to national minority, it has to be recognized by the state. Similar distinction is recognized by Will Kymlicka, who defines national minorities as “previously self-governing, territorially concentrated cultures.”<sup>55</sup> In the course of history those groups have been incorporated into a larger state either through conquest or federation. Ethnic groups, on the contrary, are “loose associations of voluntary immigrants. Their distinctiveness is primarily manifested in their family lives and in voluntary associations, and is not inconsistent with institutional integration.”<sup>56</sup> Exemplary here can be Roma minority in some states. On the one hand, according to the definitions above, we can view Roma minority in the ethnic context. On the other hand, if the state with certain number of Roma representatives recognizes them as a national minority, they gain new status and new rights which would not apply to them otherwise. They might also become protected by the national minority law if it exists in the state.

To support the subjectivity or relativity moment of belonging to ethnic group, we can also refer to Zoltan Barany work on East European Roma who states that “Ethnicity, like all identities, is relational; it attests to a consciousness of collective identity woven from several attributes like shared history, traditions, culture, and language.”<sup>57</sup>

There can be written a lot more on the problematic definition of minority. However, I find the general explications provided sufficient for the purposes of the given study. Therefore now, having established certain clarity in definitions (or, rather,

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<sup>53</sup> De Vos, George. Romanucci-Ross, Lola. (1995). *Ethnic Identity. Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. (Hereinafter: De Vos, George. Romanucci-Ross, Lola. (1995). *Ethnic Identity. Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*.)

<sup>54</sup> De Vos, George. Romanucci-Ross, Lola. (1995). *Ethnic Identity. Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*. p.18.

<sup>55</sup> Kymlicka, Will. ed. (1995). “Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination of Ethnic Minorities in Power-Sharing Systems.” *The Rights of Minority Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Quoted through Benhabib, Seyla. (2002). *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Hereinafter: Kymlicka, 1995. Quoted through Benhabib, 2002)

<sup>56</sup> Kymlicka, 1995. Quoted through Benhabib, 2002.

<sup>57</sup> Barany, Zoltan. (2002). *The East European Gypsies. Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*. p.68

absence of clear-cut definitions) of the ethnic group and national minority in general, let us look separately on the interpretations of *national minority* term by two states of interest for the given paper: the Czech Republic and Sweden.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic recognizes the following groups as national minorities, whose rights are under special protection of the national legislation and international agreements: Moravians, Slovaks, Polish, Germans, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Russians, Roma, Silesians, Jews, Bulgarians, Croats, Ruthenians (Rusyns), Greeks and Serbs.<sup>58</sup> Prior to the admission to the EU, the Czech Republic signed in 1995 and ratified in 1997 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was signed in the year 2000 and ratified in 2006.

Czech government constantly undertakes certain efforts for supporting national minorities and their culture. Of course, the process is not going completely smoothly and the reports about the Roma discrimination issues in various fields spring up in media every now and then. Particular attention is being paid to the situation of minorities in the field of education, culture and possibility to use the language of national minorities in communication with the authorities. The Committee of the Council of Europe for Human Rights paid special consideration to giving the recommendation on combating racial intolerance, including the intolerance of the Czech police towards Roma minority representatives. As a result, several measures were taken, among them being the initiation of Czech-British project on implementation of the *Strategies for the Work of the Police in Relation to Ethnic Minorities*.<sup>59</sup>

In December 2001 the Czech Republic celebrated the establishment of the Council of the Government for National Minorities as its consultative and initiative

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<sup>58</sup>Minority Rights Homepage. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous People. Czech Republic overview*. On-line edition. Retrieved: March 15th, 2010.

<http://www.minorityrights.org/1834/czech-republic/czech-republic-overview.html>

<sup>59</sup>Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. (June 2002). *Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*. Retrieved: February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

[http://www.evropskyrok.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rnm/dokumenty/dokumenty-rady/\\_report2001\\_.pdf](http://www.evropskyrok.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rnm/dokumenty/dokumenty-rady/_report2001_.pdf)  
(Hereinafter: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*)

body, headed by a member of the Government. As a next step, the Czech Republic approved the Act on the Rights of the Members of National Minorities<sup>60</sup>, which specifies the rights of members of national minorities and the competence of ministries, administrative authorities and authorities of territorial self-administration units in relation to these rights. Moreover, not only the Council of the Government for National Minorities was established around that time, but also a number of committees for national minorities at local and regional levels were set up.<sup>61</sup>

In the Minority Act the basic terms “national minority” and “a member of a national minority” are determined. The Minority Act defines a national minority as “a community of the citizens of the Czech Republic who live on its present territory, differ from other citizens by their common ethnic origin, language, culture and traditions and represent the minority of inhabitants; at the same time they show the will to be considered a national minority in common effort to preserve and develop their own identity, language, culture and community which has been formed in the course of history.”<sup>62</sup> A member of a national minority is “a citizen of the Czech Republic who declares other than the Czech ethnicity and shows the will to be considered a member of a national minority with other people declaring the same ethnicity.”<sup>63</sup>

The legal framework of individual issues concerning the rights of national minorities or the amendments of legal regulations which relate to the application of these rights is determined in the Minority Act in accordance with the Minority Languages Charter and the Framework Convention. It deals with the free option of membership in a national minority, association, participation in resolving the problems of a national minority, use of a minority language in public and in communication with authorities and courts, as well as education and preservation of national culture.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Collection of Laws in Czech Republic. *Act N.273/2001 Coll. on the rights of members of national minorities*. Entered into force: August 2nd 2001. Retrieved: March 2nd, 2010. [http://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rnm/dokumenty/vladni-dokumenty/menzakon\\_en\\_1.pdf](http://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rnm/dokumenty/vladni-dokumenty/menzakon_en_1.pdf) (Hereinafter: “Minority Act”)

<sup>61</sup>Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

<sup>62</sup>Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

<sup>63</sup>Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

<sup>64</sup>Zwilling, Carolin. (2004). “Minority Protection and language policy in the Czech Republic.” *NovelsSL*. Retrieved: January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. [http://www6.genocat.cat/llengcat/noves/hm04tardor/zwilling1\\_3.htm](http://www6.genocat.cat/llengcat/noves/hm04tardor/zwilling1_3.htm) (Hereinafter: Zwilling, Carolin. (2004). “Minority Protection and language policy in the Czech Republic.” *NovelsSL*.)

The legal protection of national minorities also plays a special role in bilateral agreements between the neighbouring states and the Czech Republic, due to the historical circumstances of the peoples from neighboring states living on the territory of the Czech Republic. Those neighboring states obligations relate to the situation of German, Polish and Slovak national minorities. In this context the representatives of respective national minorities often point out that obligations arising out of bilateral agreements are not kept sufficiently, especially with respect to members of the German national minority.<sup>65</sup>

In the given study, I will not discuss the situation of all minority groups in the Czech Republic. I shall discuss briefly the situation of the four minority groups, represented in the movies that are analyzed as the Czech Republic case study for the paper: Roma minority (depicted in the film *Smradi*), Ukrainian minority (shown in *Díky za každé nové ráno*), German and Vietnamese minorities (portrayed in *Poustevna, das ist Paradise*). My intention is not solely to verify the truthfulness or accuracy of the representation. More important is the search for certain ideological underpinning or for display of clichéd behaviors of the minority characters, as well as observation of minority-majority conflict depiction, if any. Therefore, a brief minority situation overview is vital. In addition, when the information about previous representation of those minorities in the films made before the timeframe of the given study is available, it will also be mentioned in a nutshell.

## **Roma**

It is estimated that approximately 150,000-200,000 Roma people live on the territory of the Czech Republic. Although Roma ethnicity was openly declared by 11,716 persons only.<sup>66</sup> The difference in numbers is striking and there might be various reasons for it. Among them would be an increasing number of mixed marriages and members of mixed marriages would rarely declare themselves as of Roma ethnicity. Most of the Roma representatives live in the Moravian-Silesian region (Ostrava-Karviná

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<sup>65</sup> UN Refugee Agency. (March 2010). *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Czech Republic*. Retrieved: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b9e530082.html>

<sup>66</sup> Zwilling, Carolin. (2004). "Minority Protection and language policy in the Czech Republic." *NovelsSL*.

agglomeration) and the Ústí region (Ústí nad Labem, Děčín, Most, Chomutov), the Middle-Bohemian region, the Olomouc region and Prague.<sup>67</sup>

Although the authorities of the Czech Republic are ready to improve the situation of the Roma people by long-term policy<sup>68</sup>, some problems, especially with respect to their discrimination in various fields, still survive. Media reports and opinion polls demonstrate the existence of intolerance and discrimination at school, in disco and parties, restaurants, at work and even on the streets. Writings on the walls condemning the Roma to India are not rare. The results of public opinion polls show high percentage of people who refuse the Roma as their neighbours, sons- or daughters-in-law etc. Cases of physical attack exist even nowadays<sup>69</sup>.

There are a number of funds, organizations, and projects, aimed at familiarizing the society with Roma culture, as well as developing it and preserving Roma identity. Many of the activities are sponsored by the grants or budget funds of the Ministry of Culture. Recent opening of the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno is one of the small but efficient steps of familiarizing the community with Roma situation and possibly arousing more sympathetic attitudes towards the Roma among the local population. *The Society of Experts and Friends of the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno* holds exhibitions, theatre performances and lectures, organises interactive activities for young people and participates in research and scientific projects on the topic.<sup>70</sup>

Another example of Roma integrating attempts could be the activities of *Dženo Association*, which is a civil association focusing on organizing the Roma citizens who are ready to help the members of their minority. One of the main aims of this Association is the support of development and restoration of Roma traditions, as well as support of the struggle against racism, observance of human rights, development of democracy and social tolerance. Unfortunately, despite the positive examples of active organizations listed above, it is estimated that about 20% of the officially registered organizations dealing with Roma issues are in fact “dead” ones, or non-existent.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Zwilling, Carolin. (2004). “Minority Protection and language policy in the Czech Republic.” *NovelsSL*.

<sup>68</sup> UN Refugee Agency. (March 2010). *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Czech Republic*. Retrieved: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b9e530082.html> (Hereinafter: UN Refugee Agency. (March 2010). *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Czech Republic*.)

<sup>69</sup> UN Refugee Agency. (March 2010). *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Czech Republic*.)

<sup>70</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

<sup>71</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

The members of the Roma minority now have their representative in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, as well as in some of the Ministries.<sup>72</sup>

Education is the biggest problem of the Roma and the society as a whole. Only 2% of the Roma are graduates and 13% of them secondary school-leavers. Most of the Roma attended primary school only. The Roma children often attend special schools. This phenomenon is the remnant of their previous segregation. Recently the Roma exerted efforts to educate themselves, even in advanced age, and to motivate their children to learn. Besides, the state also tries to take positive measures in the field of education.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, integration policy towards the Roma in the Czech Republic has been developing since the 1990s. Both, domestic public pressure and the pressure of the international community contribute to abandoning the traditional segregation of the Roma children at special schools nowadays. Many Roma admit that they do not teach their children the mother tongue because they want to protect them from problems at school.<sup>74</sup>

As to the earlier Roma representation in cinematography, it has not always been sympathetic. Roma often play a villain in the movies, which supports the commonly accepted view of them. However, recently the situation has been changing and the films like *El Paso*, based on a real story of a Roma family left with no means to existence, offer the insight of the situation. In 2001 the TV series aimed at wide audience *Amare Roma* (Our Roma) was shot. Its aim is to teach Roma languages, popularise Roma history, culture and tradition as well as Roma artists and famous personalities of Roma origin.

Although Roma topics are now more and more fashionable, the management of Czech Television is not ready to discuss the problem of minority broadcasting, according to the country report of the Council of Government for National Minorities in the Czech Republic.<sup>75</sup> There are no regulations imposing on the Radio and Television the duty to provide minorities with conditions and time for their broadcasting.

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<sup>72</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*

<sup>73</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

<sup>74</sup> Zwillig, Carolin. (2004). "Minority Protection and language policy in the Czech Republic." *NovelsSL*.

<sup>75</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.



Correspondingly, such arrangement and position of the state enables them to deal with minorities at will.

## **Germans**

The Germans have been living on the territory of the Czech Republic for more than 800 years along with the Poles, Slovaks, Jews or other minorities. In peaceful years people lived alongside amicably, in the war time the tables were turned. After the war, the German minority paid for the expansiveness of Germany and the failures of its leaders, one of the ways of paying the debt was the displacement from the lands of their forefathers and loss of property. Currently, German minority in the Czech Republic constitutes about 48 000 persons, according to the results of the census conducted in 2001. However, the data might not be exact as in the case with Roma minority, since many of the older people preferred to name Moravian or Silesian as their ethnicity, due to the previous bad experiences in asserting themselves as the Germans.<sup>76</sup>

Most of the German minority representatives live in the border districts, like depicted in one of the films under analysis of the present study *Poustevna, das ist Paradise*. Besides, they may reside in industrial regions where they work as experts in the glass industry, jewellery, textile industry, mining etc. Less of the Germans live in agricultural areas. The most discrimination towards the members of the German minority is in the field of the Law of Inheritance.<sup>77</sup>

Contrary to Roma population, which is also much more numerous, the German minority is organised in only two civil associations: *The Assembly of the Germans in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia* and *The Cultural Association of the Citizens of German Ethnicity in the Czech Republic* (CACGN). The main activities of those organizations are courses of German language, seminars for young people and adults on various topics, activities for the preservation of cultural heritage. The organizations are also involved into publishing the German language newspapers, some of which are supported by the Ministry of Culture. Members of those organizations also help during

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<sup>76</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

<sup>77</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

the reconstruction of churches, restoration of monuments and in social aid projects. Besides, German minority has its representatives in the government.<sup>78</sup>

Until relatively recently, the minority organizations and publications could be the most valuable source of information and a connecting link because their members are dispersed all over the republic. However, the rapidly growing accessibility of the Internet has changed the situation and decreased the value of German periodicals published in the country.

Members of the German minority often mediate cultural exchange with compatriots and help various towns in entering into partnership contacts. Thanks to its position, German minority is something like a bridge for creating friendly relations between neighbouring countries. Along with other minorities, it represents an important and enriching part of the multicultural society.<sup>79</sup> According to Carolin Zwilling's work on the minority protection in Czech Republic, there are bilateral agreements between the Czech Republic and Germany on the good neighbourhood policy and friendly cooperation which take measures for protecting German minority representatives in the Czech Republic.<sup>80</sup>

As to the representation of the Germans in Czech films, this is a rather sensitive topic. Due to a large number of movies involving WWII, the representation of the minority is rarely flattering. The movie under the given analysis is from the new era of films and one of the tasks of the analysis is to research whether the stereotypic depiction of the German minority has changed.

## Vietnamese

The number of Vietnamese nationals in the Czech Republic constitutes about 60 000 people and it is increasing on the fast pace.<sup>81</sup> Vietnamese minority roots in the country date back about forty years ago, to the times when Vietnamese government was

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<sup>78</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001.*

<sup>79</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001.*

<sup>80</sup> Zwilling, Carolin. (2004). "Minority Protection and language policy in the Czech Republic." *NovelsSL.*

<sup>81</sup> Pechová, Eva. (February 2009). "A meeting in Kolín – Vietnamese workers in the Czech Republic." *Migration online.cz. Focus on Central and Eastern Europe.* Multicultural Center Prague. Retrieved: March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

[http://aa.ecn.cz/img\\_upload/6334c0c7298d6b396d213ccd19be5999/EPechova\\_MeetinginKolin\\_1.pdf](http://aa.ecn.cz/img_upload/6334c0c7298d6b396d213ccd19be5999/EPechova_MeetinginKolin_1.pdf)  
(Hereinafter: Pechová, Eva. (February 2009). *A meeting in Kolín – Vietnamese workers in the Czech Republic.*)

cooperative with the then socialist Czechoslovakia. First Vietnamese came to the Czech Republic with friendly visits and for experience exchange. Further, in the 1960s and 1970s a big inflow of visiting students and researchers took place. In 1979-1980, the *Contract of Friendship and Cooperation* between the then Czechoslovakia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was signed, which brought even more people into the country.<sup>82</sup> After 1989, many of the Vietnamese in the state decided to stay on their free will. Though highly qualified in various spheres, majority started the trading business, selling either vegetables, Asian food or textile, which proved to be a successful means for survival and at least some economic prosperity.<sup>83</sup>

Nowadays, Vietnamese minority representatives are usually expected to be either involved into the trading business or to be resilient factory workers. Despite being a fairly large minority in the Czech Republic, they rarely make the news. To break the existing stereotypes and to bring the culture of Vietnamese minority closer to an ordinary Czech Joe, new Vietnamese culture exhibition in Prague city museum was opened. The exhibition is viewed as a good opportunity to familiarize the majority with the culture of the Vietnamese minority people who they live next to, and who had quite an impact on the Czech Republic in recent decades.<sup>84</sup>

Most organizations of the Vietnamese minority are trade-related, like *Czech-Vietnamese Society* for example. However, not all of them. *Klub Hanoi* is a sample of the cultural students' organization, which is trying to change the perception of Vietnamese minority as merely traders and factory workers by the majority population. The members of the organization acknowledge that the difficulties of integrating the Vietnamese people into the Czech society exist due to the behavioral patterns of both parties. Czechs are prone to stereotype the minority members as quiet, not too social, and concerned with their trades merely, whereas Vietnamese people are often unable to speak good Czech and are indifferent to the culture of the country where they currently live. Besides other activities, *Klub Hanoi* is trying to spread the awareness in the majority population that nowadays there is already a second generation of Czech-born

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<sup>82</sup> McGurk, Mollie. (April 22, 2010). "Exhibit highlights Vietnamese culture." *Czech Business Weekly*. Retrieved: April 22, 2010.

<http://www.cbw.cz/article/exhibit-highlights-vietnamese-culture.aspx>

(Hereinafter: McGurk, Mollie. (April 22, 2010). *Exhibit highlights Vietnamese culture*.)

<sup>83</sup> O'Connor, Coilin. (May 29, 2007). "Is the Czech Republic's Vietnamese community finally starting to feel at home?" *Český Rozhlas*. Retrieved: March 11, 2010.

<http://www.radio.cz/en/article/91826> (Hereinafter: O'Connor, Coilin. (May 29, 2007). *Is the Czech Republic's Vietnamese community finally starting to feel at home?*)

<sup>84</sup> McGurk, Mollie. (April 22, 2010). *Exhibit highlights Vietnamese culture*.

Vietnamese, who are fluent in language, diligent in studies and work successfully in a number of other spheres besides trade.<sup>85</sup>

Many Vietnamese come to the country for a specific time span, with the clear aim to earn some money and then return home. This “temporal” stay might keep them from fully integrating into society, even if the temporal stay lasts for several years. Currently, the inflow of Vietnamese immigrants into the country still continues. The Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic gives estimates that in the near future the country will experience labor shortage and this breach is planned to be filled with the Vietnamese workers.<sup>86</sup>

As to the representation of Vietnamese minority in the Czech movies, it is often restricted to widely accepted image of the vegetables or textile traders, *Up and Down* or *Town called Hermitage* movies being only few examples.

## Ukrainians

There are about 30 000 historical representatives of the Ukrainian minority in the Czech Republic, and about 50 000 temporal foreign workers from Ukraine. Most of the Ukrainians live in Prague, Karlovy Vary, Děčín, Brno, Přerov and Ostrava.<sup>87</sup> Foreign workers from Ukraine started the emigration to the Czech Republic in the middle of 1990s. The assimilation has usually been easy for them due to language similarities.

Since the Ukrainian minority is rather dispersed around the country, there are no Ukrainian schools available. However, a Summer School for the children of compatriots has been functioning for several years without any subsidy, supported solely by the Ukrainian Initiative in the Czech Republic.<sup>88</sup>

The Ukrainian minority is represented by three civil associations: *Ukrainian Initiative in the Czech Republic*, *Club of Ukrainian Women*, *Association of the Ukrainians and the Friends of Ukraine* and *Forum of the Ukrainians*; their activity exceeds the framework of minority associations. The *Ukrainian Initiative in the Czech Republic* implements every year the project *The Preservation of Identity and the*

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<sup>85</sup> O'Connor, Coliin. (May 29, 2007). *Is the Czech Republic's Vietnamese community finally starting to feel at home?*

<sup>86</sup> Pechová, Eva. (February 2009). *A meeting in Kolín – Vietnamese workers in the Czech Republic*.

<sup>87</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

<sup>88</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001*.

*Development of the Ukrainian (Ukrainian-Ruthenian) Minority in the Czech Republic.*<sup>89</sup>

It consists of the annual activities of this association, e.g. concerts, film projections, exhibitions and meetings. They also publish the cultural and political quarterly *Porohy*, which is available for the public and provides the members of the Ukrainian minority in the Czech Republic with information about the Ukrainians' life in the Czech Republic, their social activities etc.

For the last ten years the Ukrainian Initiative in the Czech Republic has been issuing the programme *Club of Understanding* in Ukrainian language at the Regina Station of Czech Radio.<sup>90</sup>

As we could already see from the information on the first three minorities in the country, there is always some issue that would promote rather unfavorable attitudes towards the minority representatives. Ukrainian minority is not an exception. Depending on the point of view on the history, negative attitudes towards the Ukrainian minority could partially be the result of historical events in 1945–1947, when Ukrainian leadership chose the then Czechoslovakian lands as a site for the insurgent movement actions.<sup>91</sup> Today, negative attitudes are strengthened by the inflow of a cheap labour force and criminals from Ukraine, or former Soviet Union in general.<sup>92</sup>

The representation of the Ukrainians in Czech movies has not been researched deeply or at least no relevant information has been found to include in the present study. Possibly, the analysis of *Díky za každé nové ráno* will be one of the first works of the kind, discussing the portrayal of the Ukrainian national minority in Czech cinematography.

## SWEDEN

In the year of joining European Union (1995), Swedish Government appointed the Minority Language Committee with the task to research the possibility of Sweden's ratification of the Language Charter and Framework Convention. The Committee used

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<sup>89</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001.*

<sup>90</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001.*

<sup>91</sup> The website of the chronicles of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Litopys UPA online. V. V'iatrovych. (2001). *UPA raids through Czechoslovakia*. Book summary. Retrieved: April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010. <http://www.litopysupa.com/main.php?pg=2&bookid=45>

<sup>92</sup> Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Council of the Government for National Minorities. *Report on the situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic in 2001.*

certain criteria while examining the groups that should be regarded as national minorities in Sweden. The criteria were the following:

- marked degree of cohesion of the group and absence of a dominant position in regard to the rest of population;
- distinct character religion-, language-, traditions-, culture-wise;
- historical or long-established ties with Sweden, in practice the group should have been present on the territory of Sweden at least since 1900;
- both individual members and the group as a whole had to be prepared to preserve their identity.<sup>93</sup>

This was Swedish interpretation of the Framework Convention's right for the states to define the national minorities. As based on the given criteria, five national minority groups were recognized and protected by the Framework Convention upon its ratification: the Sami, the Tornedalians, the Swedish Finns, the Roma, and the Jews.

The minority languages are Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish), Romany Chib and Yiddish. Of these, Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli have a historical, geographical basis, which means that more extensive measures will be directed at supporting them.<sup>94</sup>

Both, *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and *Charter for Regional and Minority Languages* were ratified by Sweden in 2000. In Swedish movies selected for the present study, I will attempt at analyzing the representation of the Finnish (*Kid Svensk*) and the Sami (*Sami nieida jojk*) national minorities characters, as well as new immigrants minority characters (*Ett öga rött*). Therefore, prior to the analysis I find it noteworthy to give a brief overview of the Finnish, Sami and new immigrant minority groups historical and current situation in Sweden.

## **Finns**

According to the World Directory of Minorities, Finnish speakers have lived in the north of Sweden in Torne Valley since before the Swedish state existed.<sup>95</sup> There are approximately 25,000 speakers of Meänkieli, a variant of standard Finnish recognized

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<sup>93</sup> Åkermark Spiliopoulou Sia, Huss Leena. (2006). *Ten Years of Minority Discourse in Sweden*.

<sup>94</sup> Åkermark Spiliopoulou Sia, Huss Leena. (2006). *Ten Years of Minority Discourse in Sweden*.

<sup>95</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

as a language in its own right in 2000, in the valley and more Tornedalians (speakers of Meänkieli) live in other northern areas. At the turn of the last century there was an intense “Swedification” policy.<sup>96</sup> The assimilation period lasted until the early 1970s, when the Swedish immigrant policy was formulated and certain language rights were given to the immigrants and minorities. Even in 1960s the Finnish language was forbidden in schools and people were told to speak Swedish at home. This issue is well depicted in the film *Elina, som jag inte fanns (As if I Didn't Exist)*, released in 2003 and showing the life of a Finnish speaking family in Torne Valley in the 1950s.

Finns have been emigrating across the Gulf of Bothnia to Sweden for centuries. This is only natural, accounting for the fact that Finland was part of the kingdom of Sweden from the 11<sup>th</sup> century right up to 1809. After 1809, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Emperor and remained so up until 1917, so the inflow of the Finns to Sweden was significantly lower. Gradually, the situation changes again and now we can speak about large numbers of more recent Finnish immigrants to Sweden.<sup>97</sup>

Since 1950s-1960s, Finns came to Sweden in search of employment, whether permanently or temporarily. These were not the rare cases when initially planned temporary emigration for work resulted for the Finnish citizens in permanent stay in Sweden. In her short paper *Finns in Sweden: Snapshots of Dalarna*, Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj notes that there was one thing that all the immigrants had in common at that time period, which was their inability to speak Swedish upon their arrival to Sweden.<sup>98</sup> Assimilation in the society in such cases was even harder, since from the beginning the Finns were not enough motivated to blend in. The experiences of discrimination or prejudice were not the rare cases.

Currently, Finnish minority in Sweden constitute about 400 000 people, 250 000 of whom are Finnish speakers. Approximately 675 000 people residing in Sweden are either Finland born or have a parent or grandparent from Finland.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

<sup>97</sup> Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Annikki. (2001). “Finns in Sweden: Snapshots of Dalarna”. *Migration, minorities, compensation. Issues of cultural identity in Europe. (Proceedings of a symposium held in Siena)*. Uppsala Universitet: Inst. för kulturanthropologi och etnologi. (Hereinafter: Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Annikki. (2001). *Finns in Sweden: Snapshots of Dalarna*.)

<sup>98</sup> Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Annikki. (2001). *Finns in Sweden: Snapshots of Dalarna*.

<sup>99</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

In her study *The Visible War. Jews and Other Ethnic Outsiders in Swedish Film*<sup>100</sup>, which covers sixty five years of representation of Jewish ethnic minority in Swedish movies since 1920s, Rochelle Wright briefly touches upon the representation of other minority groups, including the Finns. The scholar mentions that in the middle of last century, Finns in Swedish films were occasionally “assigned the role of the outsider and outcast” although in general they were portrayed “more sympathetically than other ethnic groups.” Finns in Swedish movies of that time may sometimes be depicted as “foreign” and Other, but collectively they are “also a fellow Nordic people with whom the Swedish audience feels a historical and cultural tie.”<sup>101</sup>

## **Sami**

The Sami are the indigenous, migratory people of northern Scandinavia whose traditional way of life centered around reindeer herding. Nowadays, the share of the reindeer herders among the Swedish Sami is about 10% only. For centuries, geographic isolation and very sparse settlement in the North allowed Sami culture to thrive relatively intact. Nowadays in Sweden there are approximately 15,000–20,000 people who identify themselves as Sami and they live mainly in the North of the country.<sup>102</sup>

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their long-term integral survival started to be threatened. The factors that would bring change hazard to the Sami culture in Sweden were legal restrictions on Sami migration patterns, settlement, and means of economic support. The government was also actively promoting the permanent settlement by ethnic Swedes on traditionally Sami lands. Swedish law did provide some protection of Sami herding rights, but the decisions imposed from the south were not particularly beneficial for Sami in the long-run. Moreover, until quite recently, the Sami were often looked down upon, and in the eyes of many, the economic advancement of ethnic Swedes was to take precedence as a matter of natural and absolutely correct course of development.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala.

<sup>101</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala.

<sup>102</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

<sup>103</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala. p.148.



Nowadays, the Swedish government gives resource privileges to Sami to maintain their unique culture, which is officially interpreted as “reindeer herding”.<sup>104</sup> However, despite the governmental support, the Swedish Sami face serious cultural heritage loss, for example language loss. 40% of the non-herding population cannot speak the language, and 85% cannot write it.<sup>105</sup> The language problem is raised, among others, in *Sami nieida jojk* movie analyzed in the next chapter.

However, as Sami minority became better organized, they have won increased support for the maintenance of their language. Besides the right to mother-tongue teaching in schools, Sami children are allowed four weeks a year out of school to participate in reindeer herding. Among the present day principal Swedish Sami organizations are the *Sami National Union*, founded in 1950, the *Sami-Atnam*, which is mainly cultural organization, and the *Confederation of Swedish Sami*, which is composed chiefly of non-herding Sami. In 1992 the Swedish Parliament passed Proposition 1992-93:32 establishing a *National Swedish Sami Assembly* or *Sameting*, but it has only advisory status.<sup>106</sup>

Rochelle Wright observes that in the middle of the twentieth century Sami were generally positively portrayed in ethnographically oriented movies, with the sympathetic attitude towards the indigenous people and culture. A motif of conflict between Sami and settlers reoccurs in several films released in the 1950s. The Lapland milieu was established as an exotic scenic backdrop already in 1930s even if the films included only occasional Sami characters in peripheral roles. The harsh conditions of Sami life were emphasized, along with the people’s stoic acceptance of adversity, and their resilience and resourcefulness in overcoming the hard times. The researcher also finds it noteworthy that the Sami were usually the admirable characters and not the villains as other ethnic groups, whose representation at the time was consistently stereotypical and overwhelmingly negative.<sup>107</sup>

Perhaps the favourable and relatively authentic representation of the Sami at that time can be explained by the Sami’s almost complete separation from mainstream

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<sup>104</sup> UN Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in 2009 in Sweden. (March, 2010). Retrieved: March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic,45a5fb512,45a5fc482,4b9e52b9c,0.html>

<sup>105</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

<sup>106</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

<sup>107</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala. p.152.

Swedish culture.<sup>108</sup> Since they lived in isolation in the far north of the state, their traditional way of life seldom came into contact or conflict with the lives of ethnic Swedes in other parts of the country but for Lapland, and as a consequence they could have often been viewed from a distance as fascinating or heroic peoples.

The movie featuring Sami minority in the present study touches upon many problems researched by Rochelle Wright in her study of the films from the mid 1900s. However, the new problems are discussed in the modern films as well, which speaks of no longer isolated lifestyle of Sami from the rest of the country and the rest of the world. They will be discussed further in the practical analysis part.

### **New immigrants groups**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and few decades later Sweden was a nation exhausted by emigration: between 1850 and 1914, about 1.2 million Swedes left their home country. Most of them were driven away by poverty to seek a better life elsewhere, often their destination was the US. Then people started coming in. During the post WWII years and up until 1972, Sweden recruited foreign workers to work in the rapidly developing industrial sector. Mainly, the workers were from Finland, former Yugoslavia, Turkey and after 1967 coup, from Greece. In 1970s Sweden began to receive refugees from Latin America and later from the Middle East and the immigration to Sweden continues until today.<sup>109</sup>

According to the 1997 edition of *World Directory of Minorities*, “more than 50% of the immigrant population are naturalized Swedes.”<sup>110</sup> The Swedish constitution promotes the opportunities “for ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities to preserve and develop a cultural and social life of their own” and it also states that a foreigner within the realm shall be equated with a Swedish citizen in respect of protection against discrimination on grounds of race, skin color, ethnic origin or sex.”<sup>111</sup>

Such state regulations theoretically make Sweden an attractive country to emigrate to. The reality check might, however, often show different results. The

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<sup>108</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala.

<sup>109</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala.

<sup>110</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

<sup>111</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

unemployment rate among Sweden's new minorities is above the national average. Often non-nationals work disproportionately in monotonous and physically strenuous jobs and for low earnings, despite having a higher-than-average degree of education.<sup>112</sup> Media reports show that the everyday racism and sometimes xenophobia experienced by members of new minority groups are a matter of big concern.

The potential of cinematography in rejecting the negative stereotyping of new minority immigrant groups and their portrayal as scapegoats, and by this educating the society about tolerance and multiculturalism, seems overwhelming. It also seems to be a mission of the directors who are second or third generation immigrants, who grew up in Swedish culture and identify themselves as Swedes. Since they still have the connection with their root culture, they see more explicitly both sides of the medal and therefore in their films they can present the views of both – native Swedes and the immigrants. The movie *Ett öga rött*, directed by Daniel Wallentin as based on the Swedish-Tunisian author Jonas Hassen Khemiri's book, is one of the examples of such movies.

Rochelle Wright also stresses the implied possibilities of the *Ett öga rött*-like films: "By revealing the injustice of Swedish society or the prejudice of Swedish individuals from the immigrants' point of view, these films intend to create empathy and an awareness of the problems outsiders encounter. Their goal is to push the audience to self-scrutiny."<sup>113</sup> The success of such intentions can as well be questionable. Filmmakers might see it as their goal to combat stereotypes by revealing the injustice of their society from the immigrants' point of view. However, the criticism of Swedish attitudes or explicitly negative portrayal of prejudices might arouse protest and not sympathy, as we have discussed earlier.

According to Rochelle Wright's research, in the course of the twentieth century there were many films that focused on the situation of immigrants in Sweden which bore a serious social message. They were often depicting "alienation, the difficulties inherent in adjusting to a new homeland and its unfamiliar ways, homesickness and longing for what has been left behind, the prejudice and ignorance of Swedes when confronted with other cultures."<sup>114</sup> The researcher also outlines that often, besides artistic aspirations, the purpose of the movies was to encourage the Swedish audience to be more tolerant and understanding towards various immigrant groups, which were

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<sup>112</sup> World Directory of Minorities. (1997). Edited by Minority Rights Group International. London: Minority Rights Group.

<sup>113</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. p. 321.

<sup>114</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. p. 300.

presented in a sympathetic light. In her observations, the films about new minority groups, by and large, emphasized that the circumstances of each individual were unique and everyone came to the country with his or her own story in the suitcase. Taken together, recent Swedish films about ethnic outsiders reflect the diversity of contemporary Swedish society. Another interesting observation of the researcher is that the ways of representing members of new minority groups almost always differ from representation of established Swedish minorities. One of the main differences is the sympathetic representation of the former, in order to encourage a sense of sympathy for oppression or prejudice.<sup>115</sup>

Even a sketchy overview of the recent movies depicting new Swedish minorities suggests that the observations of R. Wrights still apply in the modern-time society. Movies like *Det Nya Landet*, *Zozo*, *Ciao Bella!* are only few examples. In our case study of *Ett öga rött* movie about new immigrants minority group in Sweden, I will try to examine the ways of representing the Moroccan minority members in general, as well as conduct step-by-step analysis of whether the tendencies in new immigrant minorities representation, observed by Rochelle Wright, are still in the air.

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<sup>115</sup> Wright, Rochelle. (1998). *The Visible War. Jews and other ethnic outsiders in Swedish Film*. Uppsala.

## IV. MOVIES ANALYSIS

In this practical part of the work, I will try to define in what way minorities are depicted in films and what minority-majority conflicts are raised in the given movies. This shall be done by means of singling out the variables and analysing the movies according to them. The analyses are arranged in the following way: first, a number of variables are singled out and then the signifiers that fit the category are picked from each movie. The next step is defining the messages that are communicated and then summarizing them by countries. After that I intend to compare the country summaries and follow the analysis plan described in detail in the introduction part.

Twelve variables were singled out according to which the movies are to be analyzed:

- Kinds of housings, interior and neighbourhood;
- Clothing of the movie heroes;
- Racial discrimination and outward physical distinction;
- Well-being vs. poverty;
- Family composition : traditional vs non-traditional;
- Social class;
- Prejudices;
- Political involvement or relations with the state;
- Types of employment;
- Language and accent problems;
- Education;
- Stereotypical representation.

The number of variables seems sufficient for conducting the detailed analysis of the films and researching the patterns of minorities depiction. The selected variables enable the research of the minority characters presentation in the true-life ordinary situations. They suggest a possibility for detailed classification of minorities portrayal signs in the most common spheres of daily life, like housing, clothes, education or language usage. Besides, the variables allow the exploration of the minority representation in films in terms of financial prosperity, social acceptance and possibilities for personal and professional fulfilment. The variables also touch upon the sensitive issues of political involvement and prejudicial attitudes of the majority, which should complete the picture

of minority characters depiction in the films and also could be the grounds of possible minority-majority conflicts.

The films from both countries create parallel pairs for analysis. Traditional minorities of both states are presented by the Roma and Germans in the Czech Republic and Sami in Sweden. New immigrant groups are analyzed on the example of Vietnamese characters in *Poustevna, das ist Paradise* and Moroccan family in *Ett öga rött*. Finnish minority in *Kid Svensk* and Ukrainian minority in *Díky za každé nové ráno* also share a number of similarities in their situations in Sweden and the Czech Republic correspondingly. For instance, both groups were traditionally present on the lands of the two states. Besides, the number of the Finnish representatives in Sweden and the Ukrainians in the Czech Republic increased sufficiently in recent times, already during the second half of the twentieth century, due to the financial difficulties in their home countries.

Upon the discussion of each film separately, the sum-up of the country patterns will be done, followed by the comparison of the countries. The comparison is also partially embedded in the analysis itself. Besides, prior to analyzing the films according to the variables, I will also include fairly ample discussion of movie plots and characters, to help make the researched material come more alive.

## **SWEDISH FILMS**

### ***1. ETT ÖGA RÖTT (One Eye Red)***

*Ett öga rött* is a Swedish movie directed by Daniel Wallentin that came out in 2007. It is based on the like-named partially biographical book of Jonas Hassen Khemiri, prominent modern Swedish author, whose mother is Swedish and father is Tunisian.

The film opens with a flamboyant and vibrant presentation of the main character's Moroccan family who live in the suburbs of Stockholm and seem rather adjusted to the life in their new homeland. Their lives pass in a lively manner, and due to the kind nature and good humor of the characters they are successfully overcoming all the hardships on their ways. Personal drama in the family shakes their world stronger than an earthquake. The death of the mother leaves father Otman and fifteen years old Halim by themselves, struggling to keep going.

The story is told from Halim's point of view. Although he was already born in Sweden, he does not feel that he fully belongs there. When alive, his mother was a big support for Halim in his identity search. She taught him Arabic at home, while he was also learning Swedish at school and in day-to-day contacts. His mother emphasized that assimilation is necessary, but one should never forget his own roots.

Once his wife dies, Otman decides that moving out of the suburbs will be beneficial for his son and him and they move to the downtown area and open a small shop in the city center. Otman is determined to "become as Swedish as possible" while Halim thinks his dad is going crazy. Otman shaves off his black moustache, greets Swedish customers with exaggerated politeness, hangs the Swedish flag on his balcony, speaks only Swedish with his son, listens to ABBA first thing in the morning, praises Swedish food and gradually comes up with the idea to find a fine Swedish woman for himself. Meanwhile, Halim still stays in contact with the crazy-looking old woman from their former community in Stockholm outskirts who teaches him about the evils of integration plan. Integration plan is the Swedish state policy towards the new immigrant minority groups. It is the plan aimed at helping the newcomers to integrate into society. The biggest problem about Halim's friendship with the old woman is that she uses many Arab cultural references, but she never explains to Halim what they mean and a teenage boy is left to figure it out on his own.

The only adult person in the movie who speaks about the evils of immigrant integration plan and the duty to cherish one's own home culture and protect the tradition turns out to be a mentally challenged woman. We can interpret this fact from different perspectives, one being the view that severe opposition to state integration-assimilation policy can appear only in an insane mind.

At the end of the movie, after overcoming many inner struggles and finding new ways of interpreting the events that were flooding his life with an overwhelming force, Halim comes to understand his father. Father and son have a heart-to-heart conversation and become supportive of each others aspirations.

### ***Kinds of housings, interior and neighbourhood***

The Moroccan family lives in an ordinary block of flats on the outskirts of the city. The neighbourhood is mainly inhabited by the "wog" immigrants. We can see Arabic stores and markets on the streets, and the setting is generally different from typical Swedish neighbourhoods. I would not call the district "ghetto", since the atmosphere there seems

very vibrant and lively. Nevertheless, the isolation of the dwellings from other districts is noticeable. Moreover, moving out of the isolated neighbourhood is recognized as first step towards the integration or assimilation in society by Otman, done even prior to shaving off the moustache.

### ***Clothing of the movie heroes***

In the first neighbourhood, many women are dressed in the traditional bright clothing of a specific fashion from their homelands, often wearing head scarves. Kids and men seem to be dressed up in an ordinary fashion. Dressing as majority Swedes becomes another important means of integrating for Otman, once he moves out of his neighbourhood. Symbolic it becomes for Halim as well. Traditional Arab hat that he receives as a present from an insane woman seems to become the embodiment of his duty and power to protect his past and it is in a way his uniform which he wears in the battle-war against the state integration plan.

### ***Racial discrimination and outward physical distinction***

One can easily observe that in Halim's school the light skin blondes associate mainly with the light skin blondes, while tanned looking black haired kids cling together.

Once Halim friends' father is not selected for the part in the theatre play, Halim is convinced that this is because he is "a wog", and Halim calls a play director racist.

In the discussion with an insane mind-reader Dalanda, Halim learns that immigrants are welcome into the country to work, but they are restricted an access to other places, like entertainment clubs etc. These words are followed by the scene in front of the night club, where a long line of wogs is waiting by the entrance, but the guard tells them that the club is full. Two blond girls pass along the line, and the guards allow them to enter with a welcoming smile.

### ***Well-being vs. poverty***

The girl Halim fancies is also from Arab minority. She lives with her father who has been unemployed for many years and they were living on the social welfare system. In one of his diary entries Halim writes that "unemployment plan transfers people into old fruits that decay and then die", meaning as an example his friend's father or many other immigrants like him.



Immigrants in the film live in the blocks of flats and not houses, on the outskirts of the city, where the accommodation is usually cheaper, which also signifies of their poorer economic situation.

### ***Family composition : traditional vs non-traditional***

Both Moroccan families that we get to become closer acquainted with in the movie, as well as Swedish family of the lady Halim's dad started dating, were single-parent families. Therefore, we cannot speak of any distinctions on that basis.

### ***Social class***

Social class of the immigrants was obviously the class of workers, usually on the physically demanding or long hours jobs. Often the immigrants were qualified and respected professionals in their homelands, like the father of Halim's friend who was a professional actor, but their skills were not acknowledged in the new homeland.

The problem of classes is also touched upon by Halim at his observation of his Swedish school-mates. At one point in the school yard he pays very close attention to the groups and gangs of the Swedes and he classifies them in two groups: "First, there are the posh Swedes. They hardly know what a wog is. They have the names like Tutte, Fjutte, Noppan. Then there are the tramp suedis with messy hair and second-hand clothes, but who are always loaded with wonga for coffee."

His observations go further and he describes the immigrants' kids: "Then there are two types of wogs. Number one is the gangster wog, also called a geezer, hood or fiddler. He can make a soft air gun into a proper weapon. Number two are obedience wogs. They study hard, use fancy words and never dodge the underground fare. They become dentists and engineers. Like the shit Iranians."

Such was the social stratification of people in Swedish society according to Halim's views, which he shares with the viewers in a simplified immigrant Swedish. Halim calls himself a new type of revolutionary wog, "sultan of the mind" and "the sweatiest nightmare of the Swedish society."

### ***Prejudices***

The cases of demonstrating prejudices occurred from both sides. Halim, with his hostile attitude to everything what was in his understanding "very Swedish", displayed prejudices towards the intentions of the Swedish system to help immigrants with the

language, towards the traditional Swedish cuisine, towards the national symbols. In the eyes of Halim, the unemployed actor could not get the part in the play because of the biased attitude of the Swedes towards his skin colour. He eagerly assumes this without knowing other possible reasons.

The clear demonstration of prejudicial attitude on the part of Swedish people towards the new immigrant minority was a scene in Halim's father shop. A drunk middle-aged shabby looking Swede enters the store and asks what has happened to the old shop. When he hears that the previous owner moved out, he comments: "I am tired of you foreigners coming here and ruin everything."

I nevertheless think that his scene could be viewed at least from two angles: as prejudicial and as educational. Yes, we see on the screen a Swedish character who is throwing offences at the immigrant, accusing him of evil plan to come into the country and ruin everything. At the same time, the person we see is a shabby-looking drunkard who cannot control his emotions and behaviours. Therefore, it can be interpreted as an implicit message that if the prejudicial situations do occur, they come from not the best of folks. Moreover, it could be a message to Swedes that biased attitude signifies of narrow-minded world view, and which is better to be avoided by the thinking personalities.

### ***Political involvement or relations with the state***

The presence of omnipotent and rather ambiguous "integration plan" runs through the whole film. Majority characters do not discuss it in any way, but the plan is viewed as a threat and is deeply hated by Halim and by his advisor, old half-insane mind reader.

The theme of politics is mentioned once by Otman. When Halim accuses Sweden in doing everything to hinder the social development of immigrants groups, Otman replies: "Really? Tell me what is so great about Morocco? Unfair police? Sham democracy? Stop talking nonsense!" From Otman's reply one can see that for him, despite the drawbacks of the system, bright sides of Swedish political order and society arrangement still overshadow the darkness of his native land regime.

### ***Types of employment***

Types of employment of the characters are mainly the positions of the workers, although Halim's father does manage to get a private trading business. It was a business that did not bring much profit and demanded long working hours.

Access to labour market seems limited because of the major disadvantage – poor language skills. In one scene Halim fires at his father: “Can’t you see? All forms are so difficult that no immigrant can fill them in. Then we must live on benefits and clean their toilets. It’s a part of integration plan.”

The unemployment issue is raised along with the detrimental consequences it brings – depression, complete exclusion from the society, loss of hope. This we can observe on the example of the unemployed actor whose only occupation for weeks and months has been watching TV channels from his home country.

Halim collects the cuts-out from the newspaper articles. Among other, the headlines say: “Harder for foreigners to find work” and “Immigrants who change their names earn more.”

### ***Stereotypical representation***

Both, minority and majority characters were often represented stereotypically in the film. Earlier described Halim’s stratification of Swedish society was in fact a stereotyping itself. Arab people are shown as louder and more flamboyant. They are depicted more hot-tempered as compared to Swedes.

Otman’s attempts to better integrate were made through his trying to adopt all the possible stereotypes about Swedes – listening to Abba every morning, eating mainly salmon and potato, hanging out the flag on the balcony etc.

### ***Education***

Schooling is raised as another important issue in the movie. Besides the general school, Halim’s Mom was teaching him Arabic, which was one of the main means of ensuring that Halim will manage to remember his roots. In high school Halim was also attending Arabic language classes, using the right for schooling in the native tongue, guaranteed to the minorities by the state. At one point, the news strikes him that he cannot do it any longer. The Arabic language class was cancelled, because of the state priorities, as it was explained to Halim. The attitude of teachers (representatives of majority in the school episode) is impartial, official, and bureaucratic – they say indifferently that nothing can be done.

### ***Language and accent problems***

Importance of language knowledge is discussed in the film in several episodes. Minority language class closure is described above. Halim's mother encouraged him to learn Arabic as a means to preserve his roots.

As to the Swedish language, the improper language knowledge was often shown as the root of all evils. The unemployed actor was rejected the part because he didn't speak good Swedish.

Halim's dad wants to ensure that his son speaks fluent Swedish because he views it as a ticket to a better future for his child.

Interestingly, the book and the movie are made originally in a simple Swedish language devised by the author of the book Jonas Khemiri, to describe the variety of Swedish spoken by immigrant youngsters. It adds up to the general entourage of the movie and brings the viewer closer into the immigrants groups milieu.

### ***2. KID SVENSK (Swedish Kid)***

The movie of Nanna Huolman, released in 2007, takes the viewers back to 1984 Gothenburg. From the opening scenes we meet a young girl Kirsi who calls herself Kid Svensk. Soon we learn that she lives alone with her Mom Ester, an immigrant from Finland, a widow with the only child, who experiences many difficulties adjusting to the way of life in her new homeland. The fact that she hardly speaks Swedish does not help either.

Contrary to her Mom, Kirsi is completely assimilated and she is passionate about Sweden. Kirsi addresses her father in her mind and asks why he has not taught her Mom about life in Sweden. Now she feels it to be her duty to teach Ester.

Summer is approaching and Kirsi discovers that her Mom has plans of spending the holidays in Finland with her fellow immigrant and other friends. However, after winning a story writing competition at school, Kid Svensk is determined to stay in Gothenburg and work for the local radio. Nevertheless, her arguments do not convince Ester and off to Finland they go. In a few summer weeks Kirsi discovers the homeland of her mother, along with her growing maturity and experiences her first love.

### ***Kinds of housings, interior and neighbourhood***

Kirsi and her mom live in a middle-size apartment in the block of flats, while her Swedish friend's family lives in a private house. Viewers get to learn that other Finnish immigrants, who are friends of Ester and Kirsi, live in a flat in the same apartments block, from what we can assume that apartments were typical accommodation for the immigrants.

### ***Clothing of the movie heroes***

Clothing of Kid Svensk is no different from the rest of the kids at school. As to Ester, she is usually shown in slightly shabby and formless clothes, with the hint that she does not care how she looks. Ester works as a cleaning lady in Kirsi's school and Kirsi is often embarrassed of her Mom. At one scene, when Kirsi was awarded the main prize in school competition, Ester stays nearby in her shapeless working dress, and Kirsi angrily asks whether she could have not worn something different.

### ***Racial discrimination and outward physical distinction***

Both Kirsi and Ester look like they could have been natives of any Nordic country – blonds with the light skin. Therefore, racial discrimination is not applicable variable for this movie.

### ***Well-being vs. poverty***

The family of Kirsi and Ester is definitely shown as not a well-off one. Ester is working as a cleaning lady in school and, moreover, she gets fired. There seem to be no one to help them out. Ester intends going to Finland for a summer in order to rest as well as to make some money at the rally pizza sale.

On the other hand, we see her Finnish friend with a son. The friend owns a car and seems to be very joyful and content with the state of things in her life. Swedish family, whose daughter Kirsi is friends with, owns a house and they can afford making present for Kirsi as well as arranging the party in her honour for winning a school prize.

The contrast between them and Ester's family is striking. It is not only poverty vs. well-being that is striking, though. Astonishing is the contrast between happy and confident Swedish family in their familiar milieu and absolutely lost and left alone Ester. In the closing scenes, however, we see Ester making attempts to adjust to her new country and keep living and enjoying life together with her daughter, just for what it is.

### ***Family composition : traditional vs non-traditional***

Both Finnish immigrant women are single mothers. On the boat cruise, they are looking out for the proper men “to catch”, at least Ester’s friend seems rather enthusiastic about the prospect. There are not many Swedish families presented in the film, but the Swedish family of Kirsi’s school friend is a full two parents family.

### ***Social class***

Kirsi works at the cleaning job and is struggling to get by. Viewers meet no other characters working on the same position.

### ***Prejudices***

Classmates call Kirsi “bloody Finnish cow” and not everyone is willing to make friends with her because of her being Finnish. Besides, when Kirsi wins the school story writing contest conducted by the Gothenburg radio, some of her school mates are shocked and they comment that that Finn could not have won the competition. At least in school, many seem biased towards Kirsi because of her origins. It influences her greatly and the girl names herself Kid Svensk, in order to stress her being Swedish.

### ***Political involvement or relationships with the authorities***

There seem to be no scenes regarding given variable in the movie.

### ***Types of employment***

No well-paid or qualified work seems to be available for the Finnish immigrant Ester. Largely, this is presented as her own fault since she does not speak Swedish. Even though she does her cleaning work well, her contract is not prolonged. The viewers can interpret the fact in various ways, for example that it was too strenuous for the school authorities to every time explain Ester what is needed from her through her daughter’s translation.

### ***Stereotypical representation***

There is a wide-spread positive stereotype about the Finns being very patriotic and about their passion for nature and native lands.<sup>116</sup> Ester was really represented as an

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<sup>116</sup> Schatz, Roman. (2005). *From Finland With Love*. J. Kniga.

embodiment of that stereotype. We see her being depressed and lost all the time while she is in Gothenburg and on the way to Finland, but she starts laughing, singing and shining from inside the moment they reach Finland.

Another stereotype is about Jamppe, Finnish teenage boy who is a son of Ester's friend. He is depicted as shy, closed and introvert, typical description of a Finnish man. However, this portrayal of Jamppe does not necessarily have to refer to stereotypical representation of a Finnish boy, but could be applicable to the teenage boys being shy around the girls in any country.

### ***Language and accent problems***

Language is presented as a massive problem for the immigrants. The fact that Ester does not speak Swedish deprives her of job opportunities as well as of social ties. She cannot participate fully in society since she does not speak the language of that society. As for the younger generation (Kirsi and her first love Jamppe), language knowledge is the means for them to fully integrate in their surrounding. Moreover, for them it is the way to identify themselves as Swedes. Kid is ashamed that her Mom does not understand Swedish and she is angry with Ester for not applying efforts and teaching herself the language.

### ***Education***

In the movie, the school system gives equal opportunities of proper schooling for both – Gothenburg natives and immigrants kids. The fact that Kid Svensk wins school competition emphasises that everything is possible to achieve once enough efforts and hard work are applied.

### ***3. SAMI NIEIDA JOJK (Sami Daughter Yoik)***

*Sami nieida jojk* is a documentary road movie in Sameland, directed by Liselotte Wajstedt. The central theme of the film is the search for identity, as the main character tries to discover who she is and follows her longing after her Sami roots. It is a movie about a young Sami woman who grew up in the capital of Sweden and has never before identified herself as Sami. She does not speak the Sami language, neither does she know or use any attributes of their culture.

Now, she is determined to go back to her roots and find out whether she will be accepted. She starts with an exciting trip to Swedish Lapland, enrolling into a summer Sami language course and getting herself a traditional Sami kolt. The lady is learning herself and tells the viewers about the traditional attire of Sami, jojking, reindeer breeding culture as well as political problems of Sami minority.

Liselotte meets a lot of difficulties and sometimes rejections together with the welcoming helpfulness of the Sami. The story is narrated in a humoristic way, with imaginative animation, breathtaking sceneries of Lappish nature and wittily chosen background music. As the director comments: “The film is a personal perspective on the experiences I encounter. It is seen with my eyes, touched by my skin, projected through my pictures out to the world.”<sup>117</sup>

### ***Kinds of housings, interior and neighbourhood***

There are two types of Sami housing shown in the movie: ordinary modern houses and nomads’ tents, used by the reindeer farmers in summer. Nomads’ tents we encounter during Liselotte’s visit to a man who was teaching her about jojking. Dressed in a traditional Sami kolt, jojking, and in the tent, the man was an embodiment of a Sami coming out of a picture in the history or ethnographic books.

Sami villages shown in the movie were small and scarcely populated, surrounded by the gorgeous and scenic Lappish landscape.

### ***Clothing of the movie heroes***

Sami people in the movie were often shown in their traditional kolts. In fact, kolt appears to play a role of “being Sami” symbol. Sami in the movie wear the kolts to the festivals, to church, wedding, and community meeting. Liselotte deliberates about getting herself a kolt and in a conversation with her aunt she ponders whether kolt would help her to feel more Sami. Her aunt is skilful at tailoring kolts which signifies that she has done many of them for the relatives and friends. At the same time, the woman says that she has difficulty recalling when the last time she wore her own kolt was. She says that it was probably to the baptising of her kids, to the niece’s wedding, and to the funerals in general.

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<sup>117</sup> Sami Nieida Jojk webpage. Director’s comments.  
[http://www.saminieidajojk.se/sami\\_en/about/liselotte\\_wajstedt1](http://www.saminieidajojk.se/sami_en/about/liselotte_wajstedt1)



Through the whole narration, we learn that not only kolt, but also the traditional footwear is important for Sami and it has special way of tightening it. Liselotte at one point has troubles adjusting the footwear and becomes very upset about it, because as a Sami she feels she should have known how to do it from the childhood.

### ***Racial discrimination and outward physical distinction***

There are no emphasis placed on the physical distinction between the Sami and native Swedes in the movie.

### ***Well-being vs. poverty***

Sami in the movie are not depicted in poverty. However, the issue of them being less well off than the rest of the country population is raised in a number of scenes, like during the demonstration of Sami in Stockholm. They were demanding the authorities to ratify ILO convention that would secure human rights of Sami as native people of Sweden and give them more economic power. It would facilitate the legislation and allow them to financially prosper. This scene, however, can be regarded more as conflict with the authorities than depiction of financial well-being.

### ***Family composition: traditional vs. non-traditional***

Family related traditions are brought up in the movie on several occasions. When Liselotte speaks with the Sami family about reindeer herding, they tell her that the whole family has to help with the work at some seasons. All family members, old people and young kids, have their share in farming. It shows the families as being very close-knit, regardless the age difference between generations. Another scene where families are shown as traditional and close even with the distant relatives, is at the wedding, where whole extended family is invited to and people seem to be well-informed about the lives of each other.

### ***Social class***

All the Sami shown in the movie are farmers or from the reindeer farmers families. Liselotte herself is a film director, but her Sami Mom comes from farmer's family up North.

### ***Prejudices***

At one point during Kiruna music festival Liselotte engages in conversation with a man, whose face is blurred on the screen. She tells him that she has returned to the North, where her mother is from, in order to find her roots and perhaps regain her Sami identity. The man is being very hostile towards her. He accuses Liselotte, and people acting like her, in “segregating Swedish society”. He tells her that she has her Swedish identity as well as her mother, who has chosen to identify herself as a Swede and not as Sami when she married a Swedish man in the 1970s.

Liselotte says that her Mom’s choice is explained by the fact that she was facing much discrimination and prejudices while growing up and that she was called “a Lappish bastard” in Kiruna, capital of Swedish Lapland. The man seems to not be convinced and insists that there is nothing new for Liselotte to learn now, since she could have learned about Sami culture already in the third grade. Liselotte almost yells back at him that this is not true, that not everybody learns about minority culture from the third grade and that she has her right to search for Sami identity if she feels longing for that.

### ***Political involvement***

The issue is raised many times throughout the film. We are shown Sami demonstration on Stockholm streets, with the people marching and demanding the authorities to ratify ILO convention, as did their closest neighbours in Norway.

In his speech during the wedding, one of the Sami members dwells upon the Sami rights to reindeer herding. He says that only the registered members of the Sami village have right to herd the reindeer because such are the rules. However, as he stresses, the membership rules were not designed by the Sami themselves, they were imposed on them and the Sami villages were turned into financial companies without any Sami consent or participation.

Speech of the ex-minister of integration Jens Orback is also included in the documentary. The Minister says that “the government has given a solemn apology to Sami people for the way they have been treated”. All the troubles that there have been are due to the mutual desire to regulate fishing and hunting rights, about which the state and the Sami have very different opinions.

During the discussion at the Easter festival young Sami people are commenting that the minister has never really had time for Sami issues, because the Minister is not a

Sami himself. According to them, it is very hard to be sympathetic with the problems one does not experience himself or herself.

### ***Types of employment***

The Sami shown in the movie are mainly involved in reindeer herding and everything around it, like meat processing industry, for example.

### ***Stereotypical representation***

The Sami in the movie are largely portrayed as involved in reindeer herding, adhering to their traditions, often wearing kolt. They are also shown as stern defenders of their rights, not willing to agree with everything that is being imposed on them by the authorities. It could rather be called a truthful depiction than a stereotype.

### ***Language and accent problems***

For Liselotte learning the Sami language seems to be a key to regaining her Sami identity. She enrolls in the summer language camp and at one point she acknowledges that it is very difficult for her to learn the language now. She bursts into tears saying she wishes her Mom has taught her Sami language when she was a kid.

In the conversation with her mother on their way to Lapland, she discovers that it was her mother's conscious choice not to speak Sami to her children. Her mom says: "When I was a teenager, I often got called Lappish bastard. That made me not want to teach you kids Sami."

She married a Swedish man according to Swedish traditions and with the "one way ticket" they moved to Kiruna. She confesses that it was not common back then to teach kids Sami. "Everyone taught their children Swedish, stupidly enough."

Liselotte deliberates on the topic: "My mother did a conscious choice not to teach me Sami. She considered herself doing the right thing when she chose to speak Swedish with me, even though Sami was more natural to her. She grew up during the 50s with seven siblings in a small village called Nedre Soppero. Early on she realized that Sami wasn't an accepted language in Sweden. (...) She told me that she thinks in Sami. It seemed very strange to me."

Such deliberations with the *One way ticket* song at the background create an impression that there is no way for Liselotte and many other young people like herself to go back to her roots and something is lost behind for good for her. This something

might be her fluency in the language of her mother and grandparents, which she has never been taught.

### ***Education***

Education topic is touched upon only once in the movie. During the festival, when Liselotte argues with the man about her right to seek anew her Sami identity, the man fires back at her that she could have learned about Sami culture already in the third grade. He claims that everyone has a right to decide already in the third grade whether to learn more about the minority culture and language. Liselotte does not disagree with that, but she argues that she has not learned anything, because her mother decided for her. And her mother, in her turn, had solid grounds for such decision.

## **CZECH FILMS**

### ***4. SMRADI (The Brats)***

The movie is a narration about a young Czech couple that moves from a city to a small provincial town to help one of their three sons cope with asthma. Two other sons in the family, František and Lukáš, are adopted Roma boys. Visual clues stress their ethnic identity, since both boys look distinctly dark haired and with the darker skin color.

Two boys and their whole family come under severe moral attack of the people in town. Despite being well-behaved and trying to be very polite to the town folks, boys are accused of all possible sins. Their parents also fall victims of the prejudicial town folks judgements, who refuse to even give the Roma boys a chance.

The movie was released in 2002, directed by Zdeněk Tyc. It is an educational type of movie with sympathetic depiction of Roma kids. In the country, where a mayor of a town (town Ústí nad Labem) has even suggested to build a wall to separate the Roma ghetto from the rest of the township, movies of this kind are very up to date and seem to have a great potential in shedding new light on the minority situation in the society, as well as contributing to changing hostile attitudes of the majority towards the Roma population.

### ***Kinds of housings, interior and neighbourhood***

Czech family with two Roma boys lives in a cosy and spacious house in a small town. The town is presented as a quiet provincial place, with not many Roma characters apart František and Lukáš. Other Roma we meet on the town street, are a gang of Roma kids who were returning from digging through the garbage collectors. Therefore, the neighbourhood is dominantly Czech.

### ***Clothing of the movie heroes***

Roma boys are dressed as all the other kids of their age in school, no difference shown. A gang of homeless Roma kids is shown in rags, shabby and untidy.

### ***Racial discrimination and outward physical distinction***

Two adopted Roma boys are physically distinct from the Czech kids in school. Purely the fact that they look Roma, and not anything they have done wrong, is enough for the neighbour in their town to blame them for breaking the windshield in his car. Moreover, the fact that they look slightly different seems to be disturbing for the kids themselves. One night one of the boys dreams of him becoming blond and everything around is seen in brighter light for him after that happens.

Another example of discrimination solely on the skin colour is an accident during the break in the school toilet. The darker boy Franta is pushed out of the toilet, together with his friend, a Czech boy who is not accepted by his peers because of the obesity and bad manners. School kids kick them out of the toilet room saying that “this place is not for farts and darks during the breaks.”

### ***Well-being vs. poverty***

Czech family that adopted two Roma boys is presented as a middle class family, same as other families in the town are. However, at one point there is an episode where we see a bunch of Roma kids, shabby and untidy, walking the street. František and Lukáš do not want to greet them because those kids dig through the garbage, while their Mom tells them that these kids are forced to do that because they have nobody to provide for them. Largely, the Roma are shown as kids from the orphanage or as homeless gang members.

### ***Family composition: traditional vs. non-traditional***

Two Roma kids are adopted children, so they are not indeed a traditional Roma family. Other Roma characters are a bunch of kids juggling through the waste, so the viewers cannot really know about their family composition.

### ***Social class***

The movie events develop in a small provincial town, where almost all people are working middle class. Only the bunch of homeless Roma kids are obviously from the lower strata of society.

### ***Prejudices***

Movie is replete with the prejudicial attitude of the Czech people towards the Roma kids. Already in the opening scenes we meet an old man who blames Roma boy for breaking his windshield without seeing him doing that. The man yells in anger: "I'll take you to the police, you gipsy bastard!" Further he uses equally offensive language: "That black brat broke my window!"

Roma people are talked about in a very disgraceful manner: "They vandalize and steal everything, those black bastards."

In one scene, the wife of the old lying man whose car was broken asks the mother of the adopted Roma boys why she adopted "those kids, not some white Czechs. Since all those kids end up in prison."

As the movie develops, we get an idea that the prejudicial attitudes are in the air and in the water of the town, because even young kids adopt them. František and Lukáš themselves do not know what "gypsy" mean, but they instinctively sense that everyone thinks it is bad. They themselves are saying that they are not gypsies and they refuse greet back homeless gypsy kids whom they meet on the street.

In yet another scene the mother of the family speaks to one of the town folks and tells that they moved to that town hoping that it would be different than in a big city. Apparently, the attitudes of the people in the big city were equally prejudicial.

Prejudicial attitude seem to be explicitly demonstrated in the movie in order to show how unjust the society might be. If one is to speak about pedagogical function of the film, I find those expressions of prejudices to be the most educational of all other movie aspects.

### ***Political involvement or relations with the state***

No political involvement or encounters with the state authorities are depicted in the film.

### ***Types of employment***

Since the minority representatives in the movie are young kids, it is not relevant to speak about employment of minority representatives in the movie. However, digging through the garbage of the other Roma kids gang could be viewed as a certain type of employment, or rather absence of employment for those who should be taking care of these kids.

### ***Stereotypical representation***

Roma boys in the movie are depicted as all other kids, with their worries and troubles, with the activities many kids of their age are involved in. Different from the rest of the children in the movie are only the problems they are facing as minority members.

On the other hand, such sympathetic depiction of Roma is rather exception than the rule. When we encounter a bunch of Roma kids on the street, they are presented in a very familiar to the viewers way, in shabby clothes, loud, untidy, with huge bags full of different belongings or treasures they have dug out from the waste piles.

### ***Language and accent problems***

This problem is not touched upon in the film. Since the Roma kids are brought up in the Czech family, they speak the Czech language and at least this is not a barrier on the way to being accepted by the majority.

### ***Education***

František and Lukáš attend an ordinary town school and receive the same education as the rest of their peers. They are shown a few times in the school environment and learning-wise it seems to be an ordinary primary school. There is no discrimination on the part of the teachers, whereas there seem to be plenty on the part of the school peers, as we have discussed earlier.

## ***5. POUSTEVNA, DAS IST PARADISE (Town called Hermitage)***

*Poustevna, das ist paradise* is a documentary released in 2007, directed by M. Dušek and O. Provazník. The directors make a trip to the border Czech town between the Czech Republic and Germany, which has an unusual history. The documentary consists of a few, very different stories of the town inhabitants, who moved in rather recently, in order to start new lives. By rather recently I mean after WWII and later.

We meet a teenage Vietnamese girl Denisa who is bored at her family's shop and saves up with a friend for a dream trip to her native country. There are other Vietnamese characters, who are not involved much in the documentary events development, but rather create a back-ground for the Vietnamese representation in the movie. One of the themes that is stressed in the Vietnamese characters representation is their longing for the home country. From Denisa's words, she feels that she wants to go back, because she has friends and every family member there apart of her parents.

An elderly Sudeten German woman shares her moving recollections of the events of the war and post-war years. Another German character that we meet is a man in his early fifties, who is unemployed, loves Czech markets, bars and brothels. In his pursuit of a nice woman and true love, he is getting to know many of them, and therefore concludes that he loves Czechs themselves because they know how to enjoy life.

Among other lead characters in the movie is a Dutchman who lives in the town in a pursuit of healthy lifestyle for himself and his family. There is also a group of handicapped men from a local institution, they give their comments and views of the world.

In the given analysis, I will not touch upon all the minorities. I will analyse new immigrant Vietnamese minority representation, whose number has been increasing on a fast pace in the Czech Republic. Another minority is the German one, which is represented in the movie by two characters described above.

### ***Kinds of housings, interior and neighbourhood***

Elderly German woman in the movie lives in a modest apartment, full of old pictures and keepsakes. As to the German man, his apartment is equally modest, but more modern. They both live in block of flats, none owns a house.

As to the Vietnamese people, their apartment is not shown. However, we are shown their store, situated near the road leading from Germany. It is a small shop,



selling a wide assortment of goods – from water, cigarettes and cookies, to umbrellas and clothes. We are also shown several times the local market, which seem to be dominated by the Vietnamese traders. Often, the scenes reveal empty market with very few customers and the sellers playing ball or merely looking bored.

### ***Clothing of the movie heroes***

Both, the German characters and the Vietnamese ones are dressed as the rest of the people in town – in simple comfortable clothes, which seems to come from the local Vietnamese market. Clothing comes in contrast at one scene in the Czech pub, where the German character arrives with another friend of his. They both are dressed in a rather modest way, in buttoned shirts and slacks. As to the rest of the public in the pub, especially women, they wore pretty revealing and tight clothes.

### ***Racial discrimination and outward physical distinction***

Naturally, physical distinction between the German characters and the Czech characters cannot be easily made. As to the Vietnamese people, they obviously stand out from the crowd in the Czech Republic. However, neither discrimination nor prejudices on the basis of appearance have ever been mentioned in the movie.

### ***Well-being vs. poverty***

All the minority characters were presented as not well-off. The older German woman was sharing her story of post-war childhood poverty and currently she was shown as a modest income holder. The German man is unemployed and he is being depicted as living on a shoestring budget.

The Vietnamese family of Denisa is also not rich. The girl says that she would need to save for ages in order to afford a travel to her home country. Denisa also shares her life story, about living for eight years in Vietnam without her parents, while they were working in the Czech Republic. Upon her arrival to join them in the Czech Republic, she hardly recognized her father, who seemed old for her as compared with the way she remembered him. He also did not recognize her.

On the other hand, the Vietnamese family was planning to expand their business, to build a parking lot and a small café near the shop. This plan could signify about their relative prosperity.

To my mind, poverty of movie character does not concern the minority representatives in particular, but all the inhabitants of a small town with no industry or any other significant job providers.

### ***Family composition: traditional vs. non-traditional***

German man is divorced, although he used to be a happily married father. German lady is an elderly woman, she has family and children. Vietnamese family is now a family of three, living together in re-union, after eight years of separation.

### ***Social class***

German minority representatives are from the working class, with no particular incomes. Vietnamese people are private entrepreneurs involved in the family trade business.

### ***Prejudices***

Older German lady tells the story about the prejudices and discrimination towards the Germans upon their arrival to Poustevna after the war. She dwells upon being not completely accepted for a long time, even though she was just a child back then. German man does not share the stories about being discriminated upon on the nationality basis. Vietnamese girl tells no stories about discrimination cases either.

### ***Political involvement***

From the stories of the older lady we learn briefly about certain hardships the members of her family had with the local authorities after the war. As far as the present day is concerned, the minority representatives speak of no political involvement or cases of having to deal with the authorities.

### ***Types of employment***

Elderly German woman says that while being young she had to go through various types of jobs, starting from the early age. The German man is unemployed and he says that there is just no work for him these days. Vietnamese girl, although being in her teenage years, is working after school in the family shop. All other Vietnamese characters we encounter in the film are also involved in the trade business.

### ***Stereotypical representation***

I think that in the given movie these are the Czechs that are depicted stereotypically, not the minorities representatives. The viewers are hinted a few times that Poustevna is a good place to visit in search of entertainment and sexual encounters, because people here, in the East (meaning Eastern Europe) are “more fun and can enjoy life”. Besides, the German men try to enter the brothel once, telling the story that there are a few of those love paradises in the area. This is being a wide-spread stereotype about the ways of making the living by Eastern European women.

### ***Language and accent problems***

Language knowledge is not raised or shown as a problematic issue. The Germans in the movie do not stress lack of the language knowledge, perhaps because this does not pose a problem for them. Vietnamese girl attends Czech school and does well there. She also gives the interviews in Czech, associates with Czech friends and has no language barrier any longer.

### ***Education***

The representatives of the German minority are adults in the movie and the education topic is not relevant in their discussions. Denisa has been attending Czech school for several years now and appears to be fully adjusted to the school system. She does not speak about her further educational prospects, upon high school completion.

## ***6. DÍKY ZA KAŽDÉ NOVÉ RÁNO (Thanks for every new morning)***

*Díky za každé nové ráno* is a movie directed by Milan Šteindler, released in 1994. As discussed in a number of reviews, it is a Czech comedy, full of irony, sometimes even satire, humour and reflection upon the social situation of the 1970s. It depicts the period of standardisation and normalization in the country and its impact on the people's daily lives.

The audience meets a family of three, where the Mom is a Czech lady and the Dad is Ukrainian, who moved to Prague twenty years ago and has never gone back to his homeland. They are the parents of a smart high school graduate Olga, and also the patrons (more like sponsors) for the whole extended family of the Dad Vasyl. Family members from Ukraine take turns visiting their uncle, brother, or brother in law in

Prague and at the same time fulfilling multiple purposes of their visits – buy jeans that were not in open sale in Ukraine, shop for some delicacies, ask for money and piece of advise, or look for a perfect partner.

Olga, the daughter of the family, is going through the teenage crushes and experiences. Among other, it is time for her to enrol in the university. Being a skilful student, she has all chances entering the university. However, the school management says that since she is not in “young pioneers” organization, she cannot be recommended for the university. Later, the management also receives anonymous information that her father’s older brother First Vasyl had improper political involvement in the past and that he was “bourgeois nationalist”. Being a relative to the politically rebellious man, Olga seems to be deprived of her chance to study at the university. Her father is determined to fight and to make the justice win in this battle. Vasyl starts collecting signatures from everyone who could have known his brother First Vasyl and could testify for his innocence.

All the turbulent events in the family are constantly stirred up by the hard spirits and hot temper of the father of the family once he is drunk. The movie takes the viewers through the social events at the time as well as through personal dramas of the characters.

### ***Kinds of housings, interior and neighbourhood***

The family lives in an ordinary flat, a typical and standard kind of housing of that time. The relatives from Ukraine who come for a visit are usually from the rural area and small villages in Transcarpathian Ukraine. They are shown as the village folks, coming from their own, although not modern, farms.

### ***Clothing of the movie heroes***

The main Ukrainian character, the father Vasyl, is shown as wearing ordinary clothing. However, he is often portrayed in a hat and an old coat, which he had brought with him to Prague from Ukraine and believes it to be a good one even twenty years later.

As to the Ukrainian relatives coming for a visit, their clothing is always out of fashion. Women are often shown in traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts and plakhtas, and men are portrayed in heavy coats and high fur hats. Young women are also shown as pretty naïve in their attempts to dress up fashionably in Prague, because their provincial understanding of fashion looks funny if not ridiculous.

In the closing scenes, we see Olga and her husband driving through the hilly area, Olga wearing traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt. With the general mood of the scene, the traditional clothing is stressing Olga's acknowledgement of the roots and her consent to sympathize with all those dozens of relatives in the home country of her father.

### ***Racial discrimination and outward physical distinction***

There are no outward physical distinctions between Czechs and Ukrainians, so the issue is not touched upon in the movie.

### ***Well-being vs. poverty***

Ukraine, as judging by the father's Ukrainian relatives stories, is presented as substantially poorer than the Czech Republic, which is also a realistic reflection of the state of things. The Ukrainians are also depicted as less well-off, often attempting to trade hard alcohol for some material goods with their uncle.

Young Ukrainian niece comes to Prague in determination to get married, since the only prospects she sees for herself back home is washing, working, and giving birth to kids.

As to Vasyl, who is an emigrant from Ukraine, he seems capable to provide for his family in the same way as majority of ordinary Czechs do.

### ***Family composition: traditional vs. non-traditional***

Minority families are presented as close-knit, even the distant relatives. Every relative in the family knows about the affairs of the others and sympathises greatly with each other. Vasyl, being an authority among his relatives, acts as an advisor in a number of family matters, like his older brother's marriage for example.

### ***Social class***

Ukrainian migrant character Vasyl with his family lives in Prague and their family belongs to the working class. However, the relatives who come from Ukraine are all village folk, small scale farmers. Symbolic is Vasyl's longing to provide a good education for his daughter so that she becomes a writer and has a different life from his own. He even launches a fight with the authorities to win the right for his daughter to study.

### ***Prejudices***

There are no ethnic prejudices depicted against the representatives of the Ukrainian minority. The political ones are expressed by, for example, showing the difficulties the Ukrainian relatives of Vasyl had to go through in order to visit the then Czechoslovakia.

### ***Political involvement***

Teenage Olga suffers the most because of the alleged political involvement of her uncle into the independence struggle. The fact of his supposed involvement was enough for her not to be able to study at the university. In the closing scenes, though, we discover that his involvement was real and not alleged. However, the turmoil was steered not because her uncle was Ukrainian. It could have happened with any Czech person suspected in nationalism as well.

Another case of the involvement with the authorities was with her friend Lenka and famous book writer who urged Olga to sign Charter 77 of the dissident movement in socialist Czechoslovakia. Lenka was expelled from the final university year for signing the Charter.

At one point, Olga comes home shining of happiness because her Mom managed to get her a coat, which was in vogue but also in scarcity those days. One of the Ukrainian uncles was visiting them at that time. When he sees the coat he becomes very angry, grabs the coat and tears it to pieces. He says that he was wearing a similar coat in Siberia camp for eleven years and for free. The episode shows us that the minority characters suffered much because of the political regime in their home country.

For many years has Olga been opposed to signing any petitions or Charters or any signature collection lists. At the end though, after her father dies and she assumes his role in the family, she says that she signed the political document. She signed it for all the relatives from Ukraine to be able to keep coming for a visit now and in the future. Although it was against her convictions, she did it when she discovered that all her father's friends and extended relatives signed the paper that First Vasyl was not a "bourgeois nationalist" just to help her father and her. Because in fact he was one. When times change, the facts acquire different colouring.

### ***Types of employment***

It has never been clearly specified where Vasyl was working. The Ukrainians coming for a visit are usually farmers.

### ***Stereotypical representation***

There are a number of stereotypes that are reflected in the presentation of the Ukrainians in the movie. They are portrayed as heavy drinkers of hard alcohol. Alcohol seems to have a big importance for the Ukrainian relatives coming for a visit to their uncle in the Czech Republic, because they all bring him a bottle or three as a souvenir or a treat from his home land. It has equally big importance for the uncle himself, because the more bottles are presented to him, the friendlier he becomes.

Besides, the unmarried Ukrainian nieces are eager to catch a Czech husband, a foreigner, which is a common stereotype not only for Ukraine, but for the whole Eastern Europe in general. One of them is so blindly confident in her ability to charm the best one, and so eager to marry at least somebody in this foreign country, that she ends up picking a hippie trump who others would not even speak with. These humorous scenes reveals the way the girl viewed a possibility of marrying a foreigner as a chance to escape the hard life at home.

In the scene when a bunch of uncles from Transcarpathian Ukraine come to visit their brother, Vasyl shows them around the flat and at one point he proudly shows his treasures in the cupboard: hanging wreath of garlic and kilos of lard and sausage, something considered to be a beloved food of every Ukrainian.

### ***Language and accent problems***

The importance of the native tongue to Vasyl is stressed in various ways. First and foremost, he teaches his daughter Ukrainian and they often recite Ukrainian poetry. Secondly, when his visiting niece uses a Russian word instead of Ukrainian, making a rather common mistake of the Ukrainian speakers, Vasyl becomes very cross and orders her to leave his apartment immediately. This episode, however, speaks not only about his passion for the Ukrainian language, but also about his hot temper.

The fact that some of the dialogs between Vasyl and his Ukrainian relative are in Ukrainian add up a colouring and humour to the scenes.

### ***Education***

Education problem is one of the most burning issues in the movie, but not in the relation to minority only. The situation at the time was such that politically engaged people, be they minority representatives or Czechs, were persecuted in various ways. Moreover, not only the politically involved, but all their surrounding could suffer. Expelling from

the universities or not accepting to one was a wide-spread practice, as we can witness on Olga's or Lenka's examples.



## V. CONCLUSIONS

Movies analyses above allow us to make the conclusions about the minority groups representation patterns in each country separately, as well as to further compare countries' results to each other.

In the discussion of Swedish minorities, a number of common problems or depiction patterns can be identified in the films. For example, the analysis of the first variable on housing conditions and neighbourhood shows that poorer housing situation is found in the cases of two out of three minority groups.

Traditional clothing appears to be an important symbol of identification with the minority group for the representatives of two minorities out of three. Putting on a traditional dress is seen as a step towards belonging to the minority peoples and as a means of ascribing oneself to a particular group.

Racial discrimination or discriminative attitude is reflected in the depiction of the new immigrant minority mostly, however the issue is raised by the representatives of other two minorities as well.

The characters belonging to all three minority groups are portrayed as less well-off in comparison to the majority population. The new immigrant group and Finnish minority are depicted in a visibly inferior financial position to the majority group. The issues of the Sami's economic inferiority are touched upon mainly in the discussion of the legislation, but it is not evident in clothing, housing, neighbourhood or immediate working conditions.

All three movies touch upon the mixed marriages between minority and majority representatives. In two out of three cases they seem to function well. Nevertheless, they bring up the identity crisis issues for the children in the families. Some of the children refuse to acknowledge their belonging to the minority, as does Kirsi in *Kid Svensk*. Others are either painfully going through searching for their lost minority identity (Liselotte in *Sami nieida jojk*) or are afraid to loose the connection with the parents' culture (Halim in *Ett öga rött*).

Minority characters belong either to working class or farmers. None of them is depicted as scholar, politician or on the managerial positions. The jobs of the minority characters are usually low-paid and physically demanding. As in the case of new immigrants minority, the positions they are receiving in Sweden are far below their

qualifications from home. The situation of Sami minority is different, they are involved in reindeer herding, which has been their traditional occupation for centuries.

Prejudicial attitudes are depicted towards the representatives of all three minorities and can be summarized with the expressions those people were sometimes addressed to either by majority characters or by themselves: “wog”, “Finnish cow”, “Lappish bastard”. One should take into account, though, that *Kid Svensk* reflects the situation of 1984, which is about 15 years ago, while *Sami nieida jojk* describes the case in the late 1970s when Liselotte’s mother was called the despised “Lappish bastard”. The situation nowadays might be different with the political correctness and social tolerance campaigns being very powerful. As to the new immigrants group, it reflects the events of the current decade.

In two out of three movies minority representatives had to deal with the state authorities and in none of the cases they appeared content with the situation. New immigrant group representatives are suspicious of the state integration policies and the real benefits of the social system. Sami minority continuously fights for their rights to proceed with their traditional occupation on their lands, which to their mind runs contrary to the state policies constructed by the majority, without accounting for the opinions of the Sami themselves.

Minority characters were partially stereotypically depicted, in both positive and negative ways. In the movies under analysis, though, positive stereotypes are more common. As to the depiction of the Swedish majority, the stereotypes were mainly acknowledged by the outer markers, such as food or music preferences or physical features, like the majority of Swedish characters being blond.

Education is raised as an important issue for the minorities in the movies. New immigrant minority characters, as well as Sami representatives emphasize the struggle for their right to learn about their minority cultures and to study minority languages at school. The cancellation of the native language class at school due to the “state priorities” is regarded by minority representatives as truly evil step of the authorities.

The importance of the local language learning for better integration into society and for acquiring new job opportunities is emphasized in relation to all three minorities. The fact that poor Swedish language skills deprive the minority representative of many opportunities is acknowledged in each of three films.

Following the same description procedure, the minority representation problems in Czech movies are summarized in the same order of variables as in the Swedish films above.

Housing of the minorities characters in Czech films are the same as of the most of Czechs, they do not stand out as significantly poorer or richer. Only some representatives of Roma minority are shown as homeless and shabby.

Clothing styles of the minority groups do not appear to have particular significance. In the case of the Ukrainian minority the traditional clothing of the characters has a symbolic meaning of remembering about and belonging to the culture of the parents. Clothes is also used to distinguish the Ukrainian minority visitors to the then Czechoslovakia – either by depicting them in the traditional clothes or in out-of-fashion ones.

Racial distinction is emphasized in the relation to one minority only - this is being the Roma one. The Roma representatives are referred to in derogative manner as “black bastards”, skin and hair colour is being enough to get blamed for not committed crimes.

Minorities characters are depicted as being of modest or moderate income. They are not strikingly poorer or richer as compared to the majority characters, with the only exception of the Roma kids gang. However, Roma minority characters are always shown from two different perspectives: poor homeless group of kids or adopted boys living in proper family surrounding. Some of the other minority characters are shown as using the unemployment benefits system, whereas new Vietnamese minority characters are involved in trade business. Another typical occupation for the minority characters is farming.

Traditional family composition is shown in relation to two minority groups. Mixed marriage is shown in the Czech-Ukrainian family, which however does not bring the identity crisis for the daughter. Roma children are adopted by the Czech family and are being brought up as Czechs by their parents.

The issue of prejudices is touched upon in relation to the German minority, but only while discussing the state of things in post WWII times. As to the present day situation, prejudicial attitude towards Roma minority is a frequent case in the film.

Political involvement or problematic relations with the state authorities do not relate to the minorities characters in any special way. Ukrainian minority characters

confront the political regime in the country, but it concerns all the people in the country, both minority and majority representatives.

Stereotypical representation in the given movies takes place in relation to the Ukrainian minority and sometimes Czech majority. Interestingly enough, the depiction of the Roma minority main characters runs counter to all wide-spread stereotypes, which allegedly opens a new way of looking at them for the majority viewers.

The importance of the native tongue is emphasized only in relation to the Ukrainian minority characters. Language issues are not touched upon in any other ways. Particular education disturbances of the minority characters are not depicted either.

As based on the conclusive summaries about minority depiction in Swedish and Czech movies, we can track the existence of the common minorities problems reflected in the movies of two states. For instance, minorities characters in both countries were usually depicted in the modest housings and humble neighbourhoods. High unemployment rates or limited employment opportunities for the minority representatives seem to be raised as burning issues in both states and as a result at least slightly inferior financial situation of the minorities as compared to the majorities was the case. Ethnic and other kinds of discrimination and prejudicial attitude of the majority are also discussed as common problematic matters.

On the other hand, the depiction of the minority groups has a number of differences between the states. For example, the question of language was not a sensitive issue for the minorities in the Czech films under analysis, whereas in Swedish films it is often raised as a baffling matter for minority characters. Children identity crisis in the mixed marriages is the case depicted in all three Swedish movies, while it is not discussed in the cases of the Czech minorities. Political involvement or attitudes towards the state policies were negative in the case of Swedish minorities and one Czech minority, but they were not addressed by two other minority groups in Czech films.

The most valid common aspect of the minority groups depiction in the films of both countries is the concordance between the minorities representation and the factual situation in the societies. To exemplify, let us take the EU-MIDIS survey findings about new immigrant minority group in Sweden and Roma minority in the Czech Republic. According to the survey, Sweden, for instance, has been acknowledged as a country where new immigrant minorities are facing high discrimination on the, among other,

basis of ethnicity and religion. As far as Czech Republic is concerned, the state rates among the top countries with Roma minority discrimination in various circumstances, including ethnic discrimination in employment or in public sphere.<sup>118</sup>

Comparing the survey findings with the given paper analyses, we can say that new immigrant minority group in Sweden was depicted as being indeed discriminated upon on the basis of ethnicity, for example in employment opportunities or in daily situations at the places of recreation. The cinematographic representation of the given problem runs in line with the survey research of the factual situation.

As to the Roma minority depiction in Czech movie, discrimination and prejudices towards the minority group representatives were the main concern in the film, directed at raising public awareness of the situation. The link between the real situation with the minorities in the society and patterns of the portrayal of minorities in the recent cinematography seems explicit. Although the given analyses results should not be over generalized, partial connection between cinematography and society attitudes cannot be denied. The fact that the existence of this connection proves real in both countries under discussion supports the statement.

By acknowledging cinematography-society link and regarding films as a reflection of reality when it comes to the depiction of minorities problems, we recognize a potential of movies to be used as a tool in many practical matters. For instance, films could influence the construction of state policies and legislations in order to improve the social situation in the countries. More importantly, as an information channel that reaches wide public in short time, they can influence the societal attitudes of the majority towards minorities representatives rather quickly and effectively.

Accounting for the great potential of the films to influence our world perception and acknowledging the concordance between the patterns of certain minorities portrayal in the films and their real circumstances in the societies, given study findings could hopefully be used for the purposes suggested in the introductory part. Namely, the idea of facilitating the integration of the minorities in the majority society by means of, among other, cinematography, appears well worth consideration. Stressing the existing minorities problems, bringing up the unjust or discriminatory attitudes, as well as presenting the possible problems solution from different perspectives might provoke the

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<sup>118</sup> EU-MIDIS *Survey. Project Outputs and Key Findings*. Retrieved March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010. [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eumidis\\_mainreport\\_conference-edition\\_en\\_.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eumidis_mainreport_conference-edition_en_.pdf)

social awakening on the part of majority representatives. This path is by no means easy, since the habitual attitudes and prejudices might be deeply rooted in the societies.

Regardless whether the minorities representation in the movies is objective or the raised problems are exaggerated, the intentional support of certain films could be used in educational purposes for the majorities' cultures to better understand the national minorities representatives who they live side by side with in one country. Through supporting the production of cinematographic works that would depict minorities from an objective and unbiased perspective, break existing stereotypes, shed more light onto the minorities cultures and problems within the societies, illuminate the majority population about other ethnic groups in their countries, tangible results of acceptance, respect and tolerance could be achieved in the long-run.

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