

**BELGRADE SLUMS –
LIFE OR SURVIVAL ON THE MARGINS OF SERBIAN SOCIETY?**

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Abstract. Our research focuses on the problems of modern spatial, social and economic marginalization of the Belgrade slum population, as well as on the measures of improving the living conditions in them. The slums on the territory of Belgrade are numerous, dispersed, heterogeneous in structure, size and type, and the common denominator that could express the typical situation is poverty of their population. The paper also included an analysis of the causes of the spatial concentration of slums, the increase in population, exclusion of the population, poverty and the attitudes of the Belgrade population toward these settlements and their inhabitants. A significant part of the paper refers to the main life problems of the Roma, but of the Ashkali and Egyptians as well, who mostly inhabit the slums (unemployment, illiteracy, begging, poor housing conditions, health problems etc.). Measures for improving the living conditions in Belgrade slums, aiming at the integration of their inhabitants into the spatial and social space of Belgrade are proposed in the final part of the paper.

Key words: slums, poverty, Roma, exclusion, integration, Belgrade, Serbia

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1. Introduction

Inadequate living conditions in slums are recognized as one of the apparent signs of extreme poverty that affects thousands of people in Belgrade, especially the Roma. The negative effects on the poor households and bad infrastructure are multiplied due to residential segregation which has its roots in the centuries of marginalization of the Roma in all countries of Central and South Eastern Europe (SEE). Poor living conditions in the slums reduce the chances of the Roma to find jobs and to obtain social security, they jeopardize their health, and separate them from the rest of Belgrade inhabitants.

This research aims at studying living conditions in Belgrade slums and defining measures how to integrate the population of these enclaves into the social space of the capital by: 1) enabling access to public services and infrastructure, 2) obtaining property rights, 3) providing a healthy life for both the family and an individual as well as facilitating lives of women and children, 4) achieving adequate living conditions compliant with a lifestyle acceptable to them and 5) fostering the residential culture accepted by the society as a whole. The above-mentioned is the basis that could contribute to the reduction and to gradual elimination of social and spatial segregation of Roma and other citizens who live in Belgrade slums.

The spatial and social isolation of the inhabitants of Belgrade slums takes place at the local level and it depends on the interaction with the majority of the population. This study focuses on living conditions in the slums and the implications of such a way of life for the wider local community on the one hand and on measures of spatial and social inclusion of the population from the slums in a wider geographical setting.

From the viewpoint of the local community, life in the slums is synonymous with the poverty of their inhabitants which is the first condition for determining susceptibility. In addition to that, the slum residents take poor quality nourishment and they have difficulties in obtaining basic health services. The largest number of children living in slums are underweight. Due to poverty, Roma and other slum inhabitants are often exposed to multiple negative influences, which distances them from education and employment. The extreme poverty is far larger in Belgrade than official statistics show, because many slum inhabitants do not possess identity documents and they have no permanent residence, particularly the Roma refugees from Kosovo, who have not been accommodated in the collective centres.

Traditional milieu, unfortunately, further deteriorates the status of the Roma population in the slums. They rarely find permanent jobs. This reduces their chances of getting away from poverty and undermines their abilities to control their own lives. The local communities should understand the above-mentioned determinants of slum inhabitants' vulnerability and they should incorporate inclusive measures into national and local politics. That is a viable way of solving the challenges faced by the residents of Belgrade slums.

The study is structured into six sections: introduction, methods and data, theoretical background including literature, results of the research on living conditions in Belgrade slums, discussion defining the measures how to integrate the Roma enclaves in the social space of Belgrade, and, finally, the conclusion.

2. Methods and data

This analysis is based on the data taken from the available demographic assessments, on the research conducted by the authors in the slums of the central Belgrade municipalities, as well as on the fieldwork carried out in the slums in suburbia. Additional information was collected about the slum living conditions in

the municipalities of Novi Beograd, Stari Grad, Zvezdara, Savski Venac, Zemun, Palilula, Čukarica, and Surčin, over a three-month period in 2011. These data were compared with and complemented by the Statistical Office of Serbia, 1948–2002.

Since World War II, eight censuses have been conducted, six of which in the SFR of Yugoslavia, one in the FR of Yugoslavia (State Union of Serbia and Montenegro), while the last census was conducted in 2011, in the Republic of Serbia, as a separate country. When talking about the ethnic structure of the population of Serbia, according to the results of the mentioned censuses, we must bear in mind the fact that we only deal with the number of the ‘nationally declared’, which does not always coincide with the ethnic origin. This points to the influence of various factors on national declaration, such as socio-cultural, socio-political, economic, and in the former Yugoslavia, even religious. The exclusive use of subjective criteria had, to some extent, somewhat harmful impact on the accuracy of census results concerning this feature, because it allowed obvious fluctuations in the number of certain ethnic groups (Knežević 2011).

This claim is supported by today's ethno-demographic picture of Serbia, which is basically a result of the national policies in socialist Yugoslavia, which were, according to Radovanović (1995), dominated by the so-called Yugoslav model of socialism. During World War II and immediately afterwards, this policy created two nations – the Montenegrin and the Macedonian, and soon, the third – Muslim, which influenced the creation of floating and vague ethno-cultural identities of the Yugoslavs and the so-called regionally undeclared.

In the study of demographics of the Belgrade slums, there are many problems which we will try to explain. As already mentioned, the most numerous inhabitants of the slums are the Roma. Although the Roma are found in the statistical nomenclature of nationalities of all the censuses conducted in the period 1948–2002, there are significant fluctuations in their number from one census to another.

In the SFR of Yugoslavia, changing attitudes to declaring national affiliation and strong ideological and political influence on the national question variously influenced, through a range of proposed solutions, the quality of the obtained ethno-statistics. Therefore, the census methodology had to be in accordance with that, and the constitutional principle of free will to declaring ethnicity was supposed to show the equality of all citizens and freedom of the national declaration. The main criterion that was used, according to the census methodology, was a subjective declaration, which meant that every person had the right (not) to declare their nationality. No documents were needed as evidence, only the objective facts were expected to coincide with the declaration.

It is important to bear in mind that all the censuses in Serbia undoubtedly reflected the current social and political conditions that directly or indirectly influenced preparation, implementation, declaration and the final results of a national census. Thus, the census of 1948 was of more provisional character and its purpose was primarily to establish the circumstances after World War II. The emphasis was not on the ethnic characteristics. The census in 1971 was conducted in terms of radicalization of the relations between the socialist republics and the

federation. The census in 1981 was conducted at the time of a politically motivated strike. The census of 1991 took place just before the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was characterized by a major boycott by the Albanians in Kosovo. Due to the atmosphere of major socio-political changes at the beginning of the disintegration of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, as well as due to the armed forces of international protectorate in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), the 2002 census was not conducted on the entire territory of Serbia. The last population census in 2011 was the first census conducted in Serbia as an independent country and it was boycotted by most of the Albanians in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveda.

Oscillations in the number of Roma in Serbia censuses were affected by the following factors: the census methodology, i.e. the criteria of ethnic composition, and the principle of subjectivity in the nationality declaration. As Knežević (2008) observes, the differences in the number of the Roma in the censuses of Serbia occur without any linearity and cannot be compared with a projected trends of population. The main weakness in the statistical registration of Roma, Knežević (2008) says, is a changing attitude to the declaration in the national population censuses. In this context, a dramatic decline in the number of Roma in Serbia of almost six times when the census of 1961 is compared to the census of 1953 can be interpreted.

Table 1. Trends in the number of Roma in Serbia

1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
52,181	58,800	9,826	49,894	110,959	138,645	108,193

Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 1948–2002

* Data on the ethnic structure of the population of Serbia according to the 2011 census is still unavailable. As the data on the ethnic structure is observed only for the census years, the year 2002 is the last analyzed in this study.

According to the 1991 census, there were 138,645 Roma in Serbia. In this census three new nationalities were included – the Bunjevci, the Egyptians, and the Šokci. We assume that many Roma declared themselves as Egyptians in the censuses of 1991 and 2002, or as Ashkali in 2002.

In terms of ethnic characteristics, the 2002 census was one of the most comprehensive as it included ethnicity, mother tongue and religion. According to the census methodology, the term national or ethnic origin was used, and each person could freely declare or not declare their nationality affiliation. According to 2002 census, there were 108,193 Roma in Serbia, and it is assumed that a large number of them declared themselves as Serbs, some as Ashkali and Egyptians. Nationality affiliation, because of its fluctuating meaning (Čvorović 2004), influenced the population dynamics of the Roma in Serbia, and it also changed the

number of modalities as some new nationalities appeared over time – Yugoslavs, Muslims, Ashkali, Egyptians and others.

Another factor that may explain the significant changes in the number of Roma population in Serbia is the subjectivity of enumerated people. This allows the possibility of temporary or permanent changes of their national affiliation. In the circumstances of political crises, many Roma declared themselves in the census as the majority population – Serbs, and their determination was often temporary – it lasted only during the census, due to political or socio-psychological reasons. On the other hand, some Roma consider themselves as Serbs, as a result of assimilation and their desire to identify with the majority.

On the one hand, according to Knežević (2008, 2010), constant suspicion and mistrust of the Roma toward population censuses are present, and the census-takers are often provided with the data by people who are illiterate. On the other hand, the census-takers themselves do not often go to the slums, and some people remain unlisted. This is another factor that affects the inaccuracy of statistics in the number of Roma. The construction of new settlements-slums in big cities is common among the Roma. It is difficult to obtain accurate information about the population there, so the data often fluctuate. Thus, the population of the slums can be divided into two categories: stationary and temporary or mobile. Stationary people are those who live in a slum, while mobile are those people who live in the streets and move around the city by day, sleep on the sidewalks, entrances to residential blocks at night or change slums.

3. Theoretical background

Although there are many controversies about the name Roma in European literature, we chose this name because it is also used by international organizations and initiatives, such as the Roma Education Fund or the Decade of Roma Inclusion. This paper deals with the population of Belgrade slums, most of whom are Roma.

The United Nations, the US Library of Congress and other international associations use the term ‘Romani’ as an adjective and a noun as well (‘Romanies’ is the plural form). According to Kertesi and Kezdi (2011), in central and SEE, the name Roma is used both as a noun (plural: Roma) and as an adjective. They further state the name ‘Gypsy’ is derived from the erroneous assumption made by the Europeans who, upon encountering these dark-skinned and dark-eyed travellers, assumed they arrived from the east and thought they must be Egyptian or ‘Gyptians’. Fraser (1995) notes that the Byzantine Greek label, ‘Atsinganoi’ (‘untouchables’), for this population, is a derogatory allusion to fortune-tellers or sorcerers, and variations of this name continue to be used throughout Europe. According to Arayici (2008) and Kertesi and Kezdi (2011), the alternative local names such as ‘Tsigane’, ‘Zigeuner’, ‘Gitanos’, ‘Calo’, ‘Gitanos’, ‘Zingari’, ‘Cigain’, ‘Cygan’ or ‘Cigany’ are also disliked by many Romanies because of negative connotations about lifestyle and image that are inaccurate for most of them.

According to Revenga et al. (2002), while some Roma groups are nomadic, the vast majority of Roma in SEE have settled, some during the Austro–Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and others more recently under socialism. For many Roma, the collapse of the socialist system, according to Milcher and Fisher (2011), has led to an erosion of security in jobs, housing and other services, and in the absence of viable economic opportunities to increasing poverty, which can be confirmed by the example of Serbia (Todorović 2011).

More recently, the name Roma has been used to refer to this increasingly large and diverse population of 8–12 million in central and SEE countries. According to Barany (2002) and Kertesi and Kezdi (2011), in the early 1990s, the percentage of Roma in the total population was close to 10% in Bulgaria and Slovakia, 4–7% in Hungary, Macedonia and Romania and around 2% in Albania and the Czech Republic.

How have people treated the poor over the centuries? The Roma are one of SEE's largest and oldest ethnic minorities. According to Fraser, the Roma are believed to have migrated over the course of several centuries from northern India. No one knows exactly what the reasons to leave India were, but it is assumed that they lived in Persia before the arrival in the Byzantine Europe at the beginning of the 10th century. Kenrick (2007) indicates that by the 14th century, the Romanies had reached the SEE countries; by the 15th century, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal; and by the 16th century, Russia, Denmark, Scotland and Sweden. Some Romanies migrated from Persia through North Africa, reaching Europe via Spain in the 15th century etc.

According to Kertesi and Kezdi (2011), some Roma in central and SEE, as a heterogeneous group, speak dialects of the Romani language, whereas others adopted the language of their host country. The vast majority of the Roma of central and SEE countries settled a long time ago and their romanticized image as travellers is based on exceptions, which are often cases from Western Europe. The Roma were enslaved in some parts of Europe for centuries, and they were often targeted by law enforcement. Historical evidence on the wellbeing of the Roma communities and their relationship to mainstream societies is relatively scarce (Barany 2002, Guy 2001, Hancock 2002, Kertesi and Kezdi 2011).

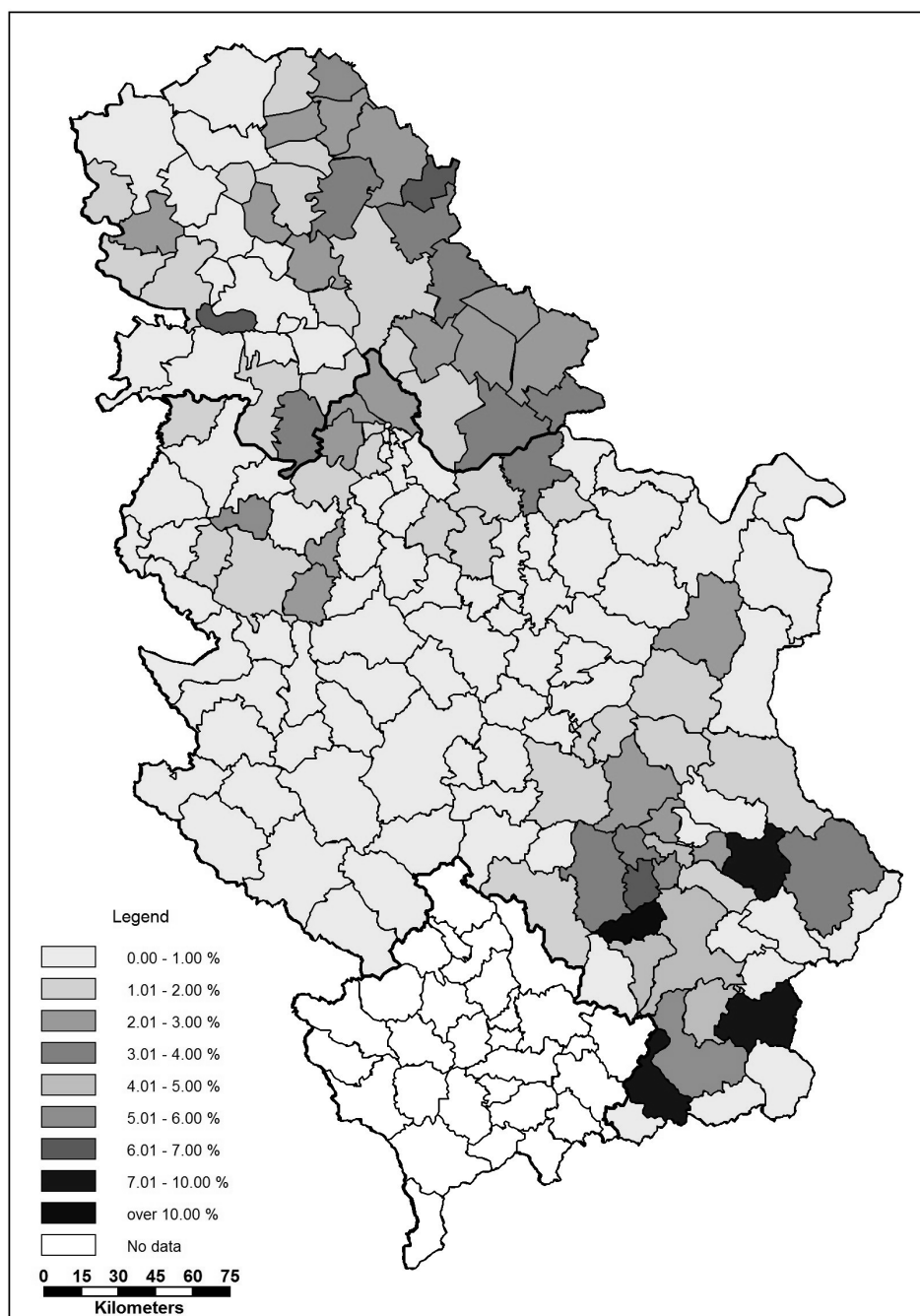
The first written document referring to Romani in Serbia dates from 1348, when Stefan Dušan, the Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks presented some Roma slaves to the monastery of Prizren, in Kosovo (Đorđević 1924, Todorović 2011). Stojančević (1984) points out that, especially after the defeat of the Turks at Vienna and Budim, the countries south of the Danube were affected by strong migration currents of the Roma who were retreating with the Turkish army, penetrating the interior of Turkey and moving toward the Balkans. Zirojević (1976) revealed the first details about the Roma settlements in Belgrade in 1536. Đorđević (1984, 1984a) differentiates between – Turkish Gypsies, White Gypsies, Vlach Gypsies and Hungarian Gypsies in Serbia. Turkish Gypsies were the Roma who gradually came to Serbia from the Turkish areas after the fall of Serbia under the Turks (Todorović 2011). They are divided into two groups: Gadzikano Roma –

for whom it is not known when they moved to Serbia and Korane or Korakan Roma, whose arrival in Serbia is remembered. Most of them are of Muslim religion. White Gypsies live apart from the Serbs, they are of Muslim religion and they live in dense homes. The Vlach Gypsies are Orthodox Roma. The Vlach Gypsies in Serbia themselves differentiate between themselves, and thus are divided into the following subgroups: Rudari or Aurari, Laješ, and Lajas or Lajeci, and travellers. Hungarian Gypsies came from Hungary to Serbia in order to sell their products and horses in the fairs, without any intention to stay, but they eventually settled permanently in Voivodina (Čvorović 2004, Todorović 2011).

According to Milcher (2006), O'Higgins and Ivanov (2006), Ringold et al. (2005) and UNDP (2002), all available data about the Roma population indicate widespread poverty, low formal employment, low education, poor health and social exclusion in all central and SEE countries. According to Čvorović (2004), Mitrović (1990), Petrović (1992) and Stanković (1992), the Roma population are the most unemployed, the least educated, the poorest, the most welfare-dependent, and the most segregated in Serbia. Furthermore, Čvorović (2004) explains, they have the most children and the most divorces. At the time of the study, all informants were recipients of welfare. Since the Roma are known to have additional children in order to receive social help, the findings of this study should be taken with some caution (Vukanović 1983).

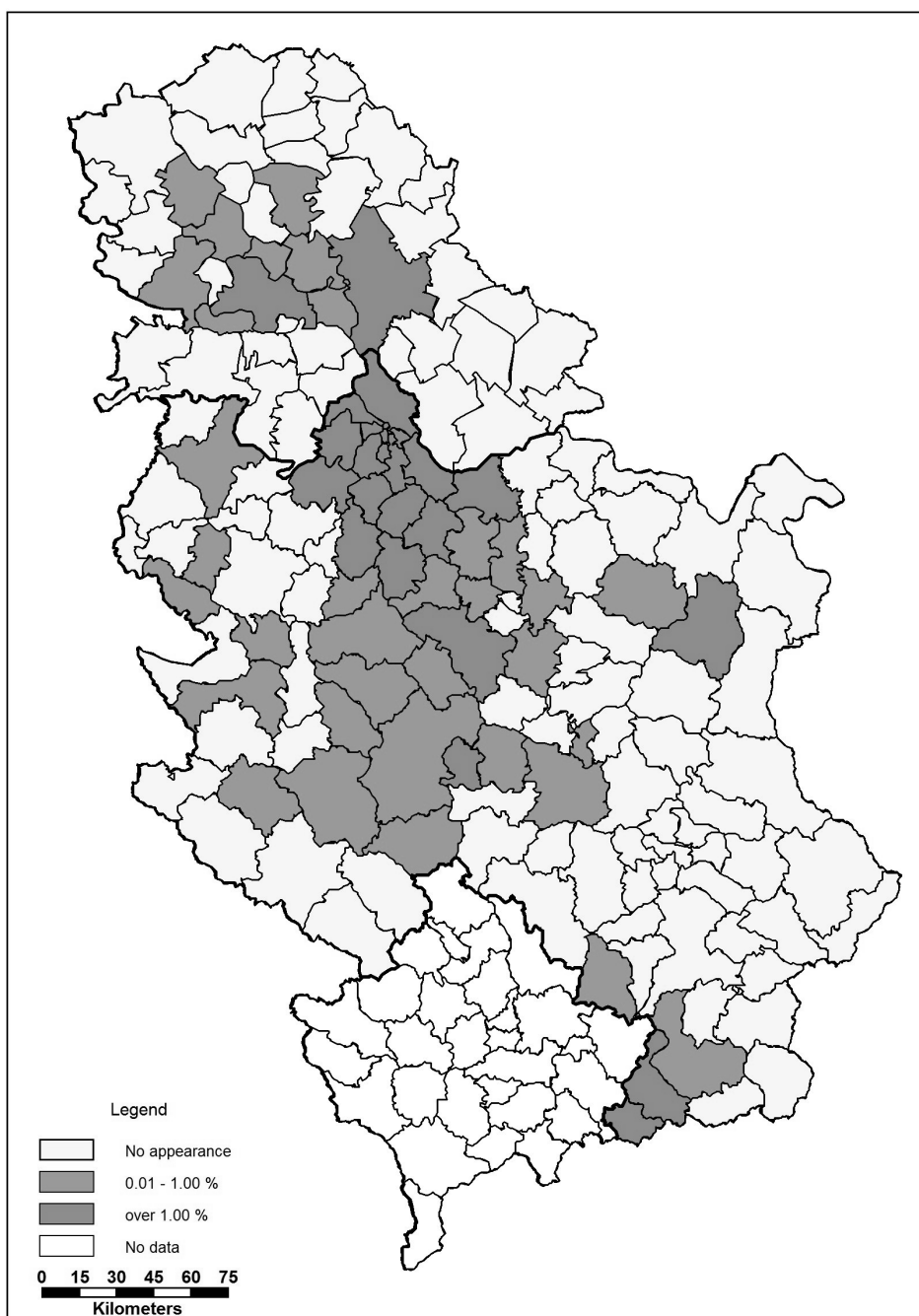
The Ashkali ethnic group was introduced in the statistical classification of nationality in the 2002 census. There are no extensive written materials about them, and their appearance is mainly related to Kosovo. According to Duijzings (1998), they accepted the Albanian language, Islamic religion and they adjusted to the strict norms of Albanian tribes. They are clearly different from the Roma as they strictly adhere to the Albanian customary law, especially within family relationships, they respect the rules of endogamy and rarely marry to other nations. Because of their assimilation, the Ashkali claim a higher social status in relation to the Roma (Duijzings 1998). In Serbia (excluding Kosovo), in the 2002 census, there were 584 Ashkali, 70.7% of whom live in Central Serbia and 29.3% in Voivodina. The largest number of Ashkali live in Belgrade – 181, or 30.99%, mostly in slums. The Ashkali are concentrated in the same four municipalities of Belgrade (Novi Beograd, Zemun, Palilula and Čukarica), where the largest concentrations of Roma and Egyptians are, while in the other 12 municipalities Ashkali ethnic group is not found.

Until the 1991 census, the Egyptians were not found in the statistical classification of nationalities, so it can be assumed that, for the most part, in Kosovo, where most of them were, they declared as Albanians, as they declared their mother tongue was Albanian, and religion – Muslim. Although in 2002 the official statistics of Serbia included the Egyptians in the official statistical nomenclature of nationalities, there might be a basis for assumptions that the Egyptians and Roma are a unique ethnic entity, while the reasons for ethnic mimicry should be sought in their desire for separation from the corps of Roma (Knežević 2010). According to the 2002 census, there are 814 Egyptians in Serbia. The largest number of



Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, Belgrade.

Figure 1. Distribution of the Roma population in Serbia in 2002.



Source: EMS (2004) Ethnical Mosaic of Serbia – according to the data of the 2002 census. Belgrade: Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of the State Union Serbia–Montenegro.

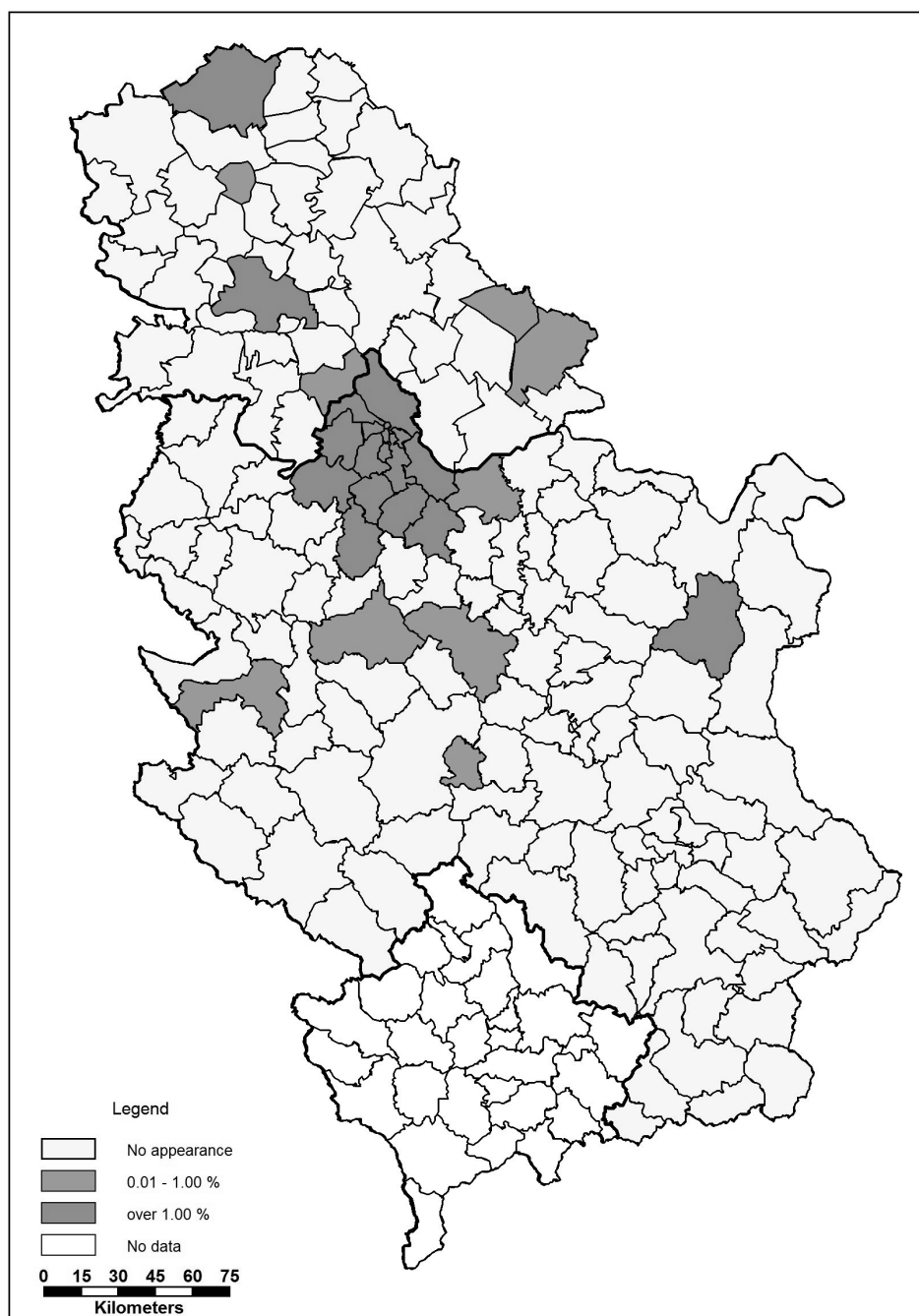
Figure 2. Distribution of the Ashkali and their share in the total population of the Ashkali in Serbia in 2002.

Egyptians live in Belgrade, 597 (73.34%), most of them in the municipality of Zemun, 276 (44.7%), mainly in the slums. That is followed by Stari Grad municipality with 87, Palilula with 68 and Novi Beograd with 50 Egyptians. According to the Census of population, households and dwellings in 2002, most shares of the ethnic community of Egyptians in the structures of Serbia are similar to the respective shares of the Roma population. In almost all ranks of the ethnic communities in Serbia, in terms of the selected indicators, the Egyptians were right next to the Roma, and particularly prominent is the average age which in 2002 amounted to 27.34 years, which puts the Egyptians, with an aging index of only 0.12, among the youngest population in Serbia (including the Roma and Ashkali).

According to Jakšić and Bašić (2005), 261 slums were located in Serbia in 2002, 137 of which were in Belgrade. According to Milić et al. (1999), there is a large concentration of Roma in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, where they live in approximately 130 'cigan-mala' (Gypsy slums) or settlements. According to Čvorović (2004), the religious standing of Roma has always depended on the current political climate. Those who came with the Turks or across Muslim countries in the Middle Ages are Muslims and they inhabit urban areas, such as Belgrade. On the other hand, Čvorović continues, the Karavlox Gypsies are Orthodox Christians who immigrated from Romania, where they became Christians. However, some Christian Roma are ex-Muslims.

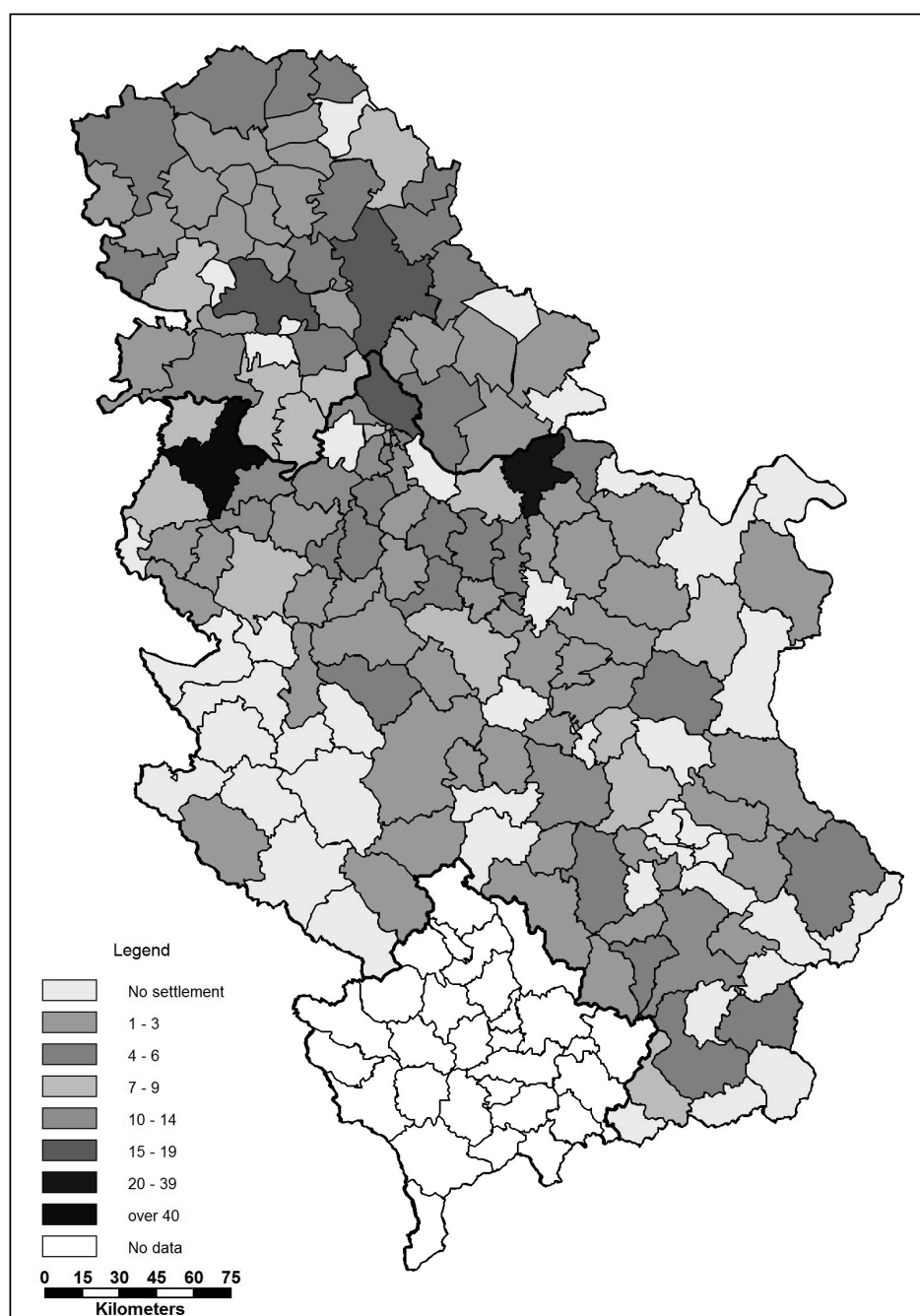
As Jakšić and Bašić (2005) state, in 2002 there were 593 Roma settlements exceeding 100 inhabitants in Serbia, where 201,353 native Roma and 46,238 Roma displaced from Kosovo lived. This number of Roma is much higher than the official data from the 2002 census, when 108,193 Roma were enumerated. This is the result of objective and subjective difficulties in enumerating the Roma population, and points to the fact that a certain number of Roma was not included in the official statistics. Most Roma settlements are in the municipalities of Šabac (40) and Požarevac (20), while there are 40 municipalities where none were recorded. In the Belgrade Metropolitan Area, 102 Roma settlements were enumerated (17.2% of the total number of Roma settlements in Serbia), most of them in the municipalities of Palilula – 15, Obrenovac – 14, Čukarica – 13, Zemun – 11 and Voždovac – 10.

Besides the above mentioned authors, a major contribution to the study of Roma and other ethnic minorities living on the margins of Serbian society was given by: Acković (1992, 1993, 1994, 2001), Barjaktarević (1970), Bašić (2000, 2002, 2002a, 2003), Đorđević (2004), Đorđević and Mašović (1999), Đurić (1986), Đurović (2000, 2002, Jakšić (2000, 2002, 2002a), Macura (2000), Mitrović (1990, 2000, 2000a, 2001), Mitrović and Zajić (1998), Prokić (1992), Prokić et al. (1993), Radojević (1984), Rakić-Vodinić (1998), Ratković-Njegovan (2011), Tomašević and Đurić (1988) etc. Their work represents a starting point for our research on the population of Belgrade slums.



Source: EMS (2004) Ethnical Mosaic of Serbia – according to the data of the 2002 census. Belgrade: Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of the State Union Serbia–Montenegro.

Figure 3. Distribution of the Egyptians and their share in the total population of the Egyptians in Serbia in 2002.

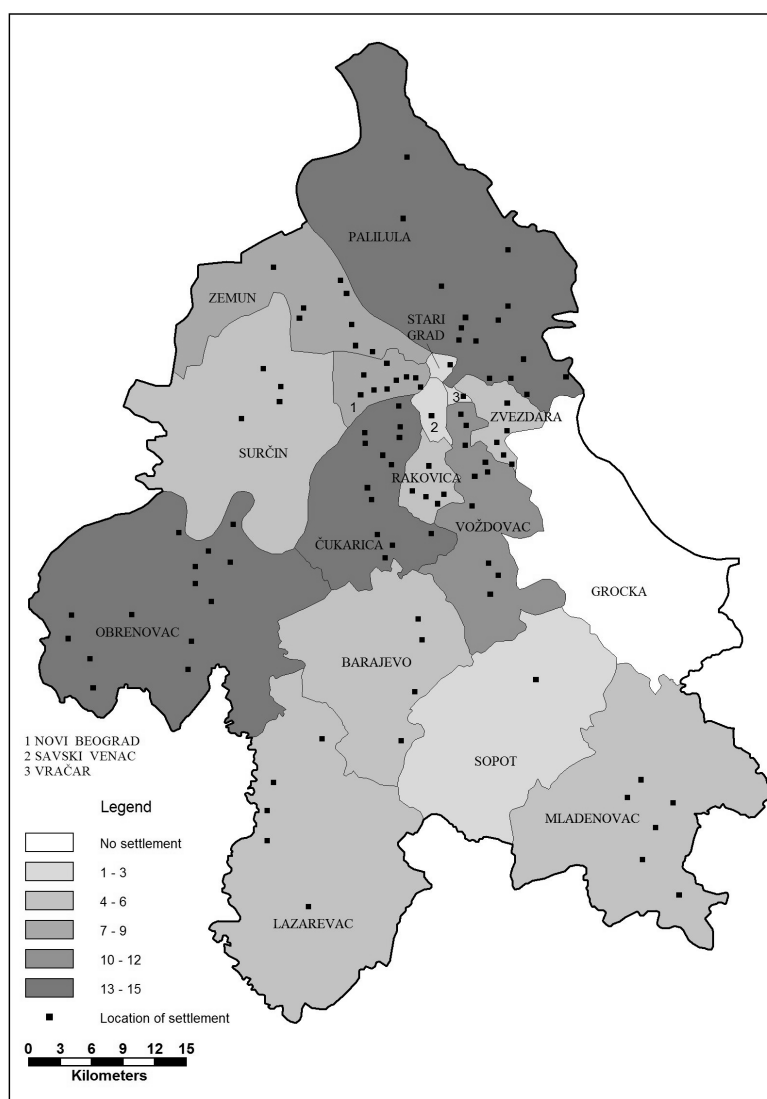


Source: based on the data by Jakšić and Bašić (2005).

Figure 4. Spatial distribution of the Roma settlements in municipalities in Serbia.

4. Research results on Belgrade slums

In this paper 'slum' means any place, mostly inhabited by the Roma, and more rarely, by the Ashkali, Egyptians, Serbs and other nationalities, in which the infra-structural and social conditions and the environment are so poor that they have harmful effects to health, social and mental state of its population. Slums are small houses built from waste or reused materials. They are often improvised from tin



Source: based on the field data and supplemented by data from Jakšić and Bašić (2005).

Figure 5. Spatial distribution of the slums in the Belgrade Metropolitan Area.

sheets, nylon, cardboard or wooden boards. The slums in the territory of Belgrade are sometimes formed at locations around the abandoned, usually temporary structures used by construction workers. When the construction works end, the Roma move into these buildings permanently, and use them as the core around which a slum spreads. These locations are left without the communal infrastructure: water, sewer, street lighting, paved roads, schools, shops, and in many cases such settlements are buried in garbage, which the communal services do not take away.

According to Stanković (1992), ethno-urban islands inhabited by the Roma in Serbia and in Belgrade have traditionally been peripheral, although recently some of them have become part of the central urban area (for example Belgrade, Niš, etc.) due to intense urban expansion. Slums, however, usually persist as ethnic-urban backwaters and as material evidence of a traditionally miserable social existence. Their 'historical role' in the preservation of ethnic compactness and spontaneous fostering of the Roma cultural identity has paid a high price: by almost total ethnic marginality in all fields of socioeconomic and cultural life.

Table 2. Trends in the number of the declared Roma in Belgrade 1948-2002 and percentage in relation to Serbia

	1948	1953*	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
The number of the Roma in Belgrade	378	/	186	3,348	9,086	14,220	19,191
% in the total number of the Roma in Serbia	0.7	/	1.9	6.7	8.2	10.3	17.7

* Data on the number of the Roma in Belgrade in 1953 was not published.

Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 1948–2002.

Fluctuations in the number of the declared Roma in Belgrade show significant irregularities that cannot be demographically explained. The number of 378 Roma, who were counted in Belgrade in 1948, increased by over 50 times until 2002. A relatively small number of registered Roma in Belgrade in the first post-war census was probably caused by the situation of the Roma in Belgrade during World War II, as well as by the nature of the census in 1948, the priority of which was not the establishment of the precise ethnic composition (Knežević 2010, 2011, 2011a). The largest fluctuation in the number of the declared Roma in Belgrade occurred in 1961. According to the 1961 census, 9,826 Roma lived in Serbia, which is about six times fewer than in 1953, when 58,800 Roma were counted. Unfortunately, no data on the number of Roma in Belgrade in 1953 was published, so it is not possible to determine the decrease in the number of Roma in Belgrade. Since 1961, the number of Roma in Belgrade kept increasing. In the period 1961–1971, the number of the declared Roma increased by exactly 18 times, from 186 inhabitants to 3,348, while at the same time their number in Serbia increased by about 5 times (growth index was 507.8). Massive relabeling of the Roma was probably caused by social progress in Serbia, and by the beginning of emancipation and integration of Roma into the Serbian society. The share of Roma in Belgrade in relation to the total number in

Serbia in 1971 amounted to 6.7%, which is about 3.5 times higher than in 1961, so we could say that in this period, Belgrade, also for Roma, became a significant gravitational zone. That same year, the share of the Roma population in the total population of Belgrade was only 0.28%.

Table 3. The share of the Roma in the total number of inhabitants of Belgrade 1948–2002

	1948	1953*	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Belgrade	634,003	731,837	942,190	1,209,360	1,470,073	1,602,226	1,576,124
Share of Roma (%)	0.06	/	0.02	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.2

* Data on the number of the Roma in Belgrade 1953 was not published.

Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 1948–2002.

Since 1971, the number of Roma in Belgrade has continued to grow, but this increase is mainly explained by changing attitudes in the declaration. Thus, in the period 1971–1981 their number nearly tripled (growth index was 271.4), from 3,348 to 9,086, while on the level of Serbia it doubled (growth index in the number of the declared Roma in Serbia was 222.4). This is the highest increase in their number between 1961 and 2002. The share of Roma in Belgrade in the total number of Roma in Serbia in 1981 was 8.2%, which confirms the further strengthening of the gravitational influence of Belgrade to the Roma during the entire post-war period. The share of the Roma population in Belgrade that year was 0.62%. According to the 1991 census, there were 14,220 declared Roma in Belgrade, which is an increase of 56.5% compared to their number in 1981. For Serbia, at the same interval, the number of the declared Roma increased by 25%. The share of the Roma in Belgrade in relation to the total number in Serbia was still increasing in 1991, and it accounted to 10.3%, and the share of the Roma population in Belgrade, also increased in comparison to 1981, and amounted to 0.9%. The results of the 2002 census show an increase in the number of the declared Roma in Belgrade from 4,520 people or 35% compared to 1991. The share of Roma in Belgrade in relation to the total number of the declared Roma in Serbia in 2002 of 17.7% showed a significant increase (more than 70%) compared to 1991, and it can be explained by the influx of internally displaced Roma from Kosovo, continuing the trend of migration of Roma from Central Serbia and Voivodina, and high population growth. The share of the Roma population in Belgrade in 2002 also increased and amounted to 1.2%. The explanation for this increase should be sought in the relative numerical stagnation of the total population of Belgrade in the last intercensal period, and in a continued migration of Roma to Belgrade.

The share of the declared Roma in Belgrade between 1948 and 2002 kept increasing (0.7–17.7%), indicating that Belgrade grew stronger as the gravitational zone for the Roma in Serbia.

Table 4. Absolute growth, average annual growth, growth index and average annual growth rate of the number of the declared Roma in Belgrade 1961–2002

	1961–1971	1971–1981	1981–1991	1991–2002	1961–2002
Absolute growth	3,162	5,738	5,134	4,520	19,005
Average annual growth	316.2	573.8	513.4	452	463.5
Average annual growth rate	179.0	92.0	44.0	27.0	48.0
Growth index	1,800.0	271.4	156.5	135.0	10,317.7

* Data on the number of the Roma in Belgrade 1953 was not published.

Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 1961–2002.

We can observe the growth trend in the share of Roma in Belgrade population from only 0.06% in 1948 to 1.2% in 2002.

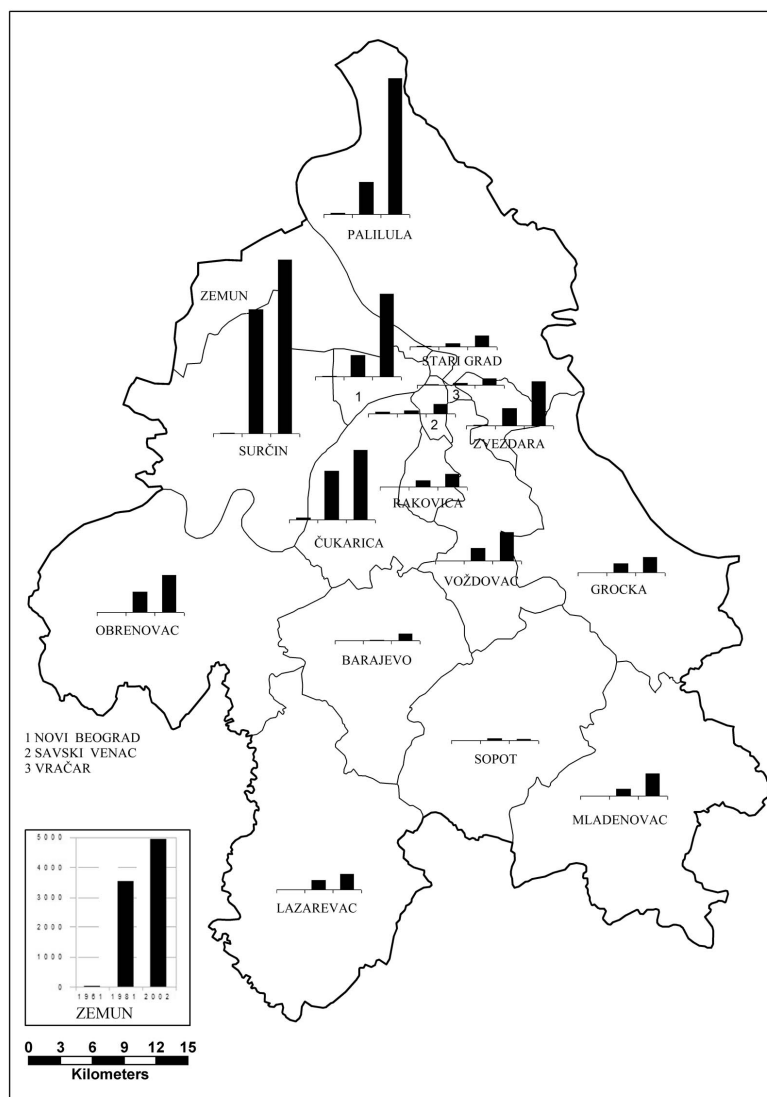
According to the 2002 census, the Roma in Belgrade are present in all 16 municipalities, mostly in the municipality of Zemun, where there are 4,952 or 25.8% of the total number of Roma in Belgrade. That is followed by Palilula with 3,897 Roma (20.3% of the total number of Roma in Belgrade), Novi Beograd, with the number of 2,371 declared Roma (12.3% of the total number of Roma in Belgrade) and Čukarica where 1,993 Roma live (10.4% of the total Roma in Belgrade). This means that 13,213 Roma live in the four municipalities, which is more than two thirds of the total number of the declared Roma in Belgrade. The remaining one third of Roma are located in the other municipalities of Belgrade.

The increased urbanization of Belgrade, fleeing from the poor smaller urban areas in search of a better life and future, and displacement of the population mostly from Kosovo in 1999 (Vujadinović et al. 2011), have brought many Roma to Belgrade. They had no money to buy or rent an apartment, so they were forced to build temporary makeshift objects in the existing slums or at new locations.

The main problems of Belgrade slums are: poverty of the population, social exclusion in relation to the local community, spatial exclusion (residential segregation), unplanned construction, underdeveloped infrastructure, poor sanitation, illiteracy of the population, neighbours' mistrust and prejudices against the population of the slums.

Poverty of the population has been the problem of the Belgrade slums since their creation. The economic and political system during the second half of the 20th century did not significantly contribute to improving the lives of the poorest population from the slums, and modest projects aimed at reducing poverty were not initiated until the beginning of the 21st century, i.e. with the political changes, as well as the economic recovery of the country and greater inflow of foreign direct investment in Serbia (see Šabić et al. 2012).

According to UNICEF (2007), the poor and socially excluded children, particularly those from the slums, have not found their place in the official statistics and data of the Republic of Serbia.



Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 1961–2002.

Figure 6. Trends in the number of the declared Roma in Belgrade by municipalities 1961 and 2002.

The internally displaced Roma from Kosovo live in a particularly difficult situation, in extreme poverty (Jakšić 2000, 2002), and so do the Ashkali and Egyptians. Arrival in Belgrade did not solve the problem of poverty; the poor became part of the urban poor. Many of them came to Belgrade without identity documents. In Serbia, without personal documents one cannot apply for social welfare or child benefit, which is not large and amounts to 12–13 euros per child per month. But for a child benefit, as well as for the other types of financial

assistance from the state, they must provide 15–16 documents, which are difficult to obtain for them. A large number of families from the slums, aware of the whole procedure, just give up on welfare. For example, a large number of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo had never been registered. Consequently, they never had identity documents in Kosovo, and they do not have them in Belgrade either. When they came, if they were not in the collective centre but in a slum they did not have a registered address. Without a registered address they could not get any personal documents. Without an ID card they cannot work. And in order to obtain identity cards they must go to their place of birth, and find two adult witnesses there who can confirm their identity. Whatever happens, any help, anything at all, goes past the slum population of immigrants from Kosovo. Without identity documents, they do not officially exist, and their children cannot enrol in a school. They cannot get any help, not even from non-governmental humanitarian organizations, because these people with no documents are not in the lists of the displaced and therefore have no legitimacy.

Although in 2000 the Commissariat for Refugees of Serbia, in cooperation with UNHCR, organized a registration of internally displaced persons, among whom there were 19,000 Roma from Kosovo, 39% of Roma in Serbia did not possess a single official Serbian document. UNHCR later investigated this problem and found that the Roma did not consider that obtaining personal documents would be of any use and they complained about the system only when some urgent needs arose.

Primarily because of the poverty, the people of Belgrade slums are characterized by **social exclusion in relation to the local community**, on the one hand, and **cohesion of the slums population**, on the other. A slum is a kind of a community, or more families that stick together and keep their traditions. Although from the viewpoint of the local communities, a slum looks like a chaotic set of cottages, it is not really so. A slum is actually a place of hope, where difficulties have created a strong social cohesion and where a traditional culture survives. In such surroundings each individual has their place and role. There are families that prefer living in the slums to living in apartments because they do not have the same social life.

The **spatial exclusion** (residential segregation) from the urban area of the city is an important feature of slums. It is a result of years of marginalization of the Roma. No country in the world is an exception to the existence of such settlements. They are the 'invisible part of the city', often spatially excluded from official maps and documents and usually physically hidden from the eyes of tourists and foreign visitors behind the colourful facades of the local authorities. Much research since the mid-1990s has been focused on socio-ethnic processes of ethnic and residential segregation when the capitals of SEE countries register as destinations of migrants (Anthias and Lazaridis 2000, Arbaci 2007, Leal 2004, Malheiros 2002, Malheiros and Vala 2004, Maloutas 2004, 2007, Petsimeris 1998 etc).



Figure 7. Roma barracks in Novi Beograd slum.

According to the field results, 95% of slums in Belgrade were built by **unplanned construction**, and only about 5% around the planned core. All slums in Belgrade were built in the zones prohibited for construction or in construction zones that were intended for the construction of other facilities. Although construction at several locations in Belgrade was allowed, the owners of buildings did not have the necessary zoning, building and technical licenses. They live in a kind of non-places, often with a sense of humiliation. In addition, they cannot even try to improve the housing conditions, because they are constantly under a threat of eviction.

The worst living conditions are in the slums with huts or sheds, built on a wasteland which is either state-owned or near landfill sites. Houses which the slum residents call 'barracks', were mostly built by people who live in them, and they can also be bought as assembly houses from the other slum residents for 50–200 euros. Most have at least two rooms, with an additional hall for shoes and water containers.

Belgrade slums are characterized by an **underdeveloped infrastructure**. The residential objects were built spontaneously from improvised materials such as adobe, mud, nylon, cardboard, tin sheets or wooden boards. If there are municipal services, water supply, sewerage and electricity networks at the locations, they are used without the necessary permits (often illegally connected households). As a rule, there are no sewer system, regulated and paved streets or related facilities.



Figure 8. A slum in Novi Beograd.

For almost all the slums it is typical that they have a good access to major streets, but the streets inside a slum are not paved. Up to 5% of the slum inhabitants have no electricity. Families generally use water from public taps because they have no water in residential units. Belgrade slums have no sanitation. The slum residents often drill pipe tap water to get drinking water.

Poor hygienic conditions are typical of all Belgrade slums. In many slum facilities there are no regulated sanitary facilities so the sewage outfall often runs parallel to the street, which is a major threat to public health. Therefore, frequent illnesses are a consequence of unhygienic conditions and poor nutrition. Malnutrition of children and high infant mortality are common.

Poverty, discrimination and poor living conditions since childhood imply that health conditions of most adult residents of slums are significantly lower than the national average. Official data on morbidity and mortality are not collected by ethnicity, and there is very little research that could give an accurate picture about the health of Roma at the national level. Low and irregular wages compel the slums residents to fight constantly for minimum money required for food and basic necessities. All this, combined with low education levels, results in a reduced ability to stimulate their children adequately in their early development. Difficult living and housing conditions further undermine the situation the children are in and lead to even greater discrimination and segregation.

Illiteracy and poor education structure of the slums population are extremely high. There are not many people who have completed elementary school. Both in the past and nowadays, the children from Roma families in Belgrade, but also in

entire Serbia hardly succeed in completing elementary school – only every third child. Due to the consecutive repetition of grades and inability to follow lessons, a significant number of the Roma children are transferred to schools for children with special educational needs. Until twenty years ago, this category included children with physical, intellectual, emotional, or sensory impairments, and nowadays, this category includes all children who for whatever reason cannot attend regular schools. According to the current UNESCO definition, the category of children with special educational needs, among others, includes all those children who occasionally or continually experience difficulties in school, children who lack interest and motivation for learning, children who repeat grades, children who are forced to work and children living on the streets, children who live far from school, children who live in the conditions of severe poverty and suffer from chronic malnutrition, and children who do not attend school for any other reasons (Macura 2000). According to most of these parameters, the largest number of the Roma children in Belgrade belong to this category, so the Roma, by the criterion of education, are a phenomenon because the special schools are being turned into institutions for education of children who mostly belong to the Roma ethnic community, which has serious implications for education and social status of the Roma, but for the school system in the country as well. Such educational chaos in the Roma population is contributed equally by two factors: first is the economic misery and partly a rooted belief of the Roma that they do not need schools, and the other factor is the massive, outdated, bureaucratic and inefficient state apparatus, which is often unable even to recognize the problem, let alone solve it. Education of the Roma is a vicious circle of civilization norms and the economic weakness of this ethnic community, which leads to the educational structure of the Roma population as a statistical indicator of their educational inferiority compared to other ethnic communities in Serbia.

Literacy and educational attainment are the educational characteristics of the population covered by the census.

The question of literacy in Serbian censuses is standard and especially important in the study of the Roma because, according to the 2002 census, they are the ethnic group with a share of 19.65% in the illiterate population in Serbia aged 10 and above. This puts them in the first position in the range of ethnic communities by a share in the illiterate (the Ashkali are in the second position with 10.55% – who are also frequent inhabitants of the slums, Vlachs – 10.52%, Egyptians – 8.81%, Albanians – 7.70%, Turks – 5.49%, Bulgarians – 5.45%, while the share of the illiterate in other ethnic communities does not exceed 5%). According to 2002 census, the number of illiterate Roma aged 10 or above was 2,426 in Belgrade, or 16.7% of the total number of Roma in Belgrade aged 10 or above. Gender structure of the illiterate Roma in Belgrade shows that nearly one in four Roma women in Belgrade is illiterate (24.4%), and that every eleventh Belgrade Roma man is illiterate (8.9%).

Table 5. Illiterate Roma in Belgrade aged 10 and above by gender in 2002

	total	illiterate	
		number	%
Male	7,227	644	8.9
Female	7,291	1,782	24.4
Σ	14,518	2,426	16.7

Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 1948–2002.

Statistical data on the education of Roma in Belgrade for the previous census years are very modest, so we will use the data on the education of Roma in Yugoslavia in 1961 and 1981, and provide a comparative review of the data on the literacy of Roma in Serbia and in Belgrade for 2002. According to the 1961 census data, at the level of Yugoslavia it was a rarity for a Roma child to complete elementary (0.7%) or secondary school (0.7%). That same year, no members of the Roma ethnic group who completed college or secondary school were counted. In 1981, 17.2% of the Roma who completed elementary school were counted, 4.4% completed secondary school, 0.2% completed college, and the share of university educated Roma in Yugoslavia was 0.1%. In 2002, the number of Roma in Belgrade older than 15 who had no educational qualifications was 2,729, or 21.7% of the total number of Roma in Belgrade older than 15, which is 3.9% less compared to the share of the same Roma contingent in Serbia. In 2002, the share of the population of Serbia with no qualifications in the total number of Serbian population older than 15 amounted to 5.66%.

The 2002 census showed, according to EMS (2004), that out of 84 Roma in Serbia who have completed university, 25 or 29.8% live in Belgrade. But despite an increase in the number of Roma who are university graduates in the 2002 census, compared to the previous period, their share in the total number of Roma older than 15 is still 0.3% in Serbia, or 0.4% in Belgrade.

Table 6. The Roma in Belgrade aged 15 and above by educational attainment and gender in 2002

Educational attainment	Number			%		
	total	male	female	total	male	female
No education	2,729	788	1,941	21.7	12.4	30.7
1–3 years of elementary school	506	198	308	4.0	3.1	4.9
4–7 years of elementary school	2,399	1,049	1,350	19.1	16.6	21.3
Elementary school	5,327	3,063	2,264	42.4	48.4	35.8
Secondary school	1,454	1,029	425	11.6	16.3	6.7
College	31	25	6	0.2	0.4	0.1
University	25	20	5	0.2	0.3	0.1
Unknown	94	66	28	0.7	1.0	0.4
Total	12,565	6,328	6,327	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistical Office of Serbia, 1948–2002.

The survey conducted during the field research of Roma in Belgrade (Knežević 2010) included the question about the highest level of completed education. According to the results, 34% of Roma completed elementary and 16% secondary school, while the others have largely incomplete elementary education. However, a valuable image was obtained from these statistics via casual observations and interviews, both from the slum children who attend school and their parents, about the attitudes of the Roma to education and the reasons why the Roma leave school quickly or do not enter the education system at all. In the majority of the Roma children who already attend school, the existence of a will to finish school was observed because they believed it would help them be better off in life. However, according to the children's words, the biggest problem they face in education is not the discrimination by the majority, but primarily the economic inability of their parents to provide them with the necessary resources for education (books, teaching aids, and appropriate clothing). Housing problems in the slums should be added, because they do not provide adequate conditions for their education. This is especially true for the Roma children who live in the slums such as Tošin Bunar, Makiš, Obrenovački Put. Most of the parents give poor living conditions as the primary reason for the children's failure at school, and as an example, we will quote a statement from a parent from Tošin Bunar who took part in a survey: "... how can I send my child to school when his teachers and other children say he's dirty and he stinks, and how can he not stink when there is no water even to wash faces or clothes." The parents, unlike the children, are convinced that there is a problem of discrimination in schools by teachers, other children and their parents, not because they are Roma, but because they are poor. However, when asked about the reasons of their own failures in education at the time when they were to be educated, the parents did not say they were discriminated against, but gave answers such as: my parents did not let me, I got married early, I was poor, school is no use whatever, and we recorded a response: "And where did you see a Gypsy go to school". No respondents said school was difficult for them in terms of understanding the school curriculum.

The displaced Roma from Kosovo, who have no identity documents, are unable to find any jobs and to educate their children. Having arrived in Belgrade, the Roma families did not send their children to schools (Acković 1993). A child who does not go to school immediately usually does not enter the educational system later either. A large number of the Roma children who went to school in Kosovo after arriving in Belgrade did not continue their education. Those children, who wanted to continue their education, had to take a year or two years again or to attend special schools. A lot of children from Kosovo spoke Romani and Albanian, and eventually learnt the Serbian language – which in turn negatively affected their inclusion in the school system in Serbia.

From the above-mentioned we can conclude that the Roma in Belgrade are partly responsible for the educational inferiority, because they still harbour negative stereotypes about their own success at school and at the same time blame someone else for that. Another problem is the lack of parental awareness of the

need for education today, and of the fact that the Roma children who are educated are far more likely to achieve better living conditions in the future. Instead, many Roma children from the slums at the age of two or three are taken to the streets by their mothers and fathers and taught to beg or at the age of 5–8 taught to collect secondary raw materials (metal, plastic, cardboard).

According to Jakšić (2002), poverty of the vast majority of Roma is a handicap both in the formal, i.e. institutional and in the informal system of earning one's living. According to him, it is paradoxical but true: they are unemployed because they are poor and unskilled and they are poor because they are unemployed or they have worst paid jobs. Then, he says, the circle of their misery is final. Large landfills near cities and garbage dumps are like the bases of economic activities of the Roma. This 'economic link' cannot be disconnected by the authorities – even if they had the political will: nor can they relocate the Roma away from the landfills, nor do the Roma themselves want to move away. It is a survival strategy or survival as a lifestyle. It is necessary to make it possible for them to do what they know, can and like to do.

Organized **begging** is a profitable business for some families in the slums. There are examples of how parents mistreat the children if they refuse to beg. Of course, if a younger brother or sister witnesses that bullying, they will not refuse their parents' demands so as not to get such treatment. The police does not



Figure 9. Preparations for collecting secondary raw materials, Novi Beograd.



Figure 10. Roma child beggars in Novi Beograd.

recognize the term ‘organized begging’, but interprets it as a group of children who ran away from their parents because of hunger, poor financial situation, living with alcoholic parents, etc. Those children gather in a few abandoned houses in Belgrade. They usually have no documents, so they remain outside the education system and the institutional, social and health care.

It is impossible to assume the exact number of children from Belgrade slums who beg in the streets, since this phenomenon is specific and there are no records or methodology for recording it, and there is no agreement of experts on what children’s begging is. Therefore, there are no planned, designed or appropriate measures – the ones applied now are focused on the consequences rather than causes and they are implemented on an ad hoc basis. The existing legal framework, which, on the one hand, recognizes the children who beg as victims of exploitation, abuse, neglect, on the other hand, criminalizes the same children and exposes them to the system of repressive measures. Very important recommendations were made by the Ombudsman that the Serbian Parliament should include consideration of Rights of the Child on the agenda, because this law introduces the concept of children as victims, and regulates their legal position.

Many Belgrade residents observe the slums population with **mistrust and prejudice**. They believe that slums are a good base for crime, drug addiction, prostitution, women and children trafficking, alcoholism, high rates of mental and

other illnesses. Such an observation of the slum residents causes an even deeper marginalization of these social groups.

According to Amnesty International (2011), almost all Roma in Serbia have experienced discrimination, and those living in informal settlements are particularly more discriminated against. This seriously exceeds the violation of their right to adequate housing, which affects their other rights, including rights to health, education and work.

The historical background of **discrimination** against the Roma in Serbia, from global and regional standpoints, means that their communities start as clearly stigmatized in relation to the other members of the Serbian society. The prejudices are deeply rooted and significantly affect the perception of the Roma and their traditions. Taking into account the complexity and importance of discrimination as a factor in social exclusion, according to UNICEF, a clear distinction should be made between different aspects of discrimination: 1) Social discrimination – reflected in the historical legacy of marginalization of ethnic minorities, which is manifested in poverty, inequality and the existence of prejudice, 2) Institutional discrimination – authorities systematically avoid respecting the rights of specific groups in the population, 3) Direct discrimination – even if the public services are available, socially and culturally deprived people fail to reach them because of the discrimination of individuals.

5. Discussion on the measures of improving life in Belgrade slums

Based on the results found in this paper, the following measures should be taken in order to improve life in Belgrade slums.

The first measure is a reduction of poverty of the slum population and their social and economic integration. These activities should be based on the joint activities of the local authorities and the slum population. It is particularly important to engage and empower the specific groups of the local population, especially women and youth, who should take responsibility for community development.

Hierarchical superiority of individuals is typical for slums, they are controlled by a number of adults who often prevent the conditions which might improve the living conditions, they stand in the way of changing the position or independence of dependent members of the community (women, children, and youth). Therefore, besides organizing, other conditions for changes in slums to take place are necessary – planned, financial, institutional and organizational support of the public sector and civil society organizations.

Effective results in improving the living conditions in slums can be achieved only if the social capital in these communities is increased as well as the ability of residents to unite and organize in order to acquire personal and collective well-being. The condition for this is a radical change of the position of dependent and suppressed members of the community, especially the fulfilment of human rights standards, and punishing abuse, child abuse and begging, and so on.

A systematic approach to life and work of street children who come from the slums, including children's and organized children's begging, is a condition for protecting this group of children and for realizing their rights. Adopting a strategy for the protection of 'street children' which would design the measures concerning children and their families, is the first step in recognizing the problem, its defining and subsequent planning and implementing measures. Otherwise, further exploitation of children and all the risks and consequences it involves can be expected, as 'street children' breed 'street children'.

Besides eradicating poverty and its consequences, in the planning and management processes, and defining measures to improve the living conditions in slums, some of the principles that should be considered come from the current domestic and international documents. The slums must be treated as the other parts of Belgrade. They must not be the 'invisible part of the city', spatially separated from the official maps and documents by the local authorities.

According to NSUPR (2008) and FOD (2007), an integrated approach to solving the housing problems of Belgrade slums involves a use of parallel, coordinated programs and actions of the local authorities and slums inhabitants in the area of employment, education and health care. It also includes defining the housing policy and projects for the improvement of settlements and housing in accordance with the opinion of the local authorities and the specific slums population through the preservation of ethnic and cultural identity of the Roma, Ashkali and others.

The improvement of the slums and the living conditions of their inhabitants should not be seen as maintaining the existing situation, but as a precondition for their spatial integration, and inclusion of their population in the social system of Belgrade.

The main goal of spatial integration and inclusion of the slum population in the social system of the Serbian capital is the provision of basic facilities and equal access to basic social and other services and infrastructure. This should contribute to the gradual elimination of the spatial and social segregation. According to NSUPR (2008), improving the quality of housing in the slums involves: improving the existing housing units and construction of new ones, improvement and construction of infrastructure, supporting through education of the population, employment and work engagement, providing health care and social assistance, joint planning and implementation of activities related to the gradual development of the whole surroundings, effective cooperation between the Roma and the general population, and changing the stereotypical behaviour of both.

Implementation of these measures and activities is an essential prerequisite for improving the miserable housing situation in Belgrade slums.

According to FOD (2007), during the initial stages of this process, it is possible to find solutions that will be consistent with the financial capabilities of local communities. It is essential that the local governments have planned funds for the promotion and legalization of housing in the slums in their budgets as permanent items. Local governments and communities in the slums need to consider the real financial capacity of the Roma to participate in improving their own housing. It is

necessary to prepare urban development plans for parts of Belgrade where the slums are, if such documents exist. It is important that these plans adequately treat the problem of the slums in terms of respect for the principle of non-discrimination and non-segregation.

In cases where the legalization of the existing settlements is not possible, the competent authorities should, through a dialogue between all the participants, find solutions for the relocation or displacement which would be acceptable for all the parties, with the involvement of the slum residents in the programs of social support and protection which they are entitled to as citizens. In cases when a relatively simple and fast legalization is possible, programs to improve settlement and integration of their population in the wider community should be simultaneously initiated. In settlements where the proprietary status of the land is regulated, projects to improve the living conditions should be initiated, such as: legalization of individual houses, improving housing conditions through building social apartments, self-construction and providing loans, construction of basic infrastructure and others.

6. Conclusion

Measures to improve the living conditions in Belgrade slums can be grouped into two models: 1) keeping and improving the slums that meet the minimum standards of quality of life, and 2) construction of new accommodation facilities in other settlements.

Our research has shown that the slums in Belgrade are numerous, dispersed, heterogeneous in structure, size and type, and there are certain peculiarities in this regard. If you are looking for a common denominator to express the typical condition in them, then it is definitely poverty. From the standpoint of integration of the slum population, the problem of poverty is one of the most important social problems. It is true that some social groups in Serbia have similar problems: refugees and displaced persons, the unemployed or people who have been made redundant. What separates the Roma and other slum inhabitants is the primary threat to the group posed by permanent poverty. It is a socially, economically and politically weak social group that cannot overcome the situation without the support of the community. Besides employment and economic empowerment, the housing conditions in the slums are the biggest issue. The majority of Belgrade population is willing to accept an appropriate institutional support program for improving the situation of the slum population, particularly the Roma. If such a program is conceived, we should certainly take care of people living in the slums whose basic needs are not significantly different from the needs of an average Serbian family. The biggest difference between them lies in the problems they face and the opportunities to solve them. The problem of housing cannot be resolved by arranging slums, their displacement or eradication, but with an institutional, well planned, well coordinated and comprehensive action program, which involves the

use of measures of economic, social, educational, urban planning, health, environmental and other policies.

The main objective of integration of the slums is to provide necessary facilities such as access to basic public services and infrastructure. This could help reduce poverty, gradually eliminate social segregation and modify some of the negative stereotypes about Roma.

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