

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

Incompetence of Slovak Democracy:

**Searching for Human Rights Culture in the Slovak Municipality of
Šurany**

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Paulína Svatoňová

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the work of my own and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

Bratislava, February 15, 2019

Paulína Svatoňová

Signature: _____

Incompetence of Slovak Democracy

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Abstract

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was ratified after the second World War in 1948. Slovakia became a democratic country in 1993 and joined the European Union in 2004. The European Union shares common values such as equality, human dignity or human rights. One would think that the UDHR or being a part of the EU would help to solve issues of inequalities and inequities in the Slovak society, nonetheless, the reality is different. The Roma is the minority in Slovakia, who experiences repercussions due to improper implementations of human rights' principles and furthermore, Slovak citizens do not seem to be aware of the concept of human rights as such. The insensibility of human rights in the Slovak society leads to other ill-fated outcomes concerning the Roma. They suffer from deprivation of life chances (health care, housing education...) in comparison with the majority of the Slovak society. Slovak citizens are the ones who constitute Slovak state institutions, therefore, for a better comprehension of regional self-government's decision-making processes concerning the Roma, the city of Šurany serves as a case study for this thesis. In 2018, the self-government of Šurany made an unfortunate decision regarding two Roma families, who were coerced to leave their homes. As long as values of dignity and human rights are not recognized among members of the Slovak society, the Slovak Republic then undermines the meaning of democracy.

Nekompetentnosť slovenskej demokracie

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Abstrakt

V roku 1948, po druhej svetovej vojne, bola prijatá Všeobecná deklarácia ľudských práv (VDLP). V roku 1993 sa Slovenská republika stala demokratickou a v roku 2004 vstúpila do Európskej únie. Európska Únia zdieľa spoločné hodnoty ako rovnosť, ľudskú dôstojnosť a ľudské práva. Môže sa zdať, že VDLP alebo pripojenie k EÚ pomôže vyriešiť nerovnosti v slovenskej spoločnosti, ale skutočnosť je iná. Na Slovensku najviac dopláca na nesprávne uplatňovanie zásad ľudských práv rómska minorita. A čo je horšie, slovenskí občania nerozumejú pojmu "ľudské právo" ako také. Nevedomosť ľudských práv v slovenskej spoločnosti vedie k ďalším nešťastným výsledkom týkajúcich sa Rómov. Rómovia v porovnaní s majoritou slovenskej spoločnosti trpia nedostatkom základných potrieb akými sú napríklad zdravotná starostlivosť, vzdelávanie a tak isto aj bývanie. Slovenskí občania sú tými, ktorí vytvárajú slovenské štátne inštitúcie a tak isto sú zodpovední aj za rozhodovacie procesy. Na lepšie pochopenie rozhodovacích procesov regionálnych samospráv týkajúcich sa rómskej menšiny som si vybrala obec Šurany. V roku 2018 samospráva Šurany totiž rozhodla o vyst'ahovaní dvoch rómskych rodín, ktoré boli prinútené opustiť ich domovy. Pokiaľ nie je medzi členmi slovenskej spoločnosti uznané ľudské právo a hodnoty ako dôstojnosť, potom Slovenská republika vyvracia zmysel demokracie.

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Underprivileged Status of the Roma

Slovakia was created as an independent state in 1993. Velvet Revolution took place in 1989 and it was followed by the establishment of a democratic regime. It seemed as a promising start for a new born state - Slovakia. One would suppose that democracy would bring along its liberal values such as liberty, equality and justice. Many Slovak citizens have benefited from the transition to the democratic regime, however the others, such as the Roma minority in Slovakia, are experiencing repercussions.

With the transition towards democracy, many new policies were brought along with the new liberal regime. Nevertheless, the Roma minority in Slovakia has rather suffered than experienced benefits of the post - 1989 era. During the communist era in Slovakia, the Roma were coerced to oblige certain measures put upon them by the state. One of the measures were monitored obligatory doctors' visits for instance. Even though the intention of the communist state was to eradicate inequality in a society, it rather created a negatively perceived marginalized group in Slovakia (Radičová, 2002). Unfortunately, this inferior perception of the Roma has retained and according to the Eurobarometer from 2015, Slovak citizens hold among the least tolerant attitudes toward them (European Commission, 2015). The Roma are minority which experience social exclusion from the majority of Slovak citizens and unfair treatment by the Slovak state institutions. The position of the Roma within the Slovak society is underprivileged and disadvantaged in comparison to the majority of the Slovak society. Prejudices and stereotypes attributed to the Roma are humiliating and degrading, therefore a presence of discrimination, racism and inequity are undermining democratic values. "Romaphobia is the last acceptable form of racism. It is acceptable in as much as it is palatable or understandable given the overwhelmingly negative attitudes toward Roma across Europe" (McGarry, 2017). The Roma have been a marginalized group not accepted by the general population of Slovakia, nevertheless, the change of position of the Roma needs to occur within Slovak citizens as well as Slovak state institutions. Social integration of the Roma is not sufficient, therefore the social stigma around the Roma people is even enhanced. Roma minority is undergoing social stigma in a Slovak society. "Stigma is a 'situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance'" (McGarry, 2017).

How can Slovakia overcome the issue of stigmatization of Roma? Any form of discrimination or racism is utterly against the principles of democracy and fundamental

human rights. This work will focus on the quality of democracy in Slovakia with a focus on the Roma minority. For a deeper understanding of the Roma issue, this thesis relies on a case study. In 2017, approximately twenty people were unethically moved out of their homes in a city of Šurany. Unfortunate example of this Roma community is just one among many others.

For theoretical background, this thesis works with already existing theories concerning democracy, human rights, citizenship and state institutions. Model of *dignitarian democracy* will be introduced in the following chapter and it will help to determine and demonstrate why dignity as such should be an essential part of the Slovak democratic system. Furthermore, economic approach, the human capabilities approach formulated by Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, describes the importance of freedom in a democratic system. The human capabilities approach introduces basic capabilities which are essential for every human being for having a life of dignity. Human rights are essential aspect of both – dignitarian democracy model and capability approach, hence of democracy as well. Further on, the definition of citizenship by T.H. Marshall will provide a background of what it means to be a citizen and why citizens are important element of democracy. State institutions also correlates with citizenship and theory formulated by Robert Putnam will display how should democratic institutions work in the most effective and successful way and why citizens do bear a significant role in the functioning of state institutions.

It is important to note that theories mentioned above are not examining the issue of the Roma minority from the legal aspect. It rather gives insight into why Slovakia cannot have a well-functioning democracy unless dignity along with human rights awareness are present in the Slovak society. Democracy along with institutions are created and formulated by its citizens. Nevertheless, how can Slovakia achieve a good quality democracy if romaphobia has still not diminished from a Slovak society? Regardless of one ethnicity, everybody deserves a life of dignity. Dignity is an indispensable aspect of democracy and human rights. Therefore, value of dignity needs to be understood and practiced by the Slovak citizens in order for successful implementation of human rights into Slovak institutions. If majority of Slovak citizens lacks the awareness of human rights it also reflects on other aspects of democratic system such as institutions and life chances of minorities. Once institutions are not working in accordance with the core democratic values, such as dignity and human rights in this instance, it also leads to decreased life opportunities. The Roma in Slovakia has been facing many challenges due to their prevalent stigma within Slovak

society. Last but not least, Šurany is just one of many examples of what is the outcome for the Roma if self-government does not act according to the values of dignity and human rights conventions.

Dignity and Human Rights as a Key for Democracy

Politics of Dignity

Dignity is an indispensable aspect of the democracy. *All Rise: Somebodies, Nobodies and Politics of Dignity* focuses on a phenomenon of dignity and how essential human dignity is in a world of politics. It promotes the notion of eliminating inequalities among members of society, therefore rankism diminishes and human dignity is equal for all (Fuller, 2006). At first, it is essential to define what dignity actually means. Dignity is a state or a quality of being worthy of honors and respect. It is also a right of everybody since we all are born equally. The social or economic status in a society should not hold an influence of one's dignity. R. Fuller also introduces the idea of rankism which in his opinion is present and visible everywhere. As he defines: "In summary, rankism occurs when those with authority use the power of their position to secure unwarranted advantages or benefits for themselves and the expense of others" (Fuller, 2006, pg. 8). Therefore, rankism is suggesting that there is superior and inferior status among humans.

Nevertheless, the author is not arguing that abolishment of rankism within societies would solve the dilemma of superiority and inferiority, since unless the authority is not misusing the rank at the expense of others, it does not need to be a drawback. It is rather proposing that if dignity is enrooted within humans' values, members of the society can become dignitarian and act according to it. "The dignitarian approach sees the establishment of equal dignity as a stepping-stone to the more fair, just, and tolerant societies that political thinkers have long envisioned" (Fuller, 2006, pg. 10). In Fuller's understanding, dignitarian approach can be implemented not only to social institutions but civic ones as well. At first, rankism as such is part of the humans' nature, however our nature has been changing throughout the history of human kind. Thus, people are able to alter since rankism is not biologically engraved in humans' brains (Fuller, 2006). Dignity as such can be then taught and slowly incorporate not only into humans' behavior but political institutions as well. Having a dignitarian model of democracy will take time and it cannot happen overnight, however, it can become real by acts such as signing treaties with international organizations with common values, as United Nations for instance, which are protecting fundamental human rights. That might be a promising beginning for new a new dignitarian era.

However, prior to establishing dignitarian governance, dignity should be cultivated in humans' culture.

Dignitarian model of politics should cultivate and ensure that everyone's' dignity is equally protected, hence should not be violated. *All Rise: Somebodies, Nobodies and Politics of Dignity* introduces mechanisms which should ensure and promote the dignitarian model – security of dignity (by delivering equal chance for job opportunities), ensure wage for labor, access to good quality education (regardless of family's income), health care, interests of citizens should be put above the private ones, protection of ones' privacy, equitable tax policy, defense on national level and participation in agreements on a global scale (Fuller, 2006).

Human Development Approach

Capability approach is a new theoretical model introduced by M. Nussbaum and A. Sen. The main notion of this new economic theory of justice focuses rather on individuals' abilities than on a growing GDP. The capability approach is applicable to policy making world too and capability can be considered as a kind of a freedom. Moreover, according to both authors, freedom is an essential element for any country's development.

Capability approach (or, in Sen's writing, the Human Development Approach) is a comparative measure which re-oriented the development and policy debate. According to Sen and Nussbaum, everybody should have ensured freedoms as freedom is indispensable for high human development and a well-functioning democracy too. Freedom to choose and decide for oneself is crucial for Sen and Nussbaum. Therefore, having basic capabilities is crucial for achieving political goals. Prior to anything, the elimination of unfreedoms is required. Dismantling unfreedoms is important because as Sen argues: "Economic unfreedom can breed social unfreedom, such as social or political unfreedom can also foster economic unfreedom" (Sen, 1999). Capability approach is not about what is provided for people by the state, but rather about the access or existing opportunity to every individual as such. "In other words, the approach takes each person as an end, asking not just about the total average well-being but also about the opportunities available to each person" (Nussbaum, 2011). Nussbaum argues that there are ten central capabilities which should be provided to every one of us – life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination, thought, emotions, practical reasons, affiliation, coexistence with other species, joy and control of one's environment. "Each capability has importance on its own, and all citizens should be raised above the threshold on all ten capabilities" (Nussbaum,

2011). Even if some people are not able to go above the threshold, they should be elevated into these central capabilities right away. Therefore, the basic central capabilities should be provided by the state and one can go above the threshold only when central capabilities are fulfilled. For instance, elementary education or basic health care is implemented in developed political systems. Freedom supplements us with free choice. Democratic systems enhance freedom. Therefore, everybody should be able to have the same dimension of choice regardless of their religion or ethnicity. Human dignity should supply equal respect from laws and state intuitions to all.

Capabilities are divided into two main categories and these are internal and combined capabilities. As mentioned above, capabilities are in a sense form of freedom and without this freedom people will not be capable of achieving their goals. Both internal and combined capabilities bear importance within the society. Combined capabilities correlate with the options one has for making decisions and also political, social and economic environment of a person. On the other hand, internal capabilities can be developed either by training or development of traits by interaction in a social, economic or political environment (Nussbaum, 2001). In short, combined capabilities should be secured and provided by the government whereas internal capabilities are created by individuals and their interaction with the surrounding environment either at home, school or work. Nevertheless, all ten capabilities mentioned previously are crucial for a person to live a life with dignity, which is a crucial aspect of democracy. As Nussbaum argues: “In general, then, the Capabilities Approach, in my version, focuses on the protection of areas of freedom so central that their removal makes a life not worthy of human dignity” (Nussbaum, 2011, p.31). Therefore, capability approach focuses rather on peoples’ life chances and these life chances are defined by ten central capabilities and no one should be deprived of those.

Human Rights

Connected to the dignitarian model proposed by R. Fuller and the capability approach introduced by Nussbaum and Sen, human rights are indispensable part for its facilitation and functioning. The emergence of human rights initiative was primarily caused by the atrocity which happened during the Second World War – the Holocaust. There was a desire for preventing such a mass killings as the Holocaust. Human rights can be also considered as moral rights since they are protecting fundamental rights of humans such as the right for life, for instance. Human rights also elevate humans to live a life in dignity. “We have

human rights not to what we need for health but to what we need for a life of dignity” (Donnelly, 1998). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was ratified after the Second World War in 1948. The declaration is supposed to ensure and guarantee fundamental freedoms and rights. Thus, even though one would think that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would solve issues of inequalities and inequities in a society, nonetheless the reality is different.

Human rights initiative can be considered as a new global ethic of human species. In the past, many thinkers and philosophers have discussed human nature as such, however principalities of human rights were lacking in many of them. Nevertheless, as Donnelly states: “The human nature that is the source of human rights rests on a moral account of human possibility. It indicates what human beings might become, not what they have been historically or ‘are’ in some scientifically determinable sense” (Donnelly, 1998). Hence, it is about the possibility of what one might actually become once there is a guarantee of fundamental human rights, since human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interconnected. Universal in a meaning that human rights are equal for all regardless of one’s economic, political or cultural status. Indivisible refers to the fact that all rights are equally important. Interdependent signifies that one cannot function without the other. Last but not least, human rights being interconnected in a meaning of that realization of one human right is function of the realization of the others (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2012).

Classification of Human Rights

As mentioned above, the key document for human rights is Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Human rights as such are universal and inalienable (Donnelly, 1998). Therefore, regardless of ones’ religion, ethnicity or gender, they apply on equal basis for everybody. UDHR can be considered as a political consensus where any state treats every person on equal and respectful basis. Human rights are founded on four main pillars. These are civil, social, political and economic rights. Civil rights can be described as equality to life and liberty whereas social ones are the rights for property, family, privacy or religion. Political rights are connected to freedom of consciousness, thought, expression or vote for instance (Claude & Weston, 2006). Furthermore, these four main principalities of human rights are interconnected and interdependent since they are inalienable. One cannot function without the other since human rights are interconnected. Economic and social rights should be the responsibility of the state. Thus, state is the actor which implements

these rights into its functioning. Moreover, human rights can be divided into positive (freedom to) and negative (freedom from) ones. Positive rights are referred to as a second generation of human rights and these include fulfillment of basic social needs such as social goods, and security rights such as food, health, education etc. There is also a third generation of rights which is most of the time referred to as “solidarity rights”. (Claude & Weston, 2006). Each pillar of human rights has diverse facilitation and functioning too. For instance, social right should provide an adequate living conditions whereas economic right is a right to property or to work. Economic rights have dual functioning as it is a basis for entitlements and independence, thus freedom.

State does possess an obligation to *respect, protect* and *fulfill* human rights. Fulfillment is meant in a sense of facilitation and provision. It again differs in reference to the different pillars. Regarding economic and social rights, state does hold an obligation to fulfill these whereas in political and civil rights, there is an obligation to respect (Claude & Weston, 2006). Treaties concerning human rights are most of the time drafted by international organizations and eventually, they are presented to states and can be ratified. Even though treaties are usually not legally binding, once the treaty is signed, it should aim and aspire to fulfill the conditions of the treaty. “Signing a treaty is a declaration by a state that it intends to be bound by the treaty” (Donnelly, 1998). Every treaty is open for ratification by a nation states. Once the treaty would be ratified, only that would mean that it is a legally binding commitment. Moreover, along with the entry into the European Union in 2004, new incentives and initiatives have been introduced to all member states. Thus, Slovakia is not an exception. Human rights are the value core of European Union since they entail and enhance the meaning of democracy.

The European Union in Connection to Human Rights

Fundamental human rights are a part of the European Union and its Charter of Fundamental Human Rights of the European Union represents values of human rights. Slovakia joined the European Union in 2004, hence as a member state it should recognise its values and rights which are stated and described in this Charter. The charter is divided into seven main sections and these are: dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights, justice and general provisions governing the interpretation and application of the charter. The charter is composed of fifty-four articles in total and each article bears its importance. ”This Charter reaffirms, with due regard for the powers and tasks of the Union and for the principle of subsidiarity, the rights as they result, in particular, from the

constitutional traditions and international obligations common to the Member States, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Social Charters adopted by the Union and by the Council of Europe and the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and of the European Court of Human Rights” (European Union, 2012). By being a member state of the European Union, every member state should aspire to implement and respect the articles of the charter. First principle of the charter is human dignity which is crucial factor for democracy. Dignity should not be violated under any circumstance and every human being is worth of living life of dignity. Every citizen of a state does have a right to live a life of dignity. Slovakia being part of the EU should ensure that fundamental human rights are taken for granted. Every citizen of Slovakia then possesses a right to live a life of dignity.

Citizenship and State Institutions

Having a status of a citizen comes along with certain entitlements and privileges. Human rights represent the core of citizenship, they specify the content of the bond between the citizen and the state. It is important to mention rights of citizens and what citizenship means because citizens of a state are the ones who create society and state institutions too. According to T.H. Marshall, every citizen has civil, political and social rights. Every category of rights has a corresponding institution which is responsible for carrying out certain functions. Court of justice is in a charge of protecting civil rights. Political rights are associated with institutions such as parliament and councils of local governments. Last but not least, ensuring social rights is in hands of educational system and social services. “Citizenship requires a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession” (Marshall, 2009). Civil, social and political rights bear its significance in a society, but the social rights are the ones which should aspire to eliminate inequality among societal members. Social rights had not been added to the status of citizenship before political and civil. Therefore, social rights can be considered as a newer element of a citizenship. Due to social rights emergence, social welfare system facilitates an aid from state to citizens who require it in order to decrease inequality among citizens in a society. “These aspirations have in past been met by incorporating social rights in the status of citizenship and thus creating universal rights to real income which is not proportionate to the market value of the claimant” (Marshall, 2009). Therefore, the development of social citizenship can be attributed to Marshall. Nevertheless, the state institutions are responsible for ensuring rights of its citizens. However, citizens are the

ones who are working in state institutions, hence in further part, this thesis examines how can state try to ensure that the performance of institutions, in a democracy, is done in the most effective and successful way towards implementation of social citizenship and dignitarian democracy.

As mentioned previously, citizens are the ones who create the state institutions. According to Robert Putnam, if democracy is about to work, it needs to primarily occur within the closest reach of the citizens, who are willing to make democracy efficient. Thus, citizens and civic engagement are crucial factors for a well-functioning democracy. According to Putnam, democracy is about the people who make it work. It starts at local and regional level of politics. Furthermore, Putnam stresses the importance of communities within society too. For civic society and political system to work, there are some factors which need to be achieved such as civic engagement, political equality, solidarity, trust, tolerance and associations (Putnam, 1993). Each of these has its own significance. Nevertheless, in order for political institutions to function properly, previously mentioned factors should be performed as effectively as possible. Citizenship, for Putnam, is marked by equal rights and obligations for all people in a community (Putnam, 1993). Moreover, Robert Putnam sees the role of community and trust within it as a crucial factor for a functioning society. He distinguishes relationships among society as vertical and horizontal ones. Vertical ones are based on inequality, since they are relations based on authority and dependency. Putnam emphasizes the horizontal ones - reciprocal and cooperative relations among members in a society. The driving force among societal groups within a community is the bridging and bonding social capital. Putnam centers his theory on social capital. Social capital is marked by trust, solidarity and reciprocity within a society. It can be strengthened by bridging and bonding processes. Bridging social capital is important for the social cohesion, tolerance and solidarity. To ensure ethnic diversity is tolerated and rightly carried out, Putnam argues that it is the role of institutions such as education for instance (Putnam, 2007).

Democracy as a Challenge for Slovakia

This thesis examines the quality of democracy in Slovakia in connection to human rights awareness and the Roma's underprivileged status in a Slovak society. There are going to be three main observations aiming to prove that the Slovak democracy is undermined. The first independent variable is the human rights awareness among the Slovak citizens. Even though Slovakia has signed many human rights treaties and conventions, it does not seem that the majority of Slovak citizens are aware of the notion of human rights and due to that fact, various consequences follow. Minorities, such as the Roma for instance, are deprived of their life opportunities in comparison to the general population. Thus, the second aspect observed in this work is about the life chances of the Roma in comparison to the general public. The Roma face deprivation in spheres such as health care, housing, infrastructure, labor opportunities and education. State is responsible for providing these to all citizens on equal basis. Nevertheless, the lack of human rights awareness and not giving enough devotion to human rights treaties and conventions, adopted by Slovakia, also introduces another issue. That is the functioning of the decision-making process of the regional self-governments regarding the Roma population. The city of Šurany is a case study of this thesis which demonstrates how the Roma minority suffers due to Šurany's self-government decision-making. Therefore, performance of Šurany's self-government does not correlate with of value of dignity and human rights. It is just one of many examples how the Roma are not treated according with dignity. All factors concerning human rights, life opportunities and regional self-governments decision making processes undermine the quality of the Slovak democracy overall.

This work combines qualitative and quantitative method when it comes to measuring independent variables mentioned above. It relies on primary data collection as well as on secondary sources. Therefore, by combination of qualitative and quantitative methods along with secondary and primary data analysis, this work tries to prove how is the quality of democracy diminished in three main aspects. These are the awareness of human rights, equality of life chances and the functioning of state institutions. This is illustrated on the case study of Šurany.

Methodology

For Slovakia to have a good quality of democracy, aspects of human rights cannot be missing. Hence, the first independent variable will be about human rights and awareness of them among the Slovak citizens. It will try to measure whether Slovak citizens do possess enough knowledge and awareness concerning human rights as such. Quantitative data will be used in form of a survey conducted on the topic of awareness and consciousness of human rights in a Slovak society. Awareness of human rights among the Slovak citizens will be a valuable measure, since Slovak citizens are the ones who run Slovak state institutions and if human rights awareness is missing, then there is a high probability it will cause a lack of human rights implementation in the state institutions as well.

The second independent variable of this thesis is the life opportunities of the Roma minority in comparison with the majority of the Slovak citizens. Determining life chances of the Roma is going to be measured by an analysis of secondary data. The Slovak Ministry of Interior has published data concerning the Roma minority in Slovakia, accessible on their official website. The most recent reports, regarding Roma, are from the year of 2013 (Mušínska, Škobla, Hurrle, Matlovičova, & Kling, 2013). Moreover, reports from the United Nations Development Program 2010 and Center for Reproductive Rights 2017 will be used as well. Observation of life opportunities of Roma citizens are evaluated primarily in the area of access to health care, housing, infrastructure, labor market opportunities and education of Slovak population. Adequate education and health care are one of the most important determining factors for a democracy as such. As stated in the capability approach theory, these are one of the most crucial elements of the ten central capabilities for a person to have a chance of living a life of dignity.

Nevertheless, state bears the responsibility for providing institutions such as education or health care and this leads us to the third independent variable which is concerned with state political institutions and decision-making processes of regional self-government in Šurany. Regarding this variable, Slovak self-government of Šurany will be examined. Qualitative method, in form of interviews, is going to be used as a measurement and display of how state institutions and processes are assessed in the Šurany's region. Moreover, quantitative method, in form of surveys among Šurany's citizens, will also provide an insight into a topic of the quality of democracy. Even though the sample of filled surveys

is not representative, since only twelve respondents answered the questionnaires, it can still be used for the purpose of this thesis. Šurany's municipality has thirteen representatives within its regional self-government and ten out of twelve survey's respondents were official representatives of the Šurany self-government. For the qualitative data, interviews were conducted with the mayor of Šurany as well as with experts on the Roma minority.

By combination of evaluation of these three independent variables, this thesis supposes that the quality of democracy is diminished due to the factors mentioned above. The next chapter will provide more detailed information about these variables.

Why Šurany?

Illustrating the workings of the failures in dignitarian democracy will be demonstrated on a case study as one of the methods of research for supporting the hypotheses. There are more reasons why the case study is selected as a method for this work. At first, it provides specific detailed information concerning one case, and results from the research might also help explaining different cases with the similar issues. It also gives a possibility to observe problems in more depth in comparison to gathering already existing data from secondary sources.

Šurany is the town, where case study of this thesis was conducted. Qualitative along with quantitative data were obtained from various sources concerning Šurany. For the qualitative part, interviews with two experts on Roma minority were conducted. One of the experts is Ivana Šusterová, who works for the office of the Plenipotentiary the Roma communities in Nitra region. She has a master's degree in ethnology and currently she also works on obtaining a doctorate. She has been focusing on Roma minority and their culture since her bachelor studies. Another expert is Ivan Rác, who also used to work for the same office and currently he is also a professor at the university of Nitra. Ivan Rác is a Roma himself and he was also dealing with the mayor of Šurany concerning the expelled Roma community. Both gave specific information and background concerning the issue of the Roma, who were commanded to leave their homes. Ms. Šusterová has been dealing with this case since Roma families were commanded to leave their homes and their situation still remains unsolved. Moreover, interview with the mayor of Šurany – Marek Oremus, provides information and view on the issue from his perspective as a public official who oversees Šurany's municipality. Finally, one interview was conducted with a relative of the aggrieved family in Šurany as well. Concerning the quantitative part, a survey in form of a

paper questionnaire was distributed among ten representatives of Šurany's self-government. Survey is also accessible online for citizens of Šurany, and two extra forms were filled in an online form too. Questions in a survey were divided in to four main parts. First part was asking about Šurany as a city, second part was connected to quality of democracy and policy of housing was a third part. Lastly demographic information was also gathered at the very end of the questionnaires. Thus, data collected on Šurany's case is a combination of qualitative and quantitative method of data collection.

The Šurany Roma Exodus

Roma population has been living in Slovakia for a very long time. Roma have been experiencing many repercussions due to their ethnicity and many members of general population hold prejudices against them. Šurany is a city in Nitra region, where Roma faces such challenges too.

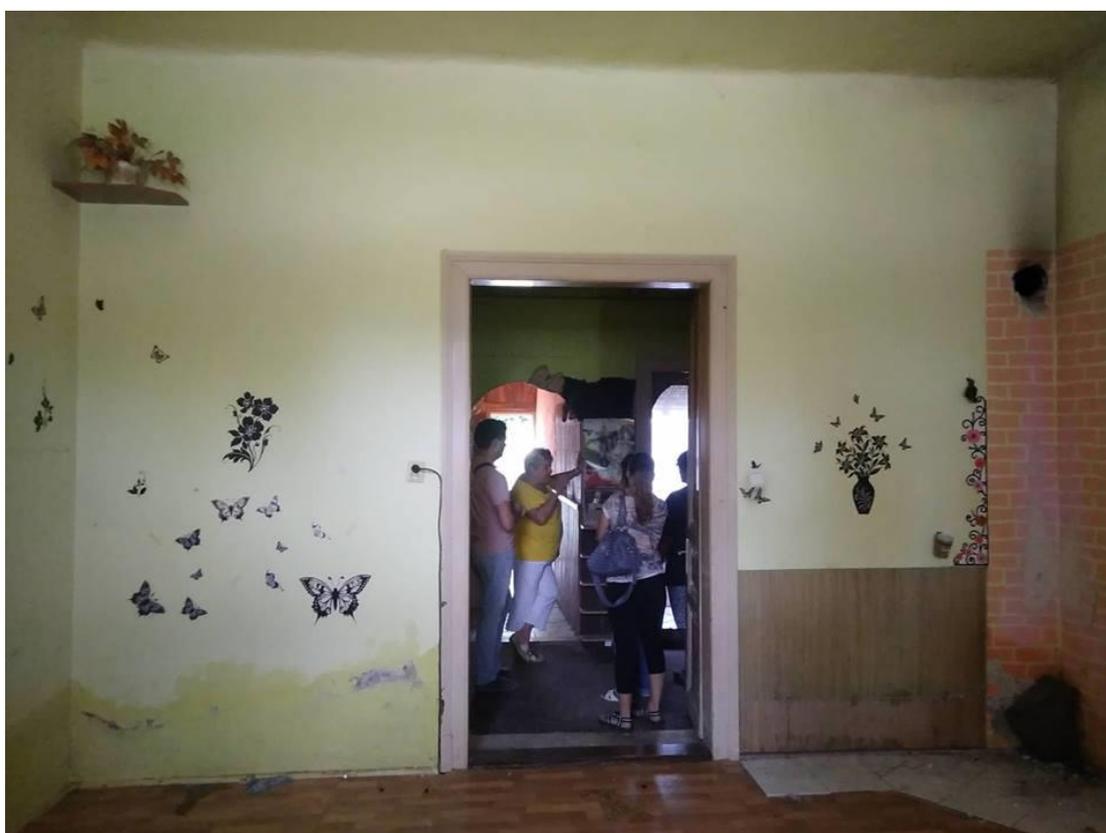
In 2017, Roma population of approximately twenty people experienced unjust decision coming from Šurany's self-government. More precisely one day, in September 2017, the self-government of Šurany sent the hurt Roma families a letter with a command to leave their homes until the end of the year. The families were forced to leave their home even though they were proper tax payers and obedient citizens. Regarding the apartments where they were living in, they did nothing wrong (Rác, 2018). However, self-government has made the decision and they put their apartments into public auction, which happened in April 2018. From the legal stand point of view, the mayor and the city did not do anything against the law. Self-government of Šurany was protecting itself, stating that since it is a public auction, even the family who was forced to leave could have applied. Nevertheless, it was also obvious that the Roma would not have enough capital for buying their former houses. One relative of the hurt family – Mr. Brand, complained about the situation and sent the case to the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Communities in Nitra region. Even though the plenipotentiary office got involved, it does not hold any legislative power, therefore it serves as a mediator in between the specific municipality and the government. The Office of the Plenipotentiary negotiated temporary housing in a city center of Šurany. Willingness of the municipality must be present in order for fulfilling the recommendations of the plenipotentiary office.

Once the public auction happened, the apartments were sold to the neighbors. Apparently, relationship between the hurt family and the neighbors was not a positive one (Šusterová, 2019). Once the neighbor bought their apartments, city was no longer the owner, therefore it was up to them what they were going to do with it. Evidently, as Mr. Brand stated, the neighbors were bullying the family who still lived in the houses. One of the examples is that, the neighbors would stop their water supply (Brand, 2018). The interesting fact is that Mr. Brand, said that the Roma family was trying to buy the apartments in 2008, nevertheless, the self-government of Šurany would not send them any reply at all to their request.

When the Roma families were forced to leave their home, Mr. Brand even tried to contact the television since he thought that publicizing the issue would help to correct the wrongs done toward the Roma. Unfortunately, that never happened. No television was willing to come since the Roma people were not the perpetrators but rather victims of the whole situation (Brand, 2018). The Roma families eventually left the apartments. It was approximately twenty people who were required to leave their homes. Even though the city provided temporary apartments for them, those apartments are far from adequate living space. According to I. Šusterová, I. Rác and Mr. Brand, once the family moved in to those city apartments, hygienic conditions were not suitable for having an adequate living space (Brand, 2018) (Rác, 2018) (Šusterová, 2019). Nevertheless, the mayor held quite a different opinion. He said that the apartments are suitable for living, since they do have a gas supply and electricity (Oremus, 2019). Ms. Šusterová and Mr. Brand who personally visited the space stated that fungus was on the walls and rats were spotted there. Both explicitly said that the space cannot be considered as adequate housing. Here are few photos of the apartment provided by Šurany.

IMAGES OF THE APARTMENTS PROVIDED BY THE CITY





As one can see in the pictures, the space is in substandard conditions. Nevertheless, the mayor insisted that the space is suitable for living and he said that he visited the place personally and that the space can be labeled as adequate for living conditions (Oremus, 2019).

The Roma issues are not promulgated enough in a Slovak society. It is very unfortunate that the Slovak televisions refused to report on this event of the Roma when Mr. Brand tried to contact them. Roma minority in Slovakia, as well as in Šurany, has been experiencing stigma and discrimination. Mr. Brand said it himself how difficult it is to find a job when one belongs to Roma ethnicity. Unless you do not know anybody, who can talk on your behalf and personally recommend you to the employer, it is rather problematic to find a good job. If one is Roma, a person faces prejudices on daily basis (Rác, 2018). Nevertheless, the family in Šurany was fortunate in a sense that Mr. Brand did try to solve it by submitting a case to the plenipotentiary office for Roma communities in Nitra. Without Mr. Brand, the family would not know how to deal with the situation. Thus, it again brings us to not being aware of ones' own rights. Moreover, it also means that life chances of the Roma people are then in a significantly disadvantaged position in comparison to the general population since state institutions often do not approach decision making processes according to human rights and dignity values. Next chapter provides a look into the culture of human rights in the Slovak society as well as an evaluation of life opportunities' through data concerning the Roma minority in the Slovak republic.

The Aftermath of the Unconsciousness of Human Rights

Human rights are about guaranteeing that any person can live a life of dignity. They are an indispensable part of democracy and they should apply to everybody on the principle of the universality, thus equality. Democracy in Slovakia was established in 1993, nevertheless, as this chapter argues, human rights still have not been enrooted enough within Slovak society. Lack of human rights culture then influences other aspects of the Slovak democracy such as functioning of the state institutions as well as decision making processes in self-governments.

Citizens are the ones who make democracy work, thus it is required to obtain proper understanding of human rights among Slovak citizens and only then they can be implemented through the state institutions as well since citizens are the ones who make the state institutions work. As mentioned previously, this thesis does not rely on the legal aspect but rather on how non-awareness of human rights influences Slovak society. For examining human rights culture within the Slovak society, the most recent report from the 2018 Eurobarometer is used as well as survey concerning quality of democracy in Slovakia conducted by BISLA students and faculty in 2018 and supported by Julie Johnson Kidd Travel Research Fellowship.

According to the most recent report carried out by the European Commission on European citizenship in 2018, Slovakia still has a long path to realize what human rights means. As the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights states, it is about dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens' rights, justice and general provisions governing the interpretation and application of the charter (European Union, 2012). Below, there is a graph depicting the most important values for the EU citizens and Slovakia holds the lowest position among two categories – equality and respect for human life. Both are considered important for values of democracy, therefore having the lowest outcome of percentages in these categories also undermines the competence of Slovak democracy.

Svatoňová: Incompetence of Slovak Democracy

QD6 In the following list, which are the three most important values for you personally?
(%)

		Peace	Human rights	Respect for human life	Democracy	Individual freedom	Equality	The rule of law	Tolerance	Solidarity, support for others	Respect for other cultures	Self-fulfilment	Religion
EU28		45	42	37	27	24	21	18	16	16	9	9	5
BE		40	35	40	24	28	21	12	23	22	13	16	5
BG		45	37	36	16	31	11	26	14	17	5	17	6
CZ		56	33	27	31	41	12	17	14	10	4	12	5
DK		48	49	34	42	21	29	15	17	12	16	2	2
DE		55	45	27	36	24	8	30	17	12	8	5	3
EE		56	43	39	17	21	10	19	17	8	15	19	2
IE		40	45	53	23	30	29	17	9	13	9	5	4
EL		53	39	44	36	22	22	25	2	22	7	4	20
ES		38	48	43	26	18	27	17	16	23	6	5	3
FR		51	44	50	18	21	25	9	22	24	10	12	3
HR		43	30	31	23	40	20	15	12	20	5	6	8
IT		37	38	39	31	24	24	10	11	17	7	13	7
CY		47	61	44	31	25	21	17	7	13	8	7	16
LV		51	51	42	11	41	13	12	8	12	20	6	5
LT		47	46	40	19	43	17	6	14	12	8	8	8
LU		49	41	46	26	27	17	12	21	23	11	4	3
HU		44	33	43	29	38	17	11	12	15	3	15	7
MT		45	29	40	28	10	15	19	8	13	6	4	11
NL		46	42	29	34	29	23	19	24	18	14	12	5
AT		53	38	31	30	49	18	15	18	12	4	9	7
PL		42	46	30	30	20	18	18	16	12	4	5	9
PT		33	42	42	22	19	41	15	10	26	7	19	2
RO		26	40	30	23	28	23	13	12	18	3	14	12
SI		53	49	43	14	36	21	12	18	14	6	6	2
SK		49	40	26	22	28	8	22	18	12	4	12	10
FI		49	47	38	18	26	30	34	16	8	4	9	5
SE		42	59	28	48	21	33	19	10	16	10	3	1
UK		41	40	41	20	19	27	22	20	8	19	5	4

Highest percentage per country

Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per country

Lowest percentage per item

Note. Reprinted from the Standard Eurobarometer 89 “European citizenship” Report by the *European Commission*, retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm>

Democratic values consist of various categories and human rights belong to the core democratic values. Nevertheless, human rights are about the goal of what a person can actually become or has a potential to become. They are universal meaning that they apply to everybody on equal basis. Even though 40% of Slovak respondents marked human rights as one of the core values, as displayed in the graph, only 8% of Slovak respondents consider “equality” as one of the most important values for them. Equality is a crucial part of human rights too, thus results are quite alarming. Slovak citizens have the least amount of appreciation for equality among all EU member states. Moreover, in the category of the value for respecting human life, Slovakia has again the lowest position among all member states. Only 26% of Slovak participants would consider “respect for human life” as a fundamental value for them (European Commission, 2018).

Moreover, according to the survey concerning quality of democracy in Slovakia, participants were asked how they feel, on a scale from one to ten, if their co-worker belongs to the following groups – Christian, atheist, Roma, homosexual, Hungarian and Muslim. One represents “not at all comfortable” whereas ten stands for “totally comfortable”. The Roma group ended up with the least percentage of “totally comfortable” feeling among respondents (Dedičstvo minulosti a kvalita demokracie, 2018). Survey also states that 55.6% respondents believe that the Slovak constitution protects the rights of minorities. Nevertheless, in commentaries, some state that minorities should not have the same rights as ethnic Slovaks or that the Slovak Constitution is actually putting minorities to the superior position in comparison to the majority of a Slovak society. Incidentally, those who know the least about the content of the Slovak Constitution tend to be at the same time the people who believe the rights of the minorities are above standards and they are at the same time least tolerant toward minorities. Correspondingly, there is a strong correlation between high tolerance towards the Other, knowledge of the Constitution, and critical stand toward the current administration in the sample of 259 participants (Dedičstvo minulosti a kvalita demokracie, 2018).

Due to low awareness of human rights within the Slovak society, this introduces another issue connected to state institutions and life chances of the Roma minority. As stated above, state institutions consist of citizens and if a lot of citizens running the public offices do not possess the values of equality or respecting human life for instance, then it also initiates other problems concerning the Roma in a Slovak society. Due to lack of these values among majority of Slovak society, the Roma have inferior position within Slovak

society in comparison to the general public, thus they are also deprived of many life opportunities. Next section dedicates attention to displaying decreased life opportunities of the Roma in comparison to the majority of Slovak society.

The Roma vs. Majority of the Slovak Society

The Roma minority is deprived of many life opportunities in comparison with the majority of the Slovak society. For measuring this specific variable, secondary data analysis will be used as a main source. The data is going to be gathered from the most recent reports, concerning the Roma minority, published by the Ministry of Interior in 2013, United Nations Development Program 2010 and the Center for Reproductive Rights in 2017. Moreover, hard data in combination with soft data, primarily about education, housing, health care and infrastructure, will demonstrate how Roma minority suffers from underprivileged status in a Slovak society. Thus, due to the deprivation of many institutions which are available to the majority of Slovak citizens, Roma minority has been stuck in a vicious circle. Therefore, the data shows how the Roma minority is dispossessed of many opportunities which are essential for humans to fulfill a life of dignity in comparison with the majority of the Slovaks.

Health Care

One of the most important elements of everyone's life is health. When it comes to health care, it is indispensable for relying on adequate and proper treatments by the doctors. Nonetheless, reality for a lot of Roma people, especially women, is different. According to Centre for Reproductive Rights, many women while staying at a hospital were dealing with segregation, discrimination or inhuman behavior from doctors toward them (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2017). The Center for Reproductive Rights has published a report, *Vakeras Zorales*, in which thirty-eight Roma women talk about their personal experience in public hospitals. Based on women's stories, employees of the hospitals were constantly putting the Roma women down as inferior. There are more examples of how the Roma women were disadvantaged. For instance, there is a segregation of rooms which are selected only for the Roma women. Furthermore, there were even cases when the Roma women were forced to share one bed with another Roma patient. Therefore, segregation in a public hospital is present even in twenty first century. Not only Roma women face segregation, but hate speech and discrimination based on their ethnicities was also an aspect of many stories from *Vakeras Zorales*. "Roma women have segregated rooms within a hospital in Krompachy - for Roma women, there are three rooms for Romas only, one

shower and one toilet. White women's rooms have their own toilets. White women can eat in a hospital canteen, whereas the Roma women cannot. In a Roma hospital room, there is no bin for trash. It is like in a concentration camp" (Center for Reproductive Rights; Poradňa pre občianske a ľudské práva, 2017). This is a clear example of not respecting Article 21 from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union concerning non-discrimination. Article four states: "Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited" (European Union, 2012). Moreover, in 2003, cases of illegal sterilization of the Roma women appeared as well. When an abused woman tried to file a lawsuit to the Slovak court, she was not successful. Cases of illegal sterilization of Roma women were not investigated by Slovak institutions, since Slovak courts declined to examine such cases. However, the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) accepted women's complaints and they helped them through the process at a court. Consequently, the women also got a money as a compensation. Those women were sterilized without their own consent, thus that is a clear abuse of ones' human rights and it also undermines their human dignity (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2017).

Housing, Infrastructure and Labor Market

Conditions of the Roma minority is significantly poorer in comparison with the majority of Slovak society. There are more types of Roma housings and some of them are located in utterly segregated areas. Living in segregated areas brings along new issues such as social exclusion or harder accessibility to state institutions (schools, public offices, hospitals etc.). According to UNDP report, there are three types of housings connected to Roma minority – segregated, separated, and diffused. The highest number of population is in the Roma housings in separated areas. Atlas of the Roma Communities states, that there is approximately 95 020 Roma people living in such areas. Segregated areas are marked as the second type of housing with the highest number of inhabitants. There are approximately, around 73 920 Roma people, who are living in totally segregated locations. Unfortunately, housings which are placed inside of the city area, the diffused ones, do hold the lowest number. Therefore, there are only 46 496 Roma people living inside of the city communities (Mušinka, Škobla, Hurrle, Matlovičova, & Kling, 2013). Moreover, when it comes to number of persons living in a one household, Slovakia holds one of the highest ranks among all member states of the EU. The percentage of crowded housing in Slovakia

is 40.1% and it is one of the highest percentage from among the OECD countries. (Filadelfiová & Gerbery, 2012). In comparison with the majority of the Slovak citizens, the Roma minority has the highest percentage of the number of persons per one room. Segregated areas have the highest average number per residential room. Therefore, the quality of living standards and dwelling itself is also in a worse position. Table below demonstrates crowded housings of the Roma in Slovakia. The research was conducted and published by the UNDP. It carried out research on Roma communities where 1,068 municipalities along with 1,573 Roma settlements were mapped (Filadelfiová & Gerbery, 2012). Table demonstrated below represents a sample from UNDP research on Roma communities.

Table 1.

The number of person per one residential room in Roma households (in % and averages)

	Segregated	Separated	Diffused	All Roma households
Number of persons per 1 room	Share of households of the entire number of households of the given type (%)			
2 or more person per residential room (%)	75.8	66.4	59.0	67.1
3 or more person per residential room (%)	46.2	36.1	34.6	38.3
4 or more person per residential room (%)	32.5	20.5	18.0	23.7
<i>Average number of persons per residential room</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>2.8</i>

Note. Reprinted from *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma households in Slovakia 2010*: by Filadelfiová & Gerbery, retrieved from <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>.

As stated above, if one is living in an absolute segregation from the city community, new kinds of problems emerge as well. Members of the Roma communities are challenged with social exclusion, discrimination, labor exclusion and lack of infrastructure too. At first,

having adequate access to water is a basic human right. Water is completely necessary for everyday life. Nonetheless, data from the UNDP report suggests, that many Roma communities struggle with having clean water supply within adequate distance from their dwellings.

Table 2.

Structure of Roma households by distance of the main water source from dwelling (in %)

	Segregated	Separated	Diffused	Total
to 10 metres	24.3	21.7	20.8	23.1
11-50 metres	36.9	30.4	37.5	35.3
more than 50 metres	38.8	47.9	41.7	41.6
Households total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note. Reprinted from *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma households in Slovakia 2010*: by Filadelfiová & Gerbery, retrieved from <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>.

Another aspect of the disadvantaged position of Roma minority is labor exclusion. Many times, ethnicity has certain influence when it comes to work opportunities for Roma. Lack of qualification is also another factor, why Roma have a problem with employability. In comparison to general public, unemployment of Roma population is up to seven times higher in comparison to geographically close majority of population (Filadelfiová & Gerbery, 2012). Although when the Roma population has the same education as general population, Roma are still in a worse position. For instance, as data from the report suggests, if one acquires secondary education with a school leaving certificate, there is more than 80% of general population with work in comparison to 37.5% of the Roma population. Thus, having the same education as general public does not guarantee Roma population a job. Table below provides more detailed data on economic activity of Roma population in comparison to general population.

Table 3.

Declared economic activity of the Roma population with a finished education age 15-55 years by category of education – comparison of the subsets and with the geographically close general population (in %)

	Less than standard primary school	Standard primary school and unfinished secondary school	Secondary school without a school-leaving certificate	Secondary school with school-leaving certificate and more
Segregated				
Working	3.7	7.9	17.3	28.6
Pensioners and the ill	10.4	3.3	2.6	—
At home	21.5	19.4	20.0	28.6
Unemployed	64.4	69.4	60.1	42.8
Separated				
Working	9.0	8.0	28.6	25.0
Pensioners and the ill	12.7	3.0	2.2	—
At home	20.9	17.6	8.8	25.0
Unemployed	57.4	71.4	60.4	50.0
Diffused				
Working	3.4	13.4	31.0	47.1
Pensioners and the ill	14.6	5.7	2.0	5.9
At home	20.2	17.7	15.0	11.8
Unemployed	61.8	63.2	52.0	35.3
Geographically close general population				
Working	12.5	57.5	65.4	81.6
Pensioners and the ill	56.3	15.2	6.3	2.4
At home	12.5	12.1	8.2	9.8
Unemployed	18.7	15.2	20.1	6.2

Roma population total				
Working	5.6	9.8	26.3	37.5
Pensioners and the ill	12.3	4.0	2.3	3.1
At home	20.9	18.2	14.3	18.8
Unemployed	61.2	67.9	57.1	40.6

Explanation of categories: *

Note. Reprinted from *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma households in Slovakia 2010*: by Filadelfiová & Gerbery, retrieved from <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>.

**Working = self-employed and entrepreneurs, full- and part-time employed and other work activities; Pensioners and the ill = old-age pensioners, disability pensioners and the ill; At home = persons in the household, on maternity and parental leave and caring for a household member; Unemployed = unemployed. Note: The educational group for individual subsets together / adds up to 100%. The group of secondary schools with a school-leaving certificate and more had for the Roma population a very low representation (N = 35), the presented percentage shares by type of settlement are therefore only for orientation.*

Education

Economic activity of a citizen correlates with ones' education too. Education is necessary for any person competing on a labor market. Nevertheless, having education apparently does not guarantee literacy. As table below demonstrates, Roma population with the same education degree as the general population, still faces more challenges when it comes to literacy.

Table 4.

Indicators of literacy for different age groups of the Roma population and a comparison with the geographically close general population (in %)

	Reads with problems or not at all		Writes with problems or not at all		At least 1 problem	
	Roma population	General population	Roma population	General population	Roma population	General population
Whole set except pre-primary school children	33.8	1.7	40.8	3.0	43.7	3.7
Attended school in past (all)	28.8	1.2	34.8	2.5	33.8	1.7

Attended school in past (16-64)	28.4	0.6	33.9	0.8	36.8	1.1
All 16-64	29.2	0.8	34.6	1.0	37.9	1.7
All 16-24 (Nro = 407; Ngp = 75)	25.8	4	32.6	4.1	37.3	6.7
All 25-34 (Nro = 417; Ngp = 119)	28.8	—	33.2	—	36.0	—
All 35-44 (Nro = 355; Ngp = 89)	29.0	—	35.4	—	38.0	—
All 45-54 (Nro = 271; Ngp = 113)	30.4	—	32.8	—	36.5	—
All 55+ (Nro = 217; Ngp = 245)	38.3	2.4	49.5	5.3	50.2	5.7
Currently attending school (all)	49.6	5.1	59.8	6.4	63.0	7.5
Currently attending school (age 10+ years)	41.5	4.1	53.1	4.2	57.4	5.5

Note: The table presents the combined percentage shares of the given groups of those who have a problem with the given activity or can't perform them at all. Only respondents who answered the question are included.

Note. Reprinted from *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma households in Slovakia 2010*: by Filadelfiová & Gerbery, retrieved from <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>.

Therefore, it is obvious that not even education or school attendance promise literacy for everyone. In general, Roma population is in a significantly worse position in comparison with the general population. In every category, as the table above shows, the Roma are in a significantly inferior situation. 28.4% of the Roma population (16-64) which attended educational institutions in the past but not anymore, reported that they struggle with reading or do not read at all. Writing is also another difficulty, concerning the same group of the Roma population, 33.9% reported issues with writing (Gerbery & Filadelfiová, 2012). Results from the research are alarming since there is a huge gap in between these two groups.

Not only Roma population suffers from decreased results gained from education in comparison to general population, but a lot of Roma men and women reported many negative experiences throughout their school attendance as well. Many of Roma claim that mocking based on their ethnicity was part of their school life (Gerbery & Filadelfiová,

2012). Facing such negative experiences in public life from an early age does leave repercussions. Experiencing exclusion, mocking and racially based distinctions from classmates enhances negative relationships between the Roma and the general population. Furthermore, even in the twenty-first century, there are some examples of segregated primary as well as secondary schools. First case which monitored that segregation occurred in the Slovak school system happened in 2012 in the Eastern Slovakia of a city of Šarišské Michaľany, nonetheless, there are more examples such as Stará Ľubovňa for instance (Sivý, 2015).

Consequences of the Self-Government's Demeanor

As data above suggests, the Roma suffer from deprivation of various state institutions and experience more difficult life due to prejudices based on their ethnicity and stigma within a Slovak society. This part of the thesis focuses on decision-making process of Šurany's self-government in connection to the case study of the Roma families. For a deeper understanding of the decision-making process toward the family, the content of the interview conducted with the mayor of Šurany will be demonstrated along with the data gathered from the survey completed by Šurany's inhabitants. Even though the sample of the survey is not representative, it is still worth to share the questionnaire's' results in connection to the case study.

Survey's questions are divided into three main sections – Šurany's priorities, quality of democracy and housing policy. The second and third section of the survey is especially important in connection to this thesis. Section of the quality of democracy unfolds certain findings regarding the decision-making processes of Šurany's self-government. Concerning the establishment of new policies, according to 83.3% of respondents, Šurany should form new policies in accordance with the Slovak constitution, whereas 25% thinks that policies should be based on human rights international conventions. Moreover, almost half of the respondents (41.7%) are not aware of the existence of the UDHR document. Furthermore, the survey also asked about the case of the aggrieved family in Šurany. As results suggest, the majority of the respondents say that the public auction was in accordance with the law, therefore there is nothing wrong with such a decision. 50% of respondents believe that everybody deserves good quality housing and yet the family was commanded to leave city apartments even though they did not do anything illegal or wrongful toward the city.

During the interview with the mayor of Šurany, he was asked what was the reason for the public auction of the hurt family's home. According to Mr. Oremus, the apartments were not safe for living due to hygienic and static reasons of the building (Oremus 2019). Nonetheless, no official documents exist stating that these particular issues with the building were present (Šusterová, 2019). Furthermore, the mayor argued that inhabitants of the houses, sold in the public auction, were not paying taxes, therefore that was another reason for public auction. However, the family who was commanded to leave was a proper taxpayer and the ones who were not paying taxes are still illegally living there (Brand, 2018). Nevertheless, everything that has city done toward the aggrieved Roma family was not against the law. As the mayor was saying, he even had meetings with the representatives of

the office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma communities and they were trying to solve the issue together. For finding a common solution for Roma communities in any Slovak regions, willingness from both sides - self-government and plenipotentiary office must be present. Whether the willingness of Šurany's self-government was there remains questionable (Rác, 2018). On one hand, Šurany did dispossess the Roma family of their homes, however, the city gave them a replacement. Even though the housing was in bad conditions, at least they were not homeless. Nonetheless, the case has not been resolved yet and Ms. Šusterová said that it is quite difficult to schedule meetings trying to solve the issues of Roma minority in Šurany. She claims that cooperation with the mayor is rather tough (Šusterová, 2019).

The most unfortunate aspect of the whole situation is that finding solutions for the issue of the Roma is a difficult and demanding process. Therefore, as Mr. Rác was saying, once Šurany sold the apartments, the city was just relieved that it is not city property, therefore it is not in their responsibility anymore (Rác, 2018). Mr. Oremus was saying, that the city of Šurany did nothing against human rights. It is true that Šurany did everything in accordance with the Slovak law system, nonetheless, if the decision was made in accordance with human rights, the family would still be living in their homes. As apartments in Šurany were in a property of the city, city as the owner can do whatever it wants with it, thus from the legal aspect of Slovakia, it is permitted. Lack of human rights awareness among state representatives then leads to repercussions such as the one example of the Roma family in Šurany. Moreover, the Roma minority also undergoes challenges of abusive speech. During the interview, Mr. Oremus himself called them "gypsies" by accident and then he corrected himself (Oremus, 2019). Nonetheless, as a state public official, one should not use such insulting names toward Roma minority since that only perpetuates the already existing stigma connected to the Roma. Calling the Roma, a gypsy has a negative connotation and it is considered as an insult if one belongs to Roma minority (Rác, 2018).

Šurany is just one of many other examples in Slovakia. There are numerous other examples of the Roma suffering negative consequences due to self-government decisions and non-willingness to negotiate with the plenipotentiary office for Roma communities. Richnava is a village in Slovakia which has approximately six hundred inhabitants, nevertheless, two thousand Roma inhabitants live there as well. The Roma housings are located on a mountain quite far from the center of Richnava, however, they are officially Richnava's

inhabitants too. Those people do not have access to a drinkable water supply. The Roma are forced to drink from the nearest stream located nearby their housings. Nonetheless, the other issue is that it is close to another village called Kluknava. When it comes to finding solutions for Roma issues in Richnava, the mayor of the city is putting responsibility for the Roma on Kluknava, since they belong to cadastral register there. Therefore, when it comes to problems' solutions, two mayors are shifting the responsibility from one to another, since one is claiming that the Roma lives in Richnava, nonetheless, they belong to the cadastral register of Kluknava. When there was a meeting of two mayors of Richnava and Kluknava, they were pinpointing the responsibility for the Roma from one to another and what is more, they did not perceive the Roma themselves as a concern, but rather the ownership of the land which the Roma have been living. Another issue, concerning euro funds, emerge from such disagreements too. Who is an eligible candidate for applying for euro funds? Is it Richnava or Kluknava? Apparently, these kinds of disputes are not uncommon at all (Rác, 2018). Another and more drastic example where Roma minority suffered a loss of their homes happened in Partizánske. Firstly in 2016, the mayor of Partizánske decided to build a wired fence around housings where the Roma were living, therefore dwellings of the Roma were separated from the majority inhabitants of Partizánske. According to the city of Partizánske, the wired fence should ensure that the decent citizens (majority) are protected from the indecent ones (the Roma) (Michalcová, 2016). Nevertheless, during the summer of 2018, the mayor took even more radical approach toward the Roma minority and he decided to utterly dismantle the separated Roma dwellings (Božík, 2018). These municipalities' decisions are not in accordance with any core democratic values, let alone the values of human rights and dignity.

Absent Values of Democracy

From theories mentioned at the beginning of this paper, it is recognizable that democracy without aspects and values such as dignity, human rights, tolerance and solidarity cannot function properly. Based on the research of this thesis, Slovakia appears to have a long journey achieving democracy with those values. According to data provided by the Eurobarometer from 2018 and survey concerning the quality of democracy, it is apparent that there is a low awareness of human rights and poor perception of the Roma among Slovak society. Human beings are equal and everybody is worthy to live a life with dignity. Along with a model for politics of dignity, the capability approach introduces ten central capabilities which should be possible and accessible for all humans if one ought to live a life of dignity. Nonetheless, either would be possible without the human rights initiative. Human rights are inalienable and universal for all human beings regardless of one religion, nationality or ethnicity. However, as demonstrated in this work, the Roma still face challenges of discrimination coming from a Slovak society as well as state institutions. Moreover, states which sign treaties concerning human rights should pursue its aim even though the treaty is not necessarily legally binding. Nonetheless, as revealed in the previous chapter, majority of the Slovak society put the Slovak constitution into a superior position in comparison to either human rights or the European treaties and conventions.

Lack of human rights consciousness then leads to consequences which affect disadvantaged members of the Slovak society – the Roma. Furthermore, having a status of a citizen comes along with certain rights which can be divided into civil, political and social ones. If a person has citizenship, he or she should not suffer from a deficiency of those rights. Even though the Roma are citizens of Slovakia, they are deprived of their citizenship rights in comparison to the general population. There are large gaps in between the general population and the Roma in connection to services provided by the state. How can one have a life of dignity, if the person is deprived of major institutions such as health care or education? The Roma minority is still underprivileged in these spheres. As data suggests, the Roma still suffer from deprivation of state institutions concerning health care, education, housing etc. Moreover, the case study of Šurany provides a more detailed insight into the decision-making of regional self-government. Based on Šurany's municipality's decision toward aggrieved family as well as info gathered from representatives of the office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma communities in Nitra region, it seems that as long as decisions are in accordance with the Slovak law system, that is a sufficient solution for

regional self-governments. Nevertheless, such decisions lack aspects of human dignity and human rights and the Roma suffer at the expense of such decisions. The case study of Šurany serves as one of the examples, how the Roma minority challenges stigma and discrimination coming from the self-government. Therefore, the quality of democracy is degraded by factors mentioned and observed in this thesis. If the Romaphobia is not abolished among the majority of the Slovak society, the Roma will hardly overcome stigma and underprivileged status.

Resumé

Hlavným zámerom tejto práce je poukázať na to, ako je kvalita demokracie degradovaná vzhľadom na postavenie Rómskej minority v slovenskej spoločnosti. Prvá kapitola bakalárskej práce je teoretický základ, ktorý opisuje už existujúce teórie. Táto kapitola je rozdelená na šesť podkapitol. Prvá podkapitola sa týka modelu demokracie kde je najdôležitejším elementom ľudská dôstojnosť a opisuje model demokracie. Ďalšia podkapitola opisuje tzv. ekonomický model *capability approach*, ktorý sa týka základných životných potrieb. Tento ekonomický model rozpráva o tom, ako je dôležité, aby každá ľudská bytosť mala zabezpečené základné životné potreby (zdravotníctvo, bývanie, školstvo...), ktoré má zabezpečiť štát na to, aby človek mohol viesť dôstojný život. Dôležitým elementom teoretickej kapitoly je rozdelenie a definícia ľudských práv. Teórie predstavené v prvej kapitole slúžia ako základný model pre fungovanie kvalitnej demokracie.

Ďalšia časť bakalárskej práce opisuje hypotézu, ktorá rozpráva o kvalitách demokracie na Slovensku a faktory, ktoré ju degradujú. Vedomosť ľudských práv na Slovensku je nízka a z toho vyplývajú ďalšie následky ako napríklad znevýhodnené postavenie Rómskej minority v slovenskej spoločnosti. Rómovia na Slovensku v porovnaní so slovenskou majoritou trpia nedostatkom životných potrieb v už spomínaných sektoroch zdravotníctva, školstva, bývania a pracovných príležitostí. Prípadová štúdia Šurian slúži na hlbšie porozumenie Rómskej problematiky napojené na regionálnu štátnu správu a jej fungovanie. V metodologickej časti tejto bakalárskej práce je podrobne opísaný proces, akým táto práca nadobudla relevantné dáta. Je to kombinácia kvalitatívneho ako aj kvantitatívneho výskumu. V roku 2017, dve Rómske rodiny čelili rozhodnutiu, ktoré bolo odsúhlasené Šurianskym mestským zastupiteľstvom a Rómske rodiny boli prinútené opustiť ich obydľia. Na získanie kvalitatívnych dát ohľadom prípadovej štúdie v Šuranoch boli uskutočnené rozhovory so štyrmi participantmi. S Ivanom Rácom, PhD. a slečnou Mgr. Šusterovou oboch pracujúcich pre úrad splnomocnenca pre Rómske komunity. Taktiež bol zrealizovaný rozhovor s pánom primátorom Šurian – Ing. Oremusom aby poskytol náhľad štátneho pracovníka na problematiku Rómskej rodiny v Šuranoch. V neposlednom rade, sme zrealizovali rozhovor s príbuzným poškodenej rodiny - pánom Brandonom. Na získanie kvantitatívnych dát ohľadom prípadovej štúdie v Šuranoch bol vyhotovený dotazník. Bohužiaľ, iba dvanásť participantov vyplnilo dotazník, takže vzorka nie je reprezentatívna, ale výsledky z dotazníku sú tak či tak preukázateľné. Desať

z dvanástich participantov boli mestskí zastupitelia. Dokopy sa mestské zastupiteľstvo v Šuranoch skladá z trinástich zastupiteľov.

Táto bakalárska práca sa snaží poukázať na negatívne následky neexistujúcej kultúry ľudských práv v slovenskej spoločnosti napojených na Rómsku minoritu na Slovensku. Kvalita demokracie je znehodnotená práve kvôli nedostatočnej vedomosti ľudských práv medzi členmi slovenskej spoločnosti a trpia tým hlavne minority ako napríklad Rómovia. Výskum preukázal, že status Rómov a ich percepcia medzi majoritnou slovenskou spoločnosťou je v znevýhodnenej pozícii čo sa taktiež odzrkadľuje na fungovaní štátnych inštitúcií. Prípadová štúdia Šurian slúži ako jeden z veľa ďalších prípadov, ktorá poukazuje ako regionálna štátna samospráva rozhoduje ohľadom osudu Rómskej minority. Pokiaľ ľudské práva a dôstojnosť nebudú dostatočne ustanovené v slovenskej spoločnosti, Rómovia sa ťažko zbavia stigmy a nespravodlivosti, ktorým denne čelia.

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