

Consus Project

Project Outline

**Countering marginalisation through alternative media:
Challenges of empowerment and social inclusion**

Title:

Countering marginalisation through alternative media: Challenges of empowerment and social inclusion

Introduction

Roma constitute one of the most marginalised and vulnerable minorities in Europe with a history of discrimination, persecution, racism and social exclusion. It is estimated that there are more than 10 millions¹ Roma in Europe with the majority of them living in Central and Eastern European countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary as well as the Western Balkans. The 2014 Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for the National Roma Integration Strategies suggests that one of the achievements in the social inclusion of Roma has been the mainstreaming of Roma integration in policy and financing both at the national and international level². Despite this growing awareness of the socio-economic hardship of the Roma community, their limited access to basic human rights and services and persistent discrimination and the political willingness to address their marginalisation, little has been achieved³. National, EU and international legislation, policy and other initiatives address primarily, rightly so, the following four crucial dimensions: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing⁴. However, relatively limited attention is paid to other important areas such as participation in and through the media; access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), communication rights, and participatory spaces to engage in the public sphere.

Roma non-governmental organisations with the support of institutions such as Open Society Foundations have initiated various projects to establish Roma media, for instance Roma community radios, TV programmes, publications such as gazettes⁵ as tools to preserve Roma language, culture and identity as well as empower the Roma community to engage with and participate in the public sphere. With the proliferation of ICTs, the media landscape has been transformed profoundly by new practices of mediated communication such as citizen journalism, new media, online social networks and a revised concept of alternative media⁶. In this light, the relation between audiences and

¹ Resource: European Commission Estimation of Roma population in Europe, available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0173&from=en>

² European Commission Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, 2014, available at

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_implement_strategies2014_en.pdf

³ See Roma Decade reports available at <http://www.romadecade.org/decade-documents-decade-progress-reports>

See UN Reports on Roma situation available at

<http://www.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/roma-in-central-and-southeast-europe/roma-data.html>

See also UN Human Rights – Working Group on Roma available at

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/UnitedNationsRegionalWGonRoma.aspx>

⁴ See EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies – Europe 2020 available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-framework/index_en.htm

⁵ See Media and Development at

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/nelson/newmediadev/Roma%20Media.html>

⁶ If interested in the research on the impact of new media on mainstream media, please see:

media has been reconfigured with more opportunities offered to audiences not only for participation in the media, but most importantly participation through the media in the public sphere⁷. It is argued that due to their characteristics, being interactive, instant, networked, persistent and ubiquitous, new media offer participatory opportunities for citizen empowerment and particularly so for marginalised communities⁸. The fundamental idea of the alternative media is that they are citizen-owned medium and serve as alternatives to the mainstream media and telecommunication organisations⁹. The principle merit of alternative media is the encouragement of the grassroots access to media, self-management as well as participation in producing alternative media formats and content to counter mainstream deliberation.

Aims of the assignment – working questions

This project is interested in exploring in what ways and to what extent alternative media could contribute to counter marginalisation of Roma in Europe (ex Roma community in Hungary, France, Western Balkans, Romania). Students will explore the following main questions:

- In what ways and to what extent alternative media, if at all, can contribute to counter marginalisation of Roma?
- What are the key recommendations for policy development regarding alternative media for social change?

In order to do so, they will need to:

First, conduct survey of literature to critically explore the concepts such as: alternative media; marginalisation, integration, social inclusion and empowerment.

Second, conduct desk research to analyse the European Union approach on social inclusion for marginalised communities (particularly the Roma community) focusing on the role of media (mainstream vs. alternative media) and its adaption at the national level. They will select four countries in Europe for their analysis.

Third, conduct desk and field research (if relevant) to explore the development of alternative media in the selected countries with the focus on Roma communities. They will look into the extent to which Roma alternative media have been developed in the selected countries? What have been the main achievements? Challenges? They will

Jenkins, Henry (2008) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, NY: New York University Press.

Lister, Martin, et.al. (2008) *New Media: A critical introduction*, London: Routledge.

⁷ See Manovich, Lev (2001) *The Language of New Media*, MIT Press.

⁸ See Chris, A. (2002). *Alternative media*. London: Sage Publications.

⁹ See Beckett, C. (2008) *Supermedia - Saving Journalism so it can save the world*. London: Blackwell.
Cammaerts, B., & Carpentier, N. (Eds.), *Reclaiming the Media: Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles*, Intellect Books.

identify the stakeholders and analyse their role in the development of Roma alternative media. They will particularly look into the following three dimensions:

- a) Empowerment of marginalised Roma in the selected countries in Europe through alternative media;
- b) The development of participatory communicative spaces for marginalised communities who have relatively limited access to mainstream media;
- c) Production of alternative discourses on Roma communities, their culture, lifestyles, complex profiles and daily issues (housing, education, health and employment) that counter the dominant discourses in the public sphere.

Finally, based on the findings of the research, they will draw policy recommendations for the development of Roma alternative media by considering aspects such as: issues of access and opportunities for Roma to develop their own medium of communication; risks of self-isolation; concerns about financing and sustainability; the role of the government, international organisation, civil society, academia and other stakeholders.

Outcome of the assignment

The outcome of the assignment will be:

- 1) Comparative research paper investigating the role of alternative media to counter marginalisation for Roma in the selected countries in Europe;
- 2) Key Policy recommendations for the development of Roma alternative media.

Purpose. What is desired of the group and the use that will be made of the findings by the provider.

The findings of the project will be introduced to the UET Centre, which works primarily on research and capacity building projects on social inclusion, human rights and ICTs. The key recommendations will be provided to the relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions working with the Roma community in Albania in order to mainstream the participatory communication spaces for Roma and other marginalised communities. The findings will inform the lecturing of New Media and ICTs as well as the development of curricula on Media for Social Change.

Key Concepts

Mainstream media; New media; Alternative media; Social inclusion; Marginalisation; Empowerment

Literature

Cammaerts, B. (2005). ICT-Usage among Transnational Social Movements in the Networked Society – To Organize, to Mobilize and to Debate, in R. Silverstone (Ed.). *Media, Technology and Everyday Life in Europe: From Information to Communication*. Aldershot.

Cammaerts, B. (2009). Community radio in the West: a legacy of struggle for survival in a state and capitalist controlled media environment. *International communication gazette*.

Carpentier, N et. al. (2009). Citizen Journalism and the North Belgian peach march, in S. Allan & E. Thorsen (Eds.). *Citizen Journalism: Global Perspectives. Global Crises and the Media*. New York: Peter Lang.

Carpentier, N. et.al (2003). “Community Media: Muting the democratic media discourse?”. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*.

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Lister, Martin, et.al. (2008) *New Media: A critical introduction*, London: Routledge.

Manovich, Lev (2001) *The Language of New Media*, MIT Press.

Young, I. M. (2002). *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Vidra, Zsuzsanna., & Fox, J (2012). “The Radicalization of Media Discourse. The rise of the Extreme Right in Hungary and the Roma Question”. CEU, Center for Policy Studies, Hungary. Available at <http://cps.ceu.edu/publications/working-papers/media-discourse-radicalization-accept>

European Union and Roma:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-funding/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-summits/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-stakeholders/index_en.htm

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7720&type=2&furtherPubs=yes>

Other resources on Roma and Media in Europe:

<http://www.errc.org/links-to-ngos-and-roma-media>

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/nelson/newmediadev/Roma%20Media.html>

<http://www.romeandmedia.com/>

<http://www.inotherwords-project.eu/content/project/media-analysis/terminology/terminology-concerning-roma>

<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ppp-online/roma-in-the-news-an-examination-of-media-and-political-discourse-and-what-needs-to-change/>

UN on Roma

<http://www.romadecade.org/>

<http://www.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/roma-in-central-and-southeast-europe.html>

<http://www.europe.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RomaInclusion.pdf>

