

Abstract

The societies of most European countries, especially those in Central Europe, are plagued by a high incidence of social and civic exclusion of Roma. The living situation of a significant part of the Roma community is a long-standing human rights challenge for modern welfare states. Since the collapse of the bipolar world, with the flowering of liberal values of equality, it has been assumed that Roma would be relatively swiftly integrated into mainstream society and that unjustified disparities in access to public services would be eliminated. Over the last thirty years, all states affected by significant levels of exclusion of the Roma minority have attempted to address this sensitive issue through a wide range of policies, but without any relevant and lasting impact. The present thesis examines national public policies in the field of Roma minority inclusion in Slovakia, Poland, and Czech Republic and Hungary in the current period. The main objective of the thesis is to compare the national integration policies of selected Central European countries by applying Actor-centred Institutionalism Theory and the A-A-A Model. The result of the scientific research is to present a comparative overview study that will generally reveal parallels and discrepancies in the states approach to Roma exclusion and the functioning of integration systems. The thesis is designed in two main parts. In the theoretical part, the theoretical foundation of the thesis is laid, based on the identification of the main concepts and the description of the two chosen explanatory frameworks. The analytical part is constructed in order to fulfil the research aim of exploring the research triangulation outlined. First dimension of the research, i.e. the substantive policy design of national Roma integration policies in all countries, comes under qualitative scrutiny. The second dimension is an analysis of the actors involved in integration policies from their design to their implementation. The triangulation concludes with an analysis of the actor-institutional environment of Roma inclusion policies, or the arena in which it takes place. The resulting findings and their subsequent synthesis will offer the first comprehensive perspective on these policies in Central Europe, as there is still no study devoted to such a wide-ranging issue involving a target population of hundreds of thousands of people.