

The Decade of Roma Inclusion:
A Unifying Framework of Progress Measurement

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1. Introduction

The social and economic situation of the Roma in Europe has become one of the focal themes of the European social and political discourse, attracting significant attention of practitioners, policy makers, as well as, more recently, scientists. A number of initiatives aiming at description, evaluation, and improvement of the socio-economic status and social inclusion of the Roma have emerged. The Decade of Roma Inclusion initiated by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute is allegedly the most comprehensive initiatives of this kind, bringing together governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as the Romani civil society. Its key objective is to accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma and to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way. The four priority areas of the Decade are education, employment, health, and housing. The Decade also commits the involved governments to take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming.

The identification of outcome targets and performance indicators is essential to monitoring the success of the Decade. In the run-up to the Decade launch, each country worked, with varying success, on identifying indicators and strengthening datasets that can be used to monitor progress on each of the Decade goals. However, more than two years into the Decade, the Decade lacks an effective outcome monitoring mechanism that would measure the results of Government programs and help assess progress towards meeting the goals set at the inception of the Decade in 2005. Monitoring frameworks on the national level, to the extent to which they have been introduced, remain

underdeveloped. Roma activists have developed DecadeWatch as a tool to assess Government inputs, yet there is consensus that it needs to be complemented by efforts to measure outcomes and real changes for people.

The objective of this paper is to propose a mechanism to allow Decade countries to track and report on the results of Roma inclusion policies in 2015. This objective includes a review of good practice in monitoring of the integration of ethnic minorities and proposing measures to strengthen outcome monitoring for the Decade of Roma inclusion – either at national level or across the Decade countries. Specifically, this paper examines and evaluates good practice in monitoring the integration of ethnic minorities from relevant countries and regions; identifies the suitable indicators for tracking integration of Roma in the Decade countries for the four focus areas of the Decade – education, employment, health and housing; discusses adequate mechanisms of collection of data on Roma integration; and sets concrete proposals for strengthening the results framework for the Decade, including guidelines for application of the suggested indicators using the available data.

2. Minority Integration

The complexity of integration of ethnic minorities involving legal, social, economic, political, moral, and many other aspects precludes a single consensual definition of such integration. Nevertheless, a number of themes recur in the scientific and practitioner's discourse on the subject matter. With good confidence one can put human rights, including the right for effective and lasting protection from crime, harassment, and violence, and citizenship rights at the foundation of minority integration.

Linguistic skills and cultural awareness are key competences that facilitate integration of ethnic minorities. Social connections within and between ethnic groups empower ethnic minorities to fully participate in social and economic life of the broader society. Such full participation defines integration and involves two features. The first such feature is achieving outcomes within employment, education, housing and health that are equivalent to those achieved within the broader society and the majority ethnic group in particular. Second, it involves functioning social relationships within ethnic minority, between ethnic minority and majority, and between members of ethnic minority and state institutions and services.

Scientific approaches to racial and ethnic discrimination in the labor markets date back to Becker (1957).¹ The issue of Roma integration has been largely overlooked, receiving only sporadic attention until recently. The early work of Beynon (1936) investigates Romani or Dom communities in Hungary, India, and USA in a comparative framework. Barany (1994) investigates socio-political and economical situations of the Roma in the post-communist Eastern Europe and the dangers to the maintenance of their identity and of their domestic and international security. Vermeersch (2003) studies the interaction between Roma ethnic identity and political participation. Reyniers (1995) investigates the migration flows of the Roma within Central and Eastern Europe and towards some OECD countries.

A number of applied reports investigate integration of ethnic minorities and evaluate integration policies. The report *On the Human Rights Situation of the Roma*,

¹ Major further contributions include Welch (1967), Arrow (1972a, 1972b, 1973), who discuss the so-called *taste for discrimination* theories; Phelps (1972), Arrow (1972a, 1972b, 1973), Aigner and Cain (1977), Coate and Loury (1993), and Lundberg and Startz (2002) elaborate on the concept of *statistical discrimination*. Altonji and Blank (1999) summarize this literature extensively.

Sinti and Travelers in Europe drafted by the Council of Europe investigates the issues of discrimination and inequality in the fields of housing, education, and health care as well as racially motivated violence. Zimmermann et al. (2007) and the ensuing report prepared by the High Level Advisory Group of Experts of the European Commission (European Commission, 2007) discuss the situation of ethnic minorities in Europe, including the Roma, and measure the gaps in their labor market outcomes, evaluate the key barriers to their integration including negative attitudes towards members of ethnic minorities, and pinpoint a number of good practices using a sample of case studies. The most closely related to this paper is the report of the Home Office on the indicators of integration (Ager and Strang, 2004). This report suggests a framework for evaluation of integration policies and services aimed at refugees and asylum seekers.

3. Integration Measurement Methodology

As discussed above, the key markers of minority integration also adopted as the key areas of the Decade are education, employment, health and housing. While these four areas are strongly interdependent and influence each other through many complex relationships, they measure important dimensions of Roma integration and thus are relevant for integration progress measurement. There are a number of criteria that any integration progress indicator should fulfill. First, the proposed indicators should measure relevant domains of the integration progress. For the purposes of the Decade these are education, employment, health and housing. Second, the proposed indicators should be general enough in their coverage, such that all the relevant aspects of the complex

integration process within each domain are captured. Third, the indicators should be feasible, easily applicable and well measurable given the available data or data that can be collected in the given frame. Fourth, the variables that the indicators measure should be actually or potentially affected by the efforts of the national governments (e.g. within the Decade) to a sufficient degree. In other words, there must be a link between governmental efforts and the measured outcomes. Fifth, the indicators should measure integration progress in relative terms vis-à-vis the majority population. Finally, the proposed indicators should be flexible to enable applicability in the various integration contexts across the Decade countries and, at the same time, they should ensure international comparability of the integration measures.

We understand integration as a process that leads to a positive outcome for the individual that is comparable with that of his or her majority counterpart. Typically, integration consists of a number of sequential stages that all condition individual outcome and thus the degree of success. One can think of this as integration into certain social or economic institution that provides services to an individual and that determines his or her success. Conceptually, there are a number of stages that describe the integration process. First, the individual may or may not access a particular institution. Second, access provided, the individual may or may not be able to realize a positive outcome in the institution. Third, realization provided, the chances to obtain service of good quality may differ. For example, to integrate in the labor market, an individual needs to participate in the labor market, should not be unemployed, and then, employment granted, needs to have good chances of obtaining a job of adequate quality.

Each integration stage preceding the final stage, hereafter intermediate stage, conditions the realization of the ensuing stages. Put differently, failure in any of these stages leads to overall individual integration failure. However, the rate of success in each integration stage is a relevant measure of the success of a community. For example, in the labor market, these measures are participation rate and the employment rate (as the counterpart of the unemployment rate).

The final stage measuring the quality of the outcome can be measured in terms of actual outcome or the chances to achieve outcome above some threshold level. For example, labor market outcomes can be measured by earnings or by the chances to achieve earnings above certain threshold. A reasonable threshold could be the threshold defining low-pay work, e.g. 60% of the average majority wage in the economy. While the first measure is often easier to measure, the second captures relevant distributional characteristics of outcomes.

One needs to note that, undesirably, certain success measures are sensitive to the share of the minority in the population. This is the case if, for example, one would define the abovementioned threshold to be 60% of the average wage of the total population. In such case, assuming that minority wages are lower than majority wages, *ceteris paribus*, regions with a larger share of minority population would exhibit better minority integration. Therefore, the benchmark thresholds need to be defined in terms of majority outcomes.

It is quite straightforward to compare these integration success indicators between majorities and minorities and thus evaluate integration success in the various stages of the integration process. Nevertheless, it may be desirable to measure the overall integration

success in certain dimension, e.g. employment. To achieve this we apply two alternative intuitive notions. First, we calculate relative expected outcome averaged over a minority group. Second, we compute the relative chances of success for members of a minority group. The expected outcome of a certain social group is the product of the group success probabilities in each of the stages up to the final stage multiplied by the average outcome achieved by the group in the final stage. In case of employment, this is computed as the participation rate multiplied by the employment rate (one minus the unemployment rate) and by the average wage or occupational attainment of the social group. The integration success is then measured as the ratio of the minority and majority expected outcomes.

The social group's chance of success is computed similarly, but we replace the average outcome in the last stage by the group's probability to achieve certain threshold outcome. In case of employment, chance of success is computed as the participation rate multiplied by the employment rate (one minus the unemployment rate) and then by the probability of achieving certain minimum earnings or occupational rank by the members of the social group. The integration success is then measured as the ratio of the minority and majority expected success chances.

Finally, to measure integration as a multidimensional phenomenon we propose to rank integration success in each country within each dimension and then compute the average rank of each country across dimensions. This way we give equal explicit and implicit weight to each dimension, since not only we use equal weights for each dimension but also we preserve the same variance of measurement in each dimension.

It is important to understand that, typically, there are a number of potential indicator of integration even within a given area. For example, within the employment

area one can look at paid employment, self employment, or both at the same time. One strategy of overcoming this ambiguity could be reporting separate indicators for each outcome or success measure. Another would be to develop comprehensive indicators, such as *income from paid- or self-employment*. The first approach could lead to a non-comparable set of indicators across countries and thus dilution of the measurement framework. The second approach may confuse various aspects of integration and, again, jeopardize international comparisons. We therefore suggest the third approach: adopting one main indicator, such as paid-employment, that concerns the greatest share of relevant populations, and report a limited number of auxiliary indicators whenever available. Another related problem is the definition of the relevant populations. The role of gender is perhaps the most relevant aspect of minority integration in this context. As above, we suggest to consider the total population as the benchmark case and report indicators by gender whenever available. Other potential caveats concerning integration indicators include the roles of regional distribution of relevant populations, business cycle phase in different countries, and differences in welfare policies and other institutions that define not only the well being of ethnic minorities under non-integration but also their incentives. These issues need to be taken care of in all areas and stages of integration measurement.

[This is the key section for the upcoming meeting. I would like to invite the Group members to contribute by providing the following:

a) feedback on the methodology

b) ideas about relevant indicators in the remaining areas: Health, Education, Housing using the same approach as outlined above. I especially invite those members who are experts in some of the area to contribute to that area, as discussed in the last meeting.

c) Discussion on how the proposed indicators fulfill the criteria outlined in the second paragraph of this section

d) evaluate what are first- and second-best indicators

e) Note and discuss the caveats of each indicator

I suggest that each area expert prepares a brief presentation (5-10 minutes) of the indicators for the respective area along the b, c, d above and the data issues discussed below.]

4. Data Issues

This section identifies the necessary data sets and discusses how they inform the indicators developed in the previous section. Furthermore, it proposes strategies of overcoming data gaps.

Gaps in the available data include missing variables, ill-defined groups of interest, or missing values for years of interest. These gaps can be overcome under certain circumstances. For example, if only data for the minority and the total population are available (but not the data for majority separately) information about the share of ethnic minority suffices to calculate the values for the majority. Namely, we can calculate the

variable of interest u for the majority group J as $u_j = (u_k - u_l I)/(1 - I)$ where I denotes the minority group as well as its share in the total population K .

[While we will concentrate on data issues later, it is crucial to understand how the proposed indicators can be measured. I would therefore like to invite the Group members to contribute to this section by summarizing the available data each of us is aware of and to assess how the suggested indicators can be measured. In addition, please consider first- and second-best data sources and data collection methods. We should also discuss barriers to ethnic data collection and how to overcome them.]

5. Monitoring Practice

This section collects and examines good practice in monitoring and evaluating the degree and progress of integration of ethnic minorities.

[For this section we need to discuss the already existing practice, reports etc. that we evaluate. The methodology should be a comparative description and analysis in the context of the framework proposed in the previous section. For the upcoming meeting I foresee a brief discussion of the known practice]

6. Policy Conclusions and Suggestions

This section sets concrete proposals for strengthening the results framework for the Decade. In particular, it suggests concrete and applicable progress indicators for the Decade.

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