

ТМ	Г. XXVI	Бр. 1	Стр. 121 - 142	Ниш	јануар - март	2002.
----	---------	-------	----------------	-----	---------------	-------

UDK 331.102.12+331.102.325(=914.99)

Оригинални научни рад

Примљено: 21.2.2002.

Dragoljub B. Đorđević

Mašinski fakultet

Niš

Jovan Živković

Filozofski fakultet

Blace

Dragan Todorović

Filozofski fakultet

Niš

ROMANIES AT FLEA MARKETS (Mirror of Serbian Economy)

Summary

Along with "guests" from Bulgaria, Romania, and China, Serbs and Romanies are the most represented at flea markets. Romanies are, in such a rough competition, perceived as "the most industrious" salespersons: being from the beginning on the margins, they imposed their own way of life from the streets to surrounding peoples as a pattern success outside legal currents of work. *They are embodiment of flea market - while flea market is "mirror of Serbian economy"*. While researching the possibilities of application of micro-entrepreneurial program among Romanies, we have steered a ray of light into three such mirrors, in flea markets of Vranje, Leskovac, and Bujanovac. For that purpose *"Procedure for gathering information by direct observation of flea market - DBDJ/DT, 2001"* has been constructed..

Key words: Romanies, micro-entrepreneurship of Romanies, flea market, grey economy

E-mail: brkab@bankerinter.net
d.d.a.@bankerinter.net
todor.d@eunet.yu

"When economy is in the deepest recession and when a man has to fight for his bare life, then one trades with shoelaces, little soaps, cheap cologne, tooth sticks, and similar. It is a path towards more acceptable allocation of the money that everybody lacks."

(Joseph Kessel "A Mortar Man")

A glance at mirror¹

When economy of a country is almost completely reduced to practicing of "grey" economy, is that then certain sign that, on one side, legal system of state does not function, and on the other side, that social situation is in complete collapse. In view of the fact that in Serbia such condition lasts for years, it is easy to forebode condition in which social institutions find themselves, and also, which is more important, ruined human souls. (Simulations of production and trade, dismounted to the level of smuggling and resale, which provide only elementary satisfaction of needs,) what else it could derive from unless everyday disappointment and havoc. Here are special strategies of survival and original culture of poverty. In all these, the phenomenon of "*flea market*" has particular place and role. However, as any other social phenomena, flea market has "two sides of a coin", its latent and manifest function.

A decade earlier, the word "flea market" provoked unpleasant feelings among many people; it even had pejorative meaning. When somebody would have asked you where you bought something, and you replied "at flea market", it would *a priori* mean that you purchased goods of suspicious quality. Reputation of today's flea market has been changed a lot; going to flea market became everyday practice, almost a ritual, for significant part of population – rite is being planned for days, it gathers people, it finds the easiest way of practicing it. It is not rare that whole families, most often on weekends, go to a flea market - to that popular "weekend place", which is trademark of almost all places in Serbia. For those who are wealthier, flea market is a place of recreation/pastime/amusement, for those who are poor it is a need, since they will at flea market buy necessary supplies and spend less money than somewhere else. Idlers "waste time" and "steal days from God" there, while for thieves of all kinds flea market is a place of luck. What is the reason for such a situation?

¹ Prepared as a part of the project "*Income Generating Activities for Roma People in South Serbia (Bujanovac, Vranje, Leskovac)*", which research team - Dr Dragoljub B. Djordjevic, Full Professor at University of Nis, team leader, Dr Jovan Zivkovic, Assistant Professor at University of Kosovska Mitrovica, first researcher, and Dragan Todorovic, Teaching Assistant at University of Nis, second researcher - undertakes for *Italian Consortium for Solidarity (ICS)*.

Our state itself has until recently been one big and immense flea market. Many people lost their jobs and were forced to become involved in illegal trade. What in the beginning was justified as specific strategy of survival became profitable business for many. Flea markets are called "department stores under open air", in which young vendors in blue coats from past times are replaced by former workers from lagged industrial giants, unemployed engineers and professors, entrepreneurs and young – all of them saw their perspective in this kind of work, that is, as politicians call it, in "grey economy". Flea markets are really exclusive places in which offer is diverse and prices are more or less acceptable: there are bad-quality goods, of course, but also products, which are being sold in boutiques, where they cost two or three times more.

Along with "guests" from Bulgaria, Romania, and China, Serbs and Romanians are the most represented at flea markets. Romanians are, in such a rough competition, perceived as "the most industrious" salesmen: from the very beginning on the margins, they imposed their own, way of life from the streets to surrounding peoples as a pattern of efficacy (success) outside legal currents of working. *They are embodiment of flea market – while it is "mirror of Serbian economy"*. While researching the possibilities of application of micro-entrepreneurial program among Romanians, we have steered a ray of light into three such mirrors, in flea markets of Vranje, Leskovac, and Bujanovac. For that purpose *"Procedure for gathering information by direct observation of flea market – DBDJ/DT, 2001"* has been constructed.

Flea markets of Vranje²

Vranje also has its own place for flea market. Moreover two! The owner of both is JKP "Komrad" from Vranje. There are in fact two markets owned by the town's communal enterprise, which, besides people who sell agricultural goods, became place of gathering for salesmen of diverse products brought from Turkey and Bulgaria. The chief of both markets, Zoran Petrović, born in Vranje, gave us valuable information.

Market "Tekija"

One does not need to wonder much around: right opposite to bus station, in area called by local population Donje Vranje, starts different life, full of mottle, noise, market bargaining, solicitous and happy faces. That is it – zone where people from Vranje for the last years buy the most. Often uncovered market works every day, but flea market works only on Saturdays, as it is written on the notice board at the entrance,

² D. Todorovic observed flea market on 1st December, 2001.

from 9 AM to 16 PM. Monthly rent of stand is 600 dinars or 20 dinars daily. We will not be wrong if we say that the market is "Romany flea market": 70-80% of all salesmen at flea market are Romanies.

One can clearly distinguish three complexes on the market. In the eastern part, close to secondary entrance, there are approximately 50 stands on which people sell products necessary for living, for what the market was built in the first place. We did not notice any salesman of Roma origin.

Right next to main entrance, in couple of lines, there are approximately 100 organized market stands, which are rented for whole month, although they are used only on Saturdays. Stands are rented by wealthy Romanies from Bujanovac, and every stand is in fact registered private shop. There are only 10% of Serbs here. People resell imported goods (smuggled goods) from Turkey and Bulgaria; these are more expensive textile products and products of higher quality (jackets, jumpers, blouses, pants, jeans, bed linen, quilts, blankets, underwear, curtains, carpets), footwear and some cosmetics. Every "firm", and some of them have even two stands, is specialized for particular products: some deal with knitted fabrics (jumpers, blouses, pants), some deal only with jeans, some with winter jackets, while some offer exclusively bed linen, underwear, and blankets. Local salesmen, Romanies and non-Romanies, cannot cope with Romanies from Bujanovac in respect to either quality or quantity of offered goods. This shows that Romanies from Bujanovac made from this job long lasting business. People mention stand of some Mad from Bujanovac, who is said to have more goods than the whole department store.

However, it is impossible to notice wealth from external appearance. By stand, one can usually find two, even three persons of different gender. Little children are with women behind the stand, while a man stands on the front. Men prevail (70%) to women (30%) in life and work strength (between 30 and 50 years of age). They also make the majority (over 70%) in comparison to older Romanies, men, and women. Regardless to predisposition for fast aging, they all look well-fed, well cared, mainly in neat and new clothes, which do not differ from the clothes offered for selling. Men look better than women do, especially those middle aged. They know each other very well, since they are together in the business for long time, they protect each other, and since being in majority, they do not pay attention either to non-Romanies salespersons or to local Romanies. People objected to administration of the market, why in this part of the market, which is the most important, there are exclusively Romanies from Bujanovac, but the answer seems to lie in economic factor. Serbs are, as we said, in minority, and are gathered in groups of two or three stands. They do not arouse Romanies' anger publicly, but they have different opinion. The majority greets each other and keeps elementary communication with neighbors, but we heard from a younger

man that Romanies should be all killed, because they were full of money and take buyers from Serbs. From the chief of the market we find out that nobody reported public incidents.

In northern and western part of the market there are approximately 300 "scrappy" stands, made from linked metal rods or convertible wooden tables; only approximately 20 Romanies offered their products, spread on the ground. There is somewhat more Serbs in this part, but not more than 30%. The number of Romanies from Bujanovac is here bigger than number of others, but they do not have goods of such a high quality. One can mainly see products for wider use (hygiene for houses, house accessories – most often plastic). Products are cheaper than those from the entrance, but the quality is questionable. One can see less expensive blouses, polo necks and jumpers, shoes and sport shoes and similar. Products are not strictly classified on the stands, but they come from all supplying centers. There is bigger number of men also (60-70%), almost two thirds are between 18 and 40 years of age and look great. There are not many older Romanies, but there is appreciably more under aged. Romany women mostly wear scarves on the heads, long skirts and boots, they are nondescript by the clothes that they wear, but this clothing is neither old, nor dirty or ragged. One third of the population is either elder or under aged, while the rest are in full living and working strength. In addition, because of their number, Romanies are louder, more visible and mutually better connected in relation to non-Romanies. They often go from one stand to another, standing shortly in small groups, watching their own stands – females are less mobile. They politely offer goods when customer approach, and become more persuasive if they notice customer's insecurity. Non-Romanies are dispersed all over this space, which is bigger than that above mentioned. This is the reason why they do not communicate a lot with each other, nor with Romany salesmen. They both sell almost the same kind of goods, but stands are not full and with diverse offer. There is small amount of goods offered, which is the reason why profit is not big.

Three Romanies at the market have their own built facilities where they sell different smuggled goods, equal in quality as that at the stands. We noticed, which was confirmed lately, only two artisan-salesmen. One is older Roma from Vranje, a producer of small metal products (nuts, bolts, levers, etc.) that he sells at scrappy stand, and the other one is well known Roma from Bujanovac, a producer of metal-plate furnaces, barbecues and stovepipes. One small Roma boy with his mother was selling church calendars, middle aged Roma, unshaved, badly dressed, and underfed was offering sand-paper, and vivid old guy, of obviously bad financial situation according to the clothes that he was wearing and bone chicks, was waving with plastic bags for packing while going from one stand to another.

Marketplace nearby Bujkovski Bridge

It could be said that this is real green market with approximately 300 stands, out of which 200 are dedicated to selling of agricultural and milk products. One third of all stands are stands for selling of mixed goods, and like in "Tekija", resellers of cheap, smuggled goods are majority here. Mr. Zoran Petrović told us that they should not be here in such a great number, but smuggling taken was imperceptibly expanded on that area. As far as the number of Romanies and non-Romanies is concerned, the situation is here inverse proportional. There are only 20 to 30 Romany stands and one can see on them, without any order or sense, winter feather jackets, together with products for hygiene, underwear, and shoes. Not more than 30 Romanies, placed on periphery of the market, on wooden, convertible tables, and some on market irony stand, are almost imperceptible in the mass of Serbian farmers and resellers. They showed us the only shop with the same products, but in private ownership of a Roma.

The whole situation would not be worth of mentioning, unless the green market nearby Bujkovski Bridge would not be found at the very end of Karadjordje Street, which on Saturdays, with all its length of couple of hundreds meters, turns into illegal flea market with improvised stands of different shapes and made of different materials organized into two lines. The same purpose serves five smaller side streets, which intersect each other, making traffic almost impossible. Mentioned stands are not purview of market office, and there are almost 200 such stands; town's communal inspection should regulate the emanated chaos, but has been satisfied by itself with issuing symbolic mandate fines, which only encourages salesmen to come again every weekend.

Romany stands make two thirds of this number and only on this place we come across Romanies from Vranje. The whole atmosphere reminds rather on some carnival, because of discomfort and huge number of different colors one cannot for surely see the quantity and quality of offered products. The biggest number of these Romanies from Vranje, concentrated in the part that ends towards the market, surely does not belong to stratum of wealthier Romany families: this is obvious from their appearance and from the products they offer. More than other places, we notice old Romany men and women, dressed in old clothes of all possible colors, with unfurled nylon in front of them and untidy assorted baubles that nobody needs. However, there are boys and girls who loudly and cheerfully sell winter caps, gloves, and small toys for children under reasonable price, and then male and female watches hooked on cardboards, as well as small hygiene accessories for every home. They are, however, very well and modern dressed, in leather and feather jackets, with red cheeks and smile on their faces. They look as if they are here for fun, not for elementary survival. Since the space is narrow, without centimeter

between properly aligned metal constructions that hold nylon, cardboards or cloth, on the other side, on pavement, there are at least two persons, most probably members of family; one of them offers goods to prospective buyers, the other person brings products and keeps an eye on them. Vast majority of these Romanies are quick and vital, obviously trained for behavior in emerged situation, which pleases them. There is an equal number of both men, who are constantly in movement and communication with each other, and women, who mainly sit or stand and sell. Except younger persons in twenties, women look much older and drawn than they really are, but still they work toughly around their two square meters of space, not badly dressed and with inevitable scarves on heads. If they have someone to take care of the stand, men usually sit for hours in surrounding facilities to drink boiled spirits, watching with one eye happenings on the street and officiously chatting and making business deals. Serbs look much more interested in their products and they do not pay attention to communication with Romanies. However, on the other side, neighborly-intimate relation with customers, witted advertisements even for the most unattractive thing, in advanced prepared answer for every objection, are very common and all this in one word is verification that even in such circumstances people from the "south railway" do not miss humor.

Products made in Romany's own fabrication program no matter if we speak about modern enterprises or traditional craft workers, will not be noticed in offer on the Romany stands in Vranje. We did not see even one older Roma who would offer products produced by processing metal or wood (agriculture tools, forger, and products made of plate, wood, brushwood, or clay); not even one who would with stentorian voice invite on repair of umbrellas or knives and scissors. Not a single Romany woman offered in front herself products of domestic work (muse, tablecloths, weaving products...). As if those have never been traditional occupations, kept in life only by Romanies and by which we recognized them. Everything is reduced to reselling of various, cheap goods from Bulgaria and Turkey, goods most often of suspicious quality and date of expiration, however accessible for empty pocket of ordinary customer.

*Flea market in Leskovac*³

If flea market is really "mirror of Serbian economy", then Leskovac, as all urban places in Serbia, has "mirrot" of his own. Looking from "south railway", from the direction of Vranje, it is located in south part of town between stadium of Football club "Dubočica" and towards west,

³ D. B. Djordjevic observed flea market on 8th of December 2001.

residential complex, called "at Madera", bus station on the north and beautiful railway station on the east.

Big flea market is legal and Public company "Pijaca" takes care of it. Earlier, until couple of years ago, this place was used to be simply called– "Market nearby railway station", since there was no flea market in that area, except market for fruits and vegetables. Today, the market is called "Kineska pijaca" (Chinese market). Five-six years ago, Public company "Pijaca", inspired by politics and ideas, as citizens say; that belonged to "woman with flower in hair" (M. Markovic), made long-term arrangement with Chinese and opened flea market. (In the other part of the colony there is a green market, but without flea market.) Renting of stands is compulsory and is 2000 dinars now. Surely, this did not stop salesmen who work illegally and who do not have access to pale flea market, and who trade on its periphery.

Except on Sundays, flea market works every day until 2 PM. On Saturdays there is the biggest crowd – it is market day in Leskovac – when masses of people from the surrounding rural areas and satellite settlements come in town searching for different accessories. "The mirror" is unavoidable destination.

It is interesting, since it is not the case with flea markets in other places, that Romanies are minority: there are 20% of them, 30% Chinese, while Serbs make half of the number. Among Romany market salesmen, "black beauties" in their best life and work strength are equal with "black boys". Older Romany women, those in third ages, mostly stay at home, and, as respectful Romany market salesmen told us, cook, take care of children and home. Majority of Romanies are in their forties, there are significant number of under aged and very small children (they are present in summer). Romanies do not defer from other salesmen – not even in respect to tidiness, style of dressing, coiffures, or underfed. For example, if we speak about clothes – they wear what they sell. One can only notice scarf tied Romany women, which is most probably reflection of confessional background and traditional Muslim costume.

Romanies are more concentrated on non-regulated part of flea market. Since there is no official exchange office, they still work as dealers of foreign currencies; now they also deal with bonds of old foreign currency savings. On the arranged space of flea market, there is no ethnic concentration. It is not in question that Romanies do not want to take central position – they indeed would feel pleasure due to profitable reasons – but conditions are not fulfilled, that is, they are not so economically powerful. They claim that among them prevail solidarity, that there are no excesses with Serbs, but jealousy shows up from time to time, while with Chinese they do not co-operate at all. There were conflicts with Chinese, which are already described in anecdotes and jokes. It

seems that Romanies instinctively feel who can be their real competition. Serbs – surrounding majority – respect Romany efficiency in trade.

However, Romanies from official flea market are in reasonably bad relations with their brothers who are their disloyal competition on made stands: while the latter takes advantage of inaccuracy of inspection, the former keeps their selling places neatly and it seems that they will have to register them as real selling shops. That will go very hard, among others, because Romanies, as Serbs, do not own any shop. Chinese are exclusive owners of the shops. In addition, origin of goods is suspicious: no matter whether it is mixed, cheap and of lower quality, expensive original brands, it is all smuggled from Turkey, Bulgaria, and Hungary. We found out only one Roma who produces small portion of pile of textile products that he offers; by the way, he is also a president of the Association of market merchants.

At flea market, besides salesmen, neither there are Romanies who are modern entrepreneurs and manufacturers, nor somebody who sells products of traditional vocations. (One can find only some Romany women here and there with knit crafts.) There are no sharpeners of knives and scissors, artisan for repair of umbrellas and coffee grinders – they work in their houses and citizens of Leskovac gladly and regularly use their crafts. However, we have been warned, in town that there are Romanies who are interested in blacksmith, plastering, basket weaving, and rope weaving crafts. Maybe they could be the base of micro entrepreneurship?

Bujanovac's flea market⁴

Inevitable necessity of people to participate in trafficking of goods and services in order to satisfy minimal existential needs have lowered demands for quality to kitsch and potboiler form. Examination of a flea market, alternative market complex under the open sky, gives the most obvious confirmation of the above stated. Bujanovac's flea market seems to be a typical example. That small town on the south of Serbia, like many Serbian places, got its flea market "Pazar" from what used to be exclusively green market, officially named *Town's market center – green market*. That is now both, legal and illegal stock exchange open every day, but the most active on Mondays – market day. It can be said that is legal for agricultural products and illegal for the rest, despite the fact that town's Public Enterprise "*Komunalac*" (this name directs to previous socialist state order, which collapse caused the mentioned situation) administers this market. If we use old folk and "romantic" naming – "Pazar" – then we nostalgically reminiscence past times with artisan way of pro-

⁴ J. Živković observed flea market on 10th of December 2001.

duction; crafts are still necessary for production and satisfaction of some human needs, but it seems that trade did not upgrade at all. Because the way of acquiring – uncertain and dependent on the will of market persons – is synonym of today's "flea" economy, mainly reduced to smuggling and resale.

On the base of the offered products, far away from any quality except the old artisan products (rope maker, tinsmith, blacksmith, basket weaver, woodworker) exclusively sold by Romanies, it is obvious who is in the biggest hardship within broken social structure and deepened social differences. Surely, to Roma people because they make 80 to 85% of all salesmen, and they are mostly forced to that lifestyle. Further indicator of hard social position of Roma "salesmen" is the fact that almost half of them are women. Additionally, there is the type of the goods offered: light wardrobe, underwear and fabric products, slippers, floor carpets, crocheted products etc. Historically imposed gender predestination in traditional division of labor now becomes deciding factor in trading and results in significant presence of Romany women at the flea market. Like men, those are usually middle aged or young women. Women are not only active behind the stand, but also in acquisition, traveling across the border (to Sofia, Temisoara or some other border center, like it was the case with place Tuzi in Montenegro, and now with Novi Pazar). Kids, small and careless Romanies are already a part of the "folklore": wandering around salesmen and buyers all the time, helping, or taking care of the products from the distance – they learn the business. While it is obvious anxious on the faces of the older because there is no great overturn, small Roma are dancing, laughing, and rejoicing. The cheeriness of their behavior seems to complete the dark picture of the place where one can meet human powerlessness. (During the rush hour, between 12 and 13 hours, in the market under the open sky 5 to 7 thousand people were present at the location that is not bigger than 250 by 100 m² very cold day. Flea market "Pazar" is located in the center of the town and is possible to approach it from several directions.)

If it is known that in the town there is not even one third of Romanies, while they are majority among salesmen then it is certain that on market day to Bujanovac come also Romany salesmen from other districts and even from Bulgaria (domestic and guest salesmen that fit to the general picture). Selling posts are being occupied since early morning hours, when it is decisive moment to take up the best places with the highest fluctuation of buyers – the entrances and front positions of the market. However, this element in sell is not decisive anymore, except for some individual salesmen of small and non-selected offer, because serious and permanent salesmen forced dominant space allocation of the market according to the type of goods. Therefore, it is precisely known where lots for truck-carriers with vegetables and fruits are, and where re-

tail trade and wholesale trade sectors are. (While wholesale fruit and vegetable salesmen are non-Roma, retailers are usually Roma.) Allocation of the space and grouping of salesmen of the same (or at least similar) kind of goods is made according to the products such as baskets, blacksmith products, underwear, jeans, carpets, and shoes (from slippers to sport shoes). Furthermore, there are ropes and leather products (purses and bags, belts) and the products for home use (pots, coffee pots, coffee cups, scissors, glues etc.). Romanies who trade with clocks, sunglasses, and corrective glasses are also grouped. Their stands are portable and especially made for that kind of products, and they are not the part of market's inventory. Most of the salesmen hire stands daily, improvised stands are also in use, as well as ground (salesmen of carpets, carpet lanes, and plastic products: basins, paddles, buckets, trash baskets, different kinds and sizes of dishes, etc.). Inside of this mottle there is so called green market, almost invisible, except for those who came that day to buy especially agricultural products.

Concentration of the salesmen of the same kind of goods is just at first glance expression of competition. Thanks to the fact that they are grouped and not dispersed, they are in position to control the price, the quality of the goods offered, offer itself, and to decrease the possibilities of real or unfair competition. This business principle is not new or unknown: uneducated salesmen have just adopted common logic of developed markets through the own experience. The concentration of the salesmen is not the condition for better profit, because profit depends, above all, on number of buyers and ability to pay. Therefore, solidarity cannot be analyzed by common sense because it is conditioned by the quality and purchasing price of a good. The quality and the price of good, again (because everything is standardized nowadays), do not depend on the skills of salesmen, but on the center from which the good is obtained. Bigger profit is not made on the flea market - the place of realization, but on the place of purchase of a good.

Though the higher logic of doing business has been adopted, it does not mean that the level of way of offering has overcome the zone of handy getting. There is no single store building at the market place, or the possibility of tenancy, not to mention introducing the private property. (There are few specialized stores – alongside the approaching roads to the "Pazar" local Albanians offer furniture in the stores made in the basements of their houses.)

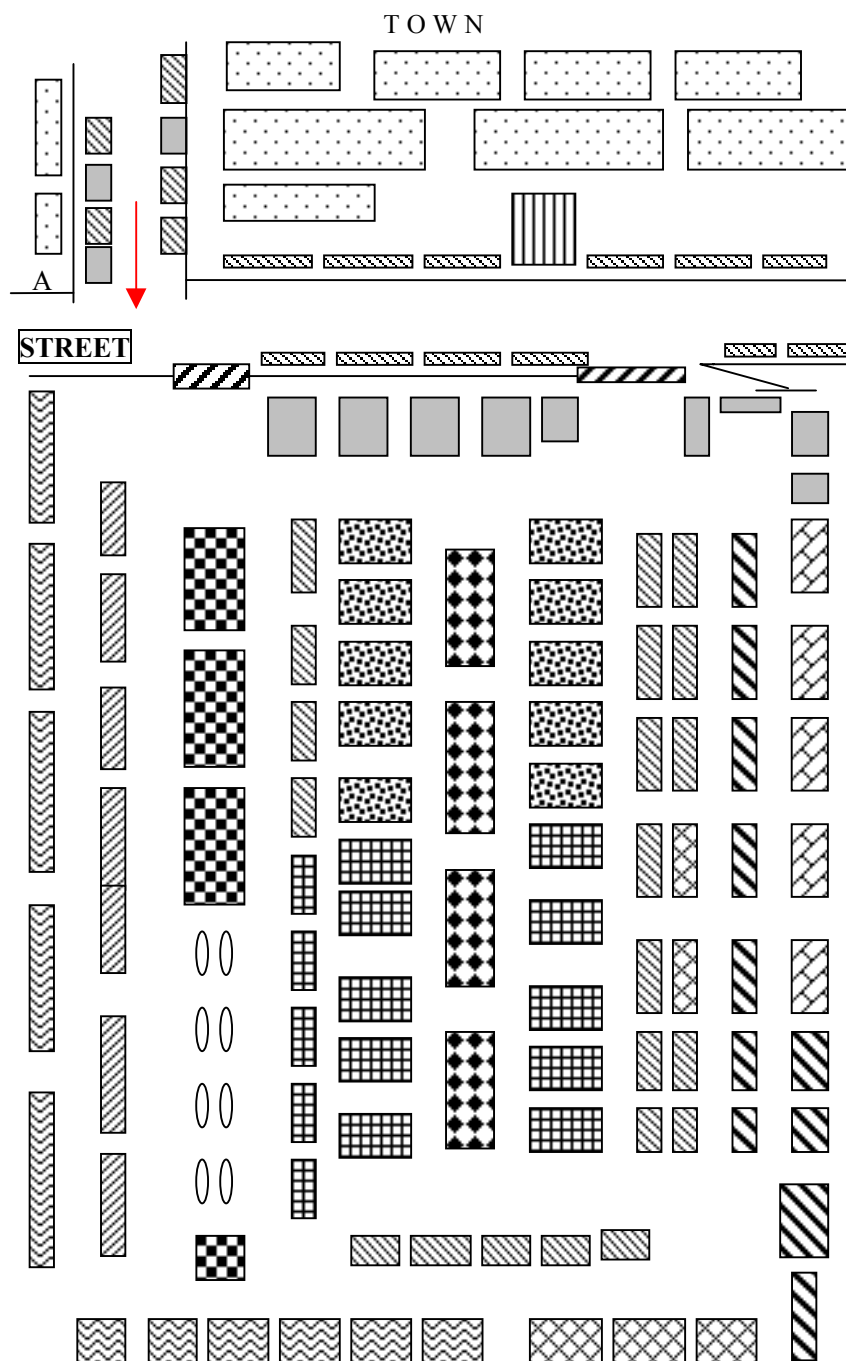
There is no negotiation or lowering the price during the act of buying. In addition, there is no communication between salesmen; they are reserved and on the distance from each other. It seems that the most vivid discussion is on the stand with artisan goods, when crafty men persuade buyers that products are of high quality: that the wood is cooked and the basket can stand big load, that the iron is hardened and that the

axe will last long, or that broom is well sewed and of good reed, and the rope is made of good hemp; and that one should buy precisely from that salesman. It is interesting that whitesmith, the salespersons of old furnaces on hard fuel, had numerous potential buyers, and the number of furnaces and stoves was considerably smaller on our second passing. In a word, crafts, still present in our reality, are the part of the past world; flea market is dominated by sell of serial products prepared for retail. Speaking with salespersons of vegetables and fruits, nearby big truck, we hear that Romanies cannot do their job, but they are perfect for distribution, retailer jobs. They are numerous, helping each other, they are united, and there are not divided – concludes salesman, after selling for the second time few sacs of apples to one Romany pair.

Nearby the trucks there are, not by chance, drays – "taxies" of the flea markets. Those are Roma, usually 7-8 of them, readily waiting for the chance to make earning. They are to disposal to those who buy agricultural products in somewhat bigger quantities. They have their order that is not changed, as well as there is harmony of the whole flea market – everything is almost defined. However, we have not seen scissors sharpeners and umbrella services. There were not either those who sell cheap plaster figurines, picture frames and knives – which can be met, on the other hand, at public places in the town. There were not present Romanies who sell and resale foreign currency and some mean of gamble (roulette, matches, etc.).

After all, flea market in Bujanovac "Pazar" has its own order. That this order is, indeed, already final image shows the following picture:

LOCATION OF FLEA MARKET "PAZAR" IN BUJANOVAC



LEGEND

Name of the market (flea market): Pazar. It is open every Monday. This is why this day in week is not called Monday but *Pazar*. Size of the selling space is 250x100 meters, with two entrances – smaller and big gate. Selling space is fenced and under watch.



Entrances into selling space of the market.



Private houses. Many of them serve as storehouses.



Private house that was converted into café-restaurant; salesmen and visitors of "Pazar" go there.



Stands on which mixed goods are being sold (small house accessories). Salesmen are usually Romanies, approximately 90%. There are two-three salespersons at every stand, out of which one or two are women.



Trucks with fruits and vegetables for wholesaling. There are no Romanies among salespersons. Usually there are resellers, that is, those who own a truck and then buy fruits from producers (farmers) for very low prices.



Stands on which there are fruits for retail trade. Salesmen are not producers, but resellers. Those are Romanies. There are usually two persons at stand, out of which one is women. Both men and women are mainly young or middle aged persons.



Space without stands. Different agricultural products are being sold on the ground by producers themselves. Salespersons are either middle aged, or older persons.



Stands with usual agricultural products. There are no resellers here – salespersons are producers. They are middle aged or older persons.



Stands on which specialized products from the corps of traditional crafts are being sold: basket weavers (baskets – big and small, baskets for underwear, baskets for bread, baskets for plants, and so on), woodworkers (handles for

hammers and paddles, chairs – big and small), rope makers (different kinds of ropes, although one can also find ropes made from plastic), blacksmiths (knives, ploughs, axes, and so on), tanners (thongs – for men and women, bags, handbags, and jackets), broom makers and whitesmiths (makers of stoves, stove pipes, things for cookies, and so on).



Carriers with handy trams. They give services to buyers who bought bigger quantity of goods. Younger and middle aged Romanies exclusively undertake this activity.



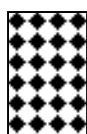
Space for stands on which male and female underwear is being wholesaled. There are usually two-three salespersons, two women and a man, all middle aged. Salesmen of these products are located next to each other, thus the place is easily recognized.



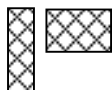
On these stands, it is offered for retail trade male and female underwear. Goods are sold usually by middle-aged Romany women. In this case, it was also made division of space at the market, so that one precisely knows where this group of salespersons is gathered.



Specialized and grouped selling space with chosen jeans wardrobe: jeans, skirts, vests, and so on. It is retail trade, and salesmen are younger Romany men.



Space without stands. Selling is run on the ground. There are products that are being wholesaled. Assortment that dominates: carpets for covering ground, jackets (winter and spring), socks – winter and spring (for men, women, and tights), products made of rope (crocheting, sheets, rags for cutlery, old clothes, and so on). Several Romany salesmen sell, and by rule, the whole family is present.



Salesmen or specialized goods made of metal (quoits, chains, pegs), but also food which are used in metal-processing process of work (rasps, drills, saws, grinding machines, emery, chisels, putties, facilities for solder, as well as machines for that work process, and so on).



Specially tented stands by salesmen from Novi Pazar. The most represented are products made of jeans: pants, jackets, skirts, and so on. Half of the salespersons are not Romanies, and they are mostly middle-aged males.



Stands that were rented by salesmen from Bulgaria, who are also oriented towards selling of specialized products. They most often offer: underwear (for men and women, scarves and wraps), products made of leather imitation (bags, pupils' bags, belts, buckles for belts), clothes (jackets – for men and women, pants – made of ordinary fabrics, shirts, dresses, skirts, and so on), and house accessories (scissors, putties, scotch tapes, buckles, clocks, calculators, batteries, glasses, and so on). Salesmen are 80% Romanies from Bulgaria, mainly middle-aged women.

Mirror tells us

Direct observation of flea markets and analysis of gathered information allow deriving of following conclusions and references:

I

1. Today urban Romanies mainly deal with smuggling and reselling of different, low-quality products from Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary.
2. Logic of simplified trade and earnings suits Romanies: buy cheap –sell expensive, and so all the way round.
3. As officials announce, half-legal trade at flea markets will soon have to transform into legal.
4. One should consider possibilities of supporting entrepreneur-trade spirit of Romanies, by reforming market standing into independent, registered trade shops, boutiques, and so on.

II

5. At flea markets, the number of Romany salespersons, salesmen of products made by traditional crafts (blacksmiths, whitesmiths, carpenters, rope makers, plastics processors...) and women handwork is small.
6. Romanies-salesmen of products of traditional crafts and women handworks were noticed in bigger number only at the flea market in Bujanovac.
7. Romanies, artisans of traditional crafts should be looked for elsewhere, outside flea markets, in both towns and villages, and see what are their particular crafts and in what conditions they work.
8. There is extremely small number of Romanies producers and salesmen of agricultural products, except in the role of resellers, again mainly at flea market in Bujanovac.

III

9. There is open possibility for founding small family manufactures.
10. There is a need for products of traditional Romany crafts (agricultural tools, blacksmiths products, and products of plate, wood, brushwood, and clay).
11. There is a need for products made by Romany women, that is, "female crafts script" (tablecloths, blouses, dresses, weaver products, decorative cheap jewelry...).
12. There is a need for traditional Romany services (sharpening knives and scissors, repair of umbrellas, coffee grinders...).

Final conclusion: Romanies can be modern entrepreneurs - rather salesmen than producers - so one should be careful with insisting on revival of old vocations.

*PROCEDURE FOR GATHERING INFORMATION BY DIRECT
OBSERVATION OF FLEA MARKETS DBDJ/DT, 2001.*

ENTERPREUNERSHIP OF ROMANIES
- FLEA MARKET -

I

1. Location of flea market
2. Legal/illegal flea market
3. Official and popular name of flea market
4. Flea market works every day / once a week (working hours of flea market)
5. Who owns flea market
6. Renting space and stands

II

7. Approximate number of Romanies salesmen in respect to others
8. Approximate number of Romany women salespersons in respect to Romany men
9. Proportion of Romany women salespersons in life, working strength and older Romany women
10. Proportion of Romany men salespersons in life, working strength and older Romany men
11. Approximate number of Romany boys (until 18 years of age) and children salespersons in respect to other
12. External appearance of Romanies salesmen (tidiness/untidiness, new/old clothes, still of dressing, coiffure, physical appearance, obesity/leanness...)

III

13. Concentration in one part of flea market / dispersion of Romany salesmen
14. Tendency of taking the central part of flea market
15. Status of non-Romany salesmen at flea markets, especially in Romany surrounding
16. Relations of solidarity or antagonism among Romany salesmen
17. Relations of solidarity or antagonism among Romany and non-Romany salesmen
18. Attitudes of non-Romanies from flea market towards Romany salesmen

IV

19. Romany salesmen on the ground / handy made stands / arranged stands
20. Romany salesmen in rented / their own shops at flea market
21. Goods of the same kind / mixed goods that Romanies have
22. Cheap and low quality / expensive and high quality products that Romanies have
23. Imported (smuggled) / domestic products that Romanies have
24. Reselling / production of goods among Romanies

V

25. Romanies modern entrepreneurs and producers
26. Romany women and "female crafts script" (tablecloths, blouses, dresses, weaver products, decorative cheap jewelry...)
27. Selling of products of traditional Romany crafts ((agricultural tools, blacksmiths products, and products of plate, wood, brushwood, and clay).
28. Romanies sharpeners of knives and scissors / repair of umbrellas / coffee grinders...
29. Salesman of lottery, newspapers, plastic bags...
30. Private exchange office / Romanies dealers

Procedure was made by D. B. Djordjevic and D. Todorovic

CHARACTERS FROM FLEA MARKETS

VRANJE



LESKOVAC



BUJANOVAC



Драгољуб Б. Ђорђевић, Ниш
Јован Живковић, Блаце
Драган Тодоровић, Ниш

РОМИ НА БУВЉАЦИМА
(огледало српске економије)

Резиме

Поред "гостију" из Бугарске, Румуније и Кине, Срби и Роми су најприсутнији на бувљацима. *Роми* се, у тако оштрој конкуренцији, сматрају "највреднијим" продавцима: двајкада на маргинама, окружујућим народима су сопствени, проказани стил живота са улица наметнули као образац успешности ван легалних токова привређивања. *Они су оличење бувљака - он је "огледало српске економије"*. Ми смо, истражујући могућности примене микропредузетничког програма у Рома, усмерили трачак светлости у таква три огледала, у бувљаке Врања, Лесковца и Бујановца. За ти сврху конструисана је *"Процедура за прикупљање информација непосредним посматрањем бувљака - ДБЂ/ДТ, 2001"*.

Кључне речи: Роми, микропредузетништво Рома, бувљак, сива економија