

► GHEORGHIANISMUL
ȘI FUNDAMENTELE
NAȚIUNII ROME

(Ediția a doua)

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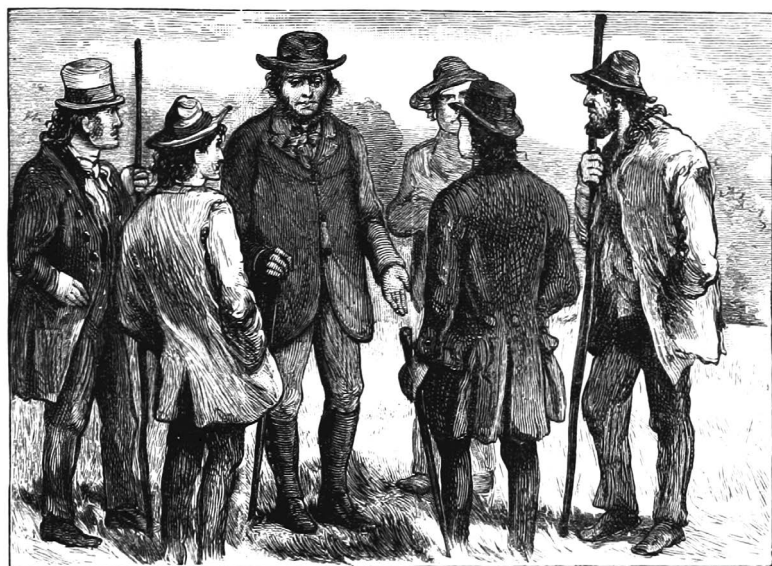
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Gheorghianismul și fundamentele națiunii rome (Ediția a doua)

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Between Recognition and Exoticisation via Marketing Practices and Market Structures: The Case of Roma in Romania

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Abstract

This paper illustrates how marketing scholarship, seldom explored in Romani Studies, can provide a lens for understanding the realities of Roma as marketplace consumers. It integrates a critical review of ethnic marketing studies with evidence from secondary data produced in Romania. Viewed through a marketing mix lens, findings show how marketing practices and market structures contribute to the marginalisation and exoticization of Roma. The paper's contribution is twofold: (1) it indicates areas for future academic and managerial work aimed at more inclusive marketing practices to benefit all consumers in a multicultural marketplace, including Roma; (2) it demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary work for marketing and Romani Studies.

Keywords

Roma consumers; ethnic marketing; inclusive marketplaces; marketing mix; Roma in Romania

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Introduction

- As a field of research, Romani
- Studies have been described as “an inter-
- disciplinary subject encompassing
- fields such as sociology, anthropology,
- linguistics and political science, centred
- on the diverse and heterogeneous com-
- munities that come under the labels of
- Roma/Gypsy but also includes analy-
- sis of Traveller communities”¹. Scholars
- in Romani Studies have observed that
- the field has made significant advance-
- ments in recent years by adopting more

¹ Andrew Ryder, “Co-Producing Knowledge with below the Radar Communities: Factionalism, Commodification or Partnership? A Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Case Study.” *Birmingham: University of Birmingham* (2015), 3.

rigorous research methodologies². Nevertheless, as Tremlett, McGarry and Agarin³ remark, for the discipline to advance, it is crucial for Romani Studies to remain in open dialogue with other academic fields. To achieve this, it needs to continue to inform and to draw on different multi-disciplinary perspectives. In this conceptual paper, we suggest that marketing scholarship, an area seldom explored in Romani Studies literature, can provide a useful lens for understanding the realities of everyday lives and aspirations of Roma⁴. Indeed, extant research recognizes that there are yet few studies exploring Roma's involvement in the economy, their everyday practices and their experience as consumers⁵. Importantly, such a focus has the potential of informing societal efforts towards integration⁶.

Just as marketing studies are absent from the discipline of Romani Studies, there are also very few studies about Roma consumers in marketing literature⁷. These deficiencies can be explained through several ontological and epistemological complexities. As Mirga and Mróz⁸ highlight, studies about Roma often rely on the ontological dichotomy between the Roma and the Gadjo (the non-Roma). This is understandable given that Roma are Europe's largest minority group⁹, but problematic for at least two reasons. On one hand, comparisons between ethnic groups often focus on differences, thus bearing the risk to essentialise certain traits and to produce inter-group hierarchies. On the other hand, denominations of internally-diverse groups under single terms – i.e., "Roma" and "non-Roma" are reductionists in nature and do not acknowledge the increasingly plural and complex realities of peoples' lives and interactions. Indeed, Romani Studies scholars recognise this limitation. Previous studies have engaged with a variety of theoretical perspectives, including Frederik Barth's notion of "ethnic boundaries", Homi Bhabha's concepts of "hybridity" and "in-betweenness" or Steven Vertovec's concept of "superdiversity"¹⁰ to highlight how complex and dynamic the Romani ethnic identity is. These advancements echo Gheorghe and Acton¹¹ who stated that multiculturalism represents "the basic reality of the Roma people".

However, recognising and addressing such forms of cultural diversity in the marketplace (e.g., in retail spaces or in advertising) and by the marketing discipline (in marketing journals and academic degrees) remains challenging due to the

² Margareta Matache, "Word, image and thought: Creating the Romani Other", (2016), FXB Center. <https://fxb.harvard.edu/2016/10/05/word-image-and-thought-creating-the-romani-other/>.

³ Annabel Tremlett, Aidan McGarry, Timofey Agarin. "The work of Sisyphus: Squaring the circle of Roma recognition." *Ethnicities* 14.6 (2014): 727-736.

⁴ Violeta Vajda, "Towards 'critical whiteness' in *Romani studies*." (2015).

⁵ Isabella Clough Marinaro, Ulderico Daniele. "A failed Roma revolution: Conflict, fragmentation and status quo maintenance in Rome." *Ethnicities* 14.6 (2014): 775-792.

⁶ Annabel Tremlett, Aidan McGarry. "Challenges facing researchers on Roma minorities in contemporary Europe: Notes towards a research program." (2013).

⁷ Cristina Galalae, Tana Licsandru, "A Post-socialist Reading of Displaced Images from the Global South: The Case of Roma, Eastern Europe's Oriental Other." *Postcolonial Marketing Communication: Images from the Margin*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2024. 137-158.

Ela Veresiu, "The consumer acculturative effect of state-subsidized spaces: spatial segregation, cultural integration, and consumer contestation." *Consumption Markets & Culture* 23.4 (2020): 342-360.

Ela Veresiu, "Delegitimizing racialized brands." *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* 8.1 (2023): 59-71.

⁸ Andrzej Mirga, Lech Mróz. *Cyganie: odmiennosc i nietolerancja*. Wydawn. Nauk. PWN, 1994.

⁹ European Commission, "Roma equality, inclusion and participation in the EU," (2020), https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu_en.

¹⁰ Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, "Challenging anti-gypsyism in academia: The role of Romani scholars." *Critical Romani Studies* 1.1 (2018): 8-28.

¹¹ Nicolae Gheorghe, Thomas Acton, "Citizens of the world and nowhere: Minority, ethnic and human rights for Roma", in Will Guy (Ed.), *Between past and future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), 55.

discipline's multiple inherent epistemic hierarchies¹². One important hierarchy is embedded in the purpose of marketing knowledge production. Marketing scholars recognise that over the last hundred years the production of marketing knowledge has been centred on serving managerial elites¹³. These elites are often envisioned as located in Western countries and serving white urban middle-class consumers. Consequently, the marketing discipline continues to overlook and under-represent minority groups all over the world, as well as non-western geographical contexts and theoretical lenses. Nevertheless, recent critical marketing studies call for challenging these forms of epistemic colonialism and West-centrism¹⁴. To achieve this, marketing scholarship needs to (1) recognise and amplify the voice of minority groups and marginalised consumers¹⁵ and (2) analyse markets and consumers within the socio-cultural, historical, political, and economic background of a given context¹⁶.

Against this background, the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the value of using tools from the discipline of marketing to provide a nuanced understanding of mundane lived experiences of Roma and the market structures that delineate them. To this end, we draw on, and take a critical approach towards, ethnic marketing and analyse evidence derived from a comprehensive review of secondary data produced in Romania, the country hosting one of the largest Roma populations¹⁷. Our findings demonstrate that marketing practices and market structures contribute to the marginalisation and exoticization of Roma. Drawing on these findings, we offer managerial recommendations and areas of future research that can inform more inclusive marketing practices for all consumers, including those who are part of Roma cultural groups.

The role of marketing in the everyday experience of ethnic minority groups

Marketing practices and market structures, through the narratives they construct, the symbolic meanings they convey, and the identities they (mis- or under-) represent, play a critical role in the everyday lives and experiences of ethnic minority groups. In diverse marketplaces, marketing activities need to facilitate "the co-existence of a variety of modes of consumption"¹⁸ by offering a wide array of products, services, and experiences tailored to the diverse needs and identity projects of different groups. As such, marketing activities may shape ethnic consumers' consumption choices and the ways in which they develop, express and perform their cultural identities by

¹² Olga Kravets, Rohit Varman, "Introduction to special issue: Hierarchies of knowledge in marketing theory." *Marketing Theory* 22.2 (2022): 127-133.

¹³ Mark Tadajewski, "Remembering motivation research: toward an alternative genealogy of interpretive consumer research." *Marketing Theory* 6.4 (2006): 429-466.

Mark Tadajewski, Pauline Maclaran, eds. *Critical Marketing Studies: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives in Critical Marketing Studies*. Sage, 2009.

¹⁴ Martina Hutton, Benedetta Cappellini, "Epistemic in/justice: Towards 'other' ways of knowing." *Marketing theory* 22.2 (2022): 155-174.

Kravets and Varman, "Introduction to special issue: Hierarchies of knowledge in marketing theory." Ozlem Sandikci, "The scalar politics of difference: researching consumption and marketing outside the West." *Marketing Theory* 22.2 (2022): 135-153.

¹⁵ Ronald Paul Hill, Kelly D. Martin, "Broadening the paradigm of marketing as exchange: a public policy and marketing perspective." *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 33.1 (2014): 17-33.

¹⁶ Aliakbar Jafari, et al. "Non-western contexts: The invisible half." *Marketing Theory* 12.1 (2012): 3-12.

¹⁷ Council of Europe, "Estimates and official numbers of Roma in Europe," (2012), <https://rm.coe.int/1680088ea9>.

¹⁸ Ahmad Jamal, "Marketing in a multicultural world: The interplay of marketing, ethnicity and consumption." *European journal of marketing* 37.11/12 (2003): 1599-1620.

mobilising the market resources available to them¹⁹. Marketing activities oriented towards ethnic minorities may also impact broader societal issues, such as the degree to which individuals feel part of the social fabric and included in the broader economic and socio-cultural context²⁰. Indeed, marketing campaigns that advance a more inclusive approach contribute to “the increased visibility (...) and normative ethic of multicultural integration”²¹, yielding in turn positive commercial outcomes²².

However, extant research has documented that the impact of marketing on the inclusion and integration of ethnic minorities is multifaceted. Marketing campaigns, by their very nature, often simplify and exoticise diverse cultural identities, reducing their complexity to commodified images exploited for mainstream consumption²³. This approach often stems from the misguided belief that groups sharing the same ethnic background are homogenous and have uniform needs, which are assumed to be distinct from those of the dominant group in an overly essentializing manner²⁴. Such misconceptions can lead to stereotypical representations of ethnic groups in marketing communications, exclusionary segmentation strategies, and overly generalised targeting attempts.

Campaigns that rely on stereotypes or fail to acknowledge the diversity within ethnic groups trigger feelings of exclusion and exoticization among ethnic consumers²⁵. By promoting an “othering” perspective, these efforts further reinforce and consolidate differences in a way that isolates and alienates ethnic consumers from the broader societal context²⁶. Indeed, when marketing consistently fails to include diverse voices and stories, and particularly those belonging to certain cultural groups, it implicitly renders those communities invisible in social and economic spheres²⁷. Marketing practices and market structures, therefore, do not only influence consumption, but may also play an instrumental role in the social standing of ethnic minority groups, perpetuating cycles of inequality and discrimination²⁸.

¹⁹ Aliakbar Jafari, Luca M. Visconti, “New directions in researching ethnicity in marketing and consumer behaviour: A well-being agenda.” *Marketing Theory* 15.2 (2015): 265-270.

²⁰ Tana Cristina Licsandru, Charles Chi Cui. “Subjective social inclusion: A conceptual critique for socially inclusive marketing.” *Journal of Business Research* 82 (2018): 330-339.

²¹ Lisa Peñaloz, “Ethnic marketing practice and research at the intersection of market and social development: A macro study of the past and present, with a look to the future.” *Journal of Business Research* 82 (2018): 273-280.

²² Osei Appiah, Liu Yung-I., “Reaching the model minority: Ethnic differences in responding to culturally embedded targeted-and non-targeted advertisements.” *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising* 31.1 (2009): 27-41.

²³ Jonathan E. Schroeder, Janet L. Borgerson. “An ethics of representation for international marketing communication.” *International Marketing Review* 22.5 (2005): 578-600.

Ela Veresiu, Markus Giesler. “Beyond acculturation: Multiculturalism and the institutional shaping of an ethnic consumer subject.” *Journal of Consumer Research* 45.3 (2018): 553-570.

²⁴ Dawn, Burton, “Towards a critical multicultural marketing theory.” *Marketing theory* 2.2 (2002): 207-236.

Ahmad Jamal, “Marketing in a multicultural world: The interplay of marketing, ethnicity and consumption.” *European journal of marketing* 37.11/12 (2003): 1599-1620.

²⁵ Schroeder and Borgerson. “An ethics of representation for international marketing communication.”

²⁶ Guilherme D. Pires, John Stanton, “Ethnic marketing ethics.” *Journal of Business Ethics* 36 (2002): 111-118.

²⁷ Eva Kipnis, et al. “Branding beyond prejudice: Navigating multicultural marketplaces for consumer well-being.” *Journal of Business Research* 66.8 (2013): 1186-1194.

²⁸ Dawn Burton, “Ethnicity, identity and marketing: A critical review.” *Journal of Marketing Management* 16.8 (2000): 853-877. Judy Foster Davis, “Selling whiteness?—A critical review of the literature on marketing and racism.” *Journal of Marketing Management* 34.1-2 (2018): 134-177. Anne-Marie G Harris, Geraldine R. Henderson, Jerome D. Williams, “Courting customers: Assessing consumer racial profiling and other marketplace discrimination.” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 24.1 (2005): 163-171.

Methodology

Academic research about the marketing practices and structures that target or that affect Roma cultural groups are missing. We have limited knowledge about whether and how they benefit Roma consumers or, on the contrary, produce and reproduce inequities. To observe this, we complement our insights from ethnic marketing literature with a comprehensive review of secondary data produced in Romania, including: (1) press articles and interviews published in professional marketing media (e.g., IQads), mainstream media (e.g., Libertatea, Digi24), and independent media (e.g., Decât o Revistă); (2) podcasts initiated by or featuring voices from within the Roma community (e.g., Obiceiul Pamantului), and (3) commercial and social marketing campaigns launched online or on mainstream television over the past twenty years featuring Roma protagonists or / and promoting social inclusion of Roma. To analyse both textual and visual data, we employed critical discourse analysis (CDA),²⁹ focusing on identifying and interpreting underlying themes and power relations. For textual data, CDA allowed us to scrutinise language choices, framing techniques, and representation patterns in press articles, interviews, and podcasts. In analysing visual content from marketing campaigns, we examined symbolic elements and composition to understand the implicit messages and societal assumptions surrounding Roma identity and social inclusion. To present our findings, we used the framework of the four elements of the marketing mix: product, promotion, place, and price. The marketing mix provides a useful tool for a structured and comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted issues that may contribute to marketplace inclusion or / and to producing market inequities; it has been used as an analytical framework by other scholars, due to its holistic nature which prevents oversight of any critical elements³⁰. In the next sections, we discuss each element of the marketing mix and provide illustrations from our data and propose directions for future marketing research and practice.

Findings

Product and service: design, quality and branding

The provision of products and services that meet consumer wants and needs is central to the marketing concept. Based on our analysis we observe three main limitations regarding the provision of products and services in Romania that are relevant for Roma cultural groups. First, it is important to reflect on the significance of market research. Without listening to and understanding consumer voices, organisations struggle to gauge whether ethnic minority consumers need similar or distinct offerings to those demanded by the majority population³¹. We were unable to identify any systematic marketing research study focused on the needs and preferences of Roma consumers in Romania. This significant shortcoming hinders companies and marketers' ability to assess whether there is a need for tailored products or services, especially in more remote communities. Second, we note the relevance of product and service accessibility. Extant literature³² demonstrates that minority consumers in

²⁹ Gillian Rose. "Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials." (2022): 1-100.

³⁰ Lucie K Ozanne, et al. "Enabling and cultivating wiser consumption: The roles of marketing and public policy." *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 40.2 (2021): 226-244.

³¹ Burton, "Ethnicity, identity and marketing: A critical review."

³² Sterling A. Bone, Glenn L. Christensen, Jerome D. Williams, "Rejected, shackled, and alone: The impact of systemic restricted choice on minority consumers' construction of self." *Journal of Consumer Research* 41.2 (2014): 451-474. Denver D'Rozario, Jerome D. Williams, "Retail redlining: Definition, theory, typology, and measurement." *Journal of Macromarketing* 25.2 (2005): 175-186.

the United States are often exposed to systemically restricted consumer choice. We observe this phenomenon in Romania, where Roma consumers experience restricted access to health services and a downgrade in quality, compared to non-Roma consumers³³. This instance of systemic service restriction and downgrade has significant implications for public health. Importantly, it may also erect additional perceived or actual barriers in accessing other products and services, with significant consequences for the wellbeing of Roma consumers. Lastly, we note that products and services communicate meanings through aspects as simple as their name. A recent study discusses the process through which the brand Knorr only recently replaced the racially charged product name "Gypsy Sauce" with "Paprika Sauce Hungarian Style" in Germany³⁴. In Romania we observe the presence on the market of products that – through their names - may reinforce harmful slurs and stereotypes against the Roma, such as "Muschi Tiganesc," the name used for a popular dry meat product, translated as "Gypsy Fillet". We believe that such product and brand names are opposing notions of inclusion and respect, and they need to be urgently reassessed.

Promotion: mis- and under-representations

Advertising images are not just promotional tools, but also "cultural texts," that define the realities consumers encounter and perceive as normal³⁵. Consequently, marketing representations have the potential to both empower and disempower certain minority groups, and to reinforce established oppressive structures and power dynamics³⁶. It is crucial for advertisers to recognise the profound impact of their imagery and strive for representations that foster inclusivity, especially for disenfranchised groups. Our analysis of advertising practices reveals two main issues: the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Roma cultural groups.

In Romania, commercial marketing representations of Roma people are very sporadic. Important to note, this gap extends beyond the Roma community to a broader lack of diversity in marketing. Recent interviews with advertising professionals highlight concerns that Romania lags in authentically representing diverse communities³⁷. Brands often hesitate to feature diversity, citing concerns about consumers' potential negative reactions and Romania's predominantly homogeneous demographic³⁸. In the limited cases where Roma individuals are featured in commercial advertising, they are often depicted in an exoticized, stereotypical manner that reinforces their portrayal as "the other." A notable example is a 2008 advertisement by a Romanian electronics retailer, which is, to our knowledge, the only Romanian TV campaign featuring non-celebrity Roma. This 30-second ad centres on the stereotype of Roma as scavengers of discarded electronics, with characters named 'Mouse' and 'Floppy' to emphasise the association with electronic waste. This portrayal commodifies their perceived exoticism in order to appeal to the White,

³³ Sastipen, "Proiecte privind creșterea accesului la servicii de sănătate", (2009), <https://www.sastipen.ro/ro/proiecte-incheiate/cresterea-accesului/>.

³⁴ Veresiu, "Delegitimizing racialized brands." .

³⁵ Schroeder and Borgerson. *An ethics*

³⁶ Michael Saren, Elizabeth Parsons, Christina Goulding. "Dimensions of marketplace exclusion: Representations, resistances and responses." *Consumption Markets & Culture* 22.5-6 (2019): 475-485. Francesca Olivotti, "The paradox of exclusion and multiculturalism in postcolonial identity." *Consumption Markets & Culture* 19.5 (2016): 475-496.

³⁷ Mirela Petre, "[Întru diversitate] Semida Durigă, Heraldist & Wondermarks: Obişnuința de a regăsi în toate ad-urile majoritatea tipică ne-a condus ca popor în a fi și mai intoleranți", IQads, (2016), <https://www.iqads.ro/articol/37202/intru-diversitate-semida-durigă-heraldist-wondermarks-obisnuinta-de-a-regasi-in>.

³⁸ Galalae and Licsandru, "A Post-socialist Reading of Displaced Images from the Global South: The Case of Roma, Eastern Europe's Oriental Other."

non-Roma viewer³⁹, and perpetuates several negative stereotypes about Roma, such as poverty, illiteracy, and nomadic lifestyles, all masked by a humorous tone - a form of "liquid racism".⁴⁰

In contrast, social marketing campaigns have frequently depicted Roma in an authentic and empowering manner. Examples include fundraising videos for education or recent campaigns challenging stereotypes and encouraging Roma to express their identity. The private sector could learn, therefore, from NGOs initiatives and Roma activists who possess the knowledge and experience to advise on effective engagement and representation of the community. Additionally, growing initiatives in Roma cultural productions, such as theatre (e.g., Giuvlipen), film (e.g., the work of Alina Serban), and other art forms (e.g., the paintings of Eugen Raportoru), offer authentic examples of representation that could inspire more accurate and respectful Roma portrayals in the commercial realm.

Prior to any commercial or social marketing initiatives, however, it is crucial to amplify Roma voices and understand their preferences for representation. The ethnic marketing literature shows conflicting findings on this topic. Distinctiveness theory suggests that individuals in a numerical minority often define themselves by their unique traits, such as ethnicity, and may favour marketing that reflects these traits i.e., ethnic marketing⁴¹. However, critics argue that ethnic marketing often oversimplifies and perpetuates stereotypes by treating ethnicity as a homogeneous construct⁴². Therefore, a nuanced, research-driven approach is necessary to ensure authentic representations.

Place: accessibility and interactions

Physical and virtual marketplaces play two important roles: mediating and enabling market transactions and providing opportunities for positive consumer-brand interactions. Our analysis about the place-related experience of Roma consumers reveals three very worrying patterns. First, at group level, we observe redlining and spatial exclusion. This is materialised via, for example, the absence of chain grocery stores in some low-income neighbourhoods where some Roma live. This distribution decision is problematic both for consumers – who are denied access to products available to their middle-class counterparts – but also for grocery companies – that could achieve generous profits by operating in neighbourhoods deprived of necessary products and services⁴³. Second, at individual level, we observe patterns of racial profiling materialised in marketplace exclusion and ill treatment. One example is that of letting agencies⁴⁴ that explicitly exclude Roma tenants in their online listings. Another is that of the numerous instances of verbal and physical abuse against Roma taking place in supermarkets and in public transport, that are still seldom documented in mainstream media⁴⁵. Indeed, racial profiling in consumption spaces

³⁹ Sofia Ulver, "Tickling tensions: Gazing into the parallax gap of the multicultural imaginary." *Marketing Theory* 21.3 (2021): 391-413.

⁴⁰ Simon Weaver, "Liquid racism and the ambiguity of Ali G." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14.3 (2011): 249-264.

⁴¹ William J. McGuire, et al. "Salience of ethnicity in the spontaneous self-concept as a function of one's ethnic distinctiveness in the social environment." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 36.5 (1978): 511

⁴² Dawn Burton, "Ethnicity, identity and marketing: A critical review." *Journal of Marketing Management* 16.8 (2000): 853-877.

⁴³ Robert N. Mayer, et al. "In urban areas: Many of the poor still pay more for food." *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 12.2 (1993): 268-270.

⁴⁴ Marius Boeriu, "Exclus romi și fără animale de companie," *Buna ziua Brasov* (2022), <https://bzb.ro/stire/exclus-romi-si-fara-animale-de-companie-a176016>.

⁴⁵ Gavrilas, Calin, "Tânără de 18 ani, de etnie romă, bătută cu bestialitate de agenții de pază ai unui hipermarket. Motivul: au bănuit-o de furt", *Adevarul.ro*, 21.12.2020.

has been extensively researched, but mainly in the context of the African American community in the United States⁴⁶. Such studies highlight that racial minorities often encounter bias, both subtle and overt, along with degradation, denial of goods and services, and unjust suspicion of shoplifting, across multiple public consumption settings such as retail centres, restaurants, and hotels. To navigate these racial hierarchies while shopping for essential goods, consumers from these communities often adopt various coping strategies. However, we know little about how Roma consumers navigate the discrimination that they are faced with in retail spaces. We believe that addressing this very significant market injustice should start with understanding such lived experiences and the correct application of anti-discrimination laws.

Pricing: affordability and fairness

Pricing is a crucial component of marketing practices, as it directly influences consumer demand and company profitability. Our analysis shows that pricing strategies can inadvertently impact the marketplace experience of the Roma community in two ways. At an individual level, pricing may exclude consumers if it disregards their economic circumstances or varies across locations or communities. At a business level, pricing practices can also hinder Roma entrepreneurial initiatives.

Research (conducted primarily in Western contexts) suggests that consumers with limited financial resources, often residing in economically disadvantaged areas, frequently encounter price discrimination across a range of goods and services. This discrimination manifests in inflated prices for essential items such as housing⁴⁷, groceries⁴⁸, and car insurance premiums⁴⁹. Moreover, these areas often face limited access to major supermarkets, exacerbating the financial burden on residents. Given the absence of systematic studies examining Roma consumers' perceptions of pricing across different communities and geographic locations, it remains challenging to identify instances of price discrimination in Romania. However, fair and equitable pricing of essential products and services could be ensured by, for example, implementing transparent pricing strategies at national level, improving accessibility in disadvantaged areas, or implementing affordability initiatives to support consumers with lower financial resources.

At a business level, we observe pricing having a significant effect on Roma craftsmanship, but this effect could also apply to other small entrepreneurial initiatives, such as emerging Roma designers (e.g., Loly by Zita Moldovan). Many Roma communities are renowned for their traditional crafts like copper smithing and silver-smithing, passed down through generations. However, these handmade products tend to be costly due to the time-intensive processes and expensive raw materials. This pricing challenge affects the economic prospects for craftsmen and the survival of their skills across generations. This issue is further exacerbated by the tendency of consumers to negotiate and seek lower prices for ethnic products, a phenomenon

⁴⁶ Cassi Pittman, " "Shopping while Black": Black consumers' management of racial stigma and racial profiling in retail settings." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 20.1 (2020): 3-22.

David Crockett, Sonya A. Grier, Jacqueline A. Williams. "Coping with marketplace discrimination: An exploration of the experiences of black men." *Academy of Marketing Science Review* 4.7 (2003): 1-21.

⁴⁷ June NP Francis, Joshua Tecumseh F. Robertson, "White spaces: How marketing actors (re) produce marketplace inequities for Black consumers." *Journal of Marketing Management* 37.1-2 (2021): 84-116.

⁴⁸ Chanjin Chung, Samuel L. Myers Jr., "Do the poor pay more for food? An analysis of grocery store availability and food price disparities." *Journal of consumer affairs* 33.2 (1999): 276-296.

⁴⁹ Citizens Advice, "Discriminatory pricing: Exploring the 'ethnicity penalty' in the insurance market," (2022), [https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Consumer%20publications/Report%20cover/Citizens%20Advice%20-%20Discriminatory%20Pricing%20report%20\(4\).pdf](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Consumer%20publications/Report%20cover/Citizens%20Advice%20-%20Discriminatory%20Pricing%20report%20(4).pdf).

discussed in marketing literature⁵⁰. To address these issues, the private sector (e.g., retailers, online marketplaces) could play a pivotal role by supporting small producers and providing them with a platform for promotion and retail. Governments could boost these efforts by promoting them domestically and internationally, and by subsidising costs to help craftsmen and other emerging entrepreneurs maintain competitiveness in the market. Moreover, initiatives such as the Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative are instrumental in helping Roma entrepreneurs, by enabling access to funding, knowledge resources and networking opportunities.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented an overview of how past, current, and potential marketing practices might shape the experiences of Roma consumers in the Romanian marketplace. Drawing on insights from ethnic marketing studies and, where available, evidence derived from various secondary data sources, we highlight the impact of these practices on Roma marketplace access, economic participation and overall societal integration.

Most importantly, the examples discussed in this paper suggest that marketing practitioners and academics have a very limited understanding of the Roma consumer, their needs and marketplace experiences. The harmful effects of marketing practices and structures developed without any consideration towards Roma cultural groups are significant; they can produce and reproduce structural inequalities, affect the wellbeing of Roma and non-Roma consumers, and they may also have negative consequences on brand equity and the overall reputation and market standing of companies involved in such practices. Therefore, brands interested in engaging with Roma cultural groups should first gauge Roma consumers' perspectives through market research, including academic approaches. We offer three main directions for future research to address this need.

First, future research could explore the dynamics within Roma communities, to understand whether and how the complexity and diversity of Roma cultural identities (e.g., traditions, values, beliefs) influence consumer behaviours and preferences. This research would help organisations interested in engaging with Roma communities to avoid stereotypical and reductionist portrayals, marketplace discrimination, and alienating their audiences. Second, research is needed to evaluate the necessity for and potential effectiveness of tailored marketing approaches (e.g., product designs, advertising strategies, distribution channels) targeted at the Roma community, that would resonate positively and inclusively. Thirdly, given the growing focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, we encourage critical research that could assess the impact of regulatory frameworks and corporate social responsibility initiatives, including the emerging DEI efforts, on reducing marketplace discrimination and promoting equitable opportunities for all consumers in Romania, including Roma communities.

Finally, we acknowledge that marketing is just one of many disciplines that can inform the understanding of everyday lives of Roma communities. We also advocate for more marketing research to serve Roma consumers and strongly believe that such research should engage deeply with the knowledge already produced in the field of Romani Studies.

⁵⁰ Feng Liu, Xin Liao, Cuiqin Ming, "Prejudice, does it exist or not? Consumer price discrimination in minority entrepreneurship." *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 2180.

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The Beginning of the Europeanisation Process for the Roma People and Their European Identity

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Abstract

The Roma community has a very long and interesting history in connection with the European space. For hundreds of years they have walked through different countries, having shared their cultural values in each country they stayed. Some have managed to include some of their values into their own cultural traditions, others had a more conservative way of living and did not consider the Roma people as one of their own. In order to resolve some of these issues, the European institutions have offered the Roma community and its people a new identity, one that comes with certain privileges that will surely help them develop. By offering them the status of European minority, the people of Roma origin enter a new form of living, based on common values that are shared through every state in the European context, described as the Europeanisation process.

Keywords

Europeanisation; Roma people;
European minority; resolutions;
European identity

Introduction

Roma history is a crucial element in understanding the underlying causes of their integration and, perhaps even more importantly, why such a process is necessary. The status of Roma, from the very first date of their appearance in the European area, is that of a marginalised, sensitive person and, in some cases, of an undesirable person.

Over the years, Roma have found a way to locate themselves in different countries. Of course, they would still travel, some more than others, but often only within one country or with the passage of time, perhaps only in a county or province. This tendency has led to defining Roma people according to certain categories, starting from their basic occupations: musicians, animal caretakers or people who shape clay. Musicians became Spanish Roma, just as in Russian choirs and Hungarian folklore. Those who modelled clay or other materials went to England and France. Animal keepers moved through Germany, Italy and Austria.

The process of "Europeanisation" is an oft-used term that sometimes captures competing and sometimes staggered processes that refer specifically to institutional isomorphism and policy convergence. It is also suggestive of moving, away from a purely

intergovernmental organisation, towards a European policy, or at least, a more integrated European political regime. Krasner suggests that regimes are “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a particular area of international relations.”¹

The institutions of the European Union have contributed to the development and construction of a pan-European Roma identity. This new identity is primarily a political one, since, linguistically and culturally, the Roma are still largely a heterogeneous group. Europeanisation has helped develop a general human rights regime and a “solution-oriented” discourse on human rights. This, in turn, has presented minority groups, especially Roma, with a number of previously unknown political opportunities, both at the level of the European Union and at the level of other states in the European area.

As a result of Europeanisation, ethnic and minority groups become more aware of and connected to their national identity, or at least the semblance of one. In this context, the Roma community’s expectations and assumptions, as well as their available avenues for addressing issues, are structured in a manner that fosters consistency and collaboration among previously fragmented communities.

First steps towards recognising Roma as a European minority

The first reference to Roma as an ethnic minority belonging to Europe was given by the Council of Europe in the late 1960s when it referred to “populations of nomadic origins” or “Gypsies and travelling groups”².

Through Recommendation on the situation of Roma and other Travellers in Europe, as well as numerous questions to the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly drew attention to the situation of Roma communities

In 1973, the Group on Minority Rights (GDM) published a report on the Roma, a minority group known as “Gypsies” in Western Europe. Continuing their longstanding interest in the Roma community, GDM commissioned a fully updated report on Roma/Gypsies: a European Minority from two renowned experts, following the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe and significant changes in the situation of Roma communities across Europe.

The report is perceived as a dynamic strategy to enhance the activities of the Group on Minority Rights, especially in contexts where GDM has initiated practical training efforts with Roma communities to promote emancipation, alongside multicultural educational projects intended to raise awareness and educate “majority” communities.

The Permanent Conference of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe (CPALRC) adopted Resolution 125 in 1981, which centred on the theme “On the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities in relation to the cultural and social challenges of nomadic populations.” This resolution thoroughly examined the conditions of Roma communities and proposed a series of recommendations aimed at addressing their needs.

In response to the educational aspects outlined in this resolution, the Council for Cultural Cooperation (CDCC) resolved in 1983 to convene an international seminar, which was the first of its kind and intended to lay the groundwork for subsequent events. Furthermore, the Council of Europe has been instrumental in providing both

¹ Stephen Daniel Krasner, “Structural causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables,” *International Regimes* 36 (1982):185 – 205.

² <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=14599&lang=en>

the initial drive and sustained support for numerous publications, primarily pertaining to education.

The scope of consideration encompassed more than just educational dimensions. In 1983, the Committee of Ministers ratified Recommendation R(83)1, focusing on the circumstances of stateless persons and nomads lacking a defined nationality. In 1986, the ad hoc Committee of Experts on Movement and Identity Documents completed a report that investigated the legal matters associated with the mobility of travellers.

The European Parliament, in March 1984, approved a resolution focused on the educational needs of children with parents experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, a separate resolution was adopted regarding the status of Roma/Gypsies, which recommended that the governments of Member States harmonize their strategies and called upon the Commission to create Community-funded programs aimed at improving the living conditions of the Roma, all while honouring their cultural identity.³

The role of the European institutions in the Europeanisation of Roma

The identification of the Roma as a 'truly European' minority, coupled with the establishment of initiatives to assess and ameliorate their conditions, represents a development that is largely associated with the post-socialist era. During the early 1990s, both the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe began endorsing the publication of detailed reports that examined the plight of the Roma.⁴

The two organizations also established dedicated units to address issues concerning the Roma community. In 1994, the OSCE set up a contact point for Roma and Sinti matters—Sinti being the official term for the Roma minority in Germany—within its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Furthermore, in 1998, the OSCE created the position of adviser on Roma and Sinti issues to enhance its focus in this area.⁵

The Council of Europe took significant steps in 1994 by designating a coordinator for Roma-related matters and, in 1995, created a panel of experts dedicated to Roma, Gypsies, and Travellers. This panel was later referred to as the MS-S-Rom (Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers) and played a pivotal role in launching the European Roma and Traveller Forum in 2004.

In the 1990s, the emergence of various international organizations for the protection of human rights, and later the emergence of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and from 1997-98, perhaps, the European Union, fundamentally changed the language used by governments, public administration and regional media in Central European Roma policy. Various European institutions triggered real change, as the majority political elites wishing to become members depended heavily on the degree to which others considered them "democratic" and were therefore willing to adopt a major change of style.

Historically, the European Union has treated minority-related concerns as the prerogative of individual Member States. Over time, however, a range of principles aimed at addressing minority issues has emerged, which, while not legally binding, serve as a form of "common European standard." These principles are encapsulated

³ Martin Kováts, "Problems of Intellectual and Political Accountability in Respect of Emerging European Roma Policy", *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* (2001): 3.

⁴ Rachel Guglielmo, Timothy Waters, "Migrating Towards Minority Status: Shifting European Policy Towards Roma", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 763 (2005).

⁵ OSCE, „Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area" (2008) <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/c/33500.pdf> .

in significant documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the 1990 Copenhagen Document, the 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Article 13 of the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights from 2000.

The activities leading to the drafting of the first Council of Europe and OSCE documents attempted the "transnational" option of an external symbolic homeland in the mid-1990s. These first specialized European Roma programs used the language of human rights as a kind of international moral standard and gradually arrived at a transnational community approach, which could be called "post-national citizenship." This special status of Roma seems to have been strengthened by Council of Europe Decision No. 1203, which refers to Roma as "a true European minority".⁶

The European Union, and notably the Commission, has been pivotal in advancing Europeanisation and cultivating a 'European' ethos or agenda throughout the Union. This initiative is, indeed, one of their core responsibilities. However, other European organizations outside the EU, such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), have also played a significant role in the development of a pan-European rights framework. In terms of Roma rights and integration, the OSCE has contributed to the creation of several comprehensive integration strategies and "action plans." Many of their recommendations are founded on a distinct interpretation of Roma as a European minority, rather than a national minority, emphasizing their shared history and cultural identity.

Council of Europe Recommendations on Roma in Europe provide:

1. One of the objectives of the Council of Europe is to promote the emergence of a genuine European cultural identity. Europe is home to many different cultures and all, including the many minority cultures, enrich and contribute to Europe's cultural diversity.
2. A special place among minorities is reserved for Roma. Living scattered throughout Europe, having no country to call their own, they are a true European minority, but one that does not fit into the definitions of national or linguistic minorities.
3. As a non-territorial minority, Roma contribute greatly to Europe's cultural diversity. In different parts of Europe, they contribute in different ways, whether through language and music or through their crafts and crafts

Key moments in the affirmation of Roma as a European minority

A critical assessment of the educational services provided to Roma/Gypsy children in the Community has been undertaken by the Commission in partnership with the Roma Research Centre at René Descartes University in Paris. The European Commission facilitated a series of expert meetings focused on Roma/Gypsy matters to steer and coordinate the research, which ultimately led to the discussion of the recommendations. The resulting document, "School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children," was published in late 1986. Further investigations were conducted to include the new Member States of Portugal and Spain, culminating in a resolution adopted by the Council and Education Ministers on 22 May 1989, which addressed the educational provisions for Roma/Gypsy children.

⁶ Yasemin Soysal, "Changing Citizenship in Europe: Remarks on Postnational Membership and the Nation State" in David Cesarani, Mary Fulbrook (editors), *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe*, (Routledge, London, 1997), 17–29.

The early 1990s marked a significant transformation in the narratives and actions of European institutions, as the Roma began to be recognized as collaborators in programs focused on advancing their socio-economic status.

The European Parliament, which regularly questions the Commission about the action it takes, has a sustained interest in resolutions and active support in the field of education through the adoption of a budget line enabling the implementation of the 1989 resolution.

In the mid-1990s, Nicolae Gheorghe, an internationally recognized advocate for Roma rights, collaborated with Andrzej Mirga to present a policy document that proposed a transnational identity project. This project is intended to function as both a political strategy and a political aim:

"Why have we used the concept of 'transnational' from a wide range of concepts available to us to describe non-territorial or dispersed minorities? The idea is to indicate that we can evolve in a different way than the national minorities of nation-states [...] We can build an ethnic dynamic and a new image [...] by interacting with non-national or supra-national institutions."⁷

At the conclusion of the OSCE Conference on the Human Dimension in Copenhagen in June 1990, the participating States ratified a crucial document. This document emphasizes the collective intention of these states to "promote respect for and enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultivate human interactions, and tackle related humanitarian challenges." Chapter IV is exclusively focused on national minorities, with Article 40 addressing matters of racism. Importantly, the Roma/Gypsies are uniquely identified as the only minority mentioned by name in this section.

Following the Copenhagen meeting, an OSCE group of experts on national minorities held a meeting in Geneva in July 1991. In Chapter VI of the final report of this meeting, the participating States expressed concern about the spread of acts of violence based on racial, ethnic or religious grounds. In this context:

'The participating States ... reaffirm their recognition of the specific problems of Roma (Gypsies). They stand ready to take effective measures to achieve full equality of opportunity between people belonging to Roma communities habitually residing in their state and the rest of the resident population. They also encourage research and studies on Roma and the specific problems they face.'⁸

Following a hearing in 1991, CALRE organised a meeting in Slovakia in 1992, bringing together local authorities, representatives of Roma communities and experts. This confirmed the results of the 1991 hearing. Its conclusions stressed both the need to update and reactivate the 1981 resolution and to present concrete working proposals. CALRE decided, on the basis of the combined conclusions of the hearing and the colloquium, to prepare a new text. Resolution, entitled 'On Gypsies in Europe: the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities', was adopted in March 1993.

Education issues were the first to involve sustained interest from the Commission services. It subsequently broadened the scope of its concern. A hearing was held in May 1991 with Roma experts and representatives, giving the Commission the opportunity to familiarise itself with the analyses and proposals of Roma associations. At the end of this hearing and after the distribution of the resulting report, the Commission undertook to study the relevant conditions for the development of Roma/Gypsy activities.

⁷ Nicolae Gheorghe, Andrzej Mirga, "The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy Paper", *Eurozine* (2001): 25.

⁸ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/c/14304.pdf>.

It urged regional and local authorities to adopt a holistic approach, where they should take the necessary measures to facilitate Roma integration in local communities, develop consultation and participation with Roma themselves, combat stereotypes and prejudices and take part in forming a network at municipal level.

In April 1993, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was tasked with:

“Studying social, economic and humanitarian issues concerning the Roma population in several Member States and their relevance to the mandate of the High Commissioner and reporting on this matter to the Committee of Chief Civil Servants. During the discussion, it was also stated that these problems can also have an international dimension”.

In an OSCE seminar on minorities organised, in connection with the work of the subgroup on “dispersed minorities”, Roma questions were again highly discussed. In 1994, the OSCE, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, organized another seminar in Warsaw, this time focusing on the situation of Roma communities in particular. This seminar confirmed and strengthened the guidelines and working concepts developed over many years, and a significant readiness for inter-institutional cooperation was demonstrated in connection with the development of a partnership involving Roma organisations. Roma showed up again at the OSCE meeting in Budapest in autumn of that year, when the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was mandated to develop a “contact point” for Roma/Gypsy issues.

Recommendation 1203 of 1993 of the Council of Europe stated that “living scattered throughout Europe, without having a specific country of their own, Gypsies are a true European minority [...] contributing to Europe’s cultural diversity”⁹.

The Assembly drew attention to the precarious situation of Roma communities and to the importance of implementing ordinances already adopted, and recommended that the Committee of Ministers take the initiative, if necessary, in the form of proposals addressed to national governments, regional and/or local authorities of the Member States, in the fields of education, personal information, culture, equal rights and daily life, as well as general measures such as cooperation and research with the European Community, consultation with international Roma representative organisations and appointment of mediators. This recommendation repeatedly stresses that, “as one of the few non-territorial minorities in Europe, Gypsies need special protection”.¹⁰

In June 2000, a general anti-discrimination programme was adopted under the name ‘EU Race and Employment Directives’. The deadline for implementing the Directives in the Member States was July 2004. However, according to the REIR (European Network against Racism), few Member States have complied.

Conclusions

The road to Europeanisation came with a lot of challenges and responsibilities for the Roma community and managed to raise serious questions regarding their role in the European context. After hundreds of years of persecution, going from state to state, the Roma people will be recognized as an European minority.

⁹ Parliamentary Assembly, “Gypsies in Europe”, 2 February 1993, <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=15237&lang=en>

¹⁰ Consiliul European, “Recomandarea consiliului din 9 decembrie 2013 cu privire la măsurile de integrare efectivă a romilor în statele membre” *Jurnalul Oficial al Uniunii Europene* (2013), [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H1224\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H1224(01))

This is a very important factor that have changed to the core the way in which the European institutions have formed resolutions regarding the integration and afterwards, the inclusion of the Roma people. The new methods focus more on engaging with the Roma community and offering them the help and support they need, especially in low-income areas and families. The role of the European institutions will continue to shape future strategies that are presented by every, if not most, European countries that want to offer their support in helping the Roma community as a whole.

As for the process of Europeanisation, it is clear that in order to benefit from all the advantages, the Roma people need to adapt and overcome a series of challenges that can go against their traditional way of living. Improvements have been made through the years and it is clear that the image of the Roma community had developed in a positive manner, many people rising and speaking on behalf of the community, many being of Roma origin.

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The Impact of Historical Trauma Exposure on Ethnic Identity and Stress Responses: A Quasi-Experimental Study of Roma and Non-Roma Participants in Romania

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to observe whether exposing Roma and non-Roma participants to images from racial purge programs brings about changes in cognition, stress, and traumatic ethnicity, and to what extent these change between the moments of treatment application. To conduct the research, a quasi-experimental design was chosen, and three groups of 30 participants each were formed: two experimental and one control group. The first experimental group consisted of Roma participants, the second of non-Roma participants, and the control group was mixed. For measurement, psychological tests were chosen, applied both in classical and electronic manner, and the treatment consisted of exposure to 16 public historical photographs.

Keywords

Transgenerational trauma;
Quasi-experiment; Traumatic cognitions; Roma ethnicity; Traumatic reactivity

Introduction

Students in Romania are preparing to choose from the new educational offerings, including the option to study "The History, Slavery, and Deportation of Roma".¹ Within this subject, students will receive extensive information about the persecution, detention, and attempts at extermination of this people, which may itself have a traumatizing character. Psychological trauma is defined as a vital experience of discrepancy between threatening situational factors and individual coping capacities, resulting in feelings of helplessness and abandonment, defenselessness, and thus causing a lasting disruption in one's understanding of self and the world.²

According to Cypress³, when referring to the period before, during, and

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/ro/news/speech/2016/02/24/the-study-of-roma-history---a-door-to-more-inclusive-growth>

² Gottfried Fischer, Peter Riedesser, *Tratat de Psihotraumatologie*, traducere de Roxana Melnicu (București, Editura Trei, 2001).

³ Brigitte S. Cypress, "Collective Trauma: An Evolutionary Concept Analysis," *Nursing Forum* 56, no. 2 (2021): 396–403.

after the Holocaust, whether considering the Romani or Jewish people, there is a set of traumatic events that together constitute a macro-trauma or collective trauma, which negatively impacts the individual's well-being, life as a whole, society, and the world. Collective trauma represents a pathology of the entire population, in our case the Romani communities, a rupture in the understanding of the individual and collective world, and in the configuration of their originating culture.⁴ The hardships of a life filled with poverty, devastation, and persecution result in a sense of loss of existential identity. Since Dr. Vivian Rakoff discovered the transmission of traumatic manifestations in 1966, research has expanded to include the families of survivors but, in contrast, post-traumatic rehabilitation was burdened by the continuation of societal hostilities.⁵ Many people continued to maintain the same attitudes towards the liberated victims, avoiding contact with them, denying the existence of the Holocaust, or accusing them of engaging in immoral acts during and after detention to survive. In the absence of supportive individuals outside the family group, children were often witnesses to their parents' traumatic stories.⁶ In the study conducted by Thamer Bakó and Katalin Zana⁷, the authors attempted to theorize the "transgenerational atmosphere", defined as the experience lived by the traumatized person, which amplifies the effect of past events on their future.

Another linked major concept presented in their study is "deficient temporality", explained by simultaneous experience at the individual level with stimuli, reactions, relationships, and attitudes from the detention period and the present time leads to the weakening of differences between generations living together, which strengthens the internalization and creation of traumatic memories without exposure to the actual experience. Sorscher and Cohen⁸ state that the manner and quality of communication between parents and children about the suffered trauma is a good predictor of their adaptation quality and affective communication was positively correlated with ethnic identification but not with Holocaust ideation. We understand that poor communication, filled with unresolved conflicts, may cause adaptive disturbances in the child's social, behavioral, and internal life, favoring the development of a wide range of distress.

By further exploring how the phenomena of self-disruption appears, we find Fonagy et al.⁹ theorizing the idea of reflective self, which holds a central position in the mechanics of attachment development between the survivor and their children. The reflective self represents the ability to observe and analyze one's own psychic life and, therefore, understand the world. The reflective self represents the capacity of each individual to analyze their own psychic life as well as that of the people around them, and when this is degraded due to a traumatic cause, people become incapable of responding to the mental stress of their descendants. In turn, the descendants will manifest a weak "reflective self" and will logically err in how they perceive the care given by the parents, which they will also demonstrate. The child needs coherence and consistency in the relationship with the attachment figure

⁴ Gilad Hirschberger, "Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning," *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 August 10, (2018): 1441.

⁵ John J. Sigal and Vivian Rakoff, "Concentration Camp Survival: A Pilot Study of Effects on the Second Generation," *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal* 16, no. 5 October 1, (1971): 393-97.

⁶ Yael Danieli, *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York, Plenum Press, 1998).

⁷ Tihamér Bakó and Katalin Zana, "The Vehicle of Transgenerational Trauma: The Transgenerational Atmosphere," *American Imago* 75, no. 2 (2018): 271-85.

⁸ Nechama Sorscher and Lisa J. Cohen, "Trauma in Children of Holocaust Survivors: Transgenerational Effects," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 67, no. 3 (1997): 493-500.

⁹ Peter Fonagy et al., "The Capacity for Understanding Mental States: The Reflective Self in Parent and Child and Its Significance for Security of Attachment," *Infant Mental Health Journal* 12, no. 3 (1991): 201.

for beneficial attributes like meaning, security, and optimal development to manifest. Second-generation survivor patients reported feeling empty inside, constantly seeking and desperate, all directly linked to the mother's inability to recognize and respond to their children's emotional needs.¹⁰ The mother's trauma due to the Holocaust creates an internal condition in which cognitive capacities such as organization, informational processing, symbolic thinking, etc., collapse. By inheriting this emotional matrix, the child's capacity to differentiate, discern, organize, and make sense becomes amorphous and crystallized.¹¹

Observing the legislative changes in Romania and knowing the lack of information among both the majority population and the Roma minority about the tragic events from distant history to the present day, we wonder if providing information about these events has the capacity to create acute distress for the two targeted populations. Thus, this research proposes the idea that after being exposed to non-violent and public images of Roma prisoners, the Roma participants will exhibit differences at the moments of evaluating variables such as discrimination, vigilance, ethnic exploration, sentimentality towards their ethnicity, and ethnic affirmation. Additionally, the paper seeks to determine if there are differences in the levels of maladaptive post-traumatic beliefs, dimensions of traumatic stress, and ethnicity among the research groups.

Method

To develop this quasi-experiment, three groups of 30 participants each were formed from different Romanian cities and villages, primarily from Vrancea County. The first group consisted of Roma ethnicity participants (13 women, age mean = 29 years, range = 18-43; 17 men, mean = 35.4 years, range = 18-65). Only three participants had higher education. This group was exposed to images of Roma victims of the Holocaust or Deportations to Transnistria. Twenty-two participants reported having family members who experienced deportations or slavery. All but one participant failed to recognize the ethnicity of people in the treatment images. The second group comprised non-Roma participants exposed to the same treatment (17 women, age mean = 22.1 years, range = 18-33; 13 men, age mean = 26.4 years, range = 19-56). Six participants had completed higher education. No participants reported family histories of eugenics or slavery victims, and five failed to recognize the ethnicity of victims in the images. The control group (n = 30) included both Roma and non-Roma participants (mean = 30.4 years, range = 18-52) and received no treatment.

Evaluations and treatment exposure were conducted in-person or online with assistance. Participants were informed about anonymity, the absence of any form of reward, the potential emotional impact of viewing the images, and that they retained the right to withdraw from the experiment at any point.

The following instruments were used: PCL-5¹²: A 20-item self-administered questionnaire evaluating PTSD symptomatology ($\alpha = .96$, convergent and discriminative

¹⁰ Patricia Dashorst et al., "Intergenerational Consequences of the Holocaust on Offspring Mental Health: A Systematic Review of Associated Factors and Mechanisms," *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 10, no. 1 December 31 (2019).

¹¹ Alessandra Cavalli, "Transgenerational Transmission of Indigestible Facts: From Trauma, Deadly Ghosts and Mental Voids to Meaning-Making Interpretations," *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 57, no. 5 (2012): 597-614.

¹² Frank Weathers et al., "The PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5)," *National Center for PTSD*, (2013).

validity = .84.¹³ Everyday Discrimination Scale¹⁴: A nine-item scale assessing everyday discrimination ($\alpha = .77$). Major Experiences of Discrimination¹⁵: A nine-item scale evaluating major life discrimination experiences. Heightened Vigilance Scale¹⁶: A nine-item self-administered questionnaire measuring ethnicity-related vigilance ($\alpha = .72$). Posttraumatic Maladaptive Beliefs Scale¹⁷: A 15-item clinical scale assessing beliefs about self and the world post-trauma ($\alpha = .82$; items 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15 reverse-scored). Ethnic Identity Scale¹⁸: A 17-item questionnaire with three subscales: ethnic affirmation ($\alpha = .71-.75$), exploration tendency ($\alpha = .82-.88$), and ethnic feeling ($\alpha = .83-.88$)¹⁹. Items 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 13, and 16 are reverse-scored. All scales used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = total disagreement, 5 = total agreement).

Conditions and Design

The study design is quasi-experimental with descriptive components. There is only one form of treatment, applied once and to volunteers who were not randomly assigned to groups, but based on their declared ethnic affiliation. The first procedure consisted of an initial analysis, prior to the application of treatment, of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms and Major Experiences of Discrimination between groups. The variables measured pre-test and post-test are daily perceived discrimination and the vigilance necessary to avoid it, affirmation of one's ethnic identity, sentimentality towards it, and its exploration. The third part of the analysis is the post-treatment exploration of acute stress symptoms and traumatic beliefs. The independent variable is represented by the treatment consisting of exposure to visual public information of Roma victims of the Holocaust, using images sourced from various history museum websites, textbooks, and encyclopedias. For the statistical part, RStudio version 2023.03.1+446 was used, which utilizes the R programming language version 4.3.0.

Results

From the descriptive analyses, it appears that for certain variables, the values of normality conditions are outside the optimal parameters and taking these data into account, non-parametric statistical tests were chosen for data analysis. To compare the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder prior to applying the results,

¹³ Michelle J. Bovin et al., "Psychometric Properties of the PTSD Checklist for Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Fifth Edition (PCL-5) in Veterans," *Psychological Assessment* 28, no. 11 (2016): 1379–91.

¹⁴ D.R. Williams et al., "Racial Differences in Physical and Mental Health: Socioeconomic Status, Stress, and Discrimination," *Journal of Health Psychology* 2, no. 3 (1997): 335–51.

¹⁵ D. R. Williams et al., "Perceived Discrimination, Race and Health in South Africa: Findings from the South Africa Stress and Health Study," *Social Science and Medicine* 67 (2008).

¹⁶ Teletia R. Taylor, Thomas W. Kamarck, and Saul Shiffman, "Validation of the Detroit Area Study Discrimination Scale in a Community Sample of Older African American Adults: The Pittsburgh Healthy Heart Project," *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 11, no. 2 (2004): 88–94.

¹⁷ Dawne S. Vogt, Jillian C. Shipherd, and Patricia A. Resick, "Posttraumatic Maladaptive Beliefs Scale: Evolution of the Personal Beliefs and Reactions Scale," *Assessment* 19, no. 3 (2012): 308.

¹⁸ Adriana J. Umaña-Taylor, "The Ethnic Identity Scale," in *What Do Children Need to Flourish? Conceptualizing and Measuring Indicators of Positive Development*, ed. Kristin Anderson Moore and Laura H. Lippman, The Search Institute Series on Developmentally Attentive Community and Society (Boston, MA: Springer US, 2005).

¹⁹ Adriana J. Umaña-Taylor et al., "A Longitudinal Examination of Latino Adolescents' Ethnic Identity, Coping with Discrimination, and Self-Esteem," *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 28 (2008): 16–50.

the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed for all dimensions of this disorder. The results show significant differences across all dimensions, and we further analyze the differences between groups using the Dwass-Steel-Critchlow-Fligner pairwise comparisons test. For the re-experiencing dimension, there are no significant differences. In the case of avoidance symptoms, there are differences between the Roma experimental group and the non-Roma group, $p = .001$, $W = 4.93$. For negative cognitions, the non-Roma experimental group differs from the control group, $p = .035$. From the Mann-Whitney U test, we observe that the non-Roma group shows more pronounced mean scores in this dimension compared to the control group, with means of 16.5 compared to 12.0 and medians of 15.0 and 11.5. A similar situation can be observed for the Hyperarousal variable, where the first group differs significantly from the control group $p = .003$, $W = -4.61$, as well as the second group from the control group, $p = 0.004$, $W = 0.004$. The mean and median of the first group are 13.0 and 12.0, for the second group 14.8 and 15.05, and for the control group 10.0 and 10.0. Major discrimination shows differences among the 3 groups, $p < .001$, $\chi^2 = 41.8$, and from the comparison between groups, the Roma experimental group has much higher scores than the non-Roma experimental group, $p < .001$, $U = 127$. The same trend is observed for the mixed ethnic control group compared to the non-Roma experimental group $p < .001$, $U = 47.5$, thus suggesting that Roma participants in both groups, regardless of treatment, experience an accentuated level of discrimination.

First Experimental Group Analysis (Roma)

To measure the effect of the intervention, the Non-parametric Repeated Measures ANOVA test was performed. For the Roma experimental group, the variable representing daily experience of discrimination differs significantly between the two measurement points, $p < .0001$, $\chi^2 = 20.6$, with means and medians being 18.9 and 18.0 before treatment and 29.4 and 30.0 post-treatment. Vigilance for avoiding discrimination also shows significant differences $p < .001$, $\chi^2 = 17.3$, with means for the two time points being 16.3 and 21.8, and medians 16.0 and 23.0. Affirmation of one's ethnicity also shows differences $p = 0.002$, but the tendency is to decrease between time points, with means being 25.6 and 22.4 and medians 26.0 and 22.0. The same phenomenon is observed for sentimentality towards ethnicity, $p = 0.074$, with means being 14.1 and 13.4 and medians 15.0, 14.0, but exploration of ethnicity does not contain significant differences $p = 0.0227$.

Second Experimental Group Analysis (Non-Roma)

The variable of daily perceived discrimination does not meet the condition of statistical significance for the difference between the two time points, $p = 0.059$, as well as vigilance, $p = 0.144$, ethnic affirmation, $p = 0.166$, sentimentality towards ethnicity, $p = 0.49$, but not ethnic exploration, which has a significance score of $p = 0.034$, with means of 23.9 and 26.4 and medians of 23.5 and 26.5.

Third Group Analysis (Control)

The daily discrimination variable shows significant differences $p = 0.007$, but the tendency is for it to decrease between measurement points, with means being 20.8 and 18.1 and medians 24.5 and 19.0, as well as vigilance, $p = 0.023$, means 16.1 and 17.9, medians 17.0 and 18.0. Upon closer inspection, differences are noted only in the post-test variable, with higher scores for Roma ethnics $p = 0.021$, a possible explanation being the constant tendency to avoid discrimination even when it is not experienced. Ethnic affirmation $p = 0.841$ and ethnic sentimentality $p = 0.239$ do not meet the condition of significance for the two time points, while ethnic exploration obtains a score of $p < .001$, means 19.7 and 26.8 and medians 19.0 and 25.0.

Only post-test variables

In the case of dissociation, re-experiencing, avoidance, and arousal level, as sub-dimensions of acute stress, all groups have significant differences. The means of the three groups (Roma, non-Roma, Control) for the dissociation variable are 15.5, 11.7, and 6.07, and the medians are 16.0, 12.0, and 5.50; the means for re-experiencing are 13.2, 10.1, and 5.37, medians 14.0, 9.00, and 5.00; for the avoidance variable: 15.1, 11.4, and 5.77, and the medians: 15.5, 11.5, and 5.00; and for the intrusion variable: 23.0, 16.2, 7.20, and medians: 24.0, 17.0, and 7.00. In the case of the traumatic beliefs dimension, differences between groups can be observed for all its variables. For the variable measuring the perception of threat, significant differences $p < .001$ are found between the Roma group and the non-Roma group, as well as between the Roma group and the experimental group, with means being 15.0, 10.9, and 9.23 and medians 15.0, 11.0, and 9.00. Self-esteem shows differences only between the Roma group and the control group $p = 0.011$, with a mean and median of 9.80 and 10.0. The last variable is trust in others, where statistical differences are observed only between the two experimental groups, Roma and non-Roma, $p = 0.009$, with means being 14.5 and 12.5 and medians 14.0 and 12.0.

Discussion

Analysis of the initial variables aimed at observing the pre-existing situation of the groups reveals that the Roma group consistently demonstrates a tendency to avoid any stimuli related to traumatic situations. However, the non-Roma group exhibits higher levels of negative cognitions and hyperarousal. Major experiences of discrimination are most strongly felt by the Roma group and Roma participants in the control group, thus establishing a pre-existing disparity among participants, regardless of group affiliation. Post-treatment, the Roma group tends to perceive higher daily discrimination and demonstrates increased vigilance in avoiding it. Additionally, there is a decrease in affirmation and positive sentiments towards their own ethnicity following exposure to photographs of Roma detainees. In the non-Roma group, only interest in exploring their own ethnicity increased, potentially attributable to a desire to understand the role of the majority ethnic group in the presented historical events. The control group, which received no treatment, shows a tendency towards decreased variable scores, specifically in discrimination and vigilance. Within the latter, inter-ethnic differences persist as an effect of major discrimination, while other variables do not present statistically significant modifications. Acute Traumatic Stress positions the Roma group at the forefront with elevated scores across all subdimensions, namely dissociation, re-experiencing, avoidance, and arousal. The dimension of traumatic beliefs also places the Roma group in a significant comparative position regarding perceived threat, lowered self-esteem, and trust in others, where a strong negative accentuation trend is clearly visible.

From these results, the hypothesis positing that historical information can create acute distress and alter perceptions of ethnic identity and discrimination experiences is confirmed through the differences observed between Roma and non-Roma participants, thus demonstrating that two distinct populations react differently to traumatic historical information. An unexpected phenomenon is the combination of increased discrimination awareness and vigilance among Roma participants coupled with a decrease in their ethnic affirmation tendency, suggesting the application of coping strategies to reduce symptoms associated with traumatic stress. The application or inclusion of this information in other works must be done with great caution, as certain biases may be present in participant selection, treatment application methods, scale administration, reduced time between applications, research design,

and lack of data normality. Future research necessitates a more profound study of this phenomenon, and to establish clear and concrete effects, more empirical data, clearer establishment of inclusion criteria for study participants, and replication of existing research are needed. The study aimed to affirm the importance of historical knowledge in shaping psychological life and the need for greater attention and care when referring to historical traumas and discrimination, as these impact different groups in entirely distinct ways.

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The Rromany Ethnic Identity Reflected in the Rromano Folklore

Some Case Studies on Myths and Proverbs / Old Sayings

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Abstract

The article introduces the way in which the theme related, directly or indirectly, to the Rromany ethnic identity is addressed in Rromano folklore, a main manifestation of the Rromany collective memory, approaching, as case studies, some myths and proverbs or old sayings. In the analyzed pieces of Rromano folklore, the Rromany ethnic identity is viewed from a few angles, either from the ancestral customary layer of the traditional Roma community, or from the confrontation with racism and with the consequences of a tragic history, to which the Roma survived through the force of remaining Roma at any risk or through the effort to try, obsessively, to live like everyone else, to integrate through assimilation, even if an unconscious one.

Keywords

ethnic identity; Rromany collective memory; Rromano folklore; myths; proverbs; self-esteem; self-image; stigma; assimilation; nomadic; racism; stereotypes; solidarity; pride

Introduction

Starting from the study hypothesis that the folklore represents, for the Rromany inherited culture, especially in a historical context of a collective memory marked by a stigmatized identity and of an unwritten cultural heritage, the keystone of ethnic identity shaping, the article aims to identify the main features of the Rromany ethnic identity and the way it is built within some myths and proverbs or old sayings. The article uses the qualitative content analysis applied on the proposed study cases.

Theoretical Framework

The collective memory of a community, using its perceptions about reality, produces myths, proverbs, old sayings and other pieces of folklore that shape identity and this created identity further develops the collective memory and its manifestations, everything describing a virtuous circle of thinking and feeling.

“Myth plays an important role as a mediator of memory. Access to the past is not always mediated through exclusive or direct experience of things that have happened. Rather, past events acquire meaning through their insertion into the differentiated fields of

cultural, symbolic, and visual archetypes. (...) Myth derives from oral traditions and has its roots in the fantastic. (...) Myth can refer back to foundational cultural events, whether real or imagined. Communities can come to understand themselves through these myths that conserve a memory of their origins. (...) Myths act as the imagines agents of classical mnemonics: the active or activating images whose force enables things to become fixed in memory. The force of myth renders its image unforgettable and serves to support and boost memory more broadly. In this vein, myth plays a role in the conservation and transmission of the past. (...) In relation to the past, memory is a double agent: it mythologizes the past and, in turn, is mythologized by it. (...) Myth both conceals and reveals the ideology that inscribes it. (...) This common ground shows, above all, how memory and mythology are vessels that communicate a single process of reconstructing the past.”¹ This theory brings us to the interpretation of myths as one fundamental source of building up the cultural memory of a people that actually reflects its view on their own ethnic identity.

In the same line of analyzing the how the ethnic identity reflects itself in the folklore, the proposed case study brings attention to another species of folklore: the proverbs / old sayings. “A proverb is a short sentence, which is well-known and at times rhythmic, including advice, sage themes and ethnic experiences, comprising simile, metaphor or irony which is well-known among people for its fluent wording, clarity of expression, simplicity, expansiveness and generality and is used either with or without change.”² So, a proverb to be recognized as such, should be short, clear and simple, but comprising deepness coming from ancestral experience and wisdom.

“The wit of one, and the wisdom of many”³, “a proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation.”⁴ In these definitions, the accent falls on the collective wisdom and on its inherited nature, so the proverb actually reflects the cultural memory of a group, in our case of an ethnic community, the identity issue being one of the main issue approached.

This conceptual framework is applicable both to myths and to proverbs or old sayings, the last ones actually being the conclusions, the main significance or the lessons learned emerged from the myths. Therefore, the analysis of the myths, proverbs and old sayings of the Romano folklore leads to the identification of the way the Rromany collective memory shapes or describes the main characteristics of the Roma ethnic identity.

The Ethnic Identity in Rromane Myths

To begin with the beginning of everything, the first road to be explored when considering the ethnic identity theme in the Romano folklore are the myths, *shidimaské paramisia* as we say in the Rromany language. We will take a look to the

¹ Roberto Vecchi, *Mythology and Memory*, (2018), 3. <https://tinyurl.com/4cz3wnj7>

² Hassan Zolfaghari, Hayat Ameri. „Persian Proverbs: Definitions and Characteristics”. *Journal of Islamic and Human Advanced Research* 2, (2012): 107.

³ K. P., Agrawal, *Tresure Of Book: On Poetries, Ghazals, Proverbs, Riddles, Idioms, Jokes and Quotes*. (Shashwat Publication; Bilaspur, 2022), 13.

⁴ Wolfgang Mieder, *The wit of one, and the wisdom of many: General thoughts on the nature of the proverb. Proverbs are never out of season: Popular wisdom in the modern age 3–40*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993), 5.

etiological legends or to the myths that describe how the Rromano people was created and what shaped their ethnic identity.

Dr. Rajko Djurić, in his book "I historia e rromane literaturaqi" [The History of Rromany Literature], introduces three such myths about the birth of the Rromano people.

One of these etiological legends or myths approaches the topic of the Roma nomadism, a quite controversial issue linked to the Roma ethnic identity because some anthropologists support the idea that the nomadism was the Roma primary way of life and strongly shaped their ethnic identity in many ways, among them the way Roma see time and space, their relationship with nature and their relationship with the land and, in general, with the property.

On the other side, most Roma activists clearly state that the nomadism was imposed on the Rromano people as a racist method of persecution and ostracization aiming to drive the Roma away from everywhere because they were not welcome anywhere and the racist majority society hated them, so the nomadism was totally negative and never an ethnic identity pattern. The Rromano folklore seems to confirm this view, at least the myths that are going to be analyzed in this article, in which, most of the times, the nomadism is seen as a consequence of a curse casted because of a sin.

Nevertheless, there are some Roma, especially the ones that still experience the semi-nomadic life, such as the Travelers from the United Kingdom of Great Britain, who see the nomadism as being important for their ethnic identity.

The author of this article, Roma anthropologist and activist herself, expressed, many times, both in her speeches and in her writings, her position about the nomadism and its relationship with the Roma ethnic identity as follows: it is very likely that the nomadism was imposed on the Roma people by the racist majority society as a mean of exclusion and it became a way of survival, but experienced for centuries, it at least influenced, if not even shaped the Rromany ethnic identity in various ways, among them the collective responsibility, the intra-community solidarity, the mobility and the adaptability.

The Rromano folklore itself, when addressing the theme of ethnic identity, many times also approaches, within it, the topic of nomadism, so, good or bad, positive or negative, it is viewed as an element belonging to the roots of the Rromany ethnic identity, linked to its birth or to its creation.

Back to the three myths from Dr. Rajko Djurić's book "I historia e rromane literaturaqi" [The History of Rromany Literature] about the birth of the Rromano people, one of these myths speaks about a curse that was casted on the Rromano people, who lived on the banks of Ganga River⁵. The tragedy was caused by the decision taken by the king's son, after the death of his father, the king, to marry the neighbor king's daughter, with whom he had been raised as he was her brother, but without being her blood brother. Learning this, the Rromano people divided into two positions: one that accepted this marriage as legitimate because the two aiming to marry were not brother and sister by blood, and the other one that condemned this marriage as being illegitimate and sinful because the future bride and groom were raised as brother and sister, so they had no right to get married. Hearing all these, a sorcerer predicted a big invasion, a war and very hard times to come for the Rromano people. All these happened. Seeing that the tragic prediction came true, the people sent a messenger to the victorious warrior king to ask him to make a judgement on case when a brother and a sister want to get married. Instead of making the judgement, the warrior king killed the messenger, making a

⁵ Dr. Rajko Djurić, *Istoria literaturii rrome. I historia e rromane literaturaqi* (București: Universitatea din București – Editura CREDIS, 2005), 17-18.

mortal sin because there it is known in the universal thinking and provided in the unwritten war laws that a messenger of peace should never be killed or ostracized in any way. This sin attracted after it the immediate and radical punishment of the sinner, so the guilty warrior king and his horse not only that died on the spot, but they also broke into a thousand pieces as they were a clay pot hit by a rock and their pieces were blown by the wind as if they had never existed. Here it is to be emphasized the fact that the warrior king died and disappeared together with his horse, the symbol of honor, so, together with him, his honor died. And something else, the warrior king and his horse not only died, but also disappeared by being blown by the wind, so their name and memory might also disappear, fact that is worse than the physical death. More than that, being blown by the wind anticipates the tragic fate of the Romano people condemned to be blown by the wind, in other words to be nomadic.

The metaphor of being blown by the wind is frequently used in the Romano folklore and it stands for the nomadism. More than that, the Romano folklore sees the wind as the most powerful force of nature, worthful to be feared of and to be respected at the highest level possible almost as God. This view about the wind certainly comes from the nomadic life of the Roma that depends a lot of the weather and especially of the wind.

That part of the people that was against the decision of the king to marry his, let's say, spiritual sister, drove him away from the country. Then, a big sorcerer casted a terrible curse on this Roma king for him to become nomadic: "May you wander on earth your whole life, never to sleep twice in the same place, never to drink water twice from the same spring". It seemed that the curse extended from the king to his people, who also became nomadic. So, as this myth describes, the Roma were not nomadic from their beginnings, they became nomadic because of a sorcerer's curse.

So, the nomadism is seen as something bad, as a result of a curse casted by a sorcerer, curse rooted in the sin of a marriage between a brother and a sister, even if they were not blood relatives, but only raised together as brother and sister. This brings our reflection on the ethnic identity theme in this Romano myth to another element of the *Romanipen* - the Roma ethno-type, the traditional marriage that, on one side, strongly forbids any type of supposedly incestuous relationship, reaching up to the seventh generation of relatives, including cousins, and on the other side, is mainly arranged between a future bride and a future groom raised by their families as close as brother and sister, but without any blood relationship, this last situation as being created to fight the curse from the myth casted for a false sin.

Another etiological legend of the Romano folklore, quoted by Dr. Rajko Djurić in his book, that approaches the creation of the Romano people speaks about a beautiful, happy and rich Roma country named Sind, where the Muslims' invasion brought war, killed many Roma and destroyed their country⁶. That is why the Roma were forced to leave their country conquered by the Muslims and to migrate in another part of the world such as Arabia, Armenia and Byzantium. There are three important topics linked to the beginnings of Romano people addressed in this legend: the certitude of the Roma collective memory that the Roma had a country and it was wealthy and full of beauty, joy and happiness; the clear relationship between the Roma migration and the conquering of the Roma country Sind by the Muslims and the main directions of the Roma migration towards areas such as Arabia, Armenia and Byzantium, which are actually mainly validated by the most reliable history researches.

⁶ Dr. Rajko Djurić, *Istoria literaturii rome*, 18.

Remaining in the framework of analyzing the nomadism as being somehow linked to the beginnings of the Rromano people, we can observe the etiological legend of the Beyashi Rroma from Hungary, still nomads at the moment the legend was collected from their community, quoted in Delia Grigore's book „Curs de antropologie și folclor rrom. Introducere în studiul elementelor de cultură tradițională ale identității rrome contemporane” [Course of Rroma Anthropology and Folklore. Introduction in the Study of Contemporary Rromany Identity's Traditional Culture Elements]⁷. The legend speaks about the Rroma as being descendants of birds, because they were born as birds, they had a totally free life, flying all over the world, but their life was quite hard, because they had to eat whatever they collected during their endless voyage. One day, after a long time of hunger and thirst, they reached a field cultivated with wheat and their head got down and started eating wheat grains. Following his example, they did the same, then they went to sleep. Next day, they did the same. Then, the same. Then, the same. And they became fatter and fatter. And they got accustomed with that comfortable life because they had enough food right there, without being forced to fly away to find something to eat. And, more than that, even if they would have wanted to fly, they would no longer be able to do it because of being too fat and less mobile. One day, the food ended and they woke up with nothing left to eat. And the winter came and it was cold and windy and they had nowhere to shelter from snow and frost. They had to follow the example of other animals, to learn from them and to put grains in pits dug in the ground, and to build huts made of straw and branches to shelter themselves during the winter. Because of work, their legs became thicker and thicker, and their wings became arms. They saw this as the end of their beautiful and free life. But what stayed was their insatiable wish to travel, at least to move from one place to another expressed like this: “When we pitch a tent in the valley, we want to be in the hill, if we stay on top of the hill, we want to fly in the valley. Only that now we have to get there on foot. We live from day to day, without amassing fortunes, for the simple reason that, one fine day, we will be birds again.”⁸

Using the metaphor of the bird, that symbolizes freedom, this legend actually describes the process of Rroma sedentarization led by the head of the nomadic community, who was taken as an example by his people. Another example followed by the nomads in order to settle was the one of the other settled beings, from which the former birds took their way of life. Nevertheless, even after becoming settled, the Rroma still preserved, in their collective mind, the memory of their nomadic life and an endless need to travel, the consequences of this mobile state of mind being a certain relationship with the property: they do not accumulate fortunes and they simply live every day for its own beauty. This brings us either to the Latin saying *Carpe Diem!* [Enjoy today], originated from Horatius' poetry („Odes”, I, 2, 8: „*Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero*” [Enjoy today and trust too little tomorrow]) or to the Rromano old saying, very much used in many traditional cultures: “*Na-i amen igi kodolestar nashti paravas les, na-i amen tehara kodolestar na janas les, si amen numai ages*” [The past is not ours because it can't be changed, the future is not ours because we don't know it, only the present is ours]. Taking all these into account, we can draw some important conclusions about the shaping of the Rromany ethnic identity in this etiological legend: the nomadism is linked with the birth of the Rroma, who were born as birds and afterwards became humans; the nomadic life is seen as the symbol of freedom, but also as quite difficult to keep,

⁷ Delia Grigore, *Curs de antropologie și folclor rrom. Introducere în studiul elementelor de cultură tradițională ale identității rrome contemporane* (București: Universitatea din București – Editura CREDIS, 2001), 38-39.

⁸ Delia Grigore, *Curs de antropologie*, 39.

reason for which finally the settled life was the only choice possible; the cultural archetype of the *Rromanipen*, the collective thinking pattern of the Rromano people, includes the fundamental view about space – the perpetual mobility feeling the nomadic life’s nostalgia (“one fine day, we will be birds again”) – and the fundamental view about time – there exists only the present and it should be lived as it is (“We live from day to day”).

The last myth we aim to analyze is, again, one from Dr. Rajko Djurić’s book. This myth⁹ speaks about the way God created the humans, among them the Rromano people. God is seen as a very familiar person, a craftsman working in clay, who shapes figurines and puts them to burn in the oven in order to make humans out of them. Because God went for a walk and came back too late, his first figurine burned too much, so it became black, this being the ancestor of the black humans. Being afraid not to burn the next figurine, God opened the oven too early, so his second figurine was left unfinished and remained raw or white, this being the ancestor of the white humans. Like in most myths, fairy-tales or other stories, at the third try, seen as the golden one or the victorious one, God kept his third figurine in the oven as much as was needed, not too much, not too little, so this last figurine became as it should be: golden colored, this being the ancestor of the Roma.

It is worth to emphasize the way of humans’ creation God followed in order to make it evolve: from the mistake of neglecting the humans, going through another mistake of over-caring the humans, finally repairing His mistakes and arriving to what is the best for humans: assisting them to achieve perfection. As for the view on the Rromany identity, this legend proves a high level of ethnic self-esteem because the Roma are seen as the perfect human beings, born at the third try of God’s creation, after His two failures. This is actually one of the few, if not the only Rromano myth studied in this article showing a clear positive ethnic self-image. Most of the other analyzed myths float somewhere between the curse of being nomadic and the pain of losing the nomadic free life.

The Ethnic Identity in Rromane Proverbs and Old Sayings

We continue our journey within the way the Rromano folklore reflects the Rromany ethnic identity by looking at some proverbs and old sayings¹⁰, *purane godimata ai purane vakiarimata*, as we say in the Rromany language.

The first topic linked to ethnic identity approached in the Roma proverbs is the racism against the Roma, that leads to the internalized stigma, also embodied in believing in an immutable tragic fate, but also to fighting against racism.

While the negative stereotypes and the prejudiced behavior leading to racism manifest themselves, the Rromano people is only seeking for respect and consideration: *T-avel o gajo e rromeste and-o kher, rodel mel; t-avel o rrom e gajeste, rodel pakiv*. [If the Gajo comes to the Rrom’s house, he looks for dirt; if the Rrom comes to the Gajo, he seeks respect.]

The anti-Rroma racism manifests itself as lack of recognition and of respect for the Roma and as cruel exploitation of the Roma: *O gajo e rromes na pringiarel, na del leske pakiv, buki lestar mangel*. [The Gajo doesn’t recognize the Rrom, doesn’t respect him, he only asks him to work.]

The anti-Rroma racism is acknowledged, but accepted as an immutable fact, this vision reflecting the resignation in front of the Rromano people’s sealed tragic

⁹ Dr. Rajko Djurić, *Istoria literaturii rrome*, 15.

¹⁰ Own Archive – Interviews collected in time, from different Roma communities.

fate of being racialized: *O romesko phiko musai te vazdel duivar buter desar e gajesko*. [The Rrom's shoulder must carry twice as much as the Gajo's.]

The same strong belief in fate (Rr. *baht*) can be interpreted in two ways: preservation of ethnic identity no matter what or impossibility, also seen as inability to escape from an old conservative fate: *O rroma biande si and-o vurdon, vi and-o vurdon meren*. [The Rroma are born in a waggon, they also die in a waggon.]

There is also a belief in the immutable tragic fate that reflects, again, resignation and the internalized ethnic stigma of not being capable to change something: *O rromano jivipen, sar e ciavoresko gadoro: hevalo, melalo, harno*. [The life of the Rroma, like a child's shirt: torn, dirty, short.]

In the same collective thinking direction based on the internalized ethnic stigma, the Rromano people's tragic fate is seen as coming from God, that is why it is impossible to be changed: *Marel o Devel kas kamel, e rromes duivar mai but*. [God strikes whoever he wants, He strikes twice the Rroma.]; *O rromano Devel marel*. [The God of the Rroma strikes.]. More than that, the tragic fate of the Rroma is linked with the disappearance of God, situation that gives the Rroma no chance of changing anything: *O rromano Devel si mulo*. [The God of the Roma is dead.]

Following the vision about the anti-Rroma racism, there are proverbs fighting it, most of its manifestations being focused on the skin's color that should not be a reason for discrimination and exclusion: *Dikh man akatar k-i buki, ma dikh man akatar k-i morki*. [Judge me by what I do, not by my skin.], but it should be a symbol of equality: *Vi parnes, vi kales hin lolo rat*. [Both white and black have red blood.] and it can be a reason for Rroma pride: *Te na ulias kali i phuv, na ulias parno o manro*. [If the earth wasn't black, the bread wasn't white.]; *Vi e kale khainiatar si parno o anro*. [Also of the black hen, the egg comes out white.]; *Mai kali e mura, mai gugli avela*. [The blacker the blackberry, the sweeter.]

In such conditions, it was expected for the Rroma ethnic identity to be marked by the fear of loneliness, the preference for collectivity instead of individuality, the need for solidarity and unity, but also by the ethnic dissociation and, sometimes, even dissolution: *Iekh rrom korkoripen; dui rroma – hanamikipen; trin rroma – maripen*. [One Rrom - loneliness; two Rroma - kinship; three Roma - quarrel.]

Another topic linked to the Rroma identity refers to the way the ethnic identity is shaped by the internalized positive stereotypes: joy of life - *E rromeste shai na cialiosa, ta asasa*. [At the Roma, maybe you can't get enough of food, but you can get enough of laughter.], love and talent for music - *Kai rroma, odoi gili shundiol*. [Where there are Roma, one can hear music.], momentary anger caused by a choleric temperament, but with no wish for rancor or revenge - *Rromani holi sar balval – avel, jal*. [The anger of the Roma is like the wind - it comes and goes.], focus on emotion and passion - *Sar o rromano ilo, nai p-i sasti phuv*. [Like the heart of the Roma, nowhere in the world.]

There are also some important features of the ethnic identity strongly underlined in the Rromano proverbs: the Roma universality or presence everywhere, followed by the recommendation for everybody to be good with the Rroma because they are everywhere: *Te jives and-o vesh, ov lacio e ruventsar, te jives and-o gav, ov lacio e gajentsar, ta kai te jives, ov lacio e rromentsar*. [If you live in the forest, be good to the wolves, if you live in the village, be good to the Gajos, but anywhere you live, be good to the Rroma.], *Kai jas, si rroma*. [There are Roma everywhere.]; brotherhood as intra-ethnic solidarity and mutual support beyond social status' boundaries: *O rrom, kai savo barvalo te ulias, nivaht na bistrel so si les ciore rromane phrala*. [The Rroma, no matter how rich they are, never forget that they have poor brothers.]; social justice and equality: *Le rrom den pakiv sarkoles, barvales vai ciores*. [The Rroma respect everyone, rich or poor.]; mutual trust, solidarity and power of the intra-ethnic role models: *O rrom e rromestar sikliol*. [The Rrom learns

from the Rom.], *Kai iekh rrom jal, savore rroma pal leste*. [Where a Rom goes, all Roma follow him.]; sharing thoughts and mutual understanding beyond wording: *Vi bilavengo, janel o rrom so leske aver rrom kamel te phenel*. [Even without speaking, a Rom knows what the other Rom wants to say.]; the Rromany language, that should not be a reason for shame or stigma, but for ethnic pride, because it is the mother tongue and the mother is fundamental: *Kon lajal peski cibiatar, lajal peski daiatar*. [He who is ashamed of his mother tongue is ashamed of his mother.], but also the Rromany language as a value because it is spoken all over the world: *Rromane cibiata jas p-o sasto sundal*. [With the Rromany language you can reach all over the world.]; the way the Roma play music: emotionally or from and to the heart for the Roma and technically or to the ears and pragmatically for the Gaje - *E gajeske bashavav e lovenghe, e rromeske e ilestar*. [I play to the Gaje for money, to the Roma from the heart.], *E gajeske bashavav and-o kan, e rromeske and-ilo*. [I play to the ears of the Gaje, to the hearts of the Roma.].

Above everything else, the intra-ethnic unity and solidarity is highly appreciated and recommended as it shapes the ethnic identity: *Rrom rromesa, gajo gajesa*. [The Rom with the Rom, the Gajo with the Gajo.]. Following this, the ethnic dissociation is blamed: *Nai ciacio rrom kon dur e rromendar tsirdel pes*. [Those Roma who stay away from the Roma are not true Roma.]. More than that, changing the ethnic identity is not only blamed, but also seen as impossible: *Shai keres tusa so kames, ama nashti te keres tut gajo*. [You can make of yourself whatever you want, but you can't make of yourself a Gajo.] mainly because the feeling, the emotion, the heartbeat of being Roma: *Vi te kerel pes o rrom ungriske, italoske, hoci-soske, o ilo lesko savahet marel rromane ritmosa*. [Even if the Rom makes himself a Hungarian, an Italian, or whatever else, its heart always beats in a Romano rhythm.]. This might be seen as stereotypical, but reflecting more, it isn't judging after frequency and intensity of reasoning.

There are Roma proverbs that show a highly positive self-image and a strong ethnic self-esteem, the respect being accepted only if the ethnic belonging is its core: *Te man varekon kamel te del pakiv, te del man pakiv sar rromes; te na, man khanci ma te del*. [If one wants to respect me, to respect me as a Rom; if not, don't give me anything.] and its top being the invincibility of the Roma: *Rromano kokalo na phaghel nikon*. [No one can break the Romano bone.].

Conclusion

As a conclusion to be drawn, the analyzed case studies of the Romano folklore, both the etiological legends and the proverbs, show a big range of reflecting the ethnic identity within the Rromany collective memory, from the curse to be nomadic and the internalized stigma caused by the anti-Roma racism to the positive ethnic self-image and the pride of belonging to the Romano people. Taking this into account, the exploration of the ethnic identity topic in other Romano folklore species is worth to be done in order to understand how the Roma collective mind refers to and shapes the ethnic identity as one of the important topics approached.

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Tracing the Beginning of the Roma Emancipation Movement in Communist Romania

The Case of Nicolae Gheorghe

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Abstract

My paper analyzes the beginning of the Roma emancipation movement in communist Romania by focusing on the activity of the Roma sociologist and activist, Nicolae Gheorghe. It is divided in three parts. The first part describes the situation of the Roma people during the communist period, and how the communist regime used their social marginality to exclude them from the ranks of the officially recognized national minorities. The second part offers a short biography of Nicolae Gheorghe identifying those elements that prompted his involvement in supporting the Roma people's quest for civic emancipation. Lastly, the paper focused on Gheorghe's actions meant to build a case for the recognition of Roma as a national minority.

Keywords

Roma people; national minority; Nicolae Gheorghe; the Securitate; civic emancipation; Radio Free Europe

Introduction¹

In one of its reports on the activity of the Roma sociologist and activist Nicolae Gheorghe, the Romanian secret police, the Securitate, quoted him saying that “he will fight so fiercely and cannot die in peace until the Gypsies are recognised as a co-inhabiting nationality”.² At that time, in March 1980, the Securitate had already begun its informative surveillance of N. Gheorghe on the ground of his involvement in “suspicious relations with foreign citizens and (...) some hostile manifestations towards the regime” [relații suspecte cu cetățeni străini și (...) unele manifestări tendențioase la adresa regimului].³ From the point of view of the Securitate, his “suspicious” relations referred to his academic contacts with Western researchers who came to Romania on various scholarships. However, the so-called “hostile” or “tendentious” activities concerned his sociological research on Roma people and his intentions to use the results of the research to influence the Romanian

¹ The research has received funding from the NO Grants 2014-2021, under Project contract UEFISCDI no. 38/2021.

² ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, dosar 234356, f. 46.

³ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, dosar 234356, f. 1.

authorities to recognise them as a national minority. The paper will focus on the last aspect of Nicolae Gheorghe's activity, namely that related to gaining the official recognition of Roma people as a national minority in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This recognition would have led to the emancipation of Romani people as the first step in safeguarding their integration and acceptance into Romanian society. Moreover, gaining recognition as a national minority would have ensured the civic emancipation of the Roma people.

The structure of the paper comprises three main parts. The first part will provide a general overview of the situation of the Roma people during the communist period, insisting on the arguments that justified their exclusion from the group of national minorities in communist Romania. The second part offers a short biography of Nicolae Gheorghe. In contrast, the last part considers his actions meant to build a case for the recognition of Roma as a national minority.

The Situation of Roma People in Communist Romania

The change of regime in 1948 did not significantly alter the juridic status of the Roma people. The communist regime, like the previous ones, refused to recognise them as a national minority.⁴ However, Roma people found themselves in an unusual position. By law, they were Romanian citizens, enjoying equal rights with the rest of the population. Moreover, they were also counted as a separate ethnic group in official documents and population censuses. Despite this, the Romanian regime defined the Roma by their social and economic marginality. Consequently, Romani people represented "a social problem" whose "backwardness" and the supposed lack of an ethnic and cultural identity did not qualify them as a minority or, in communist terminology, as a "co-inhabiting nationality" (*naționalitate conlocuitoare*).

However, what Roma people qualified themselves for was the state's social intervention in dealing with their many social, economic, and cultural problems. As a result, the communist regime approached periodically and inconsistently the so-called "Gypsy problem". Its main focus was on the nomadic or semi-nomadic Roma, whose traditional vagrant lifestyle prevented or hindered their integration into Romanian society. The (semi)nomads could not be integrated into wage labour and, thus, could not earn a steady income. Travelling also impeded the acquiring literacy, professional training, better jobs, and higher wages.⁵ Consequently, nomadic and semi-nomadic Roma lived "in misery and promiscuity, infected with social diseases".⁶ At the end of the 1970s, the Romanian authorities noted with concern that extreme poverty also reached the category of sedentary Roma.⁷

Faced with the worsening of the social, economic and cultural conditions of the Roma, the Romanian authorities devised measures that approached only superficially the causes of the so-called "Gypsy question". In the case of (semi)nomadic Roma, the (forced) sedentarisation became the cornerstone of the communist regime's plan

⁴ For more details, see Achim Viorel, "The Communist Authorities' Refusal to Recognise Roma as a National Minority", *Baltic Worlds*, Vol. 9, No. 2–3 (2018), 51–57, https://balticworlds.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/BW_2.3_2018_Viorel_Achim_pp51-57.pdf.

⁵ SANIC, *fond Președinția Consiliul de Miniștrii*–Subsecretariatul de Stat al Naționalităților, dosar 1929/1952, ff. 29–45, 57, 70–101; fond Comitetul Central al PCR–Secția Organizatorică, dosar 25/1978, ff. 1–8 f-v.

⁶ SANIC, *fond Președinția Consiliul de Miniștrii*–Subsecretariatul de Stat al Naționalităților, dosar 1929/1952, ff. 30–31, 73–85.

⁷ ACNSAS, *fond Documentar*, dosar 144 vol. 15, f. 24; 76; SANIC, *fond CC al PCR*–Secția Organizatorică, dosar 23/1977, f. 3 f; *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania. A Helsinki Watch Report*. (Washington, D.C., Human Rights Watch 1991), 22.

to deal with Romani people's social and economic marginality.⁸ However, the forced sedentarisation did not attain its purposes as changing the Roma traditional way of living required long-term commitment, increased budget spending, and knowledge of local Roma communities that the communist regime lacked altogether. The settled Roma posed a slightly different challenge to the communist regime. From its point of view, their poverty and social marginality were mainly the result of several combined factors, including Roma people's unwillingness to "take part in a permanent productive activity", their involvement in criminal activities, and in activities that the Romanian regime considered "unhealthy", such as begging and fortune telling.⁹ Also, sedentary Roma were outlined for their refusal to enlist in the Army and for not paying taxes. Despite these, they were among the beneficiaries of social aid.¹⁰ These developments only strengthened the image of Roma people as enjoying a "social parasitic lifestyle". As a result, since the end of the 1970s, the Romanian regime started to believe that Roma people were a backward group who had no chance or slight chances to overcome their social marginality and "parasitism" any time soon. Consequently, assimilation became the perfect (economic and political) solution to the "Gypsy question", which excluded the Roma people's emancipation.

Nicolae Gheorghe: A Short Biography

Nicolae Gheorghe was born to a mixed Roma family on 12 November 1946 in Roşiorii de Vede, Teleorman County. His father was a Zlătar ("gold washer"), and his mother belonged to a mixed family of Vătraşi (settled Roma) and Lăutari (musicians). Nicolae Gheorghe's parents, especially his mother, tried to escape "the burden of ethnicity". His father worked as a driver, and his mother ensured her son was clean and well-groomed and had no contact with other Roma children. When Nicolae Gheorghe was still a child, his family moved to Bucharest. This change presented him with an opportunity to fully integrate into the mainstream as he did everything possible to hide his ethnic origin and suppress the Roma part of his identity.¹¹ After graduating from the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Bucharest, he became a researcher at the Centre of Sociological Research in Bucharest. In an interview in 2013, he mentioned that he had started to reconsider his ethnic identity as the Romanian regime moved towards a more nationalistic stance and started unofficially to emphasise the ethnic differences among its citizens.¹² In 1974, Nicolae Gheorghe began his fieldwork in a small Roma community in Brateiu, Sibiu County, where, following Claude Lévi-Strauss' model, he reconstructed the family trees of the Roma living there. Gheorghe met Ion Cioabă, the leader or the bulibasha of the Kalderash Roma in the Sibiu region, during his research. This meeting changed Nicolae Gheorghe's life and influenced him to reconsider his identity. As he was no longer ashamed of his ethnic origin, Gheorghe embarked on a journey to study the Romani language, immersed himself in Roma culture, embraced the pride of his Roma identity, and lived by Roma traditions. Moreover, he witnessed first-hand in

⁸ ACNSAS, fond Documentar, dosar 144 vol. 15, ff. 1–11; SANIC, CC al PCR–Secția Organizatorică, dosar 23/1977, ff. 2–4 f–v.

⁹ SANIC, fond CC al PCR–Secția Organizatorică, dosar 23/1977, f. 4 f.

¹⁰ SANIC, fond CC al PCR–Secția Organizatorică, dosar 25/1978, f. 3 f–v; dosar 23/1977, ff. 2 v, 3.

¹¹ Oana Sandu, "Bă, de ce ești tu țigăn? Cum a devenit Nicolae Gheorghe părintele activismului civic rom", *Dor.ro*, 09. 08. 2013, <https://www.dor.ro/nicolae-gheorghe-dor12>.

¹² Ioana Bunescu, *Roma in Europe: The Politics of Collective Identity Formation* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014), 103–104.

the Cioabă family how Roma people could integrate into Romanian society and still preserve their traditions intact.¹³

The (re)discovery of his ethnicity influenced Gheorghe's research agenda and his behaviour. He began to study the Roma communities in Sibiu, Braşov, Timişoara, Turda, Teleorman, Buzău, Vaslui, and Piatra Neamţ, to whom he secured access to by making use of Ion Cioabă's reputation.¹⁴ At the same, as one of his colleagues at the Centre of Sociological Research and an informer of the Securitate noticed, Nicolae Gheorghe's behaviour began to change: he let his moustache grow, he spoke Romani in public and became vocal about how the communist regime mistreated his peers.¹⁵

Nicolae Gheorghe and the Beginning of the Roma Emancipation Movement

Nicolae Gheorghe's contribution to building a case for recognising Roma people as a national minority rested on two elements. One was his relationship with Ion Cioabă; the other considered the results of his sociological research about Roma people. As I have shown elsewhere¹⁶, Ion Cioabă was recruited as an informer of the Romanian secret police, the Securitate, and he used this position to advocate for the general interests of the Roma people. Without enjoying such a privileged position, Ion Cioabă would not have been able to involve himself or support any "Gypsy nationalist" actions for the official recognition of the Roma as a national minority,¹⁷ without any direct consequence. Consequently, the close relationship between Nicolae Gheorghe and Ion Cioabă created an unexpected opportunity for the Roma sociologist to present to the Romanian authorities a set of detailed measures meant to ease the situation of Roma people and favoured their integration into the mainstream.

Nicolae Gheorghe included the results of his fieldwork among Roma communities in two research papers, "Puncte de reper în evaluarea alternativă de politică socială față de populația de țigani din România" [Landmarks in the Alternative Evaluation of Social Policy towards the Romani Population in Romania] and "Informații și opinii privind situația țiganilor din România și din lume" [Information and Opinions Regarding the Situation of Roma in Romania and the World], both dated 1979.¹⁸ Their leading ideas became the backbone of the memoranda that Ion Cioabă, alone or with Nicolae Gheorghe, sent to the Romanian authorities at the beginning of the 1980s (1981, 1982). Moreover, the two Roma leaders and activists had the opportunity to present their proposals in October 1982 during an audience with Vasile Vâlcu, the Deputy Chairman of the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania.¹⁹ Comparatively analysed, the two documents included the same course of action regarding "the integration into work and society of Roma families". On the one hand, the memoranda underlined that Roma people were deeply connected with the mainstream, and thus, they should enjoy the same rights as the rest of the

¹³ Oana Sandu, "Bă, de ce ești tu țigan?" [online].

¹⁴ Oana Sandu, "Bă, de ce ești tu țigan?" [online]; ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, dosar 234356, ff. 40–42 f.-v, 46 f.-v, 98 f.-v.

¹⁵ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, dosar 234356, f. 98 f.-v.

¹⁶ Manuela Marin, "Un prieten devotat nouă: Ion Cioabă și Securitatea comunistă", în Lucian Vasile, Constantin Vasilescu, Alina Urs (eds.), *Traversând comunismul: Conviețuire, conformism, compromis* (Iași, Polirom, 2016), 361–383.

¹⁷ Manuela Marin (ed.), *Romii și regimul comunist din România: marginalizare, integrare și opoziție* (Cluj-Napoca, Mega, 2017), Vol. 1, pp. 40, 53–57.

¹⁸ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, dosar 234356, ff. 35–36 f.-v.

¹⁹ ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, dosar 234356, f. 196.

society. The sedentarisation of the Roma people was to be followed by an allotment of a place to live and work compatible with their traditional crafts. Roma children were to be provided equal access to education to ensure their better employment. Roma people were also encouraged to participate in the activities of all mass organisations (for workers, women, youth, etc.) or cultural events. On the other hand, integration was seen as an opportunity to acknowledge the cultural and ethnic distinctiveness of Romani people through their involvement in organised cultural activities or in the implementation of measures designed to address the many social problems confronting the Roma minority.²⁰

Nicolae Gheorghe's memorandum and research papers do not openly criticise Romanian policies towards the Roma people. Instead, they focus on the marginal position of the Roma people and the measures needed to be taken for their emancipation. However, Gheorghe adopted a critical stance in his letter published under the pseudonym "Alexandru Danciu" in the French daily *Le Matin* on 30 March 1982. The piece was read a few days later during the broadcast of Radio Free Europe. The letter was a reply to a French journalist who was attacked and badly beaten while trying to contact the Romanian dissident Vasile Paraschiv. The official explanation that he received from the authorities was that a group of "Gypsies" attacked him. Consequently, "Alexandru Danciu" rebuked the official investigation's conclusion by showing that the Roma people were usually blamed for everything that went wrong in Romania and openly denounced the "multilaterally developed prejudice and [...] racism against Gypsies" and the many abuses Roma people were subjected to by the communist Miliția. Consequently, Nicolae Gheorghe accused the communist regime of pursuing a policy of forced assimilation against Roma people who were only seen "as a residue of the past, which must disappear through assimilation into a multilaterally developed society".²¹

The reading of this letter over the microphone of Radio Free Europe led to the intensification of the surveillance of Nicolae Gheorghe by the Securitate, who suspected him of being its author. After confirming its suspicions about the identity of "Alexandru Danciu", the Securitate gradually focused on ending all "Gypsy nationalist" activities that Gheorghe alone or together with Ion Cioabă, bulibasha of Sibiu, had initiated for the civil emancipation of Roma people in Romania until the mid-1980s.²²

Conclusion

The paper has analysed the contribution of the Roma sociologist Nicolae Gheorghe to the beginning of the Roma emancipation movement during the 1970s and 1980s. Based on an extensive archive research, it describes the situation of Roma people during the communist period. The many social and economic problems confronting this minority and the refusal of the communist regime to recognise them as a national minority triggered the involvement of Nicolae Gheorghe. The second part of the paper contains a short biography of Nicolae Gheorghe and his activities before his direct involvement in supporting the recognition of the Roma people as

²⁰ ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, dosar 8685, ff. 263–265, 292–297.

²¹ ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, dosar 144, vol. 15, ff. 315–318 f-v. See also Manuela Marin (ed.): Letter from Nicolae Gheorghe (alias "Alexandru Danciu") to *Le Matin*, *Courage: Connecting Collections* [online], last edited on 21. 09. 2018, <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?lang=en&uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n50920&type=masterpieces>.

²² For more details on this subject, see Manuela Marin, "Failed Integration, Failed Emancipation: The Case of Roma Civic Activism in Communist Romania", *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, 3 (2023), 733–760.

a national minority. The last section analysed the results of Gheorghe's sociological research of local Roma communities and how they were included in official memoranda that reached (with the help of Ioan Cioba) different Romanian party and state leaders.

These documents underlined the need for the individual and collective integration of Roma people within the mainstream while preserving their cultural and ethnic identity. Because they were addressed to the Romanian authorities, they did not contain any direct criticism of the official policies regarding the Roma people. Nicolae Gheorghe took advantage of one of his trips abroad to publish a very critical piece. In his letter, also read over Radio Free Europe's microphone, he denounced not only the official indifference about the many social problems confronting the Roma people but also the law enforcement authorities' many abuses directed against them.

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Starvation as a Method of Dehumanization and Extermination during the Roma Holocaust in Romania

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Abstract

This article discusses the social, psychological, and cultural effects generated by the acute lack of food experienced by the Roma deported to Transnistria during the Holocaust. The analysis, based on survivor testimonies, is guided by two theoretical models: Dirks' general cross-cultural pattern and Young's specific model applied to Jewish inmates in Nazi camps.

Keywords

starvation; dehumanization; Holocaust; Roma; resistance; survival strategies

Introduction

Among the various methods of dehumanization¹ used by Romanian authorities in the concentration camps of Transnistria, the lack of food posed the most severe challenge for the deported Roma. Hunger was omnipresent in the camps, becoming a constant source of anxiety that led to both physical and psychological degradation.

In this study, I will discuss starvation as a tool used by Romanian authorities to dehumanize and exterminate the Roma deported to Transnistria, while also highlighting their efforts to resist and maintain their humanity. Content analysis will be employed as the research technique. The corpus of the analysed interviews comes from two works containing survivor testimonies: "Sostar na rovas...? O Samudaripen Thaj Lesqi Ciaci Paramisi – Why Don't I Cry...? The Roma

¹ Since June 1942, Romanian authorities have deported more than 25,000 Roma from Romania to Transnistria. The living conditions there were characterized by forced labour, hunger, cold, physical torture, typhus. This led to the exploitation, abuse and ultimately the physical and spiritual destruction of the deportees. Following the deportation to Transnistria, 11,000 Roma died. For more details: Elie Wiesel, Tuvia Friling, Radu Ioanid, Mihail Ionescu, Final report, *International Commission for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania*, (Polirom, Iasi, 2004), 227-245.

Holocaust and Its True Story" („Sostar na rovas...? O Samudaripen Thaj Lesqi Ciaci Paramisi – De ce nu plâng...? Holocaustul rromilor și povestea lui adevărată,") published by Furtună Adrian, Delia Grigore, and Mihai Neacșu in 2010 and "The Tragedy of the Roma Deported to Transnistria 1942-1945" („Tragedia Romilor Deportați în Transnistria 1942-1945") published by Radu Ioanid, Michelle Kelso, and Luminița Mihai Cioabă in 2009².

The recovery of survivors' testimonies highlights the subjective way in which the deported Roma experienced the famine. Hunger was internalized as the most common type of suffering and became the central factor around which they organized their camp life. Hunger also structured their memories, frequently reappearing in recollections even when not explicitly prompted: "There were times when we endured hunger for days..." – Niculae Iancu³; "What frightened you the most there? – Hunger!" – Moldoveanu Marin⁴.

My analysis will follow the three stages of human social transformations during periods of famine proposed by Dirks⁵, along with the psychological effects of hunger, as discussed by Kelly Young in the context of Jews in Nazi concentration camps⁶.

Some General Considerations on the Effects of Famine and Starvation

Studying various populations across different cultures that have undergone severe famine, Dirks argues that there is a cross-cultural pattern regarding social transformations. These transformations lead to distinctive models of social interaction as famine progresses through different stages: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion. In the alarm phase, people become aware of the danger and become hyperactive, with anxiety setting in. During the resistance phase, survival strategies develop, relationships improve, people help each other, and families become more united. In the exhaustion phase, individuals become selfish, no longer help each other, and focus solely on personal survival⁷. According to Dirks, famine is not just a biological phenomenon but also a cultural and social one. The effects of famine are simultaneously physiological and interpersonal, with its frequency dictating the physical, social, and cultural evolution of those who experience it⁸.

Exploring the degrading and dehumanizing effects of starvation on Jews deported to Nazi camps, Young shows that the main psychological effects of starvation include depression, anxiety, apathy, loss of motivation, and self-esteem. The continuous experience of food deprivation causes malnutrition, which in turn leads

² I focused my attention on these two works because they contain interviews conducted during the years 1990-2010 when the Roma survivors could still tell sufficiently coherent what happened to them.

³ Adrian Nicolae Furtună, Delia Grigore, Mihai Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...? O Samudaripen Thaj Lesqi Ciaci Paramisi – De ce nu plâng...? Holocaustul rromilor și povestea lui adevărată*, (București; Amare Rromentza, 2010), 36.

⁴ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 36.

⁵ In his work, *Social Responses during Severe Food Shortage and Famine*, Dirks makes an analysis of several famine periods of populations belonging to different cultures and different eras, taking into account studies on famine carried out by various anthropologists (Irish Great Famine of 1845 – 1852, Famine of Tikopia 1952-1953, Ethiopia/Somalia 1973 – 1975, etc.). Dirks also reviews famine periods in the Second World War prison camps.

⁶ Kelly Young, "The Psychological Effects of Starvation in the Holocaust: The Dehumanization and Deterioration of its Victims", *Augsburg Honors Review*, vol 7, (2014).

⁷ Dirks Robert, "Social Responses during Severe Food Shortage and Famine", *Current Anthropology*, vol 21, nr.1, (1980), 27-30.

⁸ Dirks, „Social Responses”, 22.

to cognitive decline and loss of concentration. The lack of vitamins B12, C, iron, proteins, and B6 causes mood changes, personality disorders, and concentration problems, thoughts of food becoming the primary focus for the starving⁹. Thus, the constant sensation of hunger and anxiety comes to dominate camp life. One of the most important observations from Young's research on Jews in Nazi camps is that as biological needs increase, social habits and standards consequently decline¹⁰.

Distribution of Daily Rations for the Roma Deported to Transnistria.

The daily ration for the Roma deported to Transnistria was 400 grams of barley, oats, or corn flour for an adult, 200 grams for a child, and 150 grams of potatoes. However, there were periods of several days or even weeks when they received nothing to eat.

A report from the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie dated December 12-19, 1942, regarding the situation of the Roma deported to the Bălșaiia Karanica sector, shows that out of 3,881 deported Roma, 150 had already died of hunger due to insufficient daily rations and delays in distribution. These people had not received their allotted potatoes for a month. Moreover, they lacked the conditions to prepare the little food they received, as they did not have the necessary utensils and wood. The report concluded that if the situation continued, all the Roma in that sector would die of hunger.¹¹

Another report from the same institution about the Roma camp in Covaliovcă states that the Roma in this camp did not receive any food for 4 to 8 consecutive days, resulting in the death of 200 Roma, with 5-10 people dying daily¹². The same situation was reported for the Roma camp in Golta, where gendarmes noted in 1943 that the Roma were performing forced labour without receiving food for months, "collapsing from hunger."¹³

Constantin Brăilă, deported to the camps in Alexandrudar, Cazirka, and Suhabalta, recalls: *"We had 400 grams of flour, and it wasn't clean. It was mixed with chaff because it was ground at windmills. If the wind blew, the flour was made; if it didn't, we starved and ate corn kernels, either boiled or roasted. No vegetables. In the summer, we only had boiled cornmeal porridge. Do you know what that is? It's crushed corn, not like cornmeal, larger. It was boiled, and they put 2-3 kilos of oil in that pot, mixed it well, and gave us one ladle each, one ladle per person, and we ate right there where we were working in the fields. Those who were full, were full; those who weren't, weren't."*¹⁴

Social Transformations of the Roma Deported Due to Starvation

I. Alarm – Evacuation

According to the pattern proposed by Dirks, in the alarm phase, people become aware of the danger and become hyperactive, with anxiety setting in. This phase does not manifest uniformly across all populations, nor does it appear

⁹ Young, „The Psychological Effects”, 70.

¹⁰ Young, „The Psychological Effects”, 73.

¹¹ Facsimil Fond Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei, Dosar numărul 201/1942, fila 11.

¹² Facsimil Fond Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei, Dosar numărul 201/1942, fila 49.

¹³ Facsimil AINSHR RG-25002M, rola 33, dosar 78/1943, fila 3.

¹⁴ Interview conducted within the project Remember to Resist, May 2016.

simultaneously, with people's reactions varying based on environmental factors, cultural influences, or the circumstances surrounding the onset of famine¹⁵.

For the Roma deported to Transnistria, the alarm phase began during the forced evacuations when taken by surprise and forced to leave their homes, people became hyperactive, anxious, and stressed. Many of them did not even know what was happening or where they were being taken, as testified by Iustian Badea, deported from Bucharest:

*"Commissioner Cojocaru came to us from the neighbourhood; he had orders to take us, not just me, but most of the people on that street, Rădulescu Tei, and he took us to the Prefecture, as they say, to the Capital, on Calea Victoriei, and kept us there like prisoners, giving us food like prisoners, as if we were thieves."*¹⁶

The Roma who were about to be deported could not take bulky luggage, utensils, or other necessary items for daily life, as it was the case with Anghel Nedelea's family from Pitești:

*"... In the evening, a patrol of gendarmes came and smashed our door with the butt of a rifle, and took us out as we were. We were only allowed to take three kilograms: a pot, a pan, and a cauldron for polenta. ... They took us to a cattle field, and we stayed there for three days with only 300 grams of bread per day."*¹⁷

The alarm phase continued on the journey to Transnistria. The nomadic Roma arrived there with their own wagons, while the sedentary Roma were deported in cattle trains. Both groups were affected by the lack of food, as survivors recount:

"We were taken with our wagons, yes. And we were taken from post to post. And we didn't have water to drink, there was no water, it was far away. And I would carry the water bucket on my head, as my mother was sick and needed water. I carried the bucket from here to the next village, walking with the bucket on my head. There was no food, no bread, nothing." – Silvia Stănescu.¹⁸

"... The guards were soldiers. Romanians, they were Romanians, ... We were dying of heat even though it was September, and we passed by wells or water channels, but they didn't let us drink even a little water, absolutely nothing, nothing. We didn't drink any water until we reached the farm. No food, there was no food" – Ștefan Moise.¹⁹

II. Resistance – Life in Transnistria

Following Dirks' pattern, we could say that the resistance phase for the deported Roma began upon arrival in Transnistria. I will now discuss the main survival techniques identified during this stage of resistance and how their behaviour deteriorated under the impact of hunger.

II. 1 Intrafamilial Relationships

One of the most important characteristics of the resistance phase is the strengthening of intrafamilial cooperation. In this stage, individuals in communities facing severe famine display greater economy of action, maintaining intact only intrafamilial reciprocity.²⁰ The importance of interpersonal relationships is also argued by Young, who, citing Shamai Davidson, states that strong interpersonal relationships

¹⁵ Dirks, „Social Responses”, 26.

¹⁶ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 13.

¹⁷ Ioanid Radu, Kelso Michelle, Cioabă Luminița, *Tragedia Romilor Deportați în Transnistria 1942-1944*, (Iași: Polirom, 2009), 211.

¹⁸ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 166.

¹⁹ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 60.

²⁰ Dirks, „Social Responses”, 28.

in a concentration camp increase the chances of survival for the deportees by sustaining their morale and giving them the motivation to fight against starvation.²¹

This form of resistance is also found among the Roma deported to Transnistria. As evidenced by the testimonies of survivors presented below, each family member contributed to securing food and then distributing resources within the immediate family, with children being prioritized in food distribution to protect them:

"They gave us a kilogram of flour per family, so it was me with my sister who died here in Romania. So, my sister, my mother, there was also a mute aunt who died, grandpa, and grandma—so six people with one kilogram of barley flour, and grandma would make us flatbread and cook it under a metal sheet. What did grandma do? She used to say: 'Don't eat now, wait, you'll eat later,' and she gave us portions. Grandpa didn't eat anymore, and mom saved food for the children." – Mitică Aurică²²

"We were in a cornfield, and I would go with my father to gather... The snow was so deep and frozen. It reached up to the corn ears. Dad would take a small bag, give me one too, and we'd go home. We would roast the corn on the stove until mom came with whatever else she could gather from the village, wherever she heard dogs barking." – Petre Vasile²³

"Poor dad, he used to go to the banks of the Bug River, where he would find small fish left behind by the fishermen. The fishermen would only take the big ones, leaving the small ones on the shore. Poor dad, as long as he lived, he would bring us fish, and we'd eat them plain. Fish strips, do you know what those are? You don't? It's a type of fish with long bones, and we'd eat them raw." – Enuța Sporidon²⁴

However, distributing food within the family also has disadvantages, leading to the loss of energy for the person who divides the food and supports the others. This is reflected in the testimony of survivor Mitică Aurică, whose grandfather stopped eating to leave more food for the children, and in the case of Enuța Spridon's father, who was the main support of the family. The chances of survival for the family member who takes on the role of primary caregiver decrease significantly, as they lose physical and mental strength, sacrificing themselves for the others.

II.2 Procuring "Extra Food"

The daily rations received by the Roma in Transnistria were insufficient and often not distributed on time. In these situations, people tried by various means to obtain additional food, even at the risk of their lives. Hunger was stronger than the fear of death. Sneaking out of the camp to ask for food from the local Ukrainian population was one of the most common methods of procuring extra food, deportees risking being beaten or even shot by guards if caught.

Radu Alexandrina recalls an episode in which her mother was caught by guards and beaten with the butt of a rifle until she lost consciousness while trying to sneak out of the camp to ask for food from the Ukrainian locals. However, the humanity of the Ukrainian women saved her: *"My poor mother would walk barefoot to the water, and that's how she would brush the snow off her feet. She went to the village, and the Germans found her, hit her with the butt of a rifle on the head, and she lay there for a day until dusk when the Russian women came and secretly took her into their yard. Then she recovered and came back home."*²⁵

Ion Petrache recounts how his family of Roma kalderash bribed the Romanian authorities with gold coins to avoid punishment when they went to Ukrainian

²¹ Young, „The Psychological Effects”, 77.

²² Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 36.

²³ Ioanid, Kelso, Ciobă, *Tragedia*, 248.

²⁴ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 38.

²⁵ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 100-101.

villages to buy or ask for food. He recalls with regret that the hunger was so severe that his family ended up giving away a gold coin or even two for a sieve of cornmeal or a few potatoes: *"At one point, when we saw that they were targeting us... we had gold coins, we had shirts with large sleeves, we would undo them, turn them into napkins, rugs like these, lighter clothing, and we would sell them to the Russians for cornmeal and vegetables. We sold the gold to the Russians, gave it to the Romanians when the Romanian army was there, and we would give away a coin or two for nothing, for two sieves of cornmeal or for potatoes."*²⁶

Another practice for obtaining additional food was "stealing" corn kernels from the fields where the deportees were forced to work in agriculture. Even though taking a few corn kernels from the field where they had likely worked a few days earlier did not seem like a serious offense to them, they were harshly punished by the authorities who supervised them, as Lucia Mihai recalls: *"The gendarmes would shoot them, kill them because they would go into the fields and steal corn to survive. They would crush the corn kernels, boil them, and give them to the children to eat because they had nothing else to give them to keep them from starving."*²⁷

Testimonies reveal that the only ones from whom deportees occasionally received small amounts of food in exchange for services or payments were the Ukrainian villagers. However, Ukrainian support was neither consistent nor substantial, as they were also in a war zone, as mentioned by Nicolae Iancu or Anuța Brânzan: *"The Russians allowed us to gather beans from their fields and in exchange they asked our parents to work,"²⁸ ... And it was lucky that the old Russian man would bring us something. He would also bring us something from time to time. My father gave him whatever he had left, something good, he gave him sheets sewn by my mother, good clothes, whatever he had, he gave him a pair of earrings, a bracelet, things like that. But he told us that he didn't have much more to give us, that he barely had enough for them, that they also received rations, that they were also on rations. And there was the army, and they were no longer in control."*²⁹

In their struggle against hunger, the deported Roma in Transnistria even learnt the local language to procure food and survive, as Mirică Dinu mentions: *"We would go to the Ukrainians to ask for food because there was none left. We didn't know Russian." 'Lady – we would shout like we do here – come here! Ninai, meaning we don't know what you're saying.' When I learnt Russian, I said to her: 'If you want, come here.' When she came, I said, 'We haven't eaten for three days, give us something to eat, we're starving.' She said, 'Cheese, milk, bread. What do you want?' 'Give us onions, they're good for us.'*³⁰

II.3 Forced Labour - A Condition for Obtaining Food

Forced labour was also perceived by survivors as a method of obtaining food. As seen in the interview excerpts below, performing forced labour was a condition for receiving the daily ration:

"I went to do all kinds of work because I couldn't stay idle; I had nothing to eat. They didn't give you anything if you didn't work; you had nothing to eat." - Enuța Sporidon³¹

"They took us to the fields and gave us about 100-200 grams to eat. To work with vegetables and on plantations. There were overseers, like the landlords here."

²⁶ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?* 100.

²⁷ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 26.

²⁸ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 39.

²⁹ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 123.

³⁰ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 93.

³¹ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 155.

We would leave at eight and come back at four. If we came back, what did we do? What did we earn? If you stayed in the collective, they didn't even give you your ration. They took us there and gave us a ladle of food if we worked. And if you did a lot of work until 1 PM, they'd give you two ladles." - Mirică Dinu³²

To understand how forced labour influenced the Roma's relationship with food, it is first necessary to clarify the term "forced labour" and how it was regulated in the concentration camps in Transnistria.

For Viorel Achim, the term "forced labour" refers to people deported to a foreign country on ethnic and racial grounds, who were made to work in places where they were taken against their will; they were forced to perform tasks that often had nothing to do with their qualifications; they worked without a contract, for an indefinite period, and without any prospect of returning to their homes; they usually worked without pay, their compensation consisting mostly of food and shelter for themselves and their families.³³

The organizing of forced labour for the deported Roma in Transnistria was regulated by Decision no. 3149 of December 18, 1942, by the Transnistria Government, and the purpose of employing them was to ensure food for the deportees. Achim points out that until December 1942, there was no plan from the authorities to organize the forced labour of the Roma; the goal of the deportations was not to exploit their labour but to exterminate them.³⁴ The concern for Roma labour was mainly related to securing food since maintaining them in camps posed an enormous expense for the authorities. To relieve the occupation administration of this burden and to maintain control over these people, who would otherwise be forced to leave the deportation sites in search of food, it was decided that all expenses for the food and accommodation of the deportees would be covered by private employers who needed labour.³⁵

The needs and demands of employers for labour varied from camp to camp, meaning that very few Roma had the opportunity to work. Achim mentions that in the Oceacov district, in mid-December 1942, out of a total of nearly 14,000 Roma who had arrived in September, only 35 were employed at the "Marshal Antonescu" state farm. The archival documents he consulted show that Roma asked to work so they could earn their food.³⁶

II.4 New Methods of Food Preparation

The starvation in the concentration camps in Transnistria led to significant changes in how people ate and prepared food. They were forced to adapt to what was available and be as inventive as possible to survive. Constant hunger and food shortages gave rise to specific eating habits and methods of preparing food in the concentration camps: eating raw food; finding new ways to process food; eating quickly to finish within the time allowed by the authorities; disregarding basic hygiene rules. Below are some excerpts from survivors' testimonies that illustrate these behaviours:

"They would go however they could and get corn and give us unsalted corn kernels, nothing else, and my father would crush the kernels with an anvil, and my mother would prepare a kind of gruel for us to eat, and it was full of sand and dirt,

³² Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 99.

³³ Achim Viorel, *Munca Forțată în Transnistria. „Oganizarea muncii” evreilor și romilor Decembrie 1942-Martie 1944*, (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2016), 20.

³⁴ Achim, *Munca Forțată*, 25, 26, 43.

³⁵ Achim *Munca Forțată*, 30.

³⁶ Achim, *Munca Forțată*, 35.

and we would eat it like that because we had no choice, so we wouldn't die." - Lucia Mihai³⁷

"When they took us to the field to pick corn, they wouldn't even let us eat corn kernels. We would put a handful of kernels in our pockets and eat them raw, unripe, and uncooked. If they saw us putting even a small handful of corn in our pockets, they would kill us; it was such destruction. They would give us a small handful of cornmeal, and when we got home, we had a small tin cup, no pot, nothing, nothing." - Maria Dumitru³⁸

"They brought us each a tin cup of cornmeal with barley... my mother would put it on the fire and make us flatbread to eat, and that's how we ate... the Russian women would peel the potatoes and throw the raw peels outside, and we would gather them from the garbage, put them on a tray, and roast them, and we ate them like that." - Radu Alexandrina³⁹

"I made a metal plate and punched holes in it, and we would take the corn in hand and rub it against the sieve. We rubbed it and made cornmeal." - Enuța Sporidon⁴⁰

III. Exhaustion

If the phase of resistance is marked by efforts to procure food and cooperate within the family, exhaustion is characterized by psychological and social collapse. Hunger shifts focus and reorganizes people's priorities, with personal survival becoming the primary focus. Kelly Young explains this shift, noting that malnutrition causes cognitive deterioration, shifting attention away from social habits and moral codes, with thoughts of food becoming dominant.⁴¹ Regarding the Roma deported to Transnistria, after a period of trying to resist and fight against dehumanization and extermination by finding various survival strategies, they eventually could not hold on and gradually began to break down mentally.

III.1 Consumption of Taboo Foods

People became so exhausted from hunger that they began eating horse, cat, and dog meat—foods considered taboo in Roma culture, as survivors Maria Dumitru and Dobrin Costică testify:

"Oh Lord, we ate horse meat, but what didn't we eat... We even ate donkey meat; the Lord Jesus knows. But what didn't we eat out of hunger." ⁴² "Because of hunger, we started eating grass like sheep... To eat dog meat, cat meat—what kind of person can you be, what kind of blood can you still have in you?" ⁴³

The consumption of foods considered taboo in their culture induced a sense of loss of human value, destroying their identity and leading them to resign themselves to dehumanization and death.

III.2 Child Abandonment

Another behaviour specific to the exhaustion phase mentioned by the Roma deported to Transnistria is the abandonment of children: *"When you could no longer bear the hunger, you'd put the child down and leave them there on the road to die because you couldn't, you no longer had the strength to carry them."* - Petru

³⁷ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 105.

³⁸ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 39.

³⁹ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 99.

⁴⁰ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 154.

⁴¹ Young, „The Psychological Effects”, 68.

⁴² Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 37

⁴³ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 37.

Căldărar⁴⁴ *“On the road, when we left, I gave birth to both of them. I threw one away, and I’m ashamed; there was a girl and a boy. And I left the girl and took the boy, yes. And I was about to throw this one away too, but God intervened, and I brought him.”* - Silvia Stănescu⁴⁵

III.3 Cannibalism

As hunger and death became more imminent in the Transnistria camps, acts of cannibalism began to emerge. For Young, the path to adopting cannibalism in extreme circumstances is part of a psychological process of hierarchizing human needs. When the human body is deprived of its primary biological needs, they become more powerful, causing the importance of other needs, such as social and moral ones, to diminish.⁴⁶ The testimonies of Ilina Hristea, Bria Mihai, and Paulina Vasile capture precisely this cognitive and psychological degradation caused by hunger, leading to the prioritization of survival over moral and social values:

“There were some people who had nothing to eat; they pulled her out of the grave, undressed her, and dragged her behind a bush. They cut the meat from her hips and thighs, then roasted it and ate it... What else could they do? It wasn’t their fault; they had nothing to eat.” - Ilina Hristea and Bria Mihai⁴⁷

“A Roma woman of ours had just died, in the evening, they buried her. The Roma from Pitești immediately went, dug her up, cut her up, and ate her. They ate human flesh! When someone died recently, they’d go, dig them up, and eat them.” - Vasile Paulina⁴⁸

Conclusions

In this study, I have demonstrated the significant role that starvation played in the Romanian authorities’ proceedings to carry out the mass extermination of the deported Roma. The Antonescu regime, much like the Nazi regime, used starvation as a tool of physical and psychological oppression. By depriving them of food, the Romanian authorities persecuted, humiliated, and degraded the deported Roma, forcing them to behave in ways that were disrespectful, treacherous, and sometimes even inhumane toward other deportees, ultimately leading to the destruction of their identity and dignity.

I focused on the subjective aspect of how the deported Roma experienced hunger, discussing its impact on their conduct and daily life in the camps. I analysed their survival tactics from the perspective of survivors’ memories, capturing their attempts to resist starvation and maintain their humanity. I emphasized the survivors’ testimonies, as these can serve as a means of restoring the memory of the Holocaust for the Roma and contribute to a more complex understanding of the suffering they endured during the Holocaust.

⁴⁴ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 79.

⁴⁵ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 181.

⁴⁶ Young, „The Psychological Effects”, 72.

⁴⁷ Ioanid, Kelso, Cioabă, *Tragedia*, 204

⁴⁸ Furtună, Grigore, Neacșu, *Sostar na rovas...?*, 38.

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Aversive Racism: A Contemporary Form of Racism

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the concept of aversive racism, including its definition, origins, and current context. Aversive racism is characterized by avoidance of direct interactions and maintaining a psychological distance from minority groups, despite public support for egalitarian beliefs. The study evaluates the presence of aversive racism among a sample of 400 adults from the Romanian majority population, using a quantitative method. The results indicate the persistence of biases against minorities, reflecting specific elements of this type of racism. Addressing discrimination requires both changes in public policies and intercultural education. Understanding aversive racism represents an essential step towards promoting social inclusion and equality.

Keywords

Aversive racism; prejudice; discrimination; social inclusion; intercultural education; public policies

Defining and Origin of Aversive Racism

Racism remains a deeply entrenched problem in contemporary society, despite significant progress made in recent decades towards equality and inclusion. Social and legislative transformations have not eradicated prejudice and discrimination but have caused them to take on new forms, often more subtle and difficult to recognize at first glance¹. One of these forms is "aversive racism," a concept introduced by sociologists John Dovidio, Samuel Gaertner, and Tamar Saguy.²

Aversive racism is a concept from social theory proposed by Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio in 1986. It describes negative evaluations of racial or ethnic minorities through a persistent avoidance of interaction with other racial and ethnic groups. Unlike traditional overt racism, characterized by hate and discrimination, aversive racism is characterized by ambivalent and complex attitudes toward other races. These attitudes are often the result of

¹ John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, "Color Blind or Just Plain Blind? The Pernicious Nature of Contemporary Racism". *The Nonprofit Quarterly*, 12(4), (2005): 40-46.

² John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, Tamar Saguy, "Another view of "we": Majority and minority group perspectives on a common in-group identity", *European Review of Social Psychology*, 18 (2007): 296-330.

unconscious beliefs formed in childhood. Subtle racist behaviors are typically directed against African Americans, Muslims, and Roma people, with workplace discrimination being a common example of aversive racism.³

The term "aversive racism" was introduced to describe a subtle and indirect form of racial prejudice. Prior to the introduction of this concept, research had largely focused on overt or "old-fashioned" racism, which involves ideologies of racial superiority, segregation, and open discrimination. The civil rights movement of the 1960s and the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation reduced overt manifestations of racism, but did not completely eliminate racial prejudices. These prejudices began to manifest in a more subtle and indirect form, leading to the necessity of redefining and expanding the concepts of racism to include these new forms of prejudice.⁴

Aversive racism describes the attitudes and behaviors of those who endorse egalitarian beliefs and deny any racial prejudices, yet act differently when interacting with members of minority groups. This type of racism manifests through subtle behaviors, such as avoiding direct interactions and maintaining social distance from minorities.⁵ Individuals who exhibit aversive racism often justify their discriminatory behaviors through non-racial rationalizations, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of prejudices without being aware of it.

The Manifestation of Aversive Racism

Aversive racism is manifested through negative evaluations of racial and ethnic minorities, characterized by the avoidance of direct interactions with these groups and the maintenance of ambivalent and complex attitudes towards them. Individuals who exhibit this type of racism publicly endorse ideas of equality and diversity but maintain subtle attitudes and behaviors that disadvantage minority groups. These unconscious biases are expressed through indirect behaviors, such as avoiding interactions with members of minority groups or supporting policies that restrict their access to resources and opportunities.⁶

For instance, an employer might publicly claim to support diversity but unconsciously favor majority candidates during the recruitment process, justifying their choice through "cultural compatibility." In another example, a teacher might claim to treat all students equally but may provide less attention or support to students from minority backgrounds, assuming they are less capable. In everyday life, a neighbor might avoid eye contact or conversations with a recently moved immigrant family, citing reasons such as "being busy" or "lack of time."⁷

Aversive racism also manifests in subtle behaviors in daily life. In stores, employees might scrutinize ethnic minority customers more closely, assuming they are more likely to steal. At the workplace, minority employees may be excluded from advancement opportunities, perpetuating inequalities and maintaining the privileges of the majority group.

³ John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, Tamar Saguy, "Another view", 296-330.

⁴ John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, Tamar Saguy, "Another view", 296-330.

⁵ John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, Tamar Saguy, "Another view", 296-330.

⁶ Victoria M. Esses, John F. Dovidio, Antoinette H. Semanya, Lynne M. Jackson, *Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration: The Role of National and International Identity*, (London: Psychology Press, 2005), 317-337.

⁷ Dixon John., Durrheim Kevin., Tredoux Colin., Tropp Linda, Clack Beverly., Eaton Liberty. "A paradox of integration? Interracial contact, prejudice reduction and black South Africans' perceptions of racial discrimination", *Journal of Social Issues*, 66(2), (2010): 40-416.

A pertinent example is how minorities are treated within the educational system. Minority students may face marginalization from peers and teachers, affecting their academic performance and self-esteem. Additionally, minorities may encounter difficulties in accessing adequate educational resources and personal development opportunities, contributing to the perpetuation of inequalities and limiting social mobility.

In neighborhoods, minority families might be treated with suspicion and isolation by majority neighbors, hindering their social integration. This marginalization can have long-term negative effects on social cohesion and create significant barriers to building inclusive and equitable communities. Aversive racism is an insidious form of prejudice that affects various minority groups through subtle exclusion and discrimination. Recognizing and understanding this form of racism is crucial for developing effective strategies to combat it and promoting equality and inclusion in modern society.

Aversive racism represents an insidious form of prejudice that persists in modern societies, affecting various minority groups through subtle exclusion and discrimination. The introduction of the concept of aversive racism has fundamentally changed the understanding of the dynamics of modern racism, highlighting the need to address not only overt forms of discrimination but also the subtle and indirect manifestations of racial prejudice.

To combat this type of racism, it is necessary to recognize and understand the subtle ways in which prejudice manifests. Intercultural education, public awareness, and the promotion of positive interactions between ethnic groups are important steps in reducing prejudice and fostering a more equitable and inclusive society. Only through concerted and sustained efforts can we build a more equitable and inclusive society for all its citizens.⁸

Manifestations of Aversive Racism in Romania: A Quantitative Analysis of Majority Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Ethnic Minorities

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research method. The quantitative approach involves the collection of numerical data that is statistically analyzed to describe, explain, or predict certain phenomena. In contrast to qualitative research, which relies on detailed descriptive data, quantitative research uses large samples and predetermined tools (e.g., questionnaires, scales) to test hypotheses and generate generalizable results.⁹

Participants

To achieve representative results at the population level, the sample of subjects must be rigorously selected. This study used a probabilistic sample of 400 adult Romanian individuals, evenly distributed across four counties (100 from each county). Probabilistic sampling, where all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected, ensures representativeness and reduces selection bias (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018). Subjects were randomly selected to achieve diversity based on relevant socio-demographic criteria (gender, age, residential environment, education).

⁸ Victoria M Esses, John F. Dovidio, Lynne M. Jackson, Tamara L. Armstrong, "The Immigration Dilemma: The Role of Perceived Group Competition, Ethnic Prejudice, and National Identity", *Journal of Social Issues* 57(3), (2001): 389 - 412

⁹ Creswell. J.W. and Creswell, J.D., "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approache" (2017) https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_609332/objava_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf.

The counties where the study was conducted are: Brăila, Galați, Constanța, and Buzău.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a standardized questionnaire, a valid and frequently used quantitative tool in social sciences. The questionnaire was developed based on the theoretical framework studied and included 15 closed-ended questions with responses on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The Likert scale allows for nuanced quantification of opinions and is ideal for measuring attitudes.¹⁰ Standardized questionnaires ensure data consistency and facilitate statistical analysis.

Procedure

The questionnaires were administered from January to February 2024 using a direct, face-to-face method by trained operators. Direct administration maximizes response rates and allows for clarification of any misunderstandings. Participation was voluntary and anonymous to ensure sincerity.

Questionnaire Items

1. Do you believe that ethnic minorities in Romania have too many rights and unearned benefits?
2. Do minorities take too much advantage of our social welfare system, while ordinary Romanians receive too little?
3. How comfortable would you feel if a Roma individual moved in next door?
4. How comfortable would you feel if a Muslim immigrant moved in next door?
5. Do you believe that "positive discrimination" policies in favor of ethnic minorities should be abolished?
6. Do you think that ethnic minorities often try to exploit their special status?
7. Do Roma students receive university places without deserving them, while Romanian candidates are rejected?
8. Do immigrants steal jobs from Romanians?
9. Do the culture and values of ethnic minorities threaten traditional Romanian culture?
10. Do ethnic minorities receive too much financial support from the Romanian state?
11. Should Romanians always have priority over minorities in employment?
12. Should Romania limit the number of immigrants coming here?
13. Do you support the idea that each ethnicity should remain separate and maintain its cultural purity?
14. Are Roma largely responsible for crime in Romania?
15. My overall opinion of ethnic minorities in Romania is positive.

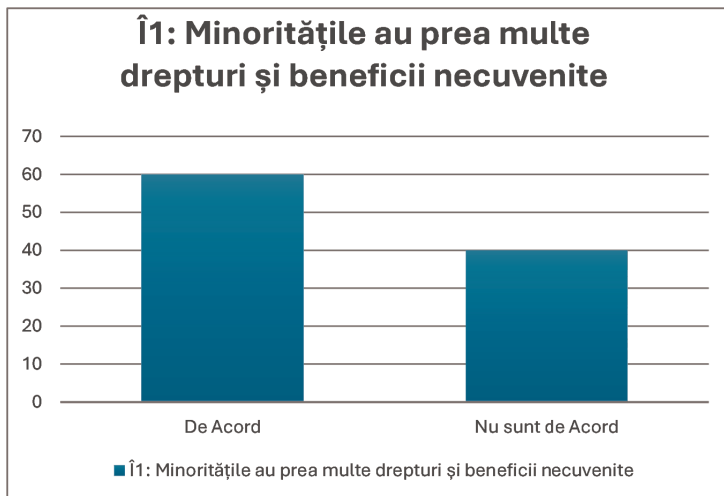
¹⁰ Ankur Joshi, Saket Kale, Satish Chandel, Dinesh Kumar Pal, "Likert Scale: Explored and Explained" *British Journal of Applied Science & Technology* 7(4) (2015): 396-403.

Detailed Statistical Interpretation of Questionnaire Data

Descriptive Analysis of Data

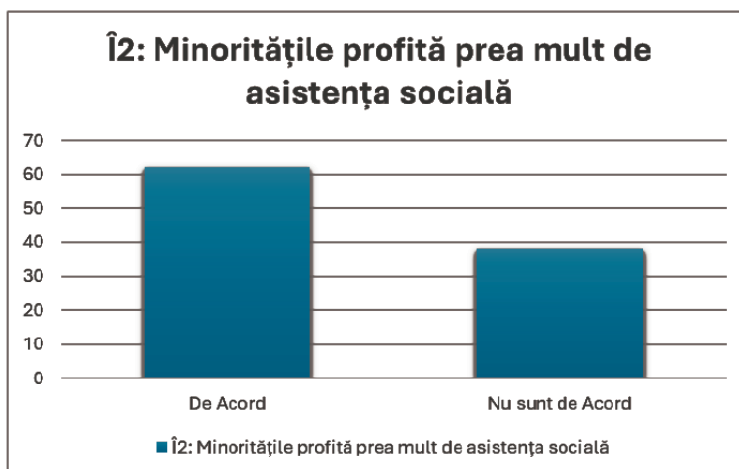
I. Perception of Minority Rights and Benefits

Question 1: Ethnic minorities in Romania have too many rights and unearned benefits.



The mean score of 3.8 and the agreement of 60% of respondents indicate a significant perception that ethnic minorities benefit from unjustified rights and advantages. This perception generates feelings of inequity and frustration among the majority population. Such resentments contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and discrimination, impacting social cohesion and exacerbating inter-ethnic tensions.

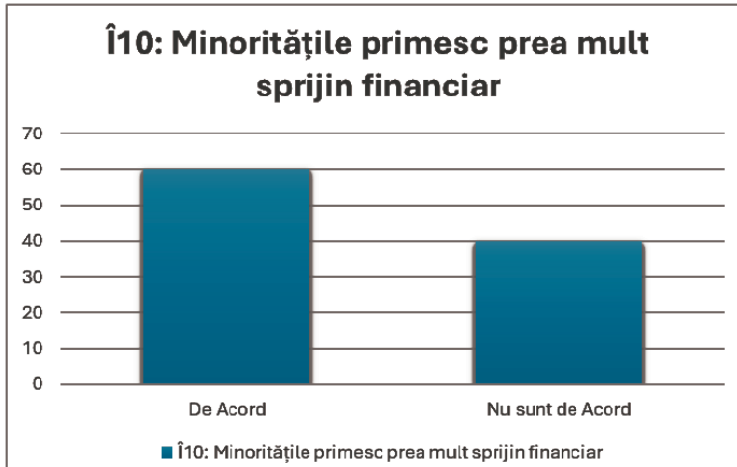
Question 2: Do minorities take too much advantage of our social welfare system?



The responses reveal that 62% of participants agree or strongly agree with the statement that minorities excessively benefit from the social welfare system, while ordinary Romanians receive too little. The mean score of 3.7 underscores a

significant perception of inequity in the distribution of social assistance. This perception of unfair distribution can generate feelings of resentment towards minority groups and the social welfare system.

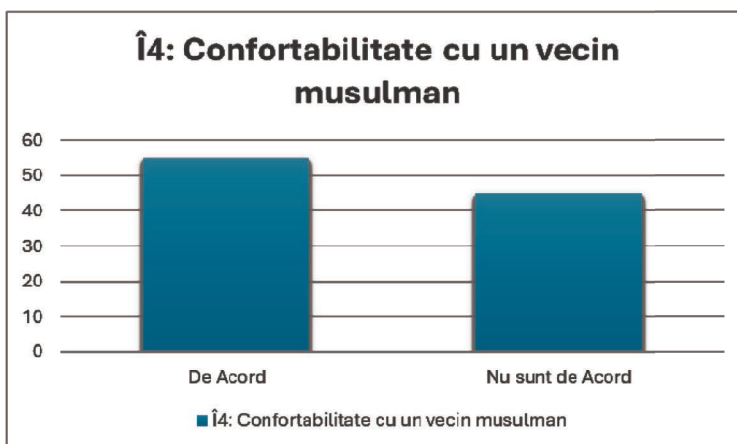
Question 10: Do ethnic minorities receive too much financial support from the Romanian state?



The mean score of 3.3 and the agreement of 60% of respondents indicate a widespread perception of inequity in the distribution of public financial resources. The resentments arising from this perception can lead to social polarization, reinforcing barriers between ethnic groups and negatively impacting social cohesion. Perceptions of favoritism can exacerbate prejudices and discrimination.

II. Attitudes Towards Immigration and Cultural Diversity

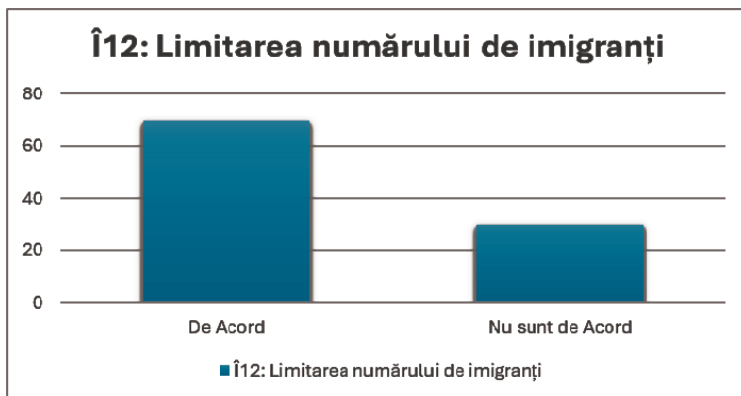
Question 4: Discomfort Towards Muslim Immigrants



The mean score of 2.3 and the agreement of 55% of respondents reflect a pronounced reluctance to accept Muslim immigrants as neighbors. Negative stereotypes

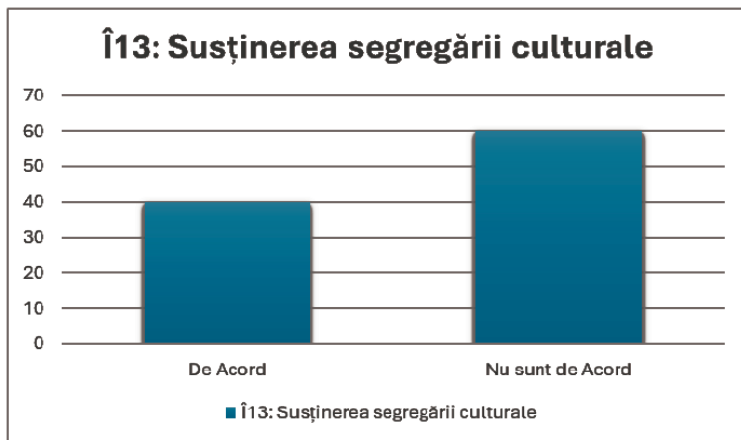
and prejudices related to cultural and religious differences amplify these negative perceptions, generating discomfort and social exclusion. Such attitudes can significantly impact the integration of immigrants and social cohesion.

Question 12: Should Romania limit the number of immigrants?



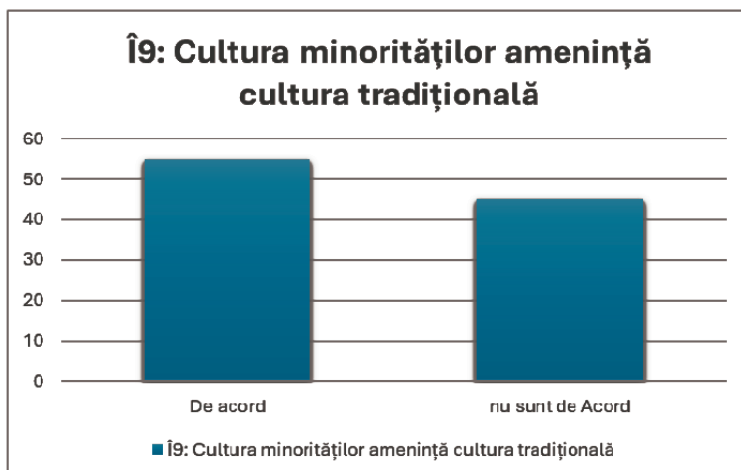
The mean score of 4.0 and the agreement of 70% of respondents indicate strong opposition to immigration. Concerns related to competition for resources and jobs, as well as issues regarding cultural identity and national security, fuel this opposition. Such sentiments can contribute to xenophobia and discriminatory behaviors.

Question 13: Cultural segregation



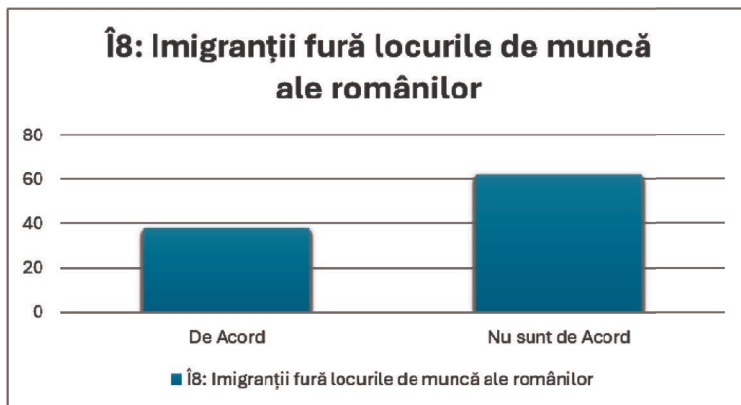
The mean score of 2.8 and the agreement of 40% of respondents indicate moderate support for cultural segregation. Concerns about losing cultural identity and a desire to protect traditions may contribute to a preference for maintaining cultural separation. Such preferences for cultural segregation can limit interactions and collaboration between ethnic groups, thereby perpetuating social tensions.

Question 9: Cultural threats



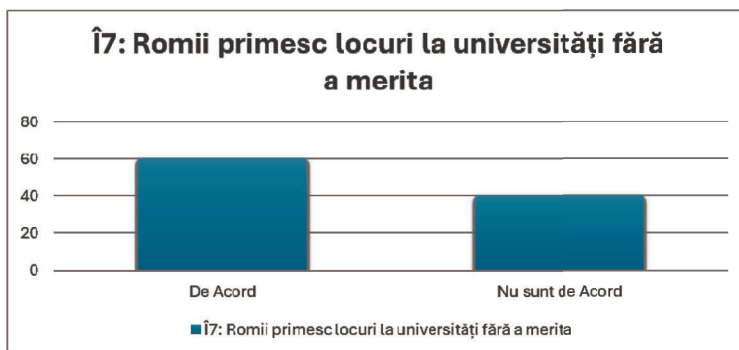
The mean score of 3.4 and the agreement of 55% of respondents suggest a significant perception that ethnic minorities threaten traditional Romanian culture. Concerns about the loss of cultural identity may generate a defensive reaction, reinforcing negative stereotypes and affecting inter-ethnic relations. This perception of cultural threat can undermine efforts to promote inclusion and multiculturalism.

III. Competition for Resources and Employment



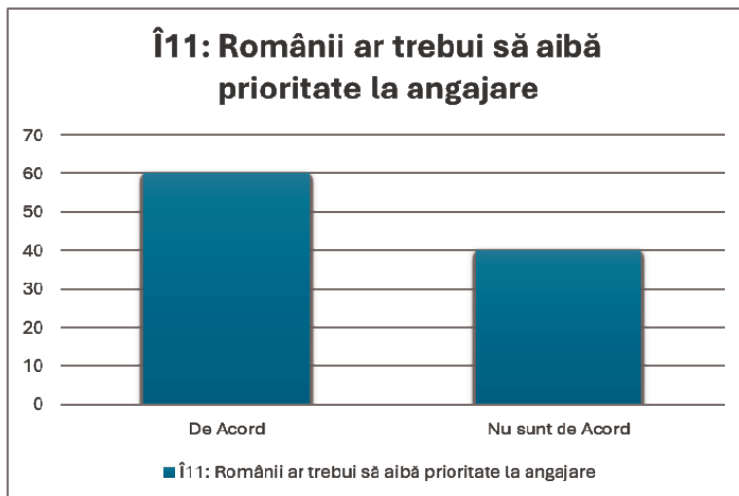
The mean score of 3.2 and the agreement of 38% of respondents indicate a perception of unfair competition in the labor market between immigrants and the local population. Resentments towards immigrants, exacerbated by challenging economic conditions, can lead to social tensions and discriminatory behaviors. The perception of unfair competition highlights concerns that immigrants may be seen as displacing local workers or creating an uneven playing field in the job market.

Question 7: Roma access to higher education



The mean score of 3.1 and the agreement of 60% of respondents reflect a perception of inequity in access to higher education for Roma individuals. This perception indicates that a substantial portion of the population believes Roma may receive unjustified advantages in the higher education system. The perception that Roma students benefit from unfair advantages in accessing higher education can generate significant resentment. This belief is often rooted in broader concerns about fairness and equity in educational opportunities, and may be exacerbated by existing stereotypes and social biases.

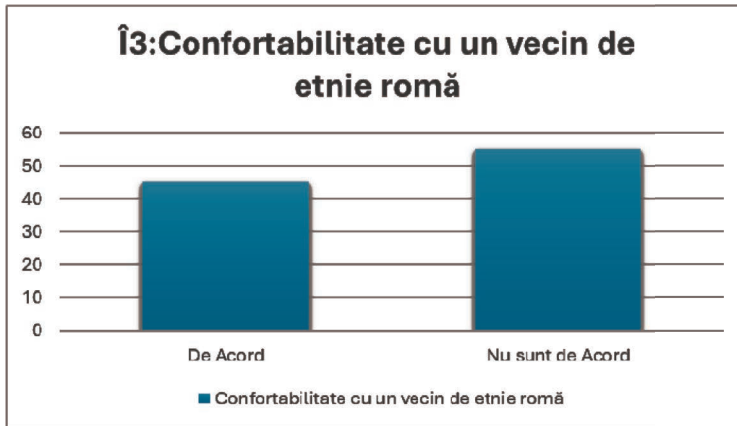
Question 11: Employment priority for Romanians



A mean score of 3.6 and the agreement of 60% of respondents suggest a strong “us versus them” perspective regarding employment. Concerns about competition for limited resources can reinforce prejudices and discrimination against minorities. The perception that Romanians should have hiring priority can lead to exclusion and marginalization of minority groups.

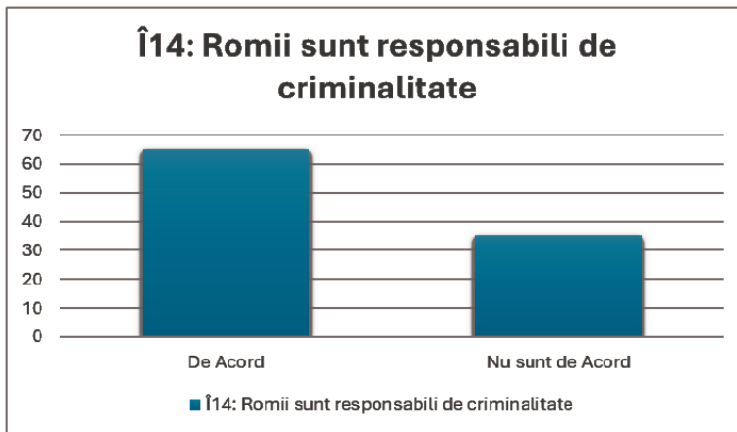
IV. General Perceptions and Stereotypes

Question 3: Discomfort towards Roma



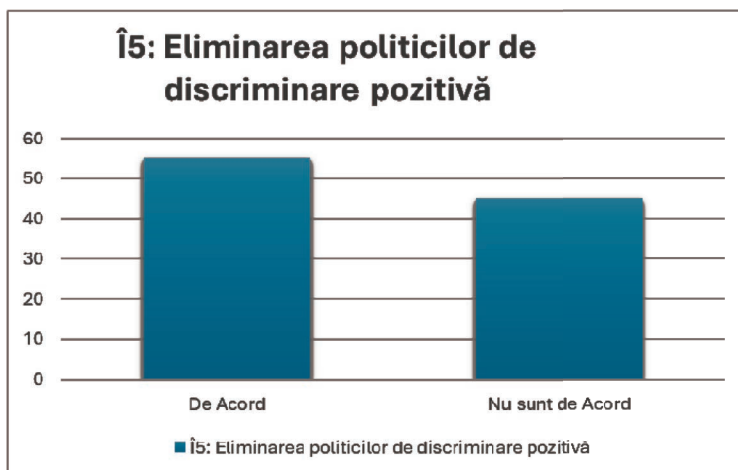
A mean score of 2.7 and the agreement of 45% of respondents reflect a moderate level of discomfort with the idea of having a Roma neighbor. Negative prejudices and stereotypes contribute to social distancing and the exclusion of Roma individuals. These attitudes can negatively impact social cohesion and the integration of Roma into the community.

Question 14: Roma people and criminality



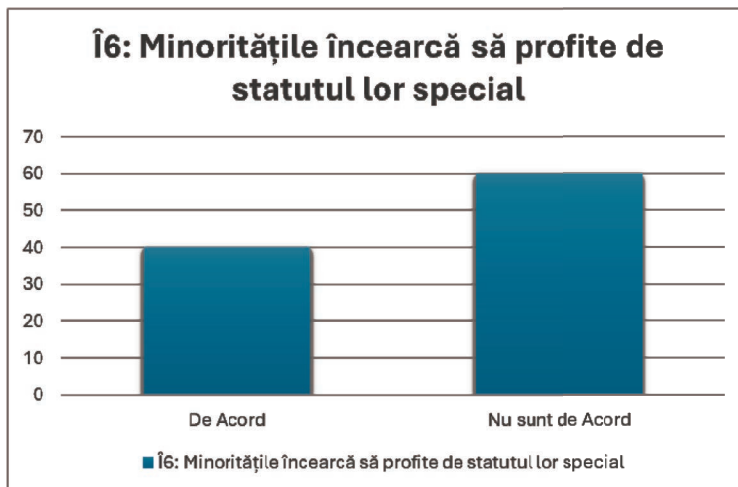
A mean score of 3.1 and the agreement of 65% of respondents reflect persistent prejudices that associate Roma with criminality. These prejudices can fuel discrimination and social exclusion of Roma, negatively affecting their integration into society. Negative portrayals in the media and a lack of direct interactions between groups contribute to reinforcing these stereotypes.

Question 5: Elimination of Positive Discrimination



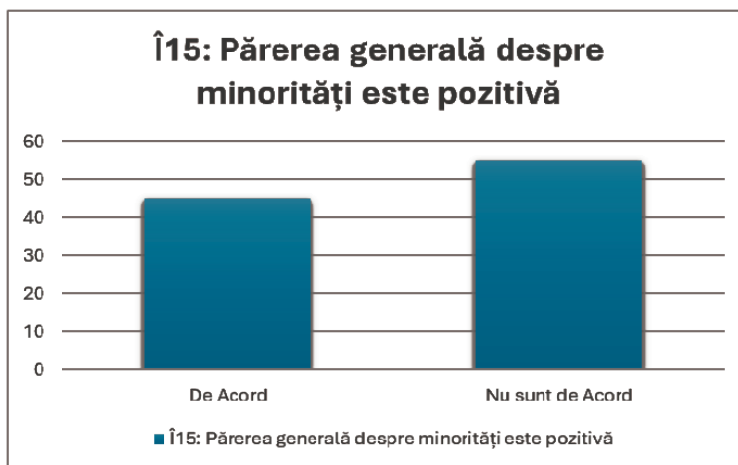
A mean score of 3.5 and the agreement of 55% of respondents suggest significant opposition to positive discrimination policies. The perception that these policies are unfair can fuel resentment and social tensions. It is important to clearly communicate the purpose and benefits of these policies to reduce perceptions of favoritism.

Question 6: Exploiting Minority Status



A mean score of 3.2 and the agreement of 40% of respondents suggest a perception of exploiting minority status for unjustified advantages. This perception can fuel negative stereotypes and prejudices, negatively impacting social cohesion and inter-ethnic relations.

Question 15: General Perception of Ethnic Minorities



Approximately 45% of respondents hold a positive or neutral opinion about ethnic minorities in Romania, while 55% have a negative opinion. The predominantly negative general perception reflects the presence of prejudices and aversive attitudes that can lead to discrimination and social exclusion of minorities.

Conclusions of the Study

The results of this quantitative study alarmingly highlight the persistence of aversive racism attitudes among the majority population in the investigated counties. The data reveal that a significant segment of the surveyed sample holds negative perspectives and prejudices against ethnic minorities, manifested through beliefs in unjustified preferential treatment and improper access to resources.

Over 60% of respondents believe that minorities receive too many rights, social benefits, or university placements at the expense of the majority. This perception distorts reality and creates a dangerous social tension. Resentments turn into hostile attitudes towards minorities, which are seen as responsible for their own lack of opportunities. For example, many respondents believe that Roma individuals receive university placements without merit, while Romanians are unfairly rejected.

Approximately 35-45% of respondents think that minorities "steal" jobs from Romanians. This perception is not only incorrect but also contributes to an atmosphere of suspicion and rivalry in the workplace. Instead of viewing diversity as an asset, these individuals perceive the presence of minorities as a direct threat to their economic stability. Minority employees are viewed with hostility and are often excluded from social circles at work.

Feelings of cultural threat are also pervasive. About 55% of respondents believe that ethnic minorities threaten traditional Romanian culture. This is manifested through refusal to participate in cultural events organized by minorities and criticism of these events in the public sphere. For example, Roma cultural festivals or events organized by Muslim communities are viewed with suspicion and are often criticized in the media and on social networks.

These negative perspectives are characteristic of aversive racism, defined by the perception of an unjustified success of another ethnic group. In the current social context in Romania, these subtle but deeply ingrained prejudices affect social

cohesion and perpetuate inequities. Although not always manifested through violence or overt discrimination, these attitudes contribute to the exclusion and marginalization of minorities.

This study reveals that aversive racism is still present in Romanian society and that urgent and concrete measures are needed to combat it. It is essential to adopt a holistic approach that includes education, public policies, and community initiatives to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all its citizens. Ignoring these issues only perpetuates inequities and social tensions, undermining progress towards a truly egalitarian society. Romania faces a major challenge in addressing these attitudes, and success depends on the collective commitment of the government, non-governmental organizations, and every individual citizen.

General Conclusions

Aversive racism is a scientific social theory proposed by Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio in 1986, which suggests that negative evaluations of racial and ethnic minorities are manifested through constant avoidance of interaction with these groups. Unlike traditional and overt racism, which involves hatred and direct discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities, aversive racism is characterized by more complex and ambivalent attitudes and expressions, including prejudiced opinions about other races. This type of racism originates from unconscious personal beliefs formed during childhood. African Americans are often targets of subtle racist behaviors. Workplace discrimination represents one of the most evident examples of aversive racism, where biased beliefs about how minorities act and think influence interactions between individuals and minority members.

Aversive racism represents a subtle and subconscious form of prejudice, which can manifest in behaviors, judgments, and decisions that favor or disadvantage certain ethnic groups, without individuals being aware of these tendencies. Aversion or negative feelings toward other groups can be unconsciously internalized, leading to a dissonance between an individual's declared egalitarian values and their discriminatory behavior.

One critical aspect of aversive racism is that it can persist despite social and legal advances in combating discrimination. Many people express support for diversity and equality, but subconsciously may act discriminatorily when making decisions related to employment, housing, access to services, or other social aspects. This has been highlighted in the present study, where the majority of respondents exhibited aversive attitudes toward minorities.

The current analysis highlights the presence of aversive racism perspectives among the surveyed majority population, manifested in ideas such as preferential access to resources for minorities or cultural threats. Approximately 60% of respondents believe that minorities receive too many rights and social benefits, while 45% feel culturally threatened by minority values. These perceptions reflect a significant reluctance towards minority inclusion and suggest the need for more rigorous educational and legislative measures.

Recommendations

- 1. Intercultural Education:** Implement programs of intercultural education in schools and universities to promote understanding and respect for diversity.
- 2. Awareness Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to highlight the negative impact of prejudices and the benefits of an inclusive society.

3. **Anti-Discrimination Legislation:** Strengthen anti-discrimination legislation and ensure its strict enforcement to protect the rights of all citizens.
4. **Promotion of Intergroup Dialogue:** Create opportunities for dialogue and interaction between different ethnic groups to reduce prejudices and improve interethnic relations.

Combating aversive racism requires concerted efforts from all sectors of society. Only through education, legislation, and the promotion of a culture of respect and mutual understanding can we create a society where every individual is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their ethnic background or race.

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Social Media Communication of Awareness Campaigns Addressing the Phenomenon of Antigypsyism

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Abstract

This article aims to explore how governmental and non-governmental entities, along with other relevant actors in civil society, can implement various social media marketing techniques to maximize the impact of awareness campaigns aimed at combating anti-Roma sentiment. Non-governmental organizations, public institutions, and other entities working in this field use diverse social media communication tools to promote their messages and engage their followers in the fight against this issue. However, the effectiveness, tactics, and approaches vary depending on the message sender. Combating anti-Roma attitudes is crucial in achieving international ideals of social justice, intercultural peace, social stability, and economic development.

Keywords

Social Media; Antigypsyism; Roma People; Marketing; Social Justice; Independent Activist; Communication tactics

I. Introduction - Social Media and antigypsyism attitude

Anti-Roma sentiment on social media is a variation of antigypsyism that has emerged recently with the evolution of social media platforms and their widespread use. Consequently, documentation of this concept is far from sufficient, but there are various statistics concerning user behavior on social media regarding reactions towards the Roma community. Among the authors documenting antigypsyism, both in general aspects and specifically in relation to social media, are Valeriu Nicolae (journalist), the Alliance Against Antigypsyism (an occasional community of relevant actors in Europe publishing various joint documents under this alliance), and Huub van Baar (University of Giessen).

The general perception of the phenomenon denotes a widespread acceptance of racism against various Roma groups in contemporary society. Antigypsyism is deeply rooted in socio-cultural attitudes and institutional practices¹. Thus, social media has become a reflection of human behavior, including this specific characteristic. Free access to the internet comes with

¹ Iulius Rostas, Ciprian Nodis, "Antigypsyism in Romania: Lessons (not) learned", 17 November 2022, <https://antigypsyism.eu/antigypsyism-in-romania-lessons-not-learned-2/>

the enhancement of freedom of expression, thus all aspects of real society have found a reflection in the online environment, including the anti-Roma side of society. Daily, social media platforms are places where individuals with anti-Roma beliefs can express their opinions and create communities, facilitating dialogue.

Locally, in Romania, anti-Roma tendencies on social media have been widely expressed over time both by generic individuals and public figures, including policymakers. In a post on the Facebook platform, then serving as a Member of the Romanian Parliament, Florin Roman declared the following:

"I'm coming back from Paris. Flying with Wizz AIR, where they take priority into account. Among the passengers, there are many Gypsies, because I don't call them Roma. It's nonsense that the word Roma is assimilated with Romania. They know their role well: all with children in tow, in the 'priority' line. As one lady said: 5 children and 15 adults, with 'priority'! Isn't the amendment good: refuse a job, no longer receive social assistance?"

This type of post is common across many different social media platforms, both locally and internationally. These posts shape public opinion against the Roma community, generally relying on stereotypes. In the example above, the policymaker misleads readers by suggesting that the term "Roma" is related to the name of the country "Romania."

Social media can be a useful tool for reducing social inequalities, but the effectiveness of this attribute is directly proportional to the users' ability to interact with new and different people. Just as human nature in the offline world is to group with like-minded individuals, this tendency is also observed in social media. We know that the internet's potential to transform social networks to reduce structural inequality largely depends on people's ability to use it to make new connections². Thus, combating anti-Roma sentiment on social media is intrinsically linked to the penetration of awareness campaigns into mainstream social media spaces and bringing majority individuals into social media circles dedicated to raising awareness.

II. Defining the main concepts

Regarding the definition of the concept of *social media*, there is a variety of opinions in establishing its general characteristics. In the paper "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media," the authors discuss the importance of understanding the terms "Web 2.0" (a highly debated ideological concept in the literature designating the second generation of the web, mainly characterized by the modernization of communication systems) and "User Generated Content (UGC)" as related elements that underpin the definition³. Thus, the paper defines social media as a group of internet-based applications built ideologically and technologically on the Web 2.0 concept, allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

This definition is categorized as problematic in the paper "Defining, developing, & divining social media," where the authors note the possibility of its applicability to certain communication technologies, such as email, which do not consider "the unique technological and social advantages that distinguish social media"⁴. This issue is also identified in the definition proposed by Bobbi Kay Lewis, who refers

² Danah Boyd, *It's Complicated*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

³ Andreas Kaplan, Michael Haenlein, "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities" *Social Media* 53 (2010): 59-68.

⁴ Caleb T. Carr, Rebecca A. Hayes, "Social Media: Defining, Developing, and Divining". *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23 (2015): 46-65.

to social media as a term used “for digital technologies that allow people to connect, interact, produce, and share content”⁵. For reference, this article will be based on the definition proposed by Carr & Hayes: Internet-based, disentrained, and persistent channels of masspersonal communication facilitating perceptions of interactions among users, deriving value primarily from user-generated content.

In 2009, Rice, R. E., and Atkin, C. K., in an attempt to adapt and extend a definition offered by Rogers and Storey in 1987 regarding awareness campaigns (referred to as public communication campaigns), managed to provide an exhaustive definition of the phenomenon, as follows: “Awareness campaigns can be broadly defined as intentional efforts to inform, persuade, or motivate behavior change in a relatively well-defined and broad audience, generally for non-commercial benefits to individuals and/or society at large, usually over a specific period of time, through organized communication activities involving mass media and often supplemented by interpersonal support.”⁶

III. Worldwide key social media marketing practices

- a) **The use of hashtags.** A constant feature of awareness campaigns is the creation of a unique hashtag that serves as a tool for individualizing a topic, becoming a primary element of identification. Many authors believe that this tool underpins the indexing and identification of a specific social media element, simplifying the individual search process⁷. The #MeToo campaign quickly built a network of individuals affected by the discussed issue through the use of this short, impactful, and easily memorable and recreatable hashtag.
- b) **The use of emotionally impactful media elements.** All the aforementioned campaigns utilized emotionally impactful images or videos in their communication efforts. Generating emotions directly influences the virality of a topic, as people discuss emotional experiences within their social circles about the prominent individuals, creating “word-of-mouth” publicity⁸. In the #BlackLivesMatter campaign, revived in public attention by the killing of George Floyd, media elements from the moment of the killing were used, as well as media elements with artistic reconstructions related to the aforementioned moment.
- c) **Influencer Marketing.** In a 2017 study, certain authors defined influencer marketing as the online equivalent of “word-of-mouth” tactics. The generally accepted definition among authors is “a type of marketing that focuses on using key leaders to spread a brand’s message to a larger market”⁹. Awareness campaigns have generally adopted this technique, using specific online audience leaders to convey their message. The Ice Bucket Challenge is a notable example of this trend, leveraging individuals with established follower bases to use their influence to encourage others to participate in the campaign, such as Bill Gates joining the challenge.

⁵ Bobbi Kay Lewis, “Social media and strategic communication: Attitudes and perceptions among college students” *Public Relations Journal*, vol. 4, No 3, (2010). 1-23.

⁶ Rice Ronald, Atkin Charles, “Public communication campaigns: Theoretical Principles and Practical Applications”, in J. Bryant & M. Oliver. (Eds.) *Media effects: Advances in theory and research*, 3 rd ed. (Santa Barbara: UC Santa Barbara, 2009), 436 – 468.

⁷ Bonilla Yarimar, Jonathan Rosa, “Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States” *American Ethnologist*, Vol 42, (2015): 4-17.

⁸ Jonah Berger, Katherine L. Milkman, “Emotion and Virality: What Makes Online Content Go Viral? The Gruyter” *Insights* Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013): 18-23.

⁹ E. Byrne, J. Kearney, C. MacEvilly, “The Role of Influencer Marketing and Social Influencers” in *Public Health. Dublin: Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* (2017).

IV. Hypothesis of the Present Article

The present work aims to analyze how certain current social media communication techniques used in reactive anti-Roma sentiment campaigns influence the outcomes of these campaigns, both in terms of social media impact and public perception of the phenomenon. I will argue that the relevance of the marketing techniques employed is a vital component in determining the impact and virality of posts within an informative reactive campaign.

Additionally, a secondary objective of this work is to identify the main differences in approaches when developing a promotional strategy for public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and independent activists. The approach of these three types of message senders may vary depending on the target audience, established visual identity, and applicable legislation relevant to the entity and/or specific activity.

Given that the topic of anti-Roma sentiment is complex and encompasses a variety of approaches, awareness campaigns are not uniform and cover a range of issues related to ethnic discrimination. Therefore, this work will focus on a specific aspect within this broad field, namely the social media approach to awareness campaigns regarding affirmative measures for Roma student enrollment in higher education institutions in Romania.

Thus, the questions raised are:

1. Does the application of current marketing techniques have a positive effect on the impact of anti-Roma awareness campaigns?
2. What are the most effective promotion methods for reactive anti-Roma sentiment awareness campaigns?

The data used in the empirical section include both quantitative and qualitative types. Quantitative data are represented by statistical data extracted from Facebook and Instagram for posts where the discussed techniques have been applied. This includes metrics such as impact, unique views, reactions, comments, and shares on Facebook, as well as impact metrics such as accounts (followers/non-followers), views, and interactions on Instagram. Qualitative data are represented by the actual comments left by users on these posts, which are then classified based on whether the messages conveyed are positive or negative.

The primary research method used in this study to understand the effectiveness of marketing techniques is the "experimental method." Three different experiments were conducted for each type of campaign sender (public institution, non-governmental organization, independent activist). The experimental design used is of the "Before-After, Without Control" type, focusing on comparing a post with average results created within a calendar year (P0) and a new post that adheres to the mentioned marketing techniques (P1), for each category of sender.

The experimental independent variable used for the present experiment, both for Facebook and Instagram posts across all categories of senders, is the use of communication tools such as "Hashtags" and "Emotional Impact." For the "non-governmental organization" and "independent activist" categories, the technique of "Influencer Marketing" will also be employed.

V. The experiment

A. Public institution

To conduct the experiment involving public institutions, assistance was sought from the National Contact Point for Roma (PNCR). According to the PNCR website,

“The National Contact Point for Roma (PNCR) is responsible for coordinating national efforts to improve the situation of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority, engaging in the evaluation and monitoring process of the progress made in implementing the Romanian Government’s Strategy for the inclusion of Roma citizens, reporting these to the European Commission, and making proposals for adapting and revising the Strategy.”¹⁰

The text is crafted in accordance with current legislative norms and the methodology required for posts by institutions of the Romanian Government. It is impersonal, characterized by rigor and clear information, starting with a historical fact intended to capture attention by specifying the exact year of implementation of affirmative measures for Roma students, thereby piquing curiosity and encouraging the reader to engage with the entire text. The body of the text addresses certain myths related to special places for Roma students, presented in a schematic format for ease of follow-up. Additionally, there are many blank lines to avoid an overly cluttered appearance. A simple, memorable hashtag is also included, providing an identity for the awareness campaign and encouraging readers to share their own experiences related to special places for Roma students, thus helping to viralize the subject.

The photograph employs the technique of “emotional impact.” The image features a composition in which the main character is dressed in stereotypical Roma attire, augmented by a graduation cap to shock the audience through its stereotypical incongruity. The character is seated directly on the ground to convey familiarity to the viewer, and has a subtle smile. They are accessorized in a stereotypical manner with a metal earring in the left ear and a gold ring on the pinky finger of the left hand. The background depicts a disadvantaged urban environment, hinting at the possible origin of the character. The artwork conveys hope through the character’s achievement of graduating despite stereotypes. The graphic text carries a positive tone, aiming to inspire Roma youth to embrace their ethnicity and encourage them to pursue higher education. Additionally, the graphic includes a hashtag “#” to facilitate the viral spread of the message. The colors chosen for the graphic text are inspired by the character’s attire, contrasted with simple white to capture attention. Another attention-grabbing element is the chosen font, which has an imposing character that stands out and perfectly complements the message.

The results generated by the post are confidential for the Ministry of Investments and European Projects. However, the estimated impact reported in terms of likes is approximately 3,000 unique individuals who viewed the post. The actual number of reactions includes 187 likes, 2 comments, and 3 shares. Considering the presented data, since the experimental post has a higher effective value compared to the report post, we can affirm that the applied promotion methods and techniques for the aforementioned post are effective. The results are approximately 1,527.27% higher than the most successful previous post.

B. NGO

To conduct the experiment involving a non-governmental organization, assistance was sought from the Agenția Împreună. According to the organization’s website, “The mission of the Agency is focused on preserving and affirming the Roma identity through research, documentation and dissemination, and the development and implementation of social policies for the benefit of the Roma.”

For the campaign conducted on behalf of the organization, a series of graphic materials were created for an Instagram carousel post. The graphics, integrated into

¹⁰ Ministerul Investițiilor și Proiectelor Europene, “Punctul Național de Contact pentru Romi (PNCR)” <https://pncr.fonduri-ue.ro/punctul-national-de-contact-pentru-romi/>

a single post and arranged in a correct sequence, provide a continuous visual narrative designed to maintain the viewer's attention and arouse curiosity, encouraging them to engage with the entire material. The colors used in the post are darker variants of the main colors from the Agenția Împreună logo. These shades are chosen to integrate seamlessly with both the "light" and "dark" modes of the Instagram Mobile interface.

The first image sets the stage for the issue with impactful font and text entirely in uppercase. The familiar language used creates direct empathy with the reader. The image includes two paperclips and an eraser, symbolizing education and evoking a nostalgic school atmosphere, thereby enhancing empathy. The Agenția Împreună logo is prominently displayed to ground the NGO's visual identity. Graphical elements such as arrows guide the viewer to the next tabs, complemented by text that informs about additional images, encouraging the reader to swipe further.

The second image continues the visual theme from the first image. It features a photograph that employs the technique of "emotional impact." The portrait of me as the message sender, recognized by the audience as an independent activist, contrasts traditional Roma attire with graduation cap, challenging preconceived notions about Roma education. The accompanying text introduces concrete information about the topic and uses keywords highlighted in a distinct color for emphasis.

The third image concludes the first visual element with a directional arrow, reminding viewers that there is another image to follow. Informative text continues in the style of the previous image. Educational elements such as three paperclips reappear, and a new graphic element resembling a file on a desk is introduced. For the first time, the hashtag #STUDENTROM is featured, drawing attention to the broader campaign and creating a media identity.

The final image reverses the color scheme and focuses on calls to action. Texts encourage readers to interact with the post and the organization's account. The ONG logo is again included to reinforce the association of the campaign with its initiator. The predominant text is written in a familiar style to ensure the message remains simple and easily retained.

Together, the images maintain reader interest through dynamic and varied elements while keeping the overall design straightforward and engaging throughout the visual experience.

The effective impact generated by the post, represented by the number of unique accounts that viewed the post at least once, is 4,478, with 86% of this figure coming from accounts that do not follow the profile. The total number of impressions, which can be generated by the same accounts multiple times, is 4,887. The post received 805 likes, and there were no comments, indicating that the post did not extend beyond the audience already sympathetic to the subject. The data are obtained from Instagram's statistics feature.

Taking into account the provided data, and considering that the experimental post has a higher effective value than the report post, we can assert that the marketing methods and techniques applied to the aforementioned post are effective, with results being approximately 689.69% higher.

C. Independent activist

To assess the impact I intended to generate as an independent activist, I utilized my personal social media pages under the name Alex Stan. On these platforms, I shared posts that combined photos and text, using a style similar to those employed by other types of communicators for consistency and comparability. Additionally, I leveraged the freedom that comes with independent communication, a key benefit of this approach, to create a range of short videos addressing similar themes. These videos, designed specifically for TikTok, allowed me to engage directly with

audiences in a more dynamic and relatable way, helping to expand the campaign's reach and resonance on social media.

The text is crafted in a familiar manner to foster empathy between the reader and the message issuer, presenting them as a person with human qualities. It begins with a striking sentence that leverages the controversial nature of the subject to capture the reader's attention and encourage them to read the entire text. As with previous emitters' approaches, the body of the text addresses myths related to special places for Romani people, written in a schematic format for easy readability. It includes ample white space to avoid appearing too dense. Additionally, a simple, memorable hashtag is used to give the campaign an identity, encouraging readers to share their own experiences related to special places for Romani people.

The photograph employs the "emotional impact" technique. It features a portrait of me as an independent activist known to the audience. The attire I am wearing plays on the incorrect perception of the Romani people's educational level, creating a stark contrast between the traditional red Romani shirt and the graduation cap, challenging preconceived notions. The background of the photo is chosen to convey a sense of impoverished origin for the protagonist, with old, crumbling buildings, puddles, and a dark color palette, enhancing empathy for the subject. The protagonist in the photograph fits the typical Romani stereotype in the collective mindset: tall, with olive skin, dark hair, facial hair, and accessories. The body position invites contemplation, with the hand on the chin suggesting concern despite the achievement of graduation. The facial expression conveys worry, aiming to express the fear stemming from the discrimination faced.

The effective impact generated by the post, represented by the number of unique accounts that saw the post at least once, is 10,417, of which approximately 85% were generated by accounts that do not follow the profile. General impressions, which can include multiple views by the same accounts, total 11,804. The post received 3,206 likes and 58 comments (over 400% more than the reference post). These data are sourced from the Instagram statistics feature.

On Facebook, the effective impact generated by the post, represented by the number of unique accounts that have seen the post at least once, is 294,775. The total impressions, which include repeated appearances by the same accounts, are 309,080. The post received approximately 11,200 likes, 1,200 comments, and 509 shares (over 3500% more than the reference post). These data are taken from the statistics option provided by Facebook.

VI. Conclusions - Answering the questions

a) Do current marketing techniques have a positive effect on the impact of anti-Roma awareness campaigns? Considering the results obtained from the communication methods used in the campaign, a considerable increase in impact was observed. Although the differences between communicator types were also significant, all results improved compared to the initial posts made before implementing the described communication techniques. The communication techniques were effective, though each worked in a different way.

b) What are the most effective methods for promoting reactive awareness campaigns against anti-Roma sentiment? In a society where marketing is fundamental to any commercial activity and in a world characterized by a free market, the promotion methods developed by experts are becoming increasingly diverse. Although each promotional campaign has specific needs and objectives, this study seeks to identify certain generally applicable techniques for combating anti-Roma attitudes

in the online environment in Romania. Based on the data gathered in the experiment, each type of communicator has unique characteristics that directly influence the effectiveness of specific communication methods. However, the most significant increases in the impact of social media posts came from involving various influencers or public figures in spreading the message. While the hashtag helped build a community around the campaign, it did not reach new audiences and had the least impact on promoting the campaign's message. It's also noteworthy that the communication style using independent activists proved to be the most effective. This approach worked especially well because the communication techniques aligned more naturally with a relatable individual whom audiences could directly connect with the campaign. By presenting a tangible person, this strategy fostered a sense of trust and familiarity, allowing the message to resonate more deeply. People were more inclined to engage with and support a cause when they could see a real person championing it, which made this method especially impactful for spreading the campaign's message.

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Deep Indian Roots of Roma Culture and Romani Language

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Abstract

In this paper, we aim to highlight linguistic connections that demonstrate the direct relationship between the Romani and Hindi languages. These connections reveal fundamental structures shared by both languages. The strong linguistic link between Romani and Hindi not only showcases similar structures across different linguistic levels but also underscores the cultural and spiritual bonds between the Roma and Indian people, establishing an undeniable shared heritage.

Keywords

Romani language; Hindi language; Sanskrit; Roma culture; Indian culture; language structures; language etymologies

● Roma people come from India. This is a truth that no one should contest today. Especially since we have a series of scientific proofs¹ but also different old stories and legends² related to the Indian origin of Roma.

● One of the legends says that a Perisan shah, Bahram Gur (420 - 438 d.H.), sitting at his court in the empire and seeing that his people were sad that they didn't have music, because there were no musicians, he sent a letter to the great king of India, Shankalat, where he asked him to send some of the most skilled musicians. And the king of India sent him a group of Indian musicians. And this is one of the first legends which talks about the outset of Roma people from India. The legend was first published by Donald Kenrick in English

● ¹ Grellmann, H.M.G., *Histoire des Bohémiens, ou tableau des moeurs, usages et coutumes de ce peuple nomade, suivie de recherches historiques sur leur origine, leur langage et leur première apparition en Europe* (Paris: Joseph Chaumerot, 1810); Miklosich, Franz, *Über die Mundarten und die Wanderungen der Zigeuner Europa's*, in "Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften" (edition in 8 vol. (I-VIII): 1872-1877; edition in 12 vol. (I-XII): 1872-1880, Vienna; Kenrick, Donald, *Dall' India al Mediterraneo. La migrazione degli Zingari* (Roma: Centro di Ricerche Zingare, 1995) etc.)

● ² Kenrick, Donald, *Legend about Gypsy Origin* (Sofia: "Studii Romani", vol.I, 1994).

in *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*³, then it was reproduced in Romani in *Bibaxtale berša* ("Unfortunate Years").

Despite these legends and stories, scientific research on the relationship between Roma people and India, and the Romani language and languages from India, start to develop with the initiative of the Hungarian student, Wáli István⁴, who was studying in Holland, around 1750, when he noticed a great similarity between the language spoken by his colleagues who came to study from the North part India, and the language spoken by the Roma from his home village in Hungary. So, he made a list of words, asking students from India basic words such as: *house, water, sun, nose, ear, eye*, or the names: *one, two, three, four, five* etc. And when he went back home and asked the Roma people from his village, he got very similar answers: *kher, pani, kham, nakh* etc. So, through this study he noticed that the two languages are extremely similar and that there is a strong connection between them, being among the first to propose such a comparative research up to that time.

And this is where the theories about the Romani language that tell us that the Romani language is a language of Indian origin began. Next, among the great linguists who search this theme were H.M.G. Grellmann and Franz Miklosich, August Pott⁵, Christoph Rüdiger⁶, Marcel Courthiade⁷ or Gheorghe Sarău⁸, which extended research from the lexical level, from the level of similarities between words, to more in-depth research aimed at the structure of the language. Afterwards, the links between Roma people and India started being studied and the analysis more detailed, being also extended to historical and cultural aspects, which are relevant for the relationship between Roma and Indian people. However, the linguistic domain remains the most consistent branch through which the connection of Roma people to India is emphasised, and also the one which should be developed furthermore.

Consequently, in our paper, we wish to illustrate some linguistic connections which highlights direct relationship between the Romani language and the Hindi languages, connections which showcase fundamental structures of the two languages. Thus, what we would like to mention from the beginning is that this in this paper we included just a few elements regarding the relation between Romani and Hindi, the article being structured in three parts:

- I Morphology
- II Syntax
- III Lexicon

I Morphology

1. *The Noun*. The noun represents a morphological category that shows multiple similarities between the Romani language and Hindi. For example, the **Romani masculine noun**:

³ Puxon, G. rattan, Kenrick, Donald, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London: University Press, 1972)

⁴ Petcuț, Petre, *Romii. Sclavie și libertate* (București: Editura Centrului Național de Cultură a Romilor, 2015).

⁵ Pott August Friedrich, *Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien. Ethnographisch-linguistische Untersuchung, vornhmlich ihrer Herkunft und Sprache* (Halle: Heynemann, 1844).

⁶ Rüdiger Jacob Carl Crystoph, *Von der Sprache und Herkunft der Zigeuner aus Indien*, in "Neuster Zuwachs der teutschen fremden und allgemeinen Sprachkunde in eigenen Aufsätzen, Bücheranzeigen und Nachrichten" (Leipzig: Erstes Stück, 1872).

⁷ Courthiade Marcel, *Les dialects Posa et Mitrip* (Paris: "Études Tsiganes" No 3/1991).

⁸ Sarău Gheorghe, *Romii, India și limba rromani* (București: Kriterion, 1998).

Specific Romani nouns with the termination in singular *o*:

balo „pig”, *čhavo* „boy (Roma)”, *gono* „bag”, *lovo* „money”, *manro* „bread” etc.

The plural of this category of nouns has the termination *e*:

bale „pigs”, *čhave* „boys (Roma)”, *gone* „bags”, *love* „money”, *manre* „breads”.

And on the other hand, we have masculine nouns in Hindi that present the following similar peculiarities:

Specific Hindi nouns with the termination in singular *ā*:

kamrā „room”, *laṛkā* „boy”, *baccā* „child”, *conā* „corner”, *darvāzā* „door” etc.

The plural of this category of nouns in Hindi has the same termination as in Romani, *e*:

kamre „rooms”, *laṛke* „boys”, *bacce* „children”, *cone* „corners”, *darvāze* „doors”.

For a better illustration, we also highlight the parallel in the following table:

	Romani	Hindi
N.sg	o	Ā
N.pl	e	E

A series of similarities can also be observed regarding the feminine nouns. For example, in Romani:

Specific Romani feminine nouns with the termination in singular *i*:

bibi „aunt”, *čiriki* „bird”, *dori* „string”, *momeli* „candle”, *pori* „tail” etc.

The plural of this category of nouns has the termination *ā*:

bibā „aunts”, *čirikā* „birds”, *dorā* „strings”, *momelā* „candles”, *porā* „tails”

And on the other hand, we have feminine nouns in Hindi that present the following similar peculiarities:

Specific Hindi feminine nouns with the termination in singular *ī*:

laṛkī „girl”, *baccī* „little girl”, *kursī* „chair”, *almarī* „locker”. etc.

The plural of this category of nouns has the termination *ā* (and *ī > iy*):

laṛkiyā „girls”, *bacciyā* „little girls”, *kursiyā* „chairs”, *almariyā* „lockers”.

For a better illustration, we also highlight the parallel in the following table:

	Romani	Hindi
N.sg	i	ī
N.pl	ā	Ā

Another rich category that can be intensively explored from the perspective of similarities between Romani and Hindi is *The Adjective*. For example, the **variable adjectives in Romani** (*buxlo* tipe in Romani):

Masc. sg. *baro* „big”, *lačo* „good”, *kalo* „black”, *purano* „old”, *nevo* „new”.

Fem. sg. *bari* „big”, *lači* „good”, *kali* „black”, *purani* „old”, *nevi* „new”.

Plural. masc. + fem. *bare* „big”, *lače* „good”, *kale* „black”, *purane* „old”, *neve* „new”.

And on the other hand, we have the **variable adjectives in Hindi**:

Masc. sg. *baṛā* „big”, *acchā* „good”, *kalā* „black”, *puranā* „old”, *nayā* „new”.

Fem. sg. *baṛī* „big”, *acchī* „good”, *kalī* „black”, *puranī* „old”, *nayī* „new”.

Fem. pl. *baṛī* „big”, *acchī* „good”, *kalī* „black”, *puranī* „old”, *nayī* „new”.

Masc. pl. *baṛe* „big”, *acche* „good”, *kale* „black”, *purane* „old”, *naye* „new”.

For a better illustration of the similarities concerning variable adjectives in Romanian and Hindi, we also highlight the parallel in the following table:

	Romani	Hindi
Masc. sg.	<i>o</i>	<i>Ā</i>
Fem. sg.	<i>i</i>	<i>ī</i>
Masc. pl.	<i>e</i>	<i>E</i>
Fem. pl.	<i>e</i>	<i>ī</i>

Regarding the adjectives, relevant similarities can also be observed with regard to **invariable adjectives**. For example:

Romani: *śukar* „beautiful”, *godāver* „smart”, *nasul* „bad”.

Hindi: *sundar* „beautiful”, *jordār* „smart”, *lāl* „red”.

Also, extremely relevant in the description of adjectives in the two languages and the similarities between them is the position of the adjective in relation to the noun. Thus, we observe that in most cases the adjective is situated before the noun both in Hindi and in Romani:

Hindi		Romani
<i>acchā baccā</i> „good boy”	–	<i>lačo čhavo</i> „good boy”
<i>acchī baccī</i> „good girl”	–	<i>lači čhej</i> „good girl”
<i>acche bacce</i> „good boys”	–	<i>lače čhave</i> „good boys”
<i>acchī bacciyā</i> „good girls”	–	<i>lače čheja</i> „good girls”

And the parallel in the aspect of similarities is also present in the case of invariable adjectives:

Hindi		Romani
<i>sundar ghar</i> „beautiful house”	–	<i>śukar kher</i> „beautiful house”

Another grammatical category for which we would like to highlight a series of similarities between the Romani language and Hindi is the **Pronoun**. For example, the Personal Pronoun in Romany and Hindi ad Nominative:

Sg.	Romani	Hindi	Pl.	Romani	Hindi
I	<i>Me</i>	<i>Mē</i>	I	<i>Ame</i>	<i>Ham</i>
II	<i>Tu</i>	<i>Tū</i>	II	<i>Tume</i>	<i>Tum</i>
III	Masc. <i>Vov</i> Fem. <i>Voj</i>	Masc. + Fem. <i>Yah</i> (nearness) <i>Vah</i> (distance)	III	<i>Von</i>	<i>Ye</i> (nearness) <i>Ve</i> (distance)

As we can see, there are similarities regarding the pronouns in the 1st and 2nd person singular, the particularity for the 3rd person in Hindi being that it presents different forms for proximity and distance, an aspect that was not preserved in Romani. However, looking at other categories of pronouns in Romani, we can observe this aspect that marks proximity and distance in the case of demonstrative pronouns: *kadava* “this one” (masc. sg.), *kadaja* “this one” (fem. sg.); *kodova* “that one” (masc. sg.), *kodoja* “that one” (fem. sg.).

Also, a distinct form of pronoun found in Hindi is the one that expresses politeness: *āp*.

Ex.: *Āp ka nām kyā hai?* „What is your name?”

Polite forms of the pronoun have not been preserved in Romani, possible explanations being correlated with certain cultural aspects that refer to the early nomadism of the Roma and to the unitary communities in which the Roma lived and still live today in some regions, precisely this unitary and familiar character in which everyone knows each other closely has left no room for the preservation or development

of polite pronouns. But this does not mean that there is no polite expression in the Romanian language. On the contrary. But this is expressed more in the form of a certain respect, highlighted by expressions such as *bibie* "aunt" when addressing a woman, or *kako* "uncle" when addressing a man, in this way being able to show consideration towards someone older in the family or to someone with a certain status in the community, these lexical elements being strongly associated with a fundamental concept from Roma culture, that of *pakiv* "respect, honor, consideration".

Strong similarities can be found also looking at Pronoun in Romani and Hindi at Genitive:

Sg.	Romani	Hindi
I	<i>mirro, mirri, mirre</i>	merā – merī – mere
II	<i>tiro, tiri, tire</i>	terā – terī – tere
III	masc. <i>leqo, lesqi, lesqe</i> fem. <i>laqo, laqi, laqe</i>	uskā – uskī – uske (nearness) iskā – iskī – iske (distance)
PI.		
I	<i>amaro, amari, amare</i>	hamārā – hamārī - hamāre
II	<i>tumaro, tumari, tumare</i>	tumhārā – tumhārī - tumhāre
III	masc. + fem. <i>lenqo, lenqi, lenqe</i>	unkā – unkeī – unke (nearness) inkā – inkī – inke (distance)

Another category is the one of **The Numeral**.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romani	jekh	duj	trin	štar	panʒ	šov	<i>efta</i>	<i>oxto</i>	<i>enǎ</i>	deś
Hindi	ek	do	tīn	cār	pāj	chah	sāt	āth	nau	das

Here we can find strong similarities and even identical structure, even regarding the pronunciation. For example, the numeral five: *panʒ* in Romani and *pāj* in Hindi. Exception are the numeral seven, eight and nine, borrowed from the Greek language in the period in which the Roma people travelled and lived in the Byzantine Empire. However, it remains hard to explain why specifically these three numerals were replaced in the old Romani by the Greek terms. A personal explanation could be that maybe these numerals were related to an economic aspect, to a frequent transaction associated to some products or to a specific currency that was frequently used in that period.

Another important morphological category that must be analyzed from the perspective of the relationship between the Romani language and the languages of India is **the Verb**.

For example the verb "to be" in Romany *si* and Hindi *honā*:

Sg.	Romani	Hindi
I	<i>me sem/ hom</i>	mē hū
II	<i>tu san</i>	tū hai
III	masc. <i>vov si</i> fem. <i>voj si</i>	vah hai
PI.		
I	<i>ame sam</i>	ham hāī
II	<i>tume sen</i>	tum ho
III	<i>von si/ hin</i>	ve hāī

Moreover, in addition to the similarities between the verb "to be", or other verbs from Romani and Hindi, a strong link regarding the verb in the two languages is the similar structure of some compound verbs in Romani and Hindi:

Romani	Hindi
<i>buti</i> „work” + <i>kerel</i> „to do” <i>butikerel</i> „to work”	<i>kām</i> „work” + <i>karnā</i> „to do” <i>kām karnā</i> „to work”
<i>vak</i> „voice” + <i>kerel</i> „to do” <i>vakārel</i> „to talk”	<i>vyakt</i> „something voiced” + <i>krnā</i> „to do” <i>vyakt karnā</i> „to breathe/ to vocalize” (in order to say something)
<i>duma</i> „word/ say” + <i>del</i> „to give” <i>duma del/ delduma</i> „to talk”	<i>bāt</i> „word” + <i>karnā</i> „to do” <i>bāt karnā</i> „to talk”
<i>c’umid</i> „kiss” + <i>del</i> „to give” <i>ćumidel</i> „to kiss”	<i>cumban</i> „kiss” + <i>karnā</i> „to do” <i>cumban karnā</i> „to kiss” <i>cumban</i> „kiss” + <i>denā</i> „to give” <i>cumban denā</i> „to kiss”
<i>kan</i> „ear” + <i>del</i> „to give” <i>del kan/ kandel</i> „to hear/ to listen (to)”	<i>kān</i> „ear” + <i>denā</i> „to give” <i>kān denā</i> (par) „to hear/ to listen (to)”
<i>del</i> „to give” + <i>brišind</i> „rain” <i>del brišind</i> „to rain”	<i>bāriś</i> „rain” + <i>honā</i> „to be” <i>bāriś honā</i> „to rain”

Looking at other verbal structure, another important component that requires a detailed analysis is the *expression of possession* both in Romani and Hindi, or in other Indian languages. Thus, first we note the fact that the expression of possession (the equivalent of "to have") formed with the verb "to be" both in the Romani language and Hindi, with the difference, however, that the pronoun form in Romani is in the Accusative case and in Genitive case for Hindi:

Sg.	Romani	Hindi
I	<i>si man</i>	<i>mere pās hai</i>
II	<i>si tut</i>	<i>āpke pās hai</i>
III	masc. <i>si les</i> fem. <i>si la</i>	masc. + fem. <i>uske pās hai</i>
PI.		
I	<i>si amen</i>	<i>hamare pās hai</i>
II	<i>si tumen</i>	<i>tumharme pās hai</i>
III masc. + fem.	<i>si len</i>	<i>unke pās hai</i>

For example, in Hindi we will say: *Ek ghar mere pās hai* – „I have a house”, or: *Vah ghar merā hai* – „That house is mine”, and with a similar structure in Romani we will say: *Si man ek kher* – „I have a house”, or: *Kodova si miro kher* – „That house is mine”. Through this structure, that of a joint principle for *expressing possession*, and the lack of a specific verb for *to have*, the linguistic analysis stretches over the borders of linguistics, reaching into the cultural or even spiritual aspects. A possible interpretation could be that there is a joint spirit which is not orientated to possession, to „having”, but more likely, towards the idea of “being something next to me/ being mine, in mine possession” but with the conotation of a determined period of time and also conditioned by our human existence, or to our presence on Earth.

II. Syntax

An important difference regarding the syntax in Romanian and Hindi is given by the position of the verb in the sentence. For instance, in Hindi it has a fix place, usually at the end of the sentence: *Vah lāi ghar sundar hai.* „That red house is beautiful.“, while in Romanian this final position has not been preserved, the position of the verb in the sentence fluctuating depending on the context or certain aspects that want to be highlighted in speech: *Kodova lolo kher si šukar. I Si šukar kodova lolo kher.* „That red house is beautiful.“

This tendency of the Romani of not keeping the verb on the last position, like in the old Indian structure, appeared probably under the influence of the contact with different languages since leaving India and arriving in Balkan and European territory.

III. Lexicon

As we said from the beginning of this paper, probably the most obvious similarities between Romani and Indian languages are those from the vocabulary level, these being the first elements analysed by the researchers who noted the connections between the two branches. For a more detailed exemplification, here are a series of terms with the same etymology in Romani and Hindi:

	Romani	Hindi
<i>rain</i>	<i>brīšind</i>	<i>bāriś</i>
<i>ear</i>	<i>kan</i>	<i>kān</i>
<i>house</i>	<i>kher</i>	<i>ghar</i>
<i>earth</i>	<i>phuv</i>	<i>puthvī</i>
<i>water</i>	<i>pani</i>	<i>pānī</i>
<i>milk</i>	<i>thud</i>	<i>dudh</i>
<i>red</i>	<i>lolo</i>	<i>lāl</i>
<i>black</i>	<i>kalo</i>	<i>kālā</i>
<i>big</i>	<i>baro</i>	<i>barā</i>
<i>good</i>	<i>lačho</i>	<i>accā</i>
<i>new</i>	<i>nevo</i>	<i>nayā</i>
<i>old</i>	<i>purano</i>	<i>phuranā</i>
<i>beautiful</i>	<i>šukar</i>	<i>sundar</i>
<i>narrow</i>	<i>tang</i>	<i>tāg</i>
<i>one</i>	<i>jekh</i>	<i>ek</i>
<i>two</i>	<i>duj</i>	<i>do</i>
<i>three</i>	<i>trin</i>	<i>tīn</i>
<i>four</i>	<i>štar</i>	<i>cār</i>
<i>five</i>	<i>panǝ</i>	<i>pāj</i>
<i>six</i>	<i>šov</i>	<i>chah</i>
<i>ten</i>	<i>deś</i>	<i>das</i>
<i>to bring</i>	<i>anel</i>	<i>anā</i>
<i>to give</i>	<i>del</i>	<i>denā</i>
<i>to see</i>	<i>dihkel</i>	<i>dekhnā</i>
<i>to fall</i>	<i>perel</i>	<i>paṛnā</i>
<i>to drink</i>	<i>piel</i>	<i>pinā</i>
<i>to go</i>	<i>ǝal</i>	<i>calnā</i>
<i>to know</i>	<i>ǝanel</i>	<i>jānnā</i>

Conclusion

As we observed in this work, besides the obvious lexical similarities between Romani and Hindi, which can mirror a series of similar or even identical terms, the elements that show us and support the theories about the Romani language as a language of Indian origin are the elements that are kept deep in the structure of the language. In this sense, we have seen how aspects regarding two of the fundamental categories of a language, the noun and the verb, are extremely similar in the two languages, keeping elements regarding the form or functioning mechanisms and paradigms, but also elements of the substrate that exceed the linguistic space and illustrates important aspects of the specificity of the two cultures and of the speakers of the two languages.

In conclusion, we wish to showcase the powerful linguistic connection between the Romani and the Hindi language, which not only illustrates the joint structures on different levels of the languages, but also highlights the cultural and spiritual connections between the Roma and the Indian people, establishing an undeniable common denominator.

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Nicolae Gheorghe and Social Policies Towards Roma During the Communist Era

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Abstract

Nicolae Gheorghe, considered the father of Romani activism, enrolled in the Sociology Department of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest, graduating in 1972 as the top of his class. Shortly after, he joined the Sociological Research Center in Bucharest, where he became involved in several studies on the Romani people.

In these studies, Nicolae sought to demonstrate that the social integration of the Roma in the Socialist Republic of Romania was incomplete. This led to Nicolae being monitored by the Securitate (the secret police).

Keywords

Nicolae Gheorghe; comunism; Roma intellectual; Roma During the Communist Era; roma history

1. Introduction

Nicolae Gheorghe, the father of Roma activism and a recipient of several human rights awards,¹ was born into a Roma family on November 12, 1946, in Roșiorii de Vede, Teleorman County. Due to some experiences during World War II, when his mother was nearly deported for being Roma, Nicolae's parents tried to "escape the burden of ethnicity," often forbidding him from playing with other Roma children. In 1955, Nicolae and his family moved to Bucharest, where they continued to hide their ethnic origins.²

Nicolae Gheorghe began to reconsider his ethnic identity when he met the Cioabă family, a Roma family of copersmiths, from whom he also learned the Romani language. He stated that his interest in Roma issues was intertwined with the communist regime's intention to adopt a nationalist policy that emphasized ethnic differences among Romanian citizens. This significantly influenced Nicolae's research agenda. A colleague from the Sociological Research Centre noted in a report to the Security that until recently, Nicolae had not openly identified as Roma or shown interest in Roma issues. However, since

¹ <https://nicolaegheorghe.ro/>

² Oana Sandu, "Bă, de ce ești tu țigan? Cum a devenit Nicolae Gheorghe părintele activismului civic rom", DOR, 9 august 2013, <https://www.dor.ro/nicolae-gheorghe-dor12/>

1982, he had grown a moustache and frequently spoke Romani on the phone, expressing dissatisfaction with the treatment of Roma and trying to demonstrate that Roma integration into Romanian society was incomplete.³

In 1983, Nicolae wrote a study in which he attempted to demonstrate that the social integration of Roma in the Socialist Republic of Romania was incomplete. Thus, this article will aim to partially or fully present the arguments Nicolae used to prove that Roma integration was unequal compared to other ethnic groups.

2. Who Were the Roma According to Nicolae?

Nicolae considered the Roma⁴ an inseparable part of the population, as they were deeply attached to the Romanian territory, the state, and the socialist nation of Romania. Therefore, the future situation of the Roma should have been one of full social integration into society and the Romanian socialist nation, provided they maintained awareness of their ethnic origin and specific cultural characteristics.⁵

Nicolae noted that the distinct history of the Roma in Romanian society, the class structure, and the contradictions of feudal and capitalist societies had allowed the process of social integration of the Roma to remain incomplete. The nearly five centuries of slavery (from the first documented evidence in 1385 until 1856, when private slaves were liberated⁶) and the discrimination during the capitalist period caused the Roma to lag behind other members of society. *'They constituted an ethnic and social category with a lower position in the social hierarchy, socially isolated, with acute manifestations of the "culture of poverty," and low social prestige.'*⁷

However, this social, cultural, and demographic isolation allowed for the formation of large, relatively well-organized Roma communities, socially and residentially segregated, with somewhat distinct norms and organizational rules, as well as the preservation of their language and some specific customs. These constituted the objective social bases for the formation and preservation of Roma ethnicity, consisting of a specific, distinct combination of lower social status characteristics with certain cultural and physical appearance peculiarities.

Nicolae believed that maintaining social distance between the Roma and the majority population was due to negative stereotypes about the Roma and their being regarded as a foreign ethnic element. This distance increased further during the interwar period, culminating in the adherence of Romanian intellectuals to fascist ideologies, which led to heightened ethnic and racial discrimination against the Roma. This new wave of hatred against the Roma culminated in the deportation of many of them to camps in Transnistria.⁸

³ Manuela Marin, *Romii și regimul comunist din România. Marginalizare, integrare și opoziție* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2017), 33-34.

⁴ In this article, I will use the term „Roma” although in the original text the author used predominantly the term „Gypsy”, a term that explicitly expresses a series of negative stereotypes about Roma. For this reason, the exonym „Gypsy” is only used when its use is necessary.

⁵ About roma history Viorel Achim, *Țigani în istoria României*, (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998).

⁶ This can be seen in the work of Petre Petcut, *Romii. Sclavie și libertate, Constituirea și emanciparea unei noi categorii etnice și sociale la nord de Dunăre* (Bucharest, Centrul Național de Cultură al Romilor, 2015).

⁷ Centrul de Documentare Nicolae Gheorghe, *Fond: Nicolae Gheorghe, Dosar: Studii Științifice, 1977-1983*.

⁸ During the Second World War, over 25,000 Roma were deported to the Transnistria camps, of whom over 6,000 children and 5,000 adults died due to the poor conditions there. Ioan Valentin Negoii, *The deportation of Roma from Muntenia to Transnistria*, (Cetatea de Scaun: Târgoviște, 2023)

3. How Did Nicolae Gheorghe Define the Roma Social Problem?⁹

In sociological terms, a "social problem" is defined as a situation that affects a sufficiently large number of people and is perceived by both those affected and those around them as a source of difficulty and dissatisfaction. Such a situation is believed to be solvable or improvable. A social problem has both an objective and a subjective aspect, stemming from the confrontation of values held by different social groups regarding that situation.

Therefore, the Roma social problem was understood as those demographic, cultural, occupational, lifestyle, and behavioural characteristics that were felt by both the Roma and the general public (ordinary people and representatives of public organizations) to be in discord with some of the general values and principles of the socialist society.

Thus, each stage of the multifaceted development of socialist society made it possible to address and resolve, in the spirit of deepening socialist democracy, deeper and more complex aspects and issues of relations between social categories and members of socialist society. One such relatively complex and inefficiently resolved issue was the ethnic status of the Roma and their full social integration into the institutions and culture of Romanian socialist society.

The implicit theoretical premise of this social policy was that the Roma did not constitute a distinct "nationality" or "ethnicity," as they did not have their own culture expressed in material and spiritual "cultural works" that would express their specificity. The Roma were more likely to represent a social stratum with characteristics determined by past poverty.

General Social Characteristics of Roma in Romania

Even in these areas, however, we encounter the "enigma" of this population, as both past and present statistical data are quite limited and approximate. Until 1930, there was no official record of them, so statistical information is available only starting from this significant census of 1930. Based on literature and the censuses of 1930, 1956, 1966, and 1977 we can present the following data on the evolution of the number of Roma:

The Evolution of the Number of Roma in the Romanian Principalities and Romania from 1837 to 1977

	Source	Year	Geographical Region	Total	% of the Country's Population
1.	M. Kogălniceanu (work on Roma)	1837	The Principalities	100,000	
2.	Calsan (author of a writing on the Principalities)	1839	The Principalities	257,165	
3.	Heigesener (author of a writing on the Principalities)	1840	The Principalities	350,000	
4.	L Kövasy	1847	Transylvania	50,000	
5.	Census in Hungary	1857	Transylvania	74,360	
6.	General Population Census in Romania	1930	Romania	243,000	1.7%
7.	General Population Census	1956	Romania	104,216	0.6%
8.	General Population Census	1966	Romania	64,197	0.3%
9.	General Population Census	1977	Romania	229,897	1.067%

⁹ In this part of the article, I have reproduced almost entirely the arguments that Nicolae brought in defining the social problem of the Roma, because the purpose of this article is to make known the way of thinking of the one who was to become the founder of the Roma movement. See in this sense: Centrul de Documentare Nicolae Gheorghe, Fond: Nicolae Gheorghe, Dosar: Studii Științifice, 1977-1983.

Any comment on the numerical evolution of the Roma must consider that these figures, especially those from censuses, represent the number of people who self-identified as Roma.

The negative connotations of the term "Gypsy" led some Roma to declare a different nationality, often Romanian, but sometimes Hungarian or even German. However, it was not always a matter of "hiding" their ethnicity: many of those who assimilated the occupational, educational, linguistic, and lifestyle attributes of the majority population considered themselves Romanian and aspired to be identified as such by others in their communities or workplaces. Moreover, the "Gypsy" nationality itself is not without ambiguities, making self-identification and declaration difficult.

Given these nuances, it should be noted that the phenomenon of declaring a different nationality is quite widespread among the Roma. Otherwise, we could not explain the significant variations in the number of Roma from one census to another, especially the "increase" from 64,197 in 1966 to 229,896 in 1977. The fully democratic nature of the 1977 census, the success of the PCR's policy on national issues in the previous decade, and the propaganda activities before the census ensured the political and moral climate and the necessary guarantees for a more intense declaration of Roma nationality, which was no longer considered a "stigma" or a shame.

However, it is likely that even in this last census, some individuals who usually identified as Roma and were identified as such by those around them declared a different identity. Smaller-scale field surveys, compared to the census but more in-depth (as attempted in Sibiu County or as some specialized bodies like the Ministry of Interior had conducted), reported more realistic absolute numbers and proportions within the total population.

Given the approximate nature of the census data regarding the Roma, it is useful to examine certain social characteristics - residence, occupation, education - of this population based on distributions of these indicators by nationality, analysed comparatively for the years 1956 and 1966.

Distribution of the Roma Population by Urban and Rural Residence

Total Roma population	1930				1956				1960			
	243,000				104,216				64,197			
	Urban	%	Rural	%	Urban	%	Rural	%	Urban	%	Rural	%
	3,700	15.22	206,000	84.77%	18,808	17.3	86,108	82.7	64,197	17,007	47,190	73.4%

It is observed that in 1930, the vast majority of Roma lived in rural areas, similar to the residence model of the entire country's population. The increase in the urban population was slow between 1950-1956 but more intense between 1956-1966; the urbanization rate in 1966 compared to 1956 was 9.2%, higher than the urbanization rate of Romanians (7.7%) and above the national average.

Regarding the geographical distribution of Roma across the country, the analysis of cartograms from the 1930, 1956, and 1966 censuses shows that Roma were present in varying percentages across all counties, with higher concentrations in central and southeastern Transylvania and counties along the Danube. Regional variations seem more related to the frequency of nationality declaration than actual density, which remains to be more accurately reflected in the 1977 census.

Distribution of the Roma Population by Occupational Categories

Year	Total	Workers	Intellectuals/ Officials	Cooperatives	Private Craftsmen	Collective Farmers	Individual Farmers
1956	104,216	40.04%	0.55%	27.73%	22.31%	6.75%	1.8%
1966	64,197	47.3%	0.5%	16.24%	14.6%	30.38%	2.6%

The significant presence of Roma in the social categories of workers and cooperative farmers (30.38% in 1966) and craftsmen (especially private ones) indicates the inclusion of Roma in the revolutionary processes of socialist industrialization and agricultural collectivization alongside the entire population of the country, regardless of nationality.

If we analyze the increase and decrease of Roma in the main occupational categories between 1956-1966, compared to the main nationalities (in numerical terms) in the country, we obtain the following situation.

Increase, decrease in occupational categories, 1966 compared to 1956

Category	Romanians	Hungarians	Germans	Jews	Roma
Workers	17.21%	13.24%	1.55%	3.67%	6.92%
Cooperative Farmers	36.83%	28.53%	8.67%	0.35%	23.65%
Individual Farmers	48.77%	38.13%	9.35%	0.68%	13.75%

The comparison should take into account the distribution in absolute values of the different nationalities in relation to occupational categories presented in the previous table. It should be noted, however, that the increase in the number of Roma in the category of workers is slower compared to the increase in the urbanization rate, both considered comparatively by nationality.

Educational preparation of the Roma population

Year	Roma Population (12 and over)		Level of Education Completed				
			Higher Education	Technical and Specialized Schools	Vocational and Trade Schools	General Schools (8-7 years)	Primary Schools and Others
1966	Roma	1	15	11	179	1,236	41,139
		-	-	-	0.42%	2.90%	96.61%
	Total population	328,241	559,380	452,645	729,477	1,680,443	11,441,062
		2.16%	2.68%	2.97%	4.80%	11.06%	75.31%

The approximate nature of the figures is evident in the educational categories and averages. Given the significant educational opportunities offered to all citizens of the country, regardless of nationality, including Roma, it is certain that the number of Roma who attended secondary and higher education, as well as vocational and trade schools, is quite large. However, those who attended such schools no longer consider themselves Roma. Hence, the low number of those who attended secondary and higher education and declared themselves of Roma nationality.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the educational level of the Roma population, as reflected in the presented statistical data, is lower than the national average and compared to other nationalities, with the majority not surpassing primary school. This is naturally a consequence of the long period of isolation and social discrimination this population faced before World War II. Significant progress was made in the decade 1956-1965, and the data from the 1977 census will likely illustrate a broader engagement of the Roma population in educational activities.

4. Instead of Conclusions

I would like to also express some general viewpoints regarding the adoption and implementation of social policy measures for the Roma:

- a. Such a social policy must be developed as an action program adopted at the central level and tailored by local authorities to suit their specific conditions.

- b. A public discussion about the ethnic and social status of the Roma is indispensable; mass media and scientific publications can greatly contribute to the success of social integration measures for the Roma.
- c. These measures primarily target Roma communities and their members; however, they should also be addressed to the entire community in which the Roma are a part, including the population with whom they interact.
- d. The goal of social integration for the Roma is not only to combat and eliminate their negative behaviours and mentalities (low employment and education, poverty, deviance, etc.), but also to stimulate the positive contributions of the Roma to the development of the organizations and communities they belong to, in accordance with their creative potential, both individual and collective.
- e. The success of social integration programs for the Roma largely depends on the participation of the Roma themselves in adopting and implementing these measures, as well as their involvement in the public and political life of the organizations and communities they are part of.
- f. It would be useful to include in the PCR's propaganda programs on the issue of nationalities some information regarding the achievements in improving the living standards of the Roma in our country, their social mobility under conditions of full equality in rights with all citizens, regardless of nationality. The economic, political, and cultural situation of the Roma in our country is superior to that of the Roma in many Western countries. Such realities deserve to be known to prevent the criticisms and distorted images presented by some foreign observers.
- g. It would also be useful to establish direct contact with representatives of the international Roma organization (Romani Union), in order to understand their concerns and, more importantly, to correctly inform them about the situation of the Roma in our country.
- h. The full social integration of the Roma and the redefinition of their social and ethnic prestige should be considered as long-term actions; observing positive effects will only be possible over the years, through systematic and persistent work, not without difficulties, obstacles, and contradictions generated by customs and mentalities deeply rooted in social group psychology. However, applying revolutionary humanism in this area of social relations makes it possible to boldly address the social issues of the Roma, overcome difficulties, and resolve the issue on principle.

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