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IDENTITĂȚI COMPLEXE ALE COMUNITĂȚILOR ROMA: EUROPA DE EST

*Andrea Boscoboinik,
Fribourg, Elveția*

Summary

Complex Identities of the Roma Communities: the case of Eastern Europe

Our research on Roma identity strategies led in different countries in Central and South-East Europe allowed us to conclude on the existence of a process of ethnicisation of Roma communities promoted by Roma activists and elite members.

The qualitative methodology of our research constitutes a particular and new approach to Romani issues. The goal was not so much to present figures but ideas and opinions gathered through dialogues with Roma individuals. Interviews based on life histories and self-perceptions were conducted in Bulgaria, in the Republic of Macedonia, in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova by local sociologists, anthropologists and social psychologists with people who define themselves as belonging to any Roma group, as well as with people that do not acknowledge being Rom but are considered as such by the surrounding neighbours.

The results of the research in each country have shown that there is no homogeneity among the scattered Roma communities. The community that from the exterior is called "Roma" is in fact composed by large heterogeneous groups, which may have very little in common among them. Despite the groups' heterogeneity, there are some Roma elite members and Roma politically engaged who seek to unify all Roma communities in one specific ethnic community. This process to promote a unified image and a singular Roma identity, which attempt to overcome the internal differences in language, culture, religion, and locality, is what can be called a process of ethnicisation or ethnogenesis.

However, in our opinion, the ethnicisation process has not been greatly successful until now. The fail of the ethnicisation process could be explained by the fact that its promoters consider the undeniable difficult situation of Roma communities only in terms of ethnicity rather than taking into account other identity dimensions, such as social, economic and religious. Even if differences based in religion, and in economic and social levels are more significant than the ethnic division, very little attention has been paid to viewing Roma as belonging to different social groups. Identities are not always primarily associated with ethnicity. Ethnicity is a part of a total identity, but it is not by force the central element.

A key argument of our position is that identity categories are not fixed; they may shift from one dimension such as ethnicity to another such as religion or social level. It is then imperative to examine how identity becomes a political resource used by Roma leaders and elites, on one hand, and from the exterior of Roma on the other. When the ethnic identity is recalled from the exterior, it is usually done with a stigmatizing goal and scapegoating intentions.

ЦЫГАНЕ БЕЛАРУСИ: СКВОЗЬ ПРИЗМУ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЙ

*Ольга Бартош,
Минск, Республика Беларусь*

Summary

The Roma of Belarus: in the Light of Transformations

The author gives a brief review of the Romany history in Belarus. Adaptation strategies of the Roma are considered as closely connected with main political events and economical changes of the surroundings.

Particular attention is paid to the Soviet age when the Roma were finally settled. The author attributes their settling to the policy of the so-called industrialization and collectivization. The interviews of eyewitnesses used in the article help to enliven the events of Soviet age: parted with their traditional jobs the Roma were able to form new adaptation strategies and to find their own niche in soviet society. New strategies were based on shortage of essential goods and seeming social stability caused by economical stagnation.

In post-soviet time the Roma faced serious economical and social changes and were disabled to answer with adequate strategies. That caused the processes of marginalization. The author touches upon the inside life of the Romany community marked with gender conflict, generation gap and crisis of identity that could develop in new ways of identification.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME?
HOW ROMANIAN ROMANI WERE PERSECUTED BY
ROMANIANS AS *ȚIGANI* IN THE HOLOCAUST,
AND HOW THEY RESISTED**

*Shannon Woodcock,
Melbourne, Australia*

Summary

This paper documents Romani resistance in the Holocaust through strategic engagement with the field of their oppression, the matrix of stereotypes of the *Țigan* other. The *Țigan* in Romania is a historically developed stereotypical identity that has been used to contain and police Romani Romanians as internal others to Romanian ethnonational identity; as slaves until 1856, and as victims of genocide in World War Two. Using archived petitions written by Romani victims of the Holocaust, the author explores how Romani Romanians identified and contested stereotypes of the *Țigani* other, simultaneously documenting how Romanian authorities wielded discourses of the *Țigan* other to contain the agency of Romani individuals and reassert their own anxious ethnonational project.

**ASPECTE DEMOGRAFICE REFERITOARE LA ȚIGANII DIN
BASARABIA (SECOLUL AL XIX-LEA - ÎNCEPUTUL SECOLULUI
AL XX-LEA)**

*Dinu Poștarencu,
Chișinău, Republica Moldova*

**Demographic Aspects of Roma Population from Bessarabia (the
19th - the beginning of the 20th centuries)**

The paper aims to elucidate the demographic situation related to the Roma Community from Bessarabia during the 19th - the beginning of the 20th century, relying on the historical literature and archive documents. The author points, from the very beginning, the fact that the official Russian statistics dating from the period of tsarist autocracy contain insufficient demographic information relating the ethnic configuration of the population in Bessarabia over the same period. The author presents an extensive picture on the dynamic of Roma population from the whole Bessarabia and argues the augmenting number of Rroms at the middle of the 19th century and its later decreasing. After offering to the audience a substantial statistical and analytical information on the evolution of the Roma population demography, the study also delineates the necessity to identify the factors that determined the decreasing number of Roma community in Bessarabia after the middle of the 19th centuries; a topic that would constitute a starting point for the future researches.

**ROMII DIN BASARABIA: ASPECTE SOCIAL-ECONOMICE
(1918-1940)**

*Andrei Păvăloi,
Chişinău, Republica Moldova*

**The Romas from Bessarabia: Socio-Economic Aspects
(1918-1940)**

The paper seeks to investigate the everyday life of Roma population from Bessarabia, aiming to bring his contribution in illuminating the problems of socio-economic integration of Roma communities in the frame of the Moldovan society during centuries. The author states that the Roma population represents one of the most present socially and culturally ethnic minorities in the history of the Romanian nation and underlines the importance of scientific researches on Roma community as one of the actual imperatives in the Romanian historiography.

The paper analyses the historical context and the economic strategies developed by the Roma community during the 20th century, arguing on the fact that the traditional occupations constituted one of the main factor of segmenting the Roma population in different groups within the same Roma community. At the same time, the everyday life of Roma community did not changed considerably, especially among the nomad groups. By keeping the ancestral traditions, values, and the traditional mode of life, the Roma population in Bessarabia managed to preserve their economic and cultural specificities in relation with other ethnic communities from Bessarabia.

**ISTORIE ȘI STRATEGII DE ADAPTARE ALE COMUNITĂȚILOR
ROME DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA: CAZUL LĂIEȘILOR
BRĂZDENI DIN SATUL CANIA**

*Ion Duminică,
Chișinău, Republica Moldova*

**Historical Aspects and Adaptation Strategies of Roma
Communities from Republic of Moldova: The Case of *Lăieși*
Brăzdeni from Village of Cania**

This study explores the ethnologic materials collected in the village of Cania, district of Cantemir, Republic of Moldova aiming to present a multilateral analyse on the *lăieși brăzdeni* community's collective identity, their traditional occupations and social relations development. In this regard, author investigates the evolution of collective identity patterns among members of the *lăieși brăzdeni* community and the process they elaborated proper models of social integration without trailing the essential elements of Roma traditional culture.

O FANFARĂ ADEVĂRATĂ. ORDINE ȘI IMPROVIZAȚIE ÎN PRACTICA MUZICIENILOR ȚIGANI DIN ROMÂNIA

*Victor Alexandru Stoichiță,
Lisabona, Portugalia*

Sommaire

En Roumanie, les musiciens professionnels tziganes accompagnent traditionnellement de grandes fêtes et cérémonies (mariages, baptêmes, enterrements, fêtes de saint patron, etc.). Ils sont embauchés le plus souvent par des commanditaires roumains. Dans les années 1990, plusieurs ensembles ont commencé à voyager pour des tournées de concerts à travers le monde. Dans ces spectacles, le nomadisme, la vie de Bohème, l'improvisation et la débrouillardise sont fréquemment mis en avant.

De telles valeurs contrastent avec celles auxquelles les musiciens s'avèrent sensibles dans leurs discours, qui influencent leurs choix économiques, et déterminent en partie leurs goûts musicaux. L'article illustre cette opposition à travers plusieurs exemples, en portant une attention particulière aux critères d'appréciation du jeu musical. Il propose ensuite quelques pistes pour comprendre les mécanismes sous-tendant cette construction identitaire.