"Roma" Series

Series Editors: Hristo Kyuchukov and Ian Hancock

Editorial Board:

Peter Bakker (Aarhus University, Denmark), Thomas Acton (University of Greenwich, London, UK), Nadezhda Demeter (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia), Ian Hancock (University of Texas, Austin, TX, USA), Encho Gerganov (New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria), Jean-Pierre Liegeois (Rene Descartes University, Paris V, France), Elena Marushakova (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria), William New (Beloit College, Beloit, WI, USA), Vesselin Popov (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria), Barry van Driel (International Association of Intercultural Education, Amsterdam, The Netherlands).

Volume 3 from...
Chapter VII
Romanipe: Roma Identities in Migration
Aleksandar Marinov

Introduction
This chapter seeks to understand the formation of the identities of Roma migrants. Firstly, it will explore the role of feelings of Otherness and how they feel they are, as opposed to those they distance themselves from. Secondly, it looks into the concept of ‘Romanipe’ and the practices of Roma migrants as indicative of their identities. The intersection between the two – their feelings and their practices – makes the Roma case quite specific and poignant to study, as Romanies are in a constant struggle to not only react towards who they come across, but also the things they do. What it turns out due to their migratory processes, furthermore, is the emergence of something new, as characteristic of ‘their ways’.

This chapter first examines who Roma migrants from Bulgaria consider themselves different from and who they consider they should keep their distance from. The section ‘The Gaze, the Other and Roma Migrants’ demonstrates how the external ‘gaze’ gives birth to their identities and informs the ways they behave abroad, and also sometimes inform them what Roma ‘should be’. This is why Roma migrants try to hide their ethnicities abroad due to fear they will not be accepted by the host societies and also a majority of them seek to prove that such labels are wrong.

It is thus not surprising for them to find out that (similar to their home countries) the Roma are not welcomed or accepted abroad. This in turn could explain why Roma consider ‘Gadže’, or non-Roma, as a whole which is in opposition to them. The analysis does not stop there, however, and shows that there is more to a Roma versus Gadže narrative. Rather, distance and Othering can exist between the Romani groups themselves due to limited encounters between different sub-groups, the lack of mutual trust and the negative labels they all share – and this explains why they sometimes perceive each other as threats. More importantly, Roma have demonstrated themselves to behave no differently to Gadže societies they oppose, dislike and seek to distance themselves from, as criminal, immoral and negative acts and behaviours.

The chapter continues with a discussion about the idea of ‘Romanipe’. It argues that ‘Romanipe’ should be studied as fluid and always in the process of becoming. The Romani identities are seen as a reaction to the encounters of migrants with the societies they come across and, as argued earlier, this gives birth to their (new) identities. Furthermore, ‘Romanipe’ becomes a negotiation between what Roma perceive “should” or is perceived as “typical” for Roma but also that which is adequate, acceptable and compatible in the current day, as well as the spaces they happen to occupy. Arising from this, the terms ‘art of living’ and ‘selective multiculturalism’ were utilised in this work. The Roma participants of this research have demonstrated their readiness and willingness to be part of the world and absorb from it as much as they
The importance can, internalise it and appropriate different elements from it, which in turn results in the creation of different assemblages or hybrids that bear the common name Roma. In this sense, the discussion of a ‘third space’ is central to this discussion, one which stresses the importance of space (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 2007). Romanipe, it is argued, is open to interpretation, is always flexible and open to accepting new forms/shapes and meanings.

The Gaze, the ‘Other’ and Roma Migrants

In order to better understand the identities of Roma, this research sought to study who the ‘Other’ is for Bulgarian migrants and how they relate to the ‘Other’. The empirical data pointed towards the intricate relations between the role of the ‘gaze’ and the attached labels of the Roma on the one hand, and who and what Roma migrants have decided to ‘Other’ or to distance themselves from, on the other. This section argues that the worldviews that people abroad tend to hold affects how Roma decide to behave and identify themselves as migrants abroad and also it influences who they want to keep a distance from. These realisations constitute major facets of their identities and make this research peculiar. Therefore, this section will attempt to explore the role of the external ‘gaze’ as a major source of the birth of the identity of Roma migrants and also try to explore who, when and how Roma migrants ‘Other’. This point will be considered again when discussing ‘Romanipe’.

Csepeli and Simon (2004: 136) put it well: “[t]he losers of the whole identification process is the Roma themselves whose voice is not heard.” This research tries to avoid generalisations when talking about ‘the Roma’ or ‘Roma culture’, often in general terms. It is also a reaction to the ways Roma are perceived and depicted in Europe by ‘major societies’ – often as threats and different or in opposition to societies – or as ‘Other’. It is thus interested to trace and capture changes, experiences and observations as noticed by the Romani migrants themselves.

The literature suggests that the ‘Other’ plays a special role in determining one’s sense of identity and belonging. The creation and existence of an Other is hence necessary in perceiving both the surrounding world and the self. Identities, as a result, would rely on stereotypes and boundaries, which are all culturally rooted and all depend on discourse, setting, context, space, as well as the messages people want to convey (Sibley 1995; Gilman 1985; Bhabha 1994; Foucault 1972; Valentine 1993a, 1993b; Panelli 2004). For Hetherington (2000), identity is how we associate and how we include or exclude others from membership of a particular identification. In order fears, mistrust, stereotypes and labels to be eradicated, and also for a better perception of the world to be perceived, authors argue and encourage that there must be a fair amount of engagement with the ‘Other’. Thus, even though relying on boundaries can prove helpful in perceiving the world around us and some initial knowledge, this has to be challenged by a fair engagement with ‘the Other’. The inherent greater freedoms characteristic of the EU makes this engagement with ‘Others’ more prominent, especially as state boundaries become arguably less relevant, with greater movement of and mobility for people (and with the inherent importance of technological advancements, ease of travel, and accessible ways of communication globally).

Fraser (1995) talks of the Roma, as well as the ‘Other’ conveys that customary practice, and adapting to the major position of suspicion with which important to test the boundaries.

Who are the Roma?

The origins of the word Roma as a direct result of the 19th-century they become aware of their concomitantly, they talk or acting in ways to the majority of awareness of the present, have been trying to become...

"...because when I arrived, us was not to say I am and met them [in Greece] for ‘ah, you won’t say you are here.” (Female, a...

"So, when we arrived the did not allow me to put addresses, they will think

- Why auntie, do they have What is going on?
- No, no they don’t want put on pants, skirts, but (50s)

“We the Cigani [Gypsies] hide our identity. Even

As could be clear learn from relatives learn from the cases such as Greece and still associated with which have urged Roma are. Thus, while the
Fraser (1995) talks about the social, geographical and occupational adaptability of Roma, as well as their tendency to feel the Otherness of the non-Roma, the Gadže. He conveys that customs may sometimes fade away, though “this does not destroy or diminish the feelings of separateness” (Fraser 1995: 305). This in return has resulted in adapting to the major societies but preserving a social distance, fortified by “the suspicion with which they were treated by the Gadže” (Fraser 1995: 319). It is important to test the veracity of the statement above and explore the intersection between boundary maintenance of Roma migrants abroad and the ‘shrinking’ of space.

Who are the Roma? A stifled identity

The origins of the ways Roma see and identify themselves are multifaceted: they arise as a direct result of the ways they are framed by the general society. On the one hand, they become aware of the existing labels attached to them and begin to internalise them; concomitantly, they try to react to these stereotypes and labels by disagreeing with them or acting in ways to refute and challenge them.

The majority of the participants of this study shared that they are intimidated to reveal their Romani identities while abroad. Such trepidation was born out of their awareness of the predominant labels and stereotypes about the Roma. As a result, they have been trying to hide it whenever needed and possible.

“... because when I arrived in Tripoli [Greece], the first thing [the local Roma from Bulgaria] warned us was not to say I am a Ciganka ['Gypsy woman' in Bulgarian]. I did not know them from before; I met them [in Greece] for the first time. My mother used to know [them]. The first thing they said was ‘ah, you won’t say you are a Ciganka because they don’t want the Cigani ['Gypsies' in Bulgarian] here.’” (Female, Montana, 20s)

“So, when we arrived there, my aunt was there – my mom’s sister. So, when I went there, my aunt did not allow me to put on dresses, long dresses. She did not let me. She said ‘you won’t dress in long dresses, they will think you are Gitanka ['Gypsy woman’ in Spanish with Bulgarian ending].

- Why aunty, do they have anything against the Gitanci ['Gypsies’ in Spanish with Bulgarian ending]? What is going on?

- No, no they don’t want us here, so you won’t use long dresses! To tell you, I listened to my aunt. I put on pants, skirts, but you cannot see people giving you bad looks.” (Female, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, 50s)

“We the Cigani [Gypsies] are famous already with a bad name. Even in front of the foreigners we hide [our identity]. Even in front of the foreigners there.” (Female, Sofia, late 50s)

As could be clearly felt, within their very initial arrivals abroad, Roma migrants learn from relatives and friends not to reveal their identities by any means. Roma, we learn from the cases above, are not well-received by the local population in countries such as Greece and Spain. Clearly, being a Roma in most of the countries of Europe is still associated with the predominant existing stereotypes and (often negative) labels which have urged Romani migrants which have imposed a definition of who the Roma are. Thus, while they find themselves amongst non-Roma or in their work-places they
refrain from conversing in the Romani language, dressing the ways they are used to and to even socialise with others who could be recognised by the general society as Roma. All this is received in two major ways. On the one hand, Roma migrants are not surprised at all to find out that they are undesired and disliked. They also receive this fact and accept it as part of their natural lives. On the other hand, they recognise that such rigid mind-sets about ‘the Roma’ are major impediments to their lives and life-prospects. They admit that the failure of non-Roma to recognise their individual, human characteristics, abilities and qualities constitute a major source of frustration and disappointment in their lives.

One of the key elements of Romani identity is their acknowledgement of these notions of non-acceptance and rigid portrayal, but also how they react to them. Informants complain about all Roma being strangely homogenous. Thus, the predominantly negative labels attached to them have then become the main source of the commonality of the various Romani communities. Yet few of the individuals demonstrated the courage to stand up and openly try to challenge these well-solidified clichés about them.

“We are nowhere accepted. No matter what country, we are nervous to say ‘I am a Rom’. We are intimidated. I am telling the truth and I won’t lie to you. I am intimidated because when people hear ‘Gypsy’ they say that it is not good. They already start looking at you with negativity and you ruin your chances. You have no chance to become better off. So, we live with this nervousness/intimidation and this has stayed inside us. These are true things.” (Male, Montana, 50s)

“Well, people do it for us to be discriminated. I think that people have made it so that we are discriminated against [...] I don’t know why we are culpable. I don’t know what are we are culpable of. I don’t know why we are blamed for being dark [skinned]...” (Male, Stara Zagora, early 20s)

Yet the pain and frustration of many Roma due to the unfair way they are generally perceived and treated by non-Roma is one of the factors which unites the Roma and forms their identities. They can thus feel the pain and agony due the non-recognition from the Gadže.

Who is the ‘Other’?

This section will try to demonstrate that there are different levels of the analysis of Romani identity. These levels are intertwined and are time and place-specific. First of all, there is a dichotomy which exists in the conscience of migrant Roma, no matter where they are. This opposition is clear and could be seen as ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’, where Roma portray the non-Roma as those who should be blamed for their unfair treatment, their failure to recognise their individual characteristics and nuances. We also see that stereotypes and labels attached to the Roma at large still play crucial roles in the ways Roma are perceived and treated abroad. The key argument is that Roma are not surprised to find out that hosts express the same anti-Romani sentiments as ‘at home’.

After delving deeper into the narratives of the interlocutors, this discussion will be continued to argue that there is more to an ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ narrative, and such a distinction is incomplete. It appears that we can speak of ‘Processes of Othering’ which are based on labels and stereotypes and Romani groups can dislike each other and find each other as threats importantly because of what has happened in Bulgaria and abroad.

The analysis does not only focus on another than Bulgaria and abroad. The key argument is that Roma is not because they migrated and criminal behaviour makes Roma no different. Only the observed differences they continue to regard insiders and outsiders.

‘Us’ vs ‘Them’

It turns out that a common assumption that Roma groups are not one of them and that the informants believe their narratives change their views about what they do and how they are treated. Thus, there was a commonality due to the inability of unifying factor among them.

“I am reminding [you],” the one who had a better upbringing, “that you have to change your culture.”

The irony of the situation is that regardless of their backgrounds, numerous positive aspects of their lives make Roma a rigid whole. This rigid whole makes many Roma feel the need to prove themselves. On the one hand, but at the same time:

“That is why we strive to be good people, to be not any different than others.”

“We”, in this context, means necessity to prove to others:

“That is how I explain it. Bulgarians look at us as being different and we can even more than this.”

This narrative is based on Bulgarians. In the reality, no one is the ‘Other’. This leads to the conclusion that the concept of ‘Otherness’ is not only dangerous, but also inappropriate.
each other as threats. These are based on limited encounter between the groups and importantly because of the current rigid labels and stereotypes attached to the Roma – in Bulgaria and abroad alike.

The analysis demonstrates that ‘enemies’ can equally be Roma from countries other than Bulgaria and Roma from Bulgaria, but from different geographical regions. The key argument is that there is a difference and rivalry between Romani sub-groups not because they might come from various places or regions but because of immoral and criminal behaviour and ignorance which might be observed among people. This makes Roma no different in any radical ways from non-Roma. Nevertheless, despite the observed disagreements and differences which apparently exist between the Roma, they continue to regard themselves as Roma. This is a key which portrays them as insiders and outsiders at the same time and informs the identity of the Roma.

‘Us’ vs ‘Them’

It turns out that a common and unifying factor for many Roma, not surprisingly, is to assume that Roma groups share a common feeling towards the Gadže – or all who are not one of them and who refuse to accept ‘the Roma’. One of the reasons why many of the informants believed they should hide their ethnicity is because host societies would change their views about them, fail to recognise their human qualities and no matter what they do and how hard they try, their attitudes about Roma would stay unchanged. Thus, there was a common, shared feeling of frustration among the Romani informants due to the inability of societies to recognise them as regular people, and this acts as a unifying factor among them, a feeling of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

“I am reminding [you], are we not all Cigani [‘Gypsies’ in Bulgarian]? If you are more educated or had a better upbringing, you still are in this bracket, ‘Cigani’.” (Female, Montana, 50s)

The irony of this Informant reminds us about the rigid way Roma are perceived, regardless of their social levels. She is clearly stating that this failure to register numerous positive and successful examples among many Roma frames them as one rigid whole. This rigidity, furthermore, acts as a form of encouragement to Roma who see the need to prove to the world they are more than what they are thought to be, on the one hand, but at the same time this makes them feel they are Roma, on the other.

“That is why we strive to develop ourselves and to show people – ‘here, we are bright; we can; you are not any different than us …’ That is it!” (Male, Montana, early 50s)

“We”, in this quote, puts Roma as one united body who has recognised the necessity to prove to the Gadže world they are more than they are thought to be.

“That is how I explain it to myself because the difference between us and the Bulgarians is that Bulgarians look at us as second class people; while we are the opposite – we strive to show them that we can even more than [them]; and that we can be people like [them].” (Male, Montana, early 50s)

This narrative is a demonstration about the clear struggle between Roma and Bulgarians. In the Romani vocabulary, ‘Bulgarians’ can also refer to any other person
who is non-Roma. The example here relates not only to ethnic Bulgarians, but also those who are not Roma. This is not only a desire to prove that Roma are able to be like the non-Roma but also they are eager to prove that they are even better. On the one hand, Roma feel they are not respected by the majority of societies, while on the other hand, they wholeheartedly strive for recognition and credibility. This clear demarcation between ‘vindicated Roma’ and unfair ‘Others’, is a sign of the constant struggle between the two. Also, this feeling to ‘over-compensate’ inherent in many Roma is a sign of the discrimination which Roma experience. Therefore, there is an intricate relation between this search for approval and recognition of the ‘gaze’ of the ‘Others’, on the one hand, and the feeling what it would actually mean to be Roma, on the other.

“Well ... [laughing] I am proud of what I am – as a person. It does not matter what I am, but as a person. But as a Romka ['Gypsy woman' in Romani language with Bulgarian ending], here in our country, you need to prove yourself in I don’t know what kinds of ways so that the Bulgarians accept you. [In Italy] I know they don’t accept us. They don’t accept us! That is what I am saying – they don’t accept us – and that is offensive and it sickens me if you want to know. Because truly speaking, that is what I am. I am a Romka [laughing]." (Female, Montana, 40s)

The majority of the Roma informants shared a feeling of frustration due to the ways they are perceived and received by the societies abroad. Due to their experiences in the past and in their home towns, they are not surprised at the similar anti-Gypsy sentiments and as migrants in the host societies they find themselves in today. Even though participants did not necessarily agree with unfair generalisations, portrayals and labels of the Roma as they limit the expression and recognition of their individual identities, this bracketing is the source of their reaction towards the Gadže and all those who they see them as guilty for their misfortunes. Non-Roma are thus recognised by Roma as those who are culpable of the inadequate recognition of the Roma and therefore their miseries. Interestingly, these sentiments are reciprocal to the widespread anti-‘Gypsy’ sentiments across Europe. While historically Roma were looked at with suspicion and mistrust, today Roma are still seen as threats to societies and as convenient scapegoats during times of major political and economic crises.

Does this all suggest, however, that there is an ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ narrative for Roma migrants? The findings of this study point towards a deeper discourse than the one described above and the following section will try to illustrate the role of labels and stereotypes attached to the Roma and further processes of Othering.

Processes of Othering

As the previous section tried to convey, there is an established set of beliefs towards ‘who the Roma are’ and ‘what they do’ and these have been perpetuated due to various factors such as master narratives and the mass media. As a result, not surprisingly, these narratives have managed to infiltrate the consciousness of the Roma themselves as they have started to internalise the images, labels and stereotypes attached to them. What it turns out then is that there is more to an ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ narrative and there are other factors which inform who Roma may consider as threats to their identities and survival. The labels attached to the Roma, thanks to general narrative about the Roma, on the one hand, and the self-worth and the self-perception of Roma migrants, on the other hand, seem to only that Roma are ethnic labels attached to them. Roma. Yet, what is important and sometimes Roma, non-Roma. Roma believe whole, and yet they are a group. Interlocutors in Bulgaria even though they are non-Roma, it does not differ in any way.

“Well, in principle, as I will say – they are [deploring] as they greet me in Cigans [too] – as [if] I don’t understand a Roma?" In Romani language, Dutch, Russian, Yugoslav [Romanes] they will sit.

If you think they [local I say] they [Dutch] say that this...

Here the interlocutors feel Roma from Romania and those of Roma and on the other hand, the Roma. The decision associated with a group, secondly, he has taken. Here we sense the affair in the Netherlands and as it is seemingly determined against Roma group unfavourably by the hand, as Roma often take. In this example, the block out Romani group.

Not much different living and working in other years there, her ‘knowledge’ existing narratives are all about them:

“I have heard the Spanish – their first [response] anything else to be said..."
other hand, seem to interact with each other in intricate and sensitive ways. It is not only that Roma are eager to prove to the world that they are different and more than the labels attached to them, but also they have a well-established idea who they are as Roma. Yet, what is interesting is that they have internalised these labels and stereotypes and sometimes Roma behave towards their own ethnic group no differently than the non-Roma. Roma become and have fallen victims to the ways they are portrayed as a whole, and yet they are not immune from ‘Othering’ members of their own ethnic group. Interlocutors demonstrated this by commenting on the ways Roma from other regions in Bulgaria and from other countries are and judged them in negative lights, even though they are all Roma. This formed narrative of distancing by the Roma then does not differ in any way to that of non-Roma.

“Well, in principle, as I know he/she is a thief, how can you keep in touch with such persons. They will say – they are [dealing] together; do you get it? Simply when I am in [front of] the shop, when they greet me in Ciganski ['Romani language' in Bulgarian], I reply in Dutch and ask them what they want, as [if] I don’t understand him/her; do you understand? He asks again – ‘Rom siinian?’ ['Are you a Roma?' in Romani language] – ‘Niet begrijpen’ ['I don’t understand' in Dutch]. I speak [to them] Dutch, Russian, Yugoslavian. As if I don’t understand Romanes [Romani language]. If I say I know [Romanes] they will sit next to you and start talking and that will be the end [of it]. [...] If you think they [local Dutch] won’t find out you are not a Cigamin ['Gypsy man' in Bulgarian]. There they [Dutch] say that the Cigami ['Gypsy man' in Bulgarian] steal [laughing]. (Male, Montana, 50s)

Here the interlocutor has clearly taken the stance of distancing himself from fellow Roma from Romania. On the one hand, he is eager to disassociate himself from a group of Roma and on the other hand, he refers to the existing general narratives regarding the Roma. The decision to distance himself is strategic. Firstly, he does not want to be associated with a group of people who are perceived as thieves by the local Dutch and, secondly, he has taken a stance of distancing himself. The quote above is quite telling. Here we sense the apprehensions of our informant as he is not able to open up in the Netherlands and associate openly with the Romanian Roma he comes across there. He is seemingly determined to consciously disassociate himself and to even discriminate against Roma groups as he has assumed that they are perceived negatively and unfavourably by the local Dutch society. Thus, Roma and non-Roma do not differ much as Roma often take the position of distancing themselves from other Romani groups. In this example, the interlocutor has assumed the role of non-Roma who has decided to block out Romani groups which are different than his own.

Not much different is the narrative of another Informant from Sofia who has been living and working in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, for more than seven years. During her years there, her ‘knowledge’ about the local Roma has been primarily informed by the existing narratives and stereotypes about the Spanish Gitanos. Here is what she relates about them:

“I have heard the Spaniards calling them Gitano; and they say ‘mucho rico’ ['very rich' in Spanish] – their first [response] is that they are rich; the second [...] is that they sell drugs. But, I don’t hear anything else to be said about them.
Here, we see another illustration of the fear and mistrust of Roma by another group of their own ethnicity. This can be explained by limited and insufficient encounters between the two Roma groups, who as a result have fallen victims of their own stereotypes. Not surprisingly, we notice the notions of mistrust and avoidance of the two Bulgarian Roma who have decided to base their live observations on the 'knowledge' production of well-established narratives of the local Spanish population who depict the Gitanos as thieves and criminals. Even though the Informant recognises and feels Spanish Roma as a sibling group ("they are one of ours"), she and her daughter/sister-in-law apparently do not want to risk closer personal contact with them, but took a stance of mistrust and fear instead. They demonstrate they have believed what the general public describes the Gitanos are, even though the two Roma groups have not had any other personal experiences of each other. The decisions of Informant and her relative have been a judgement based on predominant general narratives and arrive at an irrational judgement. Again, this is another example of distancing and fear of Roma by other Roma, who in this case happen to have different countries of origin.

Difference and rivalry between Roma groups and sub-groups

There is an important aspect of the identities of migrant Roma. Bulgarian Roma today have the opportunity, not widely experienced before, to meet and co-exist not only with Roma from other European countries such as Romania, Spain, Serbia and others, but also Romani groups from different parts of Bulgaria. It turned out there could exist a clear demarcation between 'us' and 'them' when it comes to different Roma sub-groups. First of all, a clear distinction can be observed among some informants who see Bulgarian Roma as different and better than other Romani groups. On the other hand, it was not rare that a certain Roma sub-group considered itself as better than another from another part of Bulgaria. Yet, this rivalry between groups is common and, nevertheless, they all consider and recognise themselves as Roma.

"I cannot accept such people. So they cannot be Cigan ["Gypsies" in Bulgarian], even if they are Serbian - the same way if they are doing the same things [stealing and illegality] even though it is only the Cigani who are renowned for this [everybody on our table starts laughing]. I won't accept it, do you understand?" (Female, Montana, early 20s)

More precisely, it is the immoral behaviour which Roma dislike and this does not differ in any way from what any person, regardless of their ethnicity, would disapprove and disagree with. Here, the Informant tries to dissociate herself from any person or groups of people, Roma and Gadže alike, who involve themselves in criminal acts. She refers to the Roma from Serbia who, identical to the way Roma are portrayed as a whole, have the image of thieves and yet, she fails to identify herself with such Roma.
"I am quite disappointed by the Roma people themselves. Sometimes I say to myself that I cannot escape from the fact that I am Romka ['Gypsy woman' in Romani language with Bulgarian ending]; I won't hide. I admit it that I am a Romka. But the fact that the other people do so makes our prestige go down to zero. And sometimes I am sorry I am a [Roma]. [Yet] I say to myself, it is bad to regret it." (Female, Sofia, 20s)

These trepidations are also indicative of the internal struggle which predominate in the stories of the majority of the interlocutors. What they seem to dislike and disown are the illegal, negative and immoral acts of those who have blemished and are blemishing their images as Roma. Even more, and in line with the discussion of the processes of Othering, there were instances in which Roma have behaved in a manner which does not differ at all from the way any person would act with people with little education, poor integration and orientation in the general society.

“Look how they are selling the [cell phone] Galaxy S4 which is usually priced at 600 euro, while they sell it for 200. I have bought two plasma TV for 200 euros each – brand new from the box! When I need electronics I go and tell him ‘Brother, do you want to earn something?’ I go with him in a shop, look around and tell him – ‘This TV!’ When he gives his bank account [and] the work permit to the staff in the shop, they check him and give him the TV [on leasing]; he pays one euro and receives the television. When we are out I get the [brand new] boxed TV, I pay him half of the price and that is all.” (Male, Montana, 30s)

The passage above is by an interlocutor from Montana who related his encounter with another sub-group of Roma from the same region in Bulgaria. What he wanted to illustrate is that he has outsmarted that particular group of Roma. Furthermore, he has described them as ones who lack a fair sense of reason and do not know what is in their best interest as migrants and residents abroad. Informant 29 has also suggested that he is able to trick them and take advantage of their poor orientation in society, and this deserves ridicule. This example is illustrative of a negative attitude and judgement towards one group of Roma by another. It appears that even though they speak the same language and come from the same country, and even region, Roma can not only take advantage of each other but also behave and treat each other with disdain.

Summary
As it turns out, there are two main layers informing the conscience of the Roma migrants. On the one hand, they are aware of the established images and predominant narratives about the Roma. These seem not to differ much from their experiences in their home towns, as Bulgarian citizens and when they find themselves abroad, they are not surprised to find out similarly established anti-Roma sentiments. Interlocutors recognised this as unfair and unjust, as it limits their identities as well as their existence and prospects abroad. Thus, they strive hard to prove the host societies wrong and to show them that they are more than what they are thought to be and even better than the rest. This points to the second layer of Roma identity – it becomes a reaction towards and against all those non-Roma who fail to recognise the great human talents and qualities of the Roma.

This general scenario forms a narrative of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ and could be said to be common among Roma groups, regardless of their differences. Yet such narratives
appear to be inadequate as the clear factors which give birth to Othering are features and traits which are deemed and perceived as ‘negative’ and disliked by people from all walks of life. Ignorance, illiteracy and thus involvement of any person in criminal activities, regardless of their ethnic belonging is perceived negatively by non-Roma and Roma alike. As it becomes clear from the examples above, Roma are not immune from Othering fellow Roma due to established stereotypes as well as limited encounters which ultimately makes Roma and Gadže no different from each.

This section has sought to shed light into the main processes informing the consciousness of Roma regarding their identities. This appeared to be affected by master narratives, labels attached to the communities and the search for recognition of the Other. Yet, what appeared to be Othered were characteristics and practices deemed as ‘bad’, ‘negative’, or ‘immoral’, both by Gadje and certain Roma groups. The next section will continue the analysis of Roma identity by exploring the concept of ‘Romanipe’, or what it really feels like and means to be Roma, in the context of migration. It will hopefully illustrate why this study of the Roma is poignant and worthy of study.

‘Romanipe’ and an identity of becoming

The processes of migration are materialising in many changes for Bulgarian Roma migrants. As growing numbers of Roma are now beginning to live and work in various countries in Europe, they have novel chances to meet other Roma, to observe and discover similarities and differences. It should be noted that meeting other Roma abroad is accompanied with feelings of curiosity and excitement. Thus, while at times they try and seek to make friends with other Roma, in other cases they seek to keep a distance from them due to the nature of the context, as well as because of the lack of adequate exposure between each other. Nevertheless, many of the respondents seem to have decided to stay in close proximity to the Roma communities in the host societies and this serves as a way to maintain their Roma identities.

‘Romanipe’, also known as Romanipe, Romaniman, Romanimo(s), Romanyid, Romano, Cikánistvi, Ізганія/Цыганія, and others, is a loaded term (see Mirga 1987). In the sections above we saw that there can be stark felt differences between the Roma people themselves – based on the countries and the regions they come from and the things they disagree about. The term ‘Romanipe’ instead tries to reconcile the differences between the Roma people and unite them all under certain observed commonalities such as their shared Indian origin, language, and various practices. Romanipe could be then translated as ‘Romaness’, ‘Romahood’, and ‘Gypsyhood’ or ‘Gypsyness’ (the term ‘Gypsyness’ used to be the old term preferred by the Gypsy Lore Society which was set up in Britain in 1888 as an organization whose enthusiastic members were eager to discover the ‘true Romani’ and learn more about them). All these terms bear a (set of) certain essential characteristics.

Advocates who stress the commonalities observed among many Roma bring linguistics, customs, traditions, culture and the sense of belonging to a larger fraternal group, as well as shared experiences of various forms of exclusion, marginalisation and non-recognition. In this case, ‘Romanipe’ is a form of projection of certain well-cemented ideas about the world. This portrays Roma as victims and close to nature, and define Roma people (identity) considers that differences are overwhelming. Authors such as Lebedeva and Clark (2004) are guilty of imposing what knowledge, which is in fact, inaccurate information. Thus, if we could refer to this work on ‘Romanipe’ to say about what it means, translating ‘Romanipe’ into a focus of how it is lived is the focus of this research.

Therefore, this demonstrates that Roma are not a ‘list’ of specific criteria. It is a process, especially when encountered in a given perspective, a third party’s vision of the Roma people throughout the migrations. This seeks to explain the peculiar ability of Roma to occupy, and lastly, it is a way to maintain their distinct identity factors which they are deemed to have.
cemented ideas about what it means to be a Roma. Thus, for example, if literature portrays Roma as vagrants free of the confines of law, living in the outskirts of towns and close to nature, that is what people, and scholars, would look at in order to find and define Roma people. Such approach of studying Roma and ‘Romanipe’ (as part of their identity) considers the group as an organic whole, while inter-group and individual differences are overlooked and ignored. Thus, we can see a kind of perpetuation of knowledge which could be at the same time recognised as knowledge production. Authors such as Lee (2004), Hancock (2004, 2010), Marushiakova and Popov (2012), and Clark (2004) argue that in their search to discover ‘the true Roma’, scholars are guilty of imposing an identity on Roma. There is also a danger of a ‘continuation’ of knowledge, which, without being academically verified and checked, produces inaccurate information and images of Roma and thus a distorted image of their identity, if we could refer to it in the singular. From these criticisms stems the actual take of this work on ‘Romanipe’ – or the lived experiences of Roma themselves and what they have to say about what it takes and feels to be a Roma. A Romanian Roma once warned that translating ‘Romanipe’ (as it is used in her dialect) would result in “losing the whole point” of how it is felt and that it is very hard to put in words. This is also in tune with the focus of this research - the insider perspectives of Roma informants in migration.

Therefore, this section will delve into the hugely neglected side of the debate and demonstrates that Roma identities are complex and it would be unjust to think of them as a ‘list’ of specific characteristics. Instead, ideas of ‘Romanipe’ become an organic process, especially as migration and where new group and individual experiences are encountered in new spaces. Thus, as this work seeks to illuminate the insider perspective, a third way to study ‘Romanipe’ could be added by the interpretation of the Roma people themselves by studying their personal shared observations due to their migrations. This section will first explore the role of the ‘gaze’, or the need to satisfy external expectations, which gives birth to their identities. It will then look into the peculiar ability of Roma to take various forms and shapes depending on the spaces they occupy, and lastly it will try to emphasise how the Roma have managed and continue to maintain their distinctiveness by looking into their selectivity and distilling of the factors which they allow to form part of their culture, customs and identities.

‘Romanipe’ – negotiating stereotypes and a reaction of the external gaze

One of the key ways ‘Romanipe’ could be studied and understood is to see how Roma people themselves interpret it. The role of the external gaze, it appears, is crucial to the ways Roma identities are perceived and also performed. For Cavallaro (2001), the world is inter-subjective and each individual’s interpretations always interact with those of other people. The external gaze plays a determining role in our self-identification or self-realisation. For Jean-Paul Sartre it is only when we become the object of another person’s gaze that we really come into being (Cavallaro 2001: 121). Thus, our existence is defined and influenced by the recognition of others, even though their opinion or gaze might be limiting and missing the full essence of our selves. Thus, it could be said that the ways societies perceive Roma influence how they see themselves. The gaze therefore informs to a great extent their own ideas about what a
Roma is or what it ought to be, thus giving birth to their identities. Therefore, it should not be surprising that when asked what makes them Roma and to feel like one, Roma migrants gave mixed responses. These mixed feelings could be closely related to the predominant two camps of literature regarding portrayal and master narratives about the Roma. It appears the general discourse about Roma could be located on the opposite ends of a spectrum, while ignoring their nuances. Roma migration is thus able to bridge the gap between these clashing narratives about the Roma as they are now growingly able to learn and discover due to their travels.

It is not only the general predominant discourse which informs the subjective feelings of Roma about their identities. As they involve themselves in travel today, migrant Roma try to interpret and evaluate first-hand the feelings of the surrounding (host) population, as well as about the Roma there. The identities of Roma, it is observed, are a response or reaction to how they think they are seen and perceived. It therefore becomes a reaction to the penetrating, and often judging, gaze of the people they come across (both Roma and non-Roma) and the master narratives at hand. Thus, Bulgarian Roma strive to perform and act in order to ‘entertain’, to live up to these narratives – but also challenge them.

“We say we are Cigani [‘Gypsies’ in Bulgarian], but they don’t believe it. Ask me why? All the Cigani in the world are the richest people – barons. If you say to a Russian you are a Cygan [‘Gypsy man’ in Russian] they say to you – ‘you steal, you sell your children!’ – ‘NO!’ ‘Then you are not a Ciganin [‘Gypsy man’ in Bulgarian]! Your ancestors have lied to you something!’ [the Russian] says ‘we have not seen Cigan who work’. [...]

The Cigani will do swindles. Those in the Netherlands are true Cigani – they don’t work. There are rarely any [Roma] who work – most of them do swindles and shady affairs. Most of them deal with frauds, thefts, prostitutions – I am talking to you all across the world. OUR WORK [business]! There are [Roma from] two, three towns who work; that is it!... and they [the locals] don’t believe it. If you explain to them that you don’t sell your children, they count you as non-Ciganin straight away.” (Male, Montana, 30s)

Today’s era is unique in the sense that Bulgarian Roma migrants are now able to experience, meet and learn through first-hand interactions with other Roma, foreign cultures and people. It could be noticed that they have an interest to learn about other fellow Roma and they are happy about it. Nevertheless, and as it was argued earlier, the role of general stereotypes attached to them seems to be prevalent and quite stubborn even among the Roma people themselves. As the above narrative informs, ‘real Roma’ are associated with outlaws and living on the edge of the law. What is probably the most telling part of his quote is that even though he does mention that his group of Roma are some of the ‘few’ who earn their living by fair labour, he does not fail to recognise illegal conduct as “намире рабори“ (‘our business/things’) and recognises them as things common to all Roma; he still associates with them. For him, being work-shy, stealing and swindling are “specific to us, as Roma, and that is what we usually do”. What the Informant essentially refers to with his narrative is the way the Roma are presented and portrayed generally – both in Bulgaria and elsewhere, most probably through the help of penetrating general media such as TV and newspapers. Thus, Bulgarian Roma have recognised and internalised the image that being an outlaw and an outcast is so much a part of his own self and the subconscious living, and yet...”

Thus, the ways of thinking, and it is evident in master narratives, are sometimes portrayed as follows:

On the one side, it links impoverished personal traits to their travels, sometimes in isolation, and then, that interlocutor, non-Roma, mean to be a Romanipe (‘Roma’). One quote by the Informant ...

“Romanipe...I can’t imagine what an outcast Roma is. He has shot himself.” (Male, Montana, 30s)

Here, the informant candidly perceives that whenever someone from the Roma world, the Cigani (‘Gypsies’),

“Or like a custom/tradition, [Speaking in Russian] “в Японии, в этом смысле. Всякую Воленеевен [Speaking in Bulgarian] you prepare the duck, you do it in other ways.” (Male, Montana, 30s)

Here, the examined ways and certain practices are portrayed...

Thus, there are tradiional, negatively perceived, interlocutors of the particular ‘Romani’ in a world of mixed feelings where the little pause and the ‘Romanipe’ is, could be defined or described about what a Roma means to a master narrative... portrayed by certain traits of the Roma, master narrative above and below.

They is a way for the
and an outcast is something specific for all Roma. Nevertheless, the informant refers to himself and the sub-group he belongs to as one of the 'few and rare' ones who do earn their living, and yet they are Roma.

Thus, the ways Roma migrants perceive their essential and intrinsic identities become a reaction to what others think of them. This creates a form of internal struggle and it is evident in many of the studied narratives. Thus, being a Roma, and 'Romanipe' are sometimes portrayed as two ends of an extreme spectrum by the Roma themselves. On the one side, it links well with the negative narratives about Roma as thieves, misers, impoverished persons who do not bring themselves to care much about the laws and norms of the societies they occupy. On the other end of the spectrum lie the noble travellers, sometimes nomads, who are free, stateless children of the world. No wonder, then, that interlocutors predominantly felt torn to put into words what it would actually mean to be a Roma. These opposing feelings could be exemplified by the following quote by the Informant from Montana:

"Romanipe ... I can't interpret it. What should I say to you? [laughing] It has both a negative and a positive connotation. Romanipe – Cigania [Gypsyness] look what he has done – Gypsyness (cigania). He has shat himself." (Male, Montana, 40s)

Here, the informant wants to stress that one of the ways it can be interpreted is that whenever someone makes a mess or a lousy job, and that must be attributed as cigania ('Gypsyness').

"Or like a custom/tradition – the positive – let's do our Gypsyness (ciganskoto); a tradition of some sort. [Speaking in Romani] 'Amaro Romaite te keras' ['to do our Romanipe'] – something of the sort of the tradition. It has both positive and negative connotations. [...] Like a tradition; for example, in Vasilyovden [Speaking in Romani language] 'te keras amaro Romaite' ['to do our Romanipe']; you prepare the duck, you celebrate ... these things. [...] It is very relative. It can be interpreted both ways." (Male, Montana, 40s)

Here, the examples the informant brings are positive and linked with traditions and certain practices around the household.

Thus, there are two opposing ways to understand what 'Romanipe' could be and mean. At one end of the spectrum, the Informant refers to ways or things which are negatively perceived by everybody, while at the other end there are things which are perceived by themselves as 'specific to' the Roma – such as performing and celebrating particular 'Romani' holidays. What is informative from the passage above, however, is the mixed feelings which the respondent shows and they are revealed subconsciously. The little pause and the laugh shortly after he has given consideration to what 'Romanipe' is, could reveal the uneasy subject and the ways it could be defined, redefined or described. Thus, it appears that arriving at a concise and clear definition about what a Roma could really be is a futile task. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the master narratives stemming from popular discourses. The ways Roma have been seen and portrayed by non-Roma influence to a great extent what ought to be seen as the traits of the Roma, including by the Roma themselves. This could be felt from the narrative above and also from the use of the word they and ours or amaro (in Romani). They is a way for the informant to claim non-attachment and distance from the external
narratives of what Roma are perceived to be – always creating misery, failing to do anything properly or well. If it is agreed by non-Roma that making a mess is characteristic of all Roma, then Roma themselves start to internalise this narrative, understand and apply it among their own communities. As a result, if making a mess, littering and misery are associated as their intrinsic ‘features’, then Roma also begin to see them as one but also try to react against it. Both above quoted narratives relate closely. Firstly, one of the Informants sees his own Romani community as ‘different’ from all the rest of the Roma, as it does not involve itself in illegal activities. Interestingly, at the same time he has recognised that being a rascal is ‘our business [things]’. ‘Amaro Romaipe’, or our specific traditions, as the narrative of the other Informant argues, is linked with honourable traditions and celebrations – something which evokes feelings of pride and honour. Thus, we can notice the living interplay between being a Roma and doing what a Roma really does in their lives, on the one hand, and applying external narratives, labels and stereotypes to their own Roma groups, on the other.

**Flexibility, the ‘art of living’ and survival as part of ‘Romanipe’**

The analysis above ought to be understood as not exclusive but in light of the spirit of the majority of the informants of this study. They are ready to take various forms and shapes and are able to play different roles as they have learned that being flexible is intrinsic to survival in any given society. Thus, the ability and readiness to be malleable and be ready to fit into a new society was widely recognised by the Roma informants themselves as the most needed quality in their lives as Roma. This could substantiate their secret for survival or “art of living” (Liegeois 2007: 95).

Soja (2007) maintained that the full meanings of identity could be only understood when fully practiced and lived, while links, or associations, have little meanings due to their unstable nature. Similarly, Thrift (2007) argued that humans can hardly grasp the surrounding world as they are involved in constant processes of construction and co-construction for various reasons. Therefore, what they both propose is a “third space” which is equated to the lived experiences of individuals. Also referred to as the “trialectics of being” (Soja 2007: 262), space is seen as a vital facet in understanding identities and reality. For him, in order for us to understand identities and the world better we need to study not only the society and the historical characteristics but also space. Thus, knowledge of identities should be always situated within the confines of a certain space or place which would require continuous expansion of knowledge and open-mindedness that challenge current notions of what is presently known or perceived as ‘true’.

Evidently, the processes of migration add another element to the Romani identity. First of all, they could be seen as Bulgarians, as they are citizens of this country, and thus for various reasons Roma may choose to identify solely as Bulgarians. Secondly, they seldom cease to see themselves as Roma as this has an intrinsic place in their consciousness and worldview. Lastly, as they migrate and move to new places, they become something else, which adds a new dimension or other layers to their identities. Their identities expand and evolve and they should not be seen as a contradiction of any kind; on the contrary the Roma are seen of the world but also survive and they can take various forms as a characteristic of the combination of different societies they come around the Turkish-speaking areas. Instead, they are able to identify themselves in new places, socialise not only with the essential feature of the third space among the Turkish-speaking areas and find themselves in. Therefore, prospects for accepting something smoother and easier is.

“Real Roma... [with a sign]... ‘Gypsies’ in Bulgarian traditions [but] for the majority of the female Rom; it can also be seen as exemplified in the Kaldarasi and Erli dialects.”

Ciganka [‘Gypsy woman’]

The search for ‘third space’ is a task. It is hard to capture in order to satisfy the need for a certain identity. The differences which exist between the female Rom; it can also be seen as exemplified in the Kaldarasi and Erli dialects and the interlocutor that could make clear a great trouble to do. They certainly make clear that it could be possible on...
any kind; on the contrary, they are enrichments to their Romani identities. No wonder, the Roma are seen often as colourful and diverse. Roma groups can differ in the ways they celebrate and commemorate certain traditions and customs, as they are constantly involved in an intricate interaction with the societies they are in close contact with. This flexibility is widely perceived by the Roma themselves as one of their greatest assets. It is a necessity which is long recognised as vital and necessary for not only being in the world but also surviving it. Therefore, being a type of hybrid, or a ‘rhizome’, which can take various forms at various times and for various purposes, is becoming clearer as a characteristic of Roma. Roma could be seen as ‘hybrids’ as they are the result of the combination of different products – due to the interactions with the cultures and societies they come across. They could be also a ‘rhizome’ in the sense that they can continue changing their character and an image of theirs could/should not be seen as an end-result in any way (especially as we consider processes of migration).

In their narratives, many interlocutors demonstrated their malleability and abilities to play and bring to the fore their different (non-Roma) identities, while they could be Roma whenever they have to. Not only do they become acclimatised to certain places, but Roma migrants know they can feel comfortable in their Romani identities whenever that would be necessary. Bulgarian Roma migrants have demonstrated they are also able to distance themselves from others (as described earlier on) but also associate and socialise not only with their own groups but also other Romani groups, and this is an essential feature of their identities and characters. This could be observed, for example, among the Turkish-speaking Roma from the southern and eastern parts of Bulgaria who are able to identify themselves as Turks and/or Roma, depending on the situations they find themselves in. These decisions are strategic and political and inform their prospects for acceptance by individuals or the group in their interactions. This helps for smoother and easier interactions between Roma groups themselves and non-Roma.

“Real Rom ... [with a sigh] it depends on where they have to be real Rom. If I am among our Cigani ['Gypsies' in Bulgarian], yes, I am a real Roma-Kardaraška; I will keep the laws, I will keep the traditions [but] for the moment. But as soon as I am away from them I become like a Bulgarian. If I go away to Austria I am following the Austrian rules, their requirements. I cannot say I am a real Ciganka ['Gypsy woman' in Bulgarian], save among the Cigani.” (Female, Sofia, 50s)

The search for ‘real’ Rom can be thus appreciated as a difficult and cumbersome task. It is hard to capture and define as Roma need to make sure they are flexible enough in order to satisfy the expectations and ‘gaze’ of the people they come across (and this certainly can reinforce stereotypes). These expectations are also valid within the differences which exist among different Roma groups. A Kaldaras Romni [Romni is a female Rom; it can also be translated, depending on the context, as a married woman], as exemplified in the quote, in exceptional cases could be married to an Erliša Rom. Kaldaras and Erliša are the appellations of two different sub-groups of Roma with distinctive dialects and subtle differences in their cultural practices. Thus, the Romni, interlocutor that conducted a mixed marriage with man from another Roma group, faces a great trouble to define what ‘a real Rom’ could mean or be. What she wants to certainly make clear is that there cannot be such thing as ‘one type of real Roma’ – that could be possible only in a certain setting, time and space and the ‘real Rom’ is being

225
born by the recognition of the surrounding society. Therefore, when in the company of a certain Romani sub-group she needs to make sure to adjust her behaviour and acquaint herself with the customs, ways and behaviour of that certain community in order for her to be received as 'a real Romni'. What is important to note is that there are several ways of being a (real) Rom and they would not necessarily contradict each other but rather be equally true and valid. Nevertheless, that 'real Rom' can cease to exist, but only by necessity and, as if in a play, once out of the surrounding space of the Romani community and especially when they are abroad and required to behave like a Bulgarian, Turk, Israeli or an Austrian. This should not come as a surprise, given the predominantly hostile views and rhetoric against Roma groups in Europe. What is argued here, nevertheless, is that the particular 'switching' of identification, the readiness and the ability to be malleable and take different forms, constitutes an essential part of Romani identity. It is also argued that Roma have learned the need to perform and 'play' in order to be recognised by the expectations of the people they come across.

This is probably a key to Roma identity. They have realised over their history and past experiences that, in order to settle down and live appropriately in a certain community, flexibility and acceptance of the 'ways of the hosts' are key to their survival. They need to evaluate where they are, what the general rhetoric at the time is, the people they interact with and to make sure they calibrate their own ways so that they are able to survive and be part of that society.

"I had an instance. I am going to work [and] my boss comes [...] two hours after me. He parks [his car] and goes to buy a coffee. I ask him: 'why are you going to pay for it? Upstairs it is free?'; the boss: 'how do you know?' so I tell him: 'my first job is to ask where can I park for free, and the second thing to ask is where is the free coffee machine'. He [his boss] is asking: 'You have integrated so fast? ... you have become almost Dutch!'; 'I have to!' [laughing]." (Male, Montana, 40s)

"They jump a lot and I started dancing like them. [Locals asking]: 'Where did you learn how to dance?' — 'I don't know! I saw how you dance!'" (Male, Stara Zagora, early 20s)

If we are to get a glimpse into the world of Roma migrants, we are encouraged to try to live it fully and experience it. As Soja (2007) argues, this is a vital and necessary part of how we should seek knowledge. Correspondingly, neither non-Roma nor non-migrant Roma alike would be able to fully grasp the world, experiences and identities of Roma migrants.

Immersing himself fully into the society of the Netherlands has enabled the Informants to learn that it can only benefit him to feel part of and to live fully in that society. Thus, he is doing his best to adapt to the 'Dutch ways'. Even though born in Montana and living in the Netherlands for about eight years, he has already obviously started to benefit from his adaptability and willingness to integrate and this has been recognised by his Dutch employer. In many of their narratives interlocutors also shared their free nature, their openness to new and better opportunities and their perceived readiness to change and adapt. This adaptation is recognised as an asset, rather than a threat to their intrinsic Romani identities, while the opportunities which are open are appreciated as great untapped potentials.

"Earth belongs to man. It is where you need to accept Bulgarians and therefore in the same time, [if] there were, you were born in Bulgarian is stupid! A person has to..."

"I don't know [in a light hearted way] you. [In England] I got used to the fact that I was in a foreign country."

As we can see, experiences of her staying abroad could be a Roma and there is no obvious contradiction in observations about how she is born on earth and at home in London.

"We are more compassionate. We know... We have love for the Bulgarians, and like any consciousness [the idea of] discrimination, hate, separate..." (Male, Stara Zagora, 30s)

Again, one could be enough to spread his love towards everybody to learn from various close-minded. Such a feature of the characteristic to survive in all different intrinsic Romani fear

"You cannot live like a foreigner somewhere and to change the Roma] changes according adapt quickly. They do..."

The Romskoto ["the Rom skonto"] in which we the Roma adapt quickly. We can survive! [...]"

The characteristic Romo [Bulgarian] is being presented...

We the Roma have to say... There is no such a Rom..."
“Earth belongs to man. I mean, you are born on Earth and therefore it is yours. And each and every place you need to accept as yours. In this way, [it is not good] for you to say that you are born in Bulgaria and therefore in life and death you have to stay in Bulgaria because you were born there. At the same time, [if] there would be a very good opportunity for you to go to, say Germany, and [because you were born in Bulgaria is a good enough reason] for you not to migrate – that would be stupid. It is stupid! A person has to adapt; that is very important. [...]" 

I don’t know [in a light mood] I am like this. I adapt very quickly. That is what I am trying to say to you. [In England] I got used to it in one week. I mean to say that after a week I did not mind the fact that I was in a foreign country.” (Female, Sofia, early 20s)

As we can see from the passage of the informant from Sofia, who related her experiences of her stay in London, we can see a link between her narrative about what could be a Roma and at the same time what makes her feel like one. Seemingly, there is no obvious contradiction and she has been describing her own experiences and observations about her ability to appreciate many countries as hers, simultaneously, as she is born on earth and also the fact that in about a week’s time she has started to feel at home in London.

“We are more compassionate ... We have simple love. Our love is so penetrating, so pure and I don’t know ... We have love. We have love towards everybody. I may feel like a Czech, like a Greek, Bulgarian, and like any other because we have a heart for everybody. We do not have in our consciousness [the idea] that we are more than the rest; in our consciousness does not live discrimination, hate, separation, there is no such a thing. In our consciousness is only to show love.” (Male, Stara Zagora, 30s)

Again, one could appreciate the emotions of Informant 60 which are sincere enough to spread his love towards all people, cultures and countries. This openness and love towards everybody, furthermore, is genuine and liberating and it has allowed him to learn from various countries and feel them as his own instead of being rigid and close-minded. Such a way of living could be appreciated as an ability or ‘art’ and one of the characteristic features which have allowed many Roma migrants to live and survive in all different nation-states. Furthermore, it is appreciated by many as an intrinsic Romani feature and a great asset and secret for their survival.

“You cannot live like a Bulgarian [in Italy] – it is unthinkable. That is very important – to go somewhere and to change. That is good. You get adopted quickly. You have no problem. He [the Roma] changes according to the circumstances. You adapt wherever you are. However, the Roma adapt quickly. They do not have problems with that. [...]"

The Romsko ['the Romanipe' in Bulgarian] is being used abroad. That is our strong feature, because we the Roma adapt quickly. Their mentality allows them that thing. They can always survive there. We can survive! [...]"

The characteristic Roma feature will not get lost. ... I mean to say that the Romsko ['Romanipe' in Bulgarian] is being preserved; and they offer it abroad. [...]"

We the Roma have to survive and we learn to survive. I do not see a Roma waiting for a politician. There is no such a Rom. You speak with how many you want – there is no such Roma. I do not rely
on a politician, nor to my country. By us, the Roma, there is no such a thing – we rely on our own selves.” (Male, Stara Zagora, 40s)

“That is what I mean by integration. We the Roma started integrating by ourselves; we don’t wait for anybody to integrate us. That is why more or less because, in being abroad, the mentality changes because they see how life is, what the situation is there. So they are doing their best to seek this life standard.” (Male, Stara Zagora, 50s)

“There are no Bulgarians to tell you, come here, let me make you a person [figuratively speaking, let me teach you how it is supposed to be done]. You need to find out how to survive. They look at life in a contemporary way. There is so much we can learn from Europe – a lot, a lot!” (Male, Stara Zagora, 20s).

What the narratives of the three interlocutors above demonstrate and share in common is the recognised potential that the different countries offer and their active approaches to life. While abroad, they have managed to learn, experience and see things which they have never known before their travels abroad. As the Informant has realised, “there is so much we can learn from Europe” and that in order for him to feel as a contemporary youth, he is ready to do his best in order to feel an integral part of the current age. Thus, many Roma have long recognised that it is their own responsibility to help themselves, rather than rely on certain countries with their policies or politicians.

The term “art of living” is borrowed from Liegeois (2007: 95). It was chosen as it well fits the worldviews of many of the informants to life and the approach for their survival in it. Also, it adequately describes the way Roma are in the world and in handling their lives, rather than just providing narratives of what should be done. They have seemingly taken an active and independent approach and also appreciated the potential within these open societies and in a globalised world. Furthermore, Roma have learned they need to be brave, ready and flexible enough not only to survive it but also do and live it with fun, joy and a positive outlook which allows them to the live it fully. Thus, very often, against narratives of assimilation, Roma have appreciated the great potential of being abroad while still maintaining their Roma consciousness and ‘ways’. This is because the self-consciousness and perceptions of Roma remain; they believe there is very little which could be done to eradicate their Roma identity and they believe they need to stay true to it.

“We are us to a certain extent in the different countries to a different degree. […] That is what makes me feel good – we feel freer.” (Male, Montana, early 30s)

‘Selective multiculturalism’ and the ‘Roma ways’

As seen, the processes of migration add and complement the identities of Roma migrants as they experience new feelings which bring new dimensions to their realities. Nevertheless, a major part of them continue to see themselves as Roma. They believe that one is a Roma and stays one forever and that is something which is hard to eradicate. That is why, the term “selective multiculturalism” is seen as quite appropriate in our discussion of ‘Romanipe’, or what it is that Roma people themselves see as defining and ‘at the heart’ of their identities. “Selective multiculturalism” was used by Gropper and Miller, and other authors argued is the appropriate term. Instead, they try and try hard in order to suit their own prism and they have never been observed within other ways.

As argued above, in the ways, a new space is created. What is being observed may not be ‘typical’ for their host societies. Thus, in perception, and practice, although a process of “cultural” and“multiculturalism” suit their own prism and are observed within the boundaries of the Roma, they do not come as a surprise.

The Romani identity (Male, 1987) – a collection of cultural traditions in a certain fashion in a certain fashion in a certain fashion and what is important that society comes to commemorate, for example, Easter, Christmas and so on. As to claim that these holidays which are traceable to non-Roma origin, are holidays which are now also a continuation of past traditions is quite interesting is the fact that these traditions and fashion and claim it as the same.

For example, the Easter Day can differ according to the particular dimension. While in some countries and requirements are observed, such as they are used to in the same way as the custom is to celebrate Easter, they purchase lamb and goat instead. Their gathering may involve more than families or three families – their neighbours who do not speak the same language share that their Roma neighbours, which have been in the same situation as themselves, say:

“I only lose the ugly Easter, don’t need them. For us...”
Gropper and Miller (2001: 107) in their study of American Mačvaja Roma. What the authors argued is that Roma do not live and act in a bubble and isolated from society. Instead, they try and select what would work for them as Roma and how to adopt it in order to suit their own ideas and outlooks on life. Similar processes of selectivity have been observed within the processes of migration of Bulgarian Roma abroad.

As argued above, Roma migrants have realised that they ought to change their ways in a new space in order to be involved in the matters of societies they come across. What is being observed is that they make sure to balance between what they claim to be ‘typical’ for their ethnicity, but at the same time take and adapt to the ways of the host societies. Thus, there is a constant change and evolution in terms of their ideas, perceptions, and practices which should not be seen as assimilation to host countries, though a process of internalisation through borrowing and adopting them in order to suit their own prisms. Thus, the differences in observed practices of various Romani groups within the boundaries of a nation-state and between different countries should not come as a surprise.

The Romani identity could be compared to an ‘assemblage’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) – a collection of heterogeneous elements which come together in a unique fashion in a certain space and time. When abroad, Bulgarian Roma migrants evaluate what is important for them, and what ought to be preserved. For example, when it comes to commemorating and celebrating holidays, such as the national holidays of Easter, Christmas and New Year, Roma make sure to commemorate them. Yet, they do not cease to celebrate what they perceive as typically Roma holidays such as Bango Vasili (also known as Vasilica and Vasilyovden) – the ‘Roma New Year’ (celebrated on 13-14th January), or St. George’s Day (Herdelezi, celebrated on 6th May). This is not to claim that these holidays are celebrated by the Roma across Europe. Moreover, these are holidays which are honoured and celebrated by non-Roma as well and their roots are traced to non-Roma origins. Yet, this is a great example of the adoption and continuation of past, often non-Roma, legacies and customs. What makes the Roma case interesting is their ability to combine different and various elements in a unique fashion and claim it for their ‘Own’.

For example, the ways Roma in Bulgaria celebrate Bango Vasili or St. George’s Day can differ among the different Romani groups. Yet, abroad it takes on a new dimension. While in another country, Roma appreciate they need to mind the local laws and requirements and thus cannot slaughter an animal or gather together in big spaces as they are used to in Bulgaria. Instead, they purchase a bird for ‘The Roma New Year’, as the custom is to slaughter a bird like a goose, duck, or a cock, while for Herdelezi, they purchase lamb from the butchers instead of slaughtering it themselves in the open air. Their gatherings abroad are also usually limited to family and close friends – two or three families – while the music is quieter as they need to mind the privacy of neighbours who do not necessarily celebrate these days. While abroad, interlocutors shared that their Romani culture is being enriched while what is being lost are things which have been in fact deemed as undesirable:

“I only lose the ugly things [while abroad], those which I have been dreaming of losing because I don’t need them. For example, it is not obligatory when we are in company to drink and drink and
then get up and dance kyucheti [‘belly dance’ in Bulgarian] and to start fighting in the end. Or such kinds of things – the ugly Roma behaviours... Or for example, you put the music on [maximum] volume ... without considering neighbours. [...] it is not like this – you need to pay attention to all this. [...] they bring us survachki (‘сурвачки’ in Bulgarian), the kids survakat (‘сурвакат’ in Bulgarian) there. ... We have also done engagement parties, weddings not yet, however, engagement parties, birthdays ... in a bar or in a restaurant – and there is music, orchestras, anything your soul longs for.” (Male, Montana, 30s)

The quote above is a fair example of the adaption and evolvement of traditions. The example of the survachka has often been brought up by the respondents from Montana. Survachka (‘сурвачка’ in Bulgarian) is an ornamented cornel stick which, in an old Bulgarian custom, was used by young children to lightly hit the backs (survakat ‘сурвакат’ in Bulgarian) of the adults in the family with wishes of health, joy and for a fruitful year.] This is an interesting example of a symbolic respect of the holiday and the way they decide to celebrate it. Survachkas are both used for New Year (1 December) as it is widely celebrated but also for the celebration of the Vasilica (14th January) or what Bulgarian Roma consider ‘their Roma’ New Year. This object is thus regarded as necessary for the proper commemoration of the holidays. In the cases when there is little presence of Roma migrants from Bulgaria abroad, or not a well-established Romani community abroad, migrants use their imaginations and make sure they create one themselves. Thus, instead of the traditional cornel they use what they could find in order to continue the customs and ways of celebrating it:

“My niece always used to come with her children to survakat. Last year, interestingly, we didn’t have survachka, so I went to a 500 year old tree – the one for the cacao. I took a little green branch and that is how they did it.” (Female, Montana, 50s)

To continue the narrative of adaptation of traditions in other spaces, we have some interesting examples of a combination of holidays or hybridisation.

“On the 6 May, it is Gergyovden and we are in Netherlands – we celebrate it there. On the 6 May, I took the Dutch flag – a quite big one – took it from here to the city centre. The guy was playing music and we were dancing the horo. That was in Rotterdam. They [the locals] know it and call it a fest. This is a Bulgarian holiday, however, you get the Dutch flag. [...]”

We had the Dutch flag and were dancing the horo. You are in Netherlands, so you adopt their flag, but you celebrate your own holiday. On the other side there were Italians, Turkish, and the dancing is interesting for them. The horo dance is interesting in itself but for them it is unusual. They see these moves for the first time. So, even though we are far away, it is as if we are here [in Montana]. As if we are here. Your heart is here [in Bulgaria]. [...]”

The rakia, the beer. I found an Arab shop – no pork there; or I go to the Turkish shop. I ordered 34 lambs. So, I told the guys from the mahala [‘neighborhood’] – ‘if you want good lamb you go there’. [The butcher] brings it and you choose what you like. There are Serbian ovens, which roast them in whole pieces. So, we get together. If it is only me and my son and my wife – it is not happening. We get together four or five [families].” (Male, Montana, 50s)

The narrative above not only addresses the very unique and a hybridity in ways in which respondents’ variables are combined in the adaptation of their lives in a new space, but it also brings into play Bulgarian citizens, tourists, and many Roma in them, such as celebrations that have been borrowed by the respondents which participants felt could not be directly linked within the community. Second, as Romani identities are formed, they are not directly taken from different Romani identities even more when both people take the Dutch flag. As a result, Dutch and Romani identities do not overlap.

Furthermore, they have been able to find their way by borrowing Dutch traditions and their lambs. Furthermore, the Narrative of Romani and/or the ‘belly dance’ – as they begin to celebrate ‘Gypsars’ with horo, as well as the assemblages, or combinations?

In the few cases we have, the idea of the Romani ‘ways’ were being implemented. The new English words are being used, as the customs and ways of celebration are being accepted.

“ [...] there is no way for us to celebrate Cigansko [‘Gypsy’ in English] in the Netherlands to be behind. You know, the Dutch used a goose [in order for their children] to look around looking for fishes. We put a willow around looking for a willow flower.”

In Bulgaria, for instance, the traditional signature meal and the dance, which is described as 35 exemplifies his cultural and traditional holidays. The holiday is not then an isolated event, and many Romani respondents celebrate the holidays while they are in the Netherlands and do their best to observe and participate in the events. Also, as we have seen, the combination of family members...
The narrative above is quite salutary because it captures the birth of a process at its very inception. We are able to see in the narrative above the art of being selective and a hybridity in which several important, for the Romani migrants, elements and variables are combined to create a new experience, reflective of the old, in their daily lives in a new space - Rotterdam. It is laden with three main factors. Firstly, as Bulgarian citizens, they feel Bulgarian and certain holidays and celebrations resonate in them, such as celebrating New Year, Christmas, as well as the customs which have been borrowed by the Bulgarian folk. Thus, dancing the horo - a collective dance in which participants form a circle, a line or other formations - is a custom which could be directly linked with the practices in the lands they have lived in for generations. Secondly, as Roma, they have adapted the holidays so that they uphold their Roma identity by also playing the music and rhythms of the Roma. And thirdly, the new space they happen to occupy has made them adapt the ways they celebrate and sustain their identities even more. Now, instead of taking the Bulgarian flag, the Roma in Rotterdam take the Dutch flag. However, in dancing a typical Balkan folk dance, the horo, their Romani identities do not diminish but have a specific and peculiar taste and nuance. Furthermore, they have learned that for what they perceive 'holy Roma' holidays they are no longer able to slaughter animals as they used to in Bulgaria, though they have found their way by locating Arab butchers and decent Serbian ovens in which to roast their lamb. Further, the purposeful search of preparing the meals, and the ways they begin to celebrate various important occasions are yet another great indication of assemblages, or combinations, of ingenuity and improvisation.

In the few cases when there were mixed marriages, the preservation of culture and Roma 'ways' were perceived as values which ought to be preserved. Thus, non-Roma brides were expected to acquaint themselves with the values of the Roma family as well as the customs and important celebrations.

"[...] there is no way for us to combine it with the English because this is typically our Bulgarian or Cigansko ['Gypsy' in Bulgarian] - that which we know from our parents, the elderly, who have stayed behind. You know, the father will get in, he will survaka - we even did that in front of the English woman so that she could see how it is done. She was [in Montana] on Vasilowden. We slaughtered the goose in order for her to see how we do it and learn. ... [For St Nichola's Day] I have been wandering around looking for fish along the river Themes for 12 km ... - a fish market. On Cvetnica I went looking for a willow for 6km with the bike - looking for a willow.” (Male, Montana, early 50s)

In Bulgaria, for St Nichola's Day (6th December) households have fish as a signature meal and as a way to commemorate the holiday. The narrative of Respondent 35 exemplifies his will regarding the importance of preserving and respecting the holidays. The holidays his family honours are Eastern Orthodox, Bulgarian and Roma and many Roma respondents try and make sure to honour not only these but also local holidays while they are abroad. Since some of the factors for the original ways of celebrating certain holidays may be missing, many of the informants of this study try and do their best to adapt and improvise but still keep the spirit and the idea of the events. Also, as the quote above demonstrates, the Interlocutor is eager to teach his new English daughter-in-law 'the ways' things are done in his family, the relations between family members and extended family and friends and neighbours. According
to his own narrative, they have been planning to make the wedding in their native Montana, mostly because of the new daughter in-law and more precisely in order for her to learn and realise the values and the ways of their Roma ethnic group.

The change of the ‘Roma ways’ is quite subtle and reasoned. Since Romani migrants have been living in close proximity to the host societies, they often express curiosity about the local customs and holidays and even join them in their local celebrations. The Roma do not live in a bubble but quite on the contrary, they are eager to learn and adapt to the local ways. Thus, we have got many examples of Roma joining, adapting to the locals, then internalising it as part of their own while in the new spaces. As an example, a recently returned migrant from Italy managed to introduce a fashionable trend by wearing scarves for boys. Wearing scarves by males, as he explained to me, in the Romani neighbourhood in Montana used to be associated with femininity and therefore could be the source of ridicule and mockery.

“[From Italy I got] only certain things – I got moccasins, hats, gloves, scarves – that which I saw was a fashion. I even introduced a fashion maybe three years ago. I introduced a fashion with the scarf. Before that, everybody who wore a scarf was [considered] a pederast, a gay, or something of the sort. However, when I introduced the scarf, they said it is something interesting and they saw it was fashionable now – because the Italians dictate fashion in principle. [...]”

Then they started to buy scarves from Holland, Italy, Denmark. So, I just introduced one scarf here in the mahala and in a week everyone had a scarf. A friend of mine saw me with the scarf and he liked it a lot. He even went to the Czech Republic as a representative of Bulgaria – the Bulgarian Roma – representing them in the Czech Republic – there was something like a grand gathering where different European Roma came together.” (Male, Montana, early 20s)

The quote above is a clear example of a “culture of migration” (Kandel and Massey 2002; Elrick 2008) and the internalisation of a fashion by the Roma. They have liked the new trend, approved of it and, as the case above exemplifies, even used it as a ‘representation’ of Bulgarian Roma abroad. It also supports the idea that Roma adopt and adapt with ease and are open to new trends and fashions which changes ‘their culture’.

“Any new fashion which comes out – my children are the first one to wear it. Both in Poland and here [Bulgaria]. If something new comes out, I buy it by all means – for me or for the kids.” (Female, Stara Zagora, 50s)

“In general, we the Bulgarians, the Roma, we know how to dress.” (Male, Stara Zagora, early 20s)

These quotes seek to illustrate the ease with which respondents relate with new trends and artefacts in contemporary Europe. They are not afraid to be in the world and feel fully in tune with fashion, music and behaviour. Many Roma shared their readiness to experience and learn from the host culture, but at the same time honour and stay loyal to the ways they are familiar with:

“We [celebrate] everything! Look what we celebrate – the Ciganskí ['Gypsy' in Bulgarian], the Turkish, the Polish and the Bulgarian – these traditional holidays we celebrate. New Year is not our holiday, it is a Bulgarian holiday – we do it. Vasilovden is a Ciganskí holiday and we celebrate it.
Bayram – a Turkish holiday and we celebrate it. We celebrate the Polish Easter and we celebrate our Easter.

– How about the way the Polish celebrate?

– There is no way you will not celebrate because they give you a couple of days for rest. When the female boss comes… and says ‘today we have a holiday’. So, what we do is prepare food, the grill, … we play music and we start dancing – we dance with the female boss, with the Polish when they are around us – that is how it is. They explain to us what kind of holiday it is.” (Female, Stara Zagora, 50s)

This narrative is one which is characteristic of other Bulgarian Roma abroad. They find themselves increasingly adopting the festivities of the host societies, cooking their cuisine and also doing what the locals do in general. It could be also said that they do not fail to internalise the things they like and continue it as a tradition of their own.

“I make the Paella. I make it the best. I even make it better than the Spanish. I bet with anybody. […] I beat the Spanish on [cooking] the Paella. I cook it much better than them. They were assured themselves because they were my guests. I even brought the large baking dishes/trays here [in Bulgaria]. Only the material is missing.” (Male, Sofia, 60s)

“The idea is born because my world-view is like this. It is not Bulgarian but Ciganaki, European of some sort. It is not that I have seen from the West…. That is what my fantasy gives birth to. I do not copy from anywhere. I am a painter by nature. So for a painter, there is no difficulty to make their yard paradise-like; to make an English yard; grass, tiles, a small fountain, water, to know how to arrange the pine-trees and so forth. […]

I like it, it is pleasing to my eye – the Western style, of this paradise. I like it a lot. I fancy it, it is pleasing my eye. My eye, however, is greedy/voracious. It is because my eye is a little more gifted compared to the one of the Spanish, the French, of the whole world. I have my own vision. So, I have made many remarks to Spanish friends of mine: ‘Why is that here? Do that this way; this will be more beautiful this way!’ So, if they take my advice; because in most of the cases my friends do take it, they say ‘Yes, yes, truly it is very beautiful. Truly, it became more beautiful this way!’ So, I do not take; I do not copy anything from them. Everything is mine. Everything is in my fantasy. The fantasy I have, I go and see it abroad. However, my fantasy is broader than the one I see. So, I do not copy anything – everything is mine. I have my own vision.” (Male, Sofia, 60s)

The last two quotes were selected in order to give a conclusion of the discussion in this last section. I found them quite poignant as they both share the uncommon take of Roma towards life. By being abroad, Roma manage to expand their vision, open their eyes and get further inspired. It seems it opens many doors for inspiration and life choices, which they manage to borrow and expand on ‘their own Roma’ level, and which could no longer be fully credited to the local hosts as it is being used by the Roma. This is what makes the study of the Roma absorbing and inspiring. As the Informant put it, it does not take much for an artist to create a good piece of work and this could be further applied to their art of living. The examples above sought to give a snapshot of a Roma way of combining elements and the creation of a ‘rhizome’ or mosaic which is unique to its own. This bricolage, many Roma fail to see as genuine to any particular culture or country and that is what makes them feel as Roma – the ability
to be selective towards the things they particularly like and to present in a ‘genuine Roma’ fashion. These processes and styles seem to be in a constant state of creation and becoming and this could be accredited to their travel and mobility.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to give an analysis of the identities of Roma migrants. It was argued that Roma identities are constituted on three main levels. Firstly, they seem to be a reaction to the widespread labels and perceptions about the Roma which have been generally portrayed, in the negative, as stable and rigid. Thus, many Roma have realised the need to hide their origins but they are also eager to resolve their differences and peculiarities as this one-sidedness hinders their life prospects, both in their homelands and abroad. This reaction has managed to encompass many Roma and make them act as one whole body as it aims to counter these master narratives and labels, thus creating an ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ narrative. Secondly, Roma seem to have internalised the labels attached to themselves. Therefore, not different to non-Roma, they sometimes distance themselves from and Other Roma groups which are not part of their own. This is due to fear, mistrust and lack of proper exposure to these groups. Thirdly, it appeared that certain qualities and traits which are deemed as ‘negative’, such as stealing, being an outlaw and having a poor upbringing, act as points of Othering, rather than certain ethnicities or groups per se.

The processes of migration have materialised some great discoveries for Bulgarian Roma migrants. As a result of them living in new and greater spaces abroad, their identities begin to transform as they morph into new hybrid shapes and add to their bricolage. They have the willingness and are ready to be fully involved in the societies they inhabit and do anything possible in order to become part of these societies. Thus, Roma migrants have demonstrated an art of being selective – the combination of "selective multiculturalism" (Gropper and Miller 2001: 207) and an "art of living" (Ligeois 2007: 95) - but without forgetting about their Roma identities. This is all remarkable, as they have demonstrated receptivity and the combination of the ways of the local hosts with those of their original homelands, and, at the same time, what they consider ‘typical’ for them as Roma. Therefore we could observe constant processes of selectivity and thus consider the Romani identity as ‘Romanipe’ in a continuous process of becoming.

References


Csepeli, Gyorgy and Central Euro

Deleuze, Gilles and Schizophrenia.


---

**Conclusion**

**Roma culture and Roma culture**

Elena Marushiakova

In this book we spoke not only some chapters of misunderstanding of Roma in order to see what colleagues and organizations in Bulgaria is funded by different projects network of the Open Society and towards Roma culture in some dimensions (exhibitions, conferences, etc.). In this way a gap makers and by Roma the support of various is important. The problem is the expense of other side door for the support (traditional or content themselves and by the support implication to other paradoxes, etc.) training courses for Roma and regularly organized in culture of cultural diversity represented as part of the sideline issue, very.

As a result of stereotypical perceptions who works in the field of Roma culture are unable to plan the future they would like to quote the Director of one school implemented: “I am at all, their culture comes in the morning in order when speaking discourse, however, about extreme”.

236