

**Douglas N. Sambati “Historical Sociology of the Romani Nationalism: Foundations, Development and Challenges.” (Doctoral thesis)**

Reviewer: Doc. PhDr. Csaba Szaló, Ph.D.

I have gone through the doctoral thesis of Douglas Sambati with great interest. In general, the dissertation is well-written, clearly composed and carefully argued. The work shows evidence of a deep engagement of the author with the field. I can accept the author's strategy which is not primarily aimed at challenging received views and academically established narratives about the political engagement of social actors sharing various Roma identities, but to give enriched and detailed interpretation of the history of Romani social movements. To achieve this purpose the author successfully applies classical theoretical models which deal with nationalist movements to the specific case of Romani nationalism.

The doctoral thesis demonstrates a proper use of research procedure which is accurately integrated into the theoretical and methodological set-up of the dissertation. Sections dealing with empirical details are intelligibly articulated in reference to appropriate and up to date academic literature. I have to especially acknowledge that the utilisation of Régine Robin's technique of discourse analysis is persuasive in its simplicity. What more, in its association with Roger Cartier's cultural history this mode of discourse analysis made clear, that the analysed statements were able to achieve their potential persuasive and performative effects only under particular cultural conditions. Cartier stresses the conflictual character of our human relationship to cultural objects, justifications and narrative accounts, in line with this theoretical model the doctoral thesis is able to overcome the usual fallacy of reducing cultural conditions of performative events to the semantic origins of statements. Taking various texts related to Romani movements into pieces of arguments and assumptions makes possible for the reader to grasp forms of pre-understanding which the validity of arguments presuppose. At the same time, it is becoming clear that these assumptions are not simply given but are actively constructed and contested in these discursive events.

The following remarks aim to contribute to the discussion at the oral defense:

The author of the doctoral thesis claims that one can reinterpret Romani nationalism in terms of an anti-racist movement using old nationalist tools. Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile to make clear how do movements appropriate a cultural form. Social agents develop relationship to cultural objects as far as they inhabit particular places and worlds which make them possible to experience and incorporate specific meanings of these cultural objects. Schools and museums could be conceived as such places, these *milieux* can be treated as examples of specific worlds which provide cultural objects with meanings through forming audiences competent to recognise the symbolic power of these cultural objects. From this perspective the third chapter of the doctoral thesis is given great importance.

Thus one can ask: who can be engaged in the interpretive community of these museums? What kind of cultural competences are presupposed by these exhibitions? Who can understand these museum narratives, like in the third chapter mentioned founding myth, illustrated by various forms of visualised proofs? Museums for sure can be treated as battlefields of the fight for the right to

memory, nevertheless as Chartier suggests, one has to be aware not only of the producers of cultural representations but also their addressees, consequently these museums can be treated as forms of crying out for a recognition. Who is asked to give these subjects the right to memory? The doctoral thesis persuasively demonstrates that the heterogeneity of the Romani movements, similarly as the multiplicity of different populations, languages and cultures is simply a social condition which is not in contradiction with a nationalist discursive strategy aiming at unification. However, the third chapter reveals the absence of an ultimate authority which would be able to guarantee the recognition of Romani collectivities' entitlement for a decent life.

At my conclusion, I advice the committee to approve this dissertation.

28.11.2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a smaller, more complex mark that appears to be the initials 'AW'.