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Ethnicity Revisited: the Case of Higher Educated Younger Generation Roma in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe

Abstract

This research aims to explore the self perception of ethnicity of younger generation Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. The sample population is represented by two groups of higher educated Roma. First those who were beneficiaries of the university scholarships granted by the Open Society Institute's Roma Initiatives. Second those who are working in Roma-focused NGO advocacy organizations. The organisations are: the Open Society Institute-Budapest, European Roma Rights Centre also in Budapest, the European Roma Information Office in Brussels and the European Roma and Travellers Forum by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg . This strategy of the Open Society Institute and the above mentioned NGOs has only a short history, which will be discussed further in the study.

The self perception dimension is going to be analyzed through the application of the concept of "everyday ethnicity" as developed by scholars Rogers Brubaker, Paloma Gay y Blasco and Carol Silverman in order to gain insight into the dynamics of the factors that come into play in the process of creating meaning for young and higher-educated Roma in countries from Central and Eastern Europe. As the concept of "identity" has been seriously scrutinized in social science research as an analytical category, the study's sources shall consist in semi-structured interviews with university graduates from the two above mentioned groups.

By doing so, the study shall explore manifestations of belongingness, ethnic awareness and self-identification in "everyday ethnicity". Moreover the study attempts to discover whether, and if so, in what way, pan-Romani organisations are succesful in ascribing a so-called transnational Roma identity in the case of the two groups of the study. Also, the concept of "Diaspora" will extensively be dealt with as this study represents an excellent opportunity to add value to studies in the field of Cosmopolitanism by taking up a transnational advocacy movement that works on behalf of several groups with different historicities, thus contending traditional approaches to representativeness. More specifically, the study shall put into practice Rogers Brubaker's criteria to establish whether this transnational group envisions itself as a "diaspora". Consequently, the study's sample group shall be analyzed through the criteria of manifestations of collectivity, condition and process as opposed to traditional approaches that

look at “diasporas” as tangible and bounded entities.

Essential literature:

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- 3.Gay y Blasco, Paloma, *Jordanova, Dina, Picturing 'Gypsies': Interdisciplinary Approaches to Roma Representation* Abingdon, Taylor and Francis Group, 2008.
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- 5.Hall, Stuart, *New Ethnicities* in Morley, David and Chen, Ckuan-Hsing, *Suart Hall critical dialogues in cultural studies*, London, Routledge, 1996.
- 6.Lucassen, Leo, Willems, Wim, Cottaar, Annemarie, *Gypsies and other itinerant groups : a socio-historical approach*, New York : St. Martin's Press, 1998
- 7.Mcgarry, Aidan, *Who Speaks for Roma?: Political Representation of a Transnational Minority Community*,Budapest, Central European University Press, 2007.
- 8.Silverman, Carol, *Negotiating Gypsiness. Strategy in Context*, *Journal of American Folklore*, 1988.
- 9.Vermeesch, Peter, *Marginality, Advocacy, and the Ambiguities of Multiculturalism: Notes on Romani Activism in Central Europe*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.
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