

Based on an ethnographic fieldwork among Roma in Tercov this dissertation explores questions of identity and poverty. It is argued that Gypsiness and poverty constantly mingle in both how the Roma cope with their social marginalization and how they are perceived. In consequence the Roma adopt strategies of survival whereby they attempt to escape identification as Gypsies. The facets of Gypsiness are explored on three levels. In Part 1 attention is paid to the internal cleavage that separates the Roma in Tercov in two fractions. The cleavage is analyzed on the microscopic level which reveals that one of the fractions is efficient in imposing the view of the other as more Gypsy like and thus establishes itself as immune to Gypsy perception. In Part 2 Gypsiness is explored in the realm of employment. Here the mutual complementarity of Gypsiness and poverty is recast in the discourse of deservingness which efficiently transforms social categories into cultural schemata and creates in the negative sense the exclusion of the Roma from the “moral community”. In Part 3 and 4 are presented examples of how the Roma in Tercov temporarily outwit dominant representations and gain the upper hand in the local social interaction.