

FROM (SELF-)EXCLUSION TO INTEGRATION: THE CASE OF ROMA IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: After providing a historical context covering the salient features of the last two centuries which have seen great changes in socioeconomic fortunes and political subordination, this article attempts a conceptualisation on Roma's exclusion which constitutes an important part of the 'poverty problem' accompanying Romania's transition from communism to EU accession, including social studies which frequently portray the Roma as a disadvantaged group suffering relatively low living standards. It is also examined the foreign initiatives, tension, housing, school, government and EU programmes for Roma as well as a reality of the Roma situation in the south-west and west of Romania (Banat and Crisana regions).

Key-words: *self-(exclusion), integration, Roma, Romania.*

Introduction

In comparison to other ethnic minorities the Roma have been slow to integrate and some elements have retained a traditional instinct for the nomadic in preference to claims for their own territory (Cretan, 2006). Tolerated and yet rejected or persecuted, the Roma 'culture of survival' stands as one of Romania's 'sub-histories' features a nation with Indian origins living in exile in Europe where a certain freedom of cultural expression and resistance to assimilation has been bought at the price of official attitudes fluctuating between ambivalent toleration and oppressive discrimination in search of more cohesive societies for either multi-national empires or nation states. Only Roma can really assess the price paid for their 'freedom' to be different: a separateness that extends even to their name since they do not accept the names used by others – ranging from the Greek term 'atsinganos' or 'atsinkanos' linked with 14th century India; 'Tigani' or 'Zigeuner' – with many other variants – relating to a long 'sejour' in Persia; 'Egyptians' reflecting their former residence in

Little Egypt' - the bend of Pelopones near Mount Gype from which the English term 'gypsy' is derived (Humeau 1992, p. 6). Instead these 'nomads of the plains' – adapting to their physical environment through centuries of movement (Ely, 1964) – see themselves as Roma.

In this article it is attempted a conceptualisation on Roma's exclusion which constitutes an important part of the 'poverty problem' accompanying Romania's transition from communism to EU accession.

Social studies frequently portray the Roma as a disadvantaged group suffering relatively low living standards (Sibley, 1998, p. 120-1; Kocsis, 2000, p. 121-5; Humeau, 1992, p. 35-9). The Roma of Romania are no exception (Dobraca, 1994, p. 67-8; Achim, 1998, p. 44-9).

It is provided a historical context covering the salient features of the last two centuries which have seen great changes in socioeconomic fortunes and political subordination.

While discrimination is undeniable, the Roma for their part have maintained what they see as their

identity – notwithstanding the perception of such a separatist stance as tantamount to criminality and rejection of improvement through regular work and education; aggravated by reluctance to conform to normal conventions such as carrying their identity card or *bulletin* without which they cannot legally get work or cast their vote.

In the light of Europe's insistence on appropriate solutions to these problems we examine the policy initiative of the last 15 years and the Roma response to them with particular reference to Banat since this ethnically-diverse part of western Romania has a distinguished record for social integration to the point where it may provide a model for progress in other parts of the country.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Roma before 1918. The Roma appeared in Romania in 1374 although it was only after 1386 that they reached the Hungarian Kingdom. In 1424, according to the constitution, the Roma of Transylvania were led by a 'voievod' but in 1588 were not allowed to have a leader. Habsburg documents of 1712 show the Roma as serfs belonging to the landowners (including many monastic communities) for whom some of them acted as copper- and goldsmiths. (Cretan, 2006). Their nomadic activity consisted of wanderings from place to place within the Habsburg Empire - each summer with the permission of those landowners where they stopped, while during winter they had "specific quarters". Control brought some protection, but at the cost of assimilation since the use of their mother tongue and traditional clothing was forbidden especially during period of slavery – (Achim, 1998, p. 88). In 1761 Maria Theresa imposed the first law to settle and

assimilate the Roma, dubbed 'New Hungarians'. The main stipulation of this law was to impose them to built houses renouncing at tents and the Roma children should be taken care by families of other ethnicity. More radically, in 1773 Maria Theresa ordered that all Roma children over five years of age be taken from their parents and cared for by the peasant's distant village although many were able to escape. Through this action it is appreciated that about a quarter of the Banat gypsies in the 18th century were assimilated as Germans (Achim, 1998, p. 95). Then in 1782, the next Habsburg head of state Joseph II issued an edict of 59 points including the requirements that Roma children should attend school and church regularly while they continued to be denied their own language, costume and music; such were negative perceptions of Roma culture which included a propensity for cannibalism. However little progress was made because the relatively objective contemporary writings of Francesco Grisellini point to the perpetuation of a nomadic lifestyle (casting doubt on the accuracy of Johann Jakob Ehrler's estimate of 'some 5,000 gypsies' in Banat around 1770 (Ehrler, 1982). The total of 5,272 in the 1774 Habsburg Conscription worked out at 1.3% of a total of 317,928 - compared with 3% for Jews, 2.5% for Bulgarians ('Carasoveni'), 13.0% for Germans, French and Italians; 24.0% for Serbs and 59.0% for Romanians) - is almost certainly given a probable lack of interest by the enumerators in an essentially nomadic population that was believed by contemporary academics like Valy to have originated in India (Fraser, 1994; Stewart, 1996)

Emancipation came in 1848 in the Habsburg lands - a little ahead of the Principalities in 1856

where Prince Alexander Ioan Cuza was able to secure legal freedom for all Roma in Moldova region. Emigration was also an option and although many were subsequently expelled from the USA for criminality they could at least return with capital resources set them apart from those who had stayed at home. Meanwhile in Germany Bismarck was quick to close the frontier (Crowe, 1996) and in 1905, the scale of illegal camping and fishing, along with damage to the forests, was such as to require expulsion of all those who had arrived from the Habsburg Empire. Meanwhile the Hungarian authorities were also imposing restrictions. In 1860 many rural Roma in Banat preferred to stay around monasteries or moved and formed 'mahalale' (poor residential areas) on the edge of towns and villages. Even if they were free they do not have enough money to build new houses in residential areas. On the other hand, Romanian publications on the Roma community appeared in various academic disciplines including including history, literature and poetry (Vasile Alecsandri, Gheorghe Asachi, Cezar Bolliac Barbu Constantinescu and Mihail Kogalniceanu).

In **the inter-war period** Roma assimilation (which included greater use of the Romanian language) by was balanced by moves towards autonomy and national and local levels especially in the 1930s through newspapers such as 'Glasul Romilor' in Bucharest and 'Timpul' in Craiova; while G.A. Lazurica (a well-known Roma personality) founded a 'General Association of the Roma from Romania' in 1933 which proposed, amongst other things, a dedicated hospital and university only for the Roma. However, such organisations were unable to consolidate; while

Roma handicrafts became uncompetitive due to the development of factory industry. Fascism came to the fore as Hitler cancelled all the civil rights for the Roma from Germany and began a strong racist policy, reflected later in Romania under dictatorship in 1940. Progress went into reverse the following year when Antonescu (seeking to marginalise undesirable minorities) used a secret Roma census as the basis for the massive deportation to the captured Soviet territory of Transnistria during 1942-44. A total of some 20,000 Roma (4,000 of them from Banat) reached the Bug river area, but with neither work nor means of subsistence about half of them died. Despite poor organisation the privations of war the stark realities of ethnic cleansing and genocide cannot be denied. Equality after the war resulted in discrimination being replaced by neglect since cultural development was compromised by the lack of education in the Roma mother tongue while the Roma failed to benefit from the land reform of 1946; while the Political Office of the Romanian Workers' Party did not recognise the Roma minority when it came to power in 1948 and the General Union of Roma (Uniunea Generala a Romilor), former General Association of the Roma from Romania, ceased to exist (though it had not functioned since 1941).

Despite equality under the law, the Roma were neglected under **communism**: there was no specific education in the Roma mother tongue and no benefit from the 1945 land reform; while their organization was not allowed to re-form. They also suffered from the general confiscation of wealth (through their significant holdings in gold). Since integration policies in the 1950s were not fully implemented, there was no overwhelming pressure

to settle. And although measures taken to stimulate a higher birth rate from 1967 included family benefits which were very helpful for large Roma families (typically with five or more children), the more determined efforts made during 1977-83 to accelerate social and cultural development through education and settlement policies were inadequately resources. However the Roma were employed predominantly as unskilled workers by giant industrial enterprises or socialist (state or cooperative) farms; though they were allowed to remain a distinct community (declaring themselves as Roma for census purposes from 1977) and to grow relatively rapidly in numbers. In lowland Banat they typically accounted 5-15% of individual village communities (rather more in the vicinity of monasteries) and might constitute a large majority in some special cases like Maguri near Lugoj where most Romanians moved into the town and left the Roma to take over their houses and gardens. Thus the departing Romanians sold their property to Roma.

Although the generic term “Roma” was introduced in western countries in the 1970s, the communist regime in Romania would not allow this term to be used, declaring them officially “tigani (gypsies)”. The change of their official name as Roma could only take place after the 1989 revolution. In addition they often face discrimination by community élites and small minorities feel isolated with reduced solidarity within their communities and family networks.

Roma after 1989: a continuity of the self-exclusion process. Of course the Roma now comprise diverse elements, as in Sângeorgiu de Mureș where there are four groups differentiated

according to residence, dress language (Romany, Romanian and Hungarian) and employments.

“Their exclusion by the society on which they live and their manner of obtaining the economic resources necessary for life are characteristics which set them apart as an anti-social ethnic group” (Costachie 1997, p. 112).

Initially the situation became even more difficult due to the loss of employment and lack of strong claims for land restitution; Indeed “the loss of agricultural employment had an especially negative effect on the living standards, social status and inter-ethnic relations of Roma in rural areas” where two-thirds reside, while stealing from private farms was not tolerated in same the way as theft from the old communist cooperative. Exclusion from villages might make for resumption of an itinerant lifestyle or removal to squatter settlements close to the towns.

Lack of awareness of the importance of education: there are many drop-outs from school in the 5-8 classes - because many Roma children, especially in rural areas, are put to work when they finish four year school (Dobraca 1994, p. 66). Divorce was not practiced but it remained usual for girls to marry at the age of 10-11 and boys at 12-13. Usually the Roma could secure only the lowest-paid jobs because they lacked professional training and many did not carry an identity card (‘buletin’) without which they were barred from legal employment and social benefits

Although some affluent Roma families were buying cars they could not drive (since illiterate owners could not get licences) – as well as expensive kitchen equipment that the women did not have the education to use - the majority lived in

severe poverty: ‘finding fruit’ in the summer while they ‘die of starvation’ in the winter when searching garbage dumps may yield a few dollars through the recovery of plastic crates, copper wire and scrap iron while ‘pursued by a dozen stray dogs, circled by black flurries of crows, enveloped in the acrid stench of the refuse and stung by the winds of a Balkan winter’. Their ‘contingency’ housing often lacks basic utilities: 70% of households have no running water and 80% cannot afford drugs. In addition small minorities felt isolated and vulnerable to discrimination by community elites.

Those who emigrated often became involved in highly organized ‘aggressive’ begging and

criminality in West European cities and there have been many cases of repatriation. But while some became an obvious embarrassment: undermining Romania’s prospects as potential foreign investors saw in their own countries the worst possible representation of Romanian society; others became well-integrated into Western business, like the Novacovici family with their summer palace in Buziaş (Timiș county) supported by a network of flower shops in Sweden.

However the Roma did begin to organize as they increased in number due to Romanian official censuses (table 1) in comparison to other main ethnicities.

Table no 1

The evolution in number of the Roma population in comparison to other main ethnicities in Romania (1992-2002)

Ethnicity	2002		1992		2002 in comparison to 1992
	Persons	%	Persons	%	
TOTAL	21,698,181	100,0	22,810,035	100,0	+ 95,8**)
Romanians	19,409,400	89,5	20,408,542	89,5	+ 95,1
Hungarians	1,434,377	6,6	1,624,959	7,1	+ 88,3
Roma(Gypsies)	535,250	2,5	401,087	1,8	+133,4
Ukrainians	61,353	0,3	65,764	0,3	+ 93,3
Germans	60,088	0,3	119,462	0,5	- 50,3

Source: Romanian Censuses (1992 and 2002)

In 1990 a movement for Roma emancipation was started under the leadership of the Democratic Union of Roma (Uniuna Democrata a Romilor) – which became the Roma Party (Partida Romilor) in 1992 - and the Roma Society (‘Societatea Romilor’) which dissolved in 1992 because of inner quarrels. There were also cultural organisations such as ‘Aven amentza’ (Cultural Foundation of Roma Emancipation), the General Union of Roma (‘Uniunea Generala a Romilor) and the Roma

Women’s Organisation (‘Organizatia Femeilor Tiganci). Meanwhile traditional leadership was manifested through the Cioabă and Rădulescu families in Sibiu. Indeed, Iulian Rădulescu - self-styled ‘emperor of all Roma’ - is still looking for compensation for his deportation to Transnistria in 1942. However traditional leaders were not considered effective because authority is “rarely recognised beyond their extended families and the

people who are keen to do business with them” (Pons, 1995).

Household surveys indicated an overall poverty rate of 76.4% in 1995 and 78.8% in 1997 compared with national average figures of 25.3% and 30.8% respectively. With low educational achievement (in 1998 44% of the Roma population had not completed the basic eight-year schooling programme) barriers were encountered in the labour market; while most Roma lived in settlements with quasi-legal housing arrangements. A gender component arose because Roma girls were dropping out of school early and were often at risk through poor reproductive health; while Roma boys were disproportionately represented among the juvenile delinquent population.

A number of violent incidents occurred. Some localised pogroms were reported immediately after the revolution but ten Roma homes were burnt in Racșa (Orașu Nou commune, Satu Mare county) in 1994 where those responsible were forced to rebuild. Tension in Piatra Neamț led the mayor at one stage to advocate a Roma ghetto under armed guard. The worst ethnic violence occurred in Hădăreni (Chețani commune in Mureș county) in September 1993 when an innocuous conversation between three young Roma men and a non-Roma woman sparked a series of arguments and confrontations: a Romanian man was stabbed (and later died) leading to a pogrom in which three Roma were killed while 13 houses were burnt and five others ransacked. Police are alleged to have incited further anti-Roma violence after they arrived. Although several Romanians were jailed for murder and arson the sentences for murder were considered light - and were subsequently reduced with

compensation (in one case) that was greater than what a widow of one of the murdered Roma had received.

THE (SELF-)EXCLUSION PROCESS

The concept may be applied not only to economic disadvantage (low living standards in the context of the general level of wellbeing) but also to environmental, social-cultural and political disadvantages – please give examples as they affect Roma. Where exclusion occurs in all these domains then the condition is one of particular severity among the Roma in parts of Romania.

Disadvantage is arguably greatest in case of a large number of children looked after by a Roma mother who is divorced or widowed. Hence the gender component to marginality. Indeed most of the ‘inactive’ Roma aged under 18 years or over 65 live in poverty, with poverty rates increasing according to the number of children in the family. Gender inequality arises through access to employment and the wage level. It is interesting to notice the way in which the Roma women are affected in their domestic activities since food may be carried a long distance or since their quarters usually do not have shops. In this respect other kinds of marginality appear: *family and gender exclusion*.

Exclusion is arising from poor qualifications such as inadequate skills for effective competition on the labour market; also lack of skill as well as information about work opportunities in neighbouring areas.

Exclusion is also ‘systemic’ in many respects through traditional inter-ethnic relations (grounded in Roma exclusion) and fundamentally divergent value systems.

In the past the Roma as a group have been reduced the slavery by the dominant and a further example arising through the wartime deportations of the early 1940s. Recent tensions reflect a desire to exclude Roma by ethnic cleansing and to restrict them to specific areas or ghettos. In Deva and Piatra Neamt Roma have been required to move into special designated quarters in year 2004 but with no further results.

Indeed Roma neighbourhoods are typically poorly serviced e.d. as regards access to shops which may require food to be carried long distances.

Tension can easily mount through the migratory tendencies which mean that large groups could suddenly descend on a unsuspecting neighbourhood and erect shelters or building without authorisation (and possibly in violation of the zoning plan)

Systemic exclusion uses ethnicity (or culture, immigrant status, age group) in order to exclude and marginalise: thus systemic marginality applied to a group and contingent marginality applies to individuals.

Philo (2000, p. 751) explains how excluded individuals tend to 'become unwelcome visitors within those spaces which come to be regarded as the loci of 'mainstream' social life' such as middle class suburbs and prime public space. Sibley (1995) used psychoanalytical arguments about 'self' to create distance from all those perceived as alien 'others' transformed into socio-spatial configurations grounded in exclusion. 'Others' 'enter the psyche as objects which unease and discomfort' (1998, p. 119).

As the idea began to assume policy interest Sibley (1981) anticipated a new tradition of research into excluded minorities through the study of Roma and travelling people in general. Note the EU projects from 1995.

Recalling the work of Lawless et al. (1997) on labour markets, Sibley (1998, p. 1999) argued that 'unemployment and associated deprivations, particularly poor housing and inadequate education can in combination amount to a denial of citizenship'.

While national economies may 'serve adequately to integrate most of the population, there are some on the margins who are weakly connected to the economic system and need help' (1998, p. 199).

'The idea of an **inclusionary society** where involvement in the dominant economy, together with care for elderly and disabled, are the main policy objectives has to be examined critically' (1998, p. 119). Idea of autonomy: nomadic Roma 'have often sought peripheral locations on the edge of cities because in such locations they may be able to minimise the interference of social control agencies and to maintain their cultural separation from the defining *gaje*' (non-Roma) (1998, p. 120). Thus 'power relationships cannot be easily inferred from the facts of location or from convenators of poverty or involvement in labour markets' (1998, p.120). There is a need to adopt other 'world views' through ethnography or participant observation.

Thus in the 1990s large Roma communities living at the edge of villages in the Banat mining zone ('Banatul Montan') have been 'comfortable' with a daily routine of begging and petty theft (replicated in some West European cities) and are seemingly indifferent to the conflict that this

engenders within mainstream society. The authorities fail to integrate these elements just as employers may overlook Roma individuals seeking promotion in their workplaces because of their low education.

Further 'collateral' exclusion may arise as an intermediary form when investors steer clear of Roma areas because of their perceived social or environmental contamination. For instance, nobody wanted to invest in the Roma quarter called Godinova in Bocsa even if the taxes on lands there are cheap: firstly because the population is poor and unskilled and secondly because a lot of garbage rests around. Tension could arise if Roma are believed to harbour infectious diseases. In the Dambovită quarter of Timisoara, Roma are making bricks on the margins of a local lake and people living in the block around this lake interdict their children to play with the Roma children because they do not have medical insurance and family doctors, they are eating unwashed fruits, vegetables etc. and could be infected because they wash only in the waters of the lake. International aid for Roma communities could be viewed with hostility by other ethnic groups living in their neighbourhoods) who consider that the Roma should do more to help themselves. Such examples could have been seen in the towns of Caransebes, Lugoj and Arad where the aid were lead in 1990-2 to the poor people and most of them were Roma.

The EU report on Romania in 2000 mentioned limited staffing and budgetary resources to support the Roma in contrast to faster progress in protecting other minorities under the 1999 amendments to the education law (providing for the use of minority languages at all levels of education - including the

possibility of separate state universities). There was also concern from the Council of Europe over the provision of Roma schools on the basis of equal opportunity

PROGRESS OVER ROMA

INTEGRATION

Romanian Roma Organisations

The Centre of Resources of Ethnocultural Diversity's Catavencu Agency of Press Monitoring used press and TV advertising to encourage Roma self-identification for the 2002 census.

The Centre for Roma Social Studies launched 'Roma News' financed by the EU Phare Programme to improve their media presentation of Roma affairs and challenge the conventional stereotypes which help to perpetuate discrimination. Other initiatives include the newscast 'Rromano Lil' as well as a radio station and press agency reported in 2000 and they are still successful. Clearly more Roma journalists are needed. Undoubtedly some public perceptions are exaggerated: the Ferentari district of south Bucharest is perceived an area prone to crime although the rate is no greater than the average interviews revealed that residents had witnessed relatively few incidents. (Dumitrache & Dumbraveanu, 1998, pp. 61-67).

There have been successes in local government, though parliamentary seats are difficult to secure because the modest vote (reflecting lack of confidence in the electoral system) is been split between as many as five parties.

An overarching Roma Federation emerged in 2001. New organisations are often dominated by their leaders due to low membership, but they seek

enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, better education and employment opportunities, more positive media portrayal (with more dedicated radio and TV) and more effective welfare policies.

Foreign Initiatives

The EU launched a programme for the education of the Roma children in what was called by the Roma leaders as the European Diaspora of the Roma population. With Phare support, a centre for ethnocultural diversity encouraged ethnic self-identification for the 2002 census while another organisation for social study and integration seeks to eliminate cultural stereotypes and all forms of discrimination partly through the mass-media.

The Soros Foundation uses gold stolen from Roma by Nazis to fund scholarships for Roma students (c.500 in 2001) - in Romania and other transition states. Some have participated in an intensive management course financed by the World Bank and the Ford Foundation.

In 2003 George Soros gave \$30mln to a Roma Education Fund (which now has a total of \$43mln pledged) and followed this up by financing a World Bank Conference in Sofia (2005) to agree a 'Decade for Social Inclusion of Roma' across the region.

Government Initiatives

Role of government has improved under the provisions of the 1999 Accession Partnership: Roma experts are being hired by ministries, county prefects and local government. National Office for Roma During 2002 there have been Roma councillors working with each "Prefectura" and County Council and collaborating with the police and labour organisations with the aim of enhancing the integration of Roma people: improving school

attendance and labour market integration, while reducing criminality. The problem remains over identity cards without which the Roma cannot vote or obtain a job.

In 2001, the Romanian Government promised improvements through a 'National Office for Roma' (subordinate to a Human Rights Commission within the Ministry of Culture) acknowledging problems relating to education, unemployment and criminality.

During 2002 there have been Roma councillors working within each county council and prefecture: collaborating with the police and labour organisations with the aim of enhancing the integration of Roma people: improving school attendance and labour market integration.

Roma in Schools

Sensitivity over limited ethnic autonomy prevents Roma-managed schools with bilingual education rather than Romanian-managed Roma segregated schools or Romanian majority schools lacking bilingual facilities. But while some progress is being made in education, Roma access to the labour market and social housing remains unsatisfactory in the opinion of the EU.

Illiterate young (married) women of Ivesti (from cauldron maker families) are going to school under a basic education programme initiated by the German foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Employment

The Roma seem to be catching up on the rest of the population with employment rates rising from 39 to 48% during 1996-2001 and they earn the same as the mainstream population after allowing for their generally poorer qualifications. Indeed "if the

health and schooling of Roma were to improve to the extent that employment prospects increase with human capital, they might move out of poverty without having to deal with discrimination in earnings” (Mete et al. 2003 p. 43).

Clearly labour market programmes must reach the unemployed Roma but in general it may be desirable to target poor communities where Roma are over-represented in order to avoid further marginalisation by singling out the group explicitly.

Housing

The Roma continue to identify themselves prominently through their buildings but in sharp contrast to crude ‘contingency’ housing, the more affluent Roma are now building ‘palaces’ (‘palate’)-with towers covered with zinc-coated plate as a sign

of wealth. It is reported that since 1994 over a hundred such ‘palaces’ have been built by the Roma coppersmiths of Ivesti – a distinct group appointing their own ‘bulibasha’ and many have moved into a so-called golden district after buying land through companies concerned with gold and copper as well.

Some problem have arisen where the Roma have flouted the planning laws and gone ahead with the local authority’s approval. This is widespread in all places across Romania where Roma have important communities (figure 1).

Some continued conflict in Deva and Sibiu in 2001 with slogans daubed on buildings proclaiming “the Romization of Romania” or “Death to Gypsies” when government moved to ban Far Right organisations

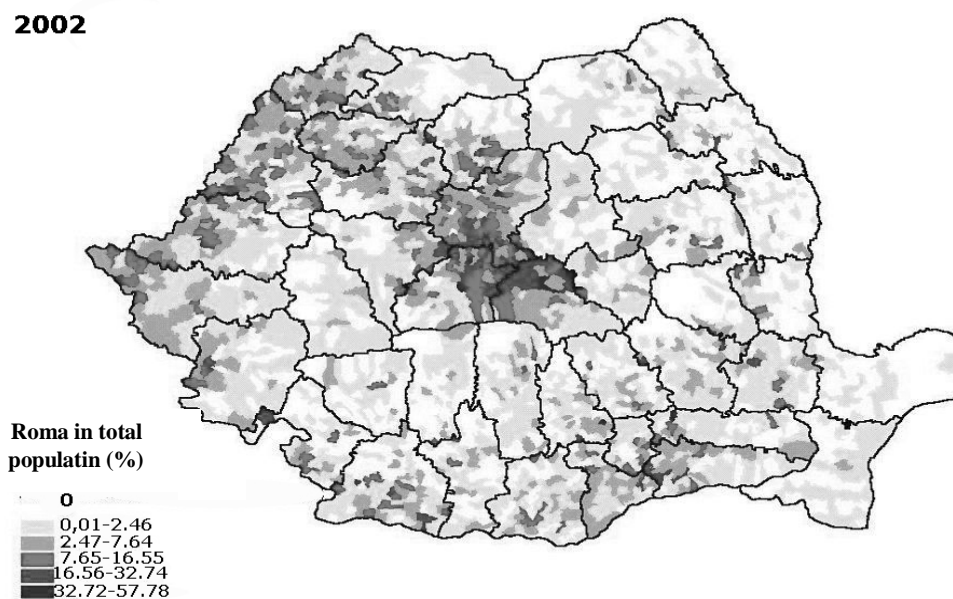


Figure 1. The Roma communities in Romania (source: Romanian census 2002)

Tension

Research shows that some public prejudice is unfounded: although the Ferentari district of south

Bucharest is perceived an area prone to crime although the rate is actually no greater than the average and interviews show that residents had

witnessed relatively few incidents. (Dumitrache & Dumbraveanu, 1998, pp. 61-67).

Still some tension: in Deva and Sibiu in late 2001 Noua Dreapta” (New Right-Wing) organisations slogans were blamed for graffiti referring to ‘the Romization of Romania’ or “Death to Gypsies” – followed by action to outlaw such groups.

Closure over Hadareni in 2005 saw the conclusion of two legal actions: one by the Romanian authorities confirming an earlier decision that the Romanians responsible should to pay compensation and to have their houses seized in the process (although the houses have not yet been taken) and another by the European Court of Human Rights (started in 2000) required the Romanian government to pay €500,000 to the Roma victims. Meanwhile the National Agency for the Roma (replacing the Department of Roma Affairs in 2004) has been joined by the NGO ‘Partners for Local Development Foundation’ over community projects to improve relations (e.g. in health and education in 2005).

Specific Problems in Banat and Crişana

Similar problems over the need for greater integration (through the education system), higher employment and reduced criminality.

Similar tendency over organisation: a Roma newspaper appeared in Timisoara in 1990: ‘O glas al romengo; (‘The Voice of the Roma’) as a supplement of ‘Baricada’.

Cases of demolition of illegally-erected Roma ‘palaces’ in Timisoara after a spontaneous migration to Strada Constantin Diaconovici Loga (with some diplomatic fall-out in the case of some individuals with double (Romanian-French)

citizenship. This is frequent in all Banat municipalities (Timisoara, Arad, Lugoj) where many Roma have double citizenship.

However there has been little violence or because of a good inter-ethnic relationships there were no violent events or the daubing of slogans.

Banat is favoured for foreign investment by its location in the west; reinforced by the social harmony maintained through several centuries by a multi-ethnic society. This should make for better opportunities for the local Roma even though they secure only the lowest-paid jobs because they lack professional training.

The integration of Roma is a social problem with deep historical roots and one which shows a consistent pattern of marginality. It may be relevant to ask to what extent the Roma have tacitly encouraged or acquiesced in their marginalisation as a means of preserving elements in their culture; although it is also evident that the authorities have been unable to resource policies of social inclusion and have – at times – sought radical and inhumane solutions. However now that the European concept of an inclusive society cannot now accept Roma exclusion policies will have to be seen through to a successful conclusion.

This paper has pointed to a promising start but the challenge remains to accelerate the social integration of the Roma while at the same time preserving appropriate elements of their culture.

Issue of welfare retrenchment: ‘all postcommunist states went through periods of welfare state retrenchment and programmatic liberalization during the 1990s [when] faced with economic recessions and new problems of poverty

and unemployment, governments reduced subsidies and entitlements, introduced means-testing of benefits to direct them toward the new poor, and privatized some welfare services' (Crowe 1996). It is also argued that all welfare states produce constituencies including groups that enjoyed benefits as recipients under the comprehensive but low-provisioned welfare systems of communism but evidently in Romania the representative institutions have not afforded the Roma adequate influence.

Conclusions

The gipsies history is a complex one, manifested by long periods of opresion. For many times the human rights of the Roma population were encroached. We consider that the gipsies' problems from Romania are confronted, implicit from the entire Romanian geographical space from the point

of view of the interes idea for social and economic integration of the gipsies, interes manifested at the national level but also in the international space. To avoid the exclusion situation of the gipsies we suggest that the considerations anterior exposed to be removed by programs or nongovernments projects or local administration programs. Also the development agencies and the investments institution can lead to the social integration of the gipsies, but in the same time can generate conditions for keeping the cultural traditions of the gipsies in Romania.

In the geographical repartition of the Roma population from Banat and Crișana it is remarked the trend of a Roma population increase, especially in plain areas or in the contact zones with the hill areas, but we can't spoke about teritorial concentration of gipsies.

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