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Faculty of Psychology

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Master in Social Psychology

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Discrimination and family values concerning the Romas Causes of migrations

**Importance of music in everyday life
The possibility to live together
Testimonials**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis that I am presenting.

The various parts of the thesis content are the result of my reading and my research.

For the research part, permission was obtained from the persons or institutions mentioned for the inclusion of the information collected.

In particular, with regard to testimonials, all results were obtained with the consent of the different actors.

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Gypsy women with her child in Brussels (personal photo)

Abstract

Research shows that there are 15-20 million Roma in Europe. It is a people without a country. Many of these Roma lived in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. These countries were part of the USSR where the policy of assimilation was strong.

In the Eastern Bloc, assimilation also meant favouring name changes. Communism wanted to eradicate nomadism, promote "sedentarization" by building entire neighbourhoods for the popular masses. For example, in Budapest, the old town has been preserved and it is in the periphery that large blocks of buildings have been built for the popular mass, including the Romas. Their way of life in a caravan, without a fixed address, had to disappear, because under communism, the work card had to control the working masses and make it possible to locate all the people.

Forced assimilation still allowed them to have a job. The Roma language was also considered archaic. Romas were seen as largely illiterate and misfits for the new economic, political and social order.

However, we note that assimilation was only partially successful, leaving, after 1989, the Roma population poorly adapted to the changes and above all, the often illiterate and underqualified, Romas were considered of little use for the new economic option: capitalism.

The greatest failure after the fall of Communism is that the Romas remain 90% illiterate in Hungary and elsewhere. The most painful change was the fact that with the collapse of Communism (1989), the State no longer guaranteed housing and work for all. The former satellite countries are collapsing economically with a huge increase in the unemployed.

Those who are the most affected are people without training, without diplomas. The whole Roma community is affected. The satellite countries therefore regard the Roma as parasites, a population that is a burden for society. Their precariousness is multiple: housing, employment, education of children...

Indeed, under the Soviet regime the Roma had a job, even a subordinate one. There was even a separate Roma community: the musicians. They had, it seems, an easier life than the other Roma. Before 1989, restaurants were full and Gypsy musicians brightened up the evenings to the sound of Gypsy orchestras. The power even

favoured these musicians, in particular by turning a blind eye to the undeclared tips on which they could live well.

After 1989, an “ultra” capitalism settled in Hungary. People want to forget the past and look to Western countries as the model to emulate. The "kolkozoes" (mass agricultural and livestock farms) are destroyed, the law of the market prevails. In Hungary, it was a period when the “apparatchiks” bought up the land en masse with the old levers of power still in place and the first, Antal government. This period when the former apparatchiks use themselves for ridiculous prices also concerns the purchase of real estate at low prices. The new rich appear to be the new dominant class and are the heirs of the old regime, called post-communist. In Hungary, this will be called “Rendszerváltás”.

In Hungary, the new dominant class of former communists send their children to foreign universities to constitute 10-15 years later, the new political heads. The “elders”, like Horn Gyula, who is a former AVH (Communist secret police sadly famous for torture), Medgyessy Peter, who was a minister under the regime of János Kádár,... remain present on the political scene. The former AVH, Horn Gyula will even be Prime Minister. One denies the past, one's membership in the Communist Party. The phenomenon affects all the former satellite countries of the USSR. All the members of the former communist regime are working to get a facelift. Horn Gyula will be the mentor of young socialists, like Gyurcsány Ferenc,...

But these changes also lead to the impoverishment of the popular mass and especially for those who have no qualifications: the Roma. Solidarity is dethroned by “every man for himself” and the desire to become rich as quickly as possible. For the Romas, who are not entitled to the cake of the distribution of goods between "apparatchiks", the only way out is to migrate to Western countries, in search of El Dorado. This is done from the 90s. The dismantling of Yugoslavia, with 10 years of war in the 90s will also precipitate the desire to flee famine, war, discrimination. Discrimination has always existed, but to a lesser extent, because the Communist Regime had tried to attenuate the discrimination by work, food and housing for all.

With the fall of Communism, prices are skyrocketing and concern food, energy, water, rents. If during the communist period, a social safety net existed (virtually free medical care, pensions for even young people, unfit for work, etc.), after 1989, this social safety net was broken and became almost non-existent. People are losing their jobs, the Roma first. We don't need them any more. They became parasites again for the new society being created, imitating at will what is done in Western Europe. The testimonies collected highlight this reality.

Since 1989, some Eastern Bloc countries have joined Europe and the Schengen area. The nationals of these countries (Balkans, Romania, Hungary,...) they arrive in Western countries for a better future. Many are fleeing discrimination (Romas from Bulgaria, Romania, etc.) or the war in the Balkans.

In this work, I mainly wanted to collect source information concerning the experience of Roma under the Communist regime. I wanted to know the forms of discrimination to

which they were subjected. Learn more about the past of the Roma during the Communist Regime and after the fall of this Regime.

I also wanted to meet musicians who seemed to be quite privileged under the Communist Regime and who experienced the descent into hell with the fall of the Communist Regime.

I also wanted to find out their motivations for leaving their country of origin. How did they adopt their host country? What essential values do they hold in their host country? In the host country can Romas preserve their identity, language and traditions? Are they discriminated against in their host country?

We often hear that the Romas are discriminated against and research has been carried out on this subject. I wanted to listen to the testimonies of Romas in various countries, but also to listen to non-Roma people in order to try to know the perception they had of the Roma.

Living together with the Roma community, is it possible? How? 'Or' What ? Are there any solutions? Non-Romas were interviewed in 3 cities of Central Europe, in order to know the perceptions they had of Roma.

I approached families in Hungary, Ukraine, Serbia, Austria, Slovakia and Romania. I also met Roma families who had migrated to Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and France. The migrants came from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Romania. Some interviewed Romas are Muslims, some are Christians.



Gypsy flag

Magyar cigány himnusz

Zöld az erdő, zöld a hegy is
green
A szerencse jön is, megy is
Gondok kése husunkba vág
meat
Képmutató lett a világ
hypocritical
Egész világ ellenünk

Úzött tolvajokként élünk
Nem loptunk mi csak egy szöget
Krisztus vérző tenyeréből
Isten, könyörülj meg nekünk
Ne szenvedjen tovább népünk
Megátkoztál, meg is vertél
Örök csavargóvá tettél

Horvath Aladar, 1993

Hungarian gypsy's anthem

The forest is green, the mountain is
Luck comes and goes
The knife of worry digs into our
The world has become
The whole world is against us

We live as hunted thieves
But we only stole one nail
From the bleeding palm of Christ
Lord , have mercy on us
Let our people suffer no more
You cursed, you beat me
You made us an eternal wanderer

(translation: Ferenc sebök)

Analysis

This hymn concerns Christian Gypsies. There are some who are Muslims, especially in the Balkans or Orthodox Christians, especially in Romania. The hymn evokes the land of freedom with mountains and green expanses.

The hymn speaks of their wandering, like a kind of damnation. They did not steal anything except the nail of Christ crucified; this image refers in particular to their great religiosity.

The world is seen as hostile to them, and luck or bad luck is seen as inevitable. This hymn is also an imploring.

Analyse

Cet hymne concerne les Tsiganes chrétiens. D'autres sont musulmans, surtout dans les Balkans, d'autres sont des chrétiens orthodoxes, notamment en Roumanie. L'hymne évoque la terre de liberté avec les montagnes et les étendues vertes.

L'hymne parle de leur errance, comme une sorte de damnation. Ils n'ont rien volé, sauf le clou du Christ crucifié; cette image renvoie notamment à leur grande religiosité.

Le monde est perçu comme étant hostile à leur égard et la chance ou la malchance est perçue comme une fatalité. Cet hymne est aussi une imploration.

Introduction

Since the end of the 1980s there have been many works and research in Western countries concerning the situation of the Romas in Europe. The Cold War was not conducive to the exchange of information. After the implosion of the USSR and the liberation of the former satellite countries of the USSR (1989, Fall of the Berlin Wall), things changed. Migration has increased significantly for Romas.

With the accession to the European Economic Community (EU) of Central European countries, migrations have increased exponentially. The creation of the Schengen Area (Europe without borders, with free movement of populations in EU member countries) has further accelerated migration.

Finally, the Balkan war in the 90s (period after Tito presiding over the future of the former Yugoslavia) resulted in the dislocation of Yugoslavia with the emergence of new countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro.

Under Tito's Regime, coexistence could exist, despite certain existing discrimination. After Tito, the forms of discrimination vis-à-vis the Roma have increased. The Balkan war generated pogroms concerning Muslims (pogrom in Srebrenica for example), but the Roma also suffered.

In some regions, neither peace nor territorial division has led to a consensus to date.

Our research is original, because we tried to get to the heart of the matter: meeting the Romas in their countries and asking them to tell the story of the period before and after 1989. The causes of migration were also addressed. I also met Romas who have chosen to leave the country.

More specifically, we wanted to know in what conditions the Romas lived under the Communist regime and what discrimination they suffered. How do they view their life now?

Do they regret this old regime?

To achieve this, we collected testimonies in various countries:

Ukraine – Hungary – Slovakia – Romania – Serbia – Austria, for those who stayed in the country.

Belgium - Germany - Netherlands - France, for those who have left the country.

We also collected testimonies of Romas. We wanted to know if they were discriminated against in their host country and if they did not regret their choice to leave their country

of origin. I also wanted to know the essential values that they absolutely want to preserve. Breaking away from the way of life of a host country is probably not an ideal option for integration. Finally, I wanted to listen to them in order to try to understand the importance of music in their lifestyle and daily life.

The testimony of Roma musicians shed some interesting light on their living conditions before and after 1989.

The qualitative approach was chosen in this research, with the collection of testimonies and their analysis.

To address the issue of living together between Roma and non-Roma, I also wanted to know the perceptions non-Romas had of the Roma.

This time it is a quantitative approach, by questionnaire.

Research question

The research question has six poles:

- Did forms of discrimination concerning Romas exist under the Communist regime? What about their situation after the collapse of the USSR in 1989?
- What were the reasons for leaving their country of origin? Do they feel discriminated against in the host country? Can they preserve their identity, language and traditions in the host country?
- What are the essential values to preserve in a world of "Gadjes" (no Roma people)?
- Does music take an important place in their lives?
- What was the situation of Roma musicians under the communist regime? Did the Fall of the Regime change the conditions for exercising their art?
- How do non-Roma people perceive living together with Romas?

Chapter 1

Methodological approach

1.1. Research methodology

To do this research, on the one hand, I used the qualitative approach. I went to meet Roma families to collect testimonies. I also used a questionnaire to try to highlight the perceptions of non-Roma on the Roma and to try to find out about the possible difficulties of “living together”.

This questionnaire, with two questions, is a quantitative approach.

Two populations are concerned with regard to the Romas : the Romas who remained in their country and those who chose to leave their country.

The analysis of the testimonies was able to highlight any convergences and discrepancies.

The quantitative approach to a question on “living together” requires a “yes/no” response from a sample of “non-Roma”. The question “why” was asked to those who had answered “no” to the question.

Sample: 450 people in 3 cities (Budapest, Oradea, Subotica).

1.2. Qualitative approach with testimonials

After thinking for a long time to find out how I was going to construct this research concerning the Roma, I had therefore opted for a qualitative approach. Collecting testimonials by letting people speak in order to highlight their main ideas seemed interesting to me.

Of course, in order to start from a good base of research already done by other researchers, I decided to rely on a theoretical research framework.

It was then that I realized that my research question was quite original: to meet musicians and collect testimonies concerning the period under the Communist Regime and after the fall of the Regime in 1989.

This approach also establishes a link between the anthropological approach and the social psychology approach. The goal is to have relevant and first-source data to answer the research question, which is broken down into six points.

In any case, there are different ways of developing a research theme and therefore there is no "single model" in the human sciences.

Indeed, "most human intervention researchers agree that their work does not fall under a single methodological paradigm" (Gérard, 2004, p. 52).

We opt for an approach that aims "to obtain information on the perceptions, affective states, judgements, opinions, representations of individuals, from their personal frame of reference and in relation to current situations" (Van der Maren, 1996, p. 312).

Our work is therefore mainly part of a qualitative research regarding the Roma people. I did not intend to do quantitative research aimed at gathering metric data on people's knowledge, opinions, attitudes or behaviours.

By choosing the qualitative method, I therefore focused on phenomenology. A phenomenological approach aims to describe a particular "phenomenon".

The collection of testimonies, the investigations carried out on the ground with the Roma, in their country of origin or in their host country, correspond, according to Creswell (1998), to the characteristics of the qualitative approach.

In this research, the collection of data is based on testimonies but also on a series of documents and theoretical research on the question. The present work is therefore centred on the implementation of the research rather than on a conclusive result sought.

In this chosen approach, the analysis of the data includes the search for meanings allowing an interpretation. There is therefore no hypothesis at the start of this work.

According to Creswell, the approach consists in exploiting the testimonies to highlight "meaningful reporting units", which will be used to define the reality of the field explored. The substance of the meaningful reporting units will represent the "core" of the experience. Of course, this approach does not exclude reflexive hindsight or the interpretation of data from experience.

The fact of relying on a small sample does not pose a problem at the methodological level provided that “the speaker is always situated in relation to a context during the analysis of his “sayings” (Kaufmann, 1996).

With regard to the questionnaire, the quantitative approach allowed a metric measurement for the non-Roma population concerning the possibility or not of “living together”, since it was necessary to answer yes or no.

An open subsidiary question “why” allowed the actors to give their perceptions that they had of the Roma and of “living together”.

1.3.Process for data analysis

I have sought to bring together the elements of discourse of the same nature, of the same order, or of the same register in categories which "are headings or classes which bring together a group of elements under a generic title, a gathering carried out because of the characters of these elements" (Bardin, 2007, p. 151).

This part is important, because it makes it possible to locate the various concepts, notions, terms used in the statements of the subjects having a relation with the themes and initial hypotheses.

A unit of meaning that can be “a word, a group of words, a sentence or a portion of a sentence, an idea, a theme, a slogan, particular grammatical forms, the size of an image (...)”
(L’Ecuyer, 1990, p. 59).

It is a fact that by taking notes, which is less ideal than analysing a recording, I am aware of the loss of information because of the risk of forgetting to note down certain data.

In a qualitative approach, the interview is dissected: the words, paragraphs, sentences, which may correspond to the themes and hypotheses are identified, isolated and, finally, classified into categories and sub-categories.

The objective of categorization is “to provide a simplified representation of raw data through condensation” (L’Ecuyer, 1990; quoted by Bardin, 2007, p. 65).

Creswell (1998, p. 120-121) specifies and formalizes the steps to be taken in the data collection activity as follows: several individuals who have experienced the phenomenon are questioned. It is in this perspective that I made contact with the witnesses agreeing to testify.

The testimonies are presented in a form of a sort of predicted matrix (Polkinghorne, quoted by Creswell (ibid, p. 121)). The testimonies will be analysed by countries.

1.4.Scope of the study

In order to be able to answer my research question, the field of study concerns the Romas. The interviewed Romas lived in or originated from the following countries: Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, Austria, Slovakia, i.e. six countries for the interviewed Romas in their own country.

I also collected testimonies from Roma families who had migrated to the following countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany.

These are from the following countries: Kosovo – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Serbia – Romania.

Alongside these testimonies from Romas who remained in the country and others who left the country, we also aimed to interview musicians about their living conditions before and after 1989.

For the questionnaire concerning non-Roma and “living together”, 450 people answered the questionnaire: 150 people in Hungary – 150 people in Romania and 150 people in Serbia. People were approached in malls and on the streets.

1.5.Research work limits

The limits were as follows:

- Testimonies of Roma in each country of origin: I had 32 refusals, which represents approximately 1/3 of the Roma population, not taking into account 20 musicians who were approached and who all agreed to participate. Meetings went better when a Roma introduced me to the family. Mistrust has always been palpable; it took time for relationships to be easy.
- The testimonials were sometimes difficult to do. Indeed, during testimonies, it was difficult to isolate the person for the testimony; the whole family wanted to be there.
- Being introduced to a family by another close or distant family member facilitated the acceptance of witnessing
- I did not know how to record the testimonies, because most of them did not want trail. A real mistrust of what I was going to do with the recordings! However, note taking was accepted.

- I also had to limit my research in time and geographical space. Indeed, concerning the Roma in their country of origin, I chose families living in regions where people speak Hungarian, so that I could converse with them.

Finally, for the issue of “living together”, I questioned 450 non-Roma people in 3 cities: Budapest (Hu) – Oradea (Ro) and Subotica (Srb).

For each city I questioned 150, i.e. a sample of 450 people.

This allowed me to highlight the negative perceptions and beliefs of non-Roma towards Roma.

1.6. The target population

- Roma families who remained in the country.
Roma in the country of origin: i.e. 6 countries in total.

Hungary: 6 families
Romania: 6 families
Ukraine: 6 families
Serbia: 6 families
Austria: 6 families
Slovakia: 6 families

Total testimonials: 36 families

- Roma families who have left their country. Host country: 4 countries in total (Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany).
The families come from the following countries: Serbia, Hungary, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo.

Total testimonials: 32 families

- Testimony of 20 musicians (6 in Hungary – 6 in Romania – 4 in Serbia – 4 in Austria)
- 450 non-Roma people questioned regarding their perception of a possible “living together” with the Roma (HU, RO, SRB).

1.7. Approach to witnesses and methodological precaution

The recording of their testimony was done by taking notes, because digital recording was refused by most families. We had to explain that the testimonies were not going to be passed on to the police, to the school or elsewhere.

Video recordings were also refused. I had prepared a questionnaire which was refused at first. So I turned to the life story rather than using the “question-answer” method.

In order to create trust, I therefore asked them that they talk about their experience of life by saying that they were free to speak or not to speak. I read them the elements of my research question so that they could know what I wanted them to talk about.

To gain their trust, I told them the following:

- The interview was not compulsory and they could talk about their experience of life as they wished.
- That if they did not have complete confidence, they could stop the interview as they wanted.
- That my research was done in a university research setting.

The « non-Romas » questionnaire was used in public places, approaching people, as you do in marketing.

As for the 450 non-Roma people questioned, it happened in the public square, when leaving department stores, like a marketing survey.

1.8.Parameters concerning the testimonials of the countries of origin and the host countries

It was during their testimonies that I sometimes reminded them of the elements of my research question, in order to facilitate their story.

To help them in their story, I asked them to clarify some things they had talked about. These details concerned:

- The discrimination to which they are subject
- Their daily life difficulties
- Why they stayed in the country or why they left
- The comparison of their life during communism and after 1989
- The essential values for them and their way of life
- The possibility of preserving their essential values

- The place of music in their daily lives

And for musicians, the additional clarification:

- Their life as a musician during communism and after 1989

Chapter 2

Brief theoretical approach of social psychology

This theoretical approach serves, on the one hand, to define the field of social psychology. My research enters fully into the concerns of social psychology. Indeed I tried to go around the question with regard to the origin of the Roma, their successive migrations, the cartography of the Roma in Europe, the discrimination to which they are subject, etc.

This succinct theoretical approach provided preliminary insight into my research on the Roma. But first I need to talk a bit about what social psychology is and the concerns of social psychology.

2.1. About social psychology as scientific discipline

Social psychology was born at the end of the 19th century. The two important figures of the beginning of the 20th century are Mac Dougall and Ross in the USA and Marx and Durkheim in Europe. We could summarize the practical aspect of social psychology as follows: social psychology is concerned with the knowledge of man.

Before the 20th century, the knowledge of man had remained in the sphere of philosophy, so social psychology made it possible to take another approach to man.

Development of social psychology:

The origin of social psychology began in the US at the end of the 19th century.

The first published study in this area: by Norman Triplett (1898) on the “phenomenon of social facilitation”.

The first important book in English of social psychology was written by Mc Dougall (1908): “An Introduction to Social Psychology”. He spoke about emotion and sentiment, morality, character and religion.

Murchison (1935) published the “first handbook on social psychology”.

About 1,000 studies in social psychology were published by Murphy & Murphy (1931/37)

During the 1930s, many Gestalt psychologists came to the US. They fled to the US from Germany because of the Nazi Regime. We can by instance mention Kurt Lewin. The fields of interest of social psychologists were perception, attitudes and behaviour concerning variety of small group phenomena.

World War II is an important period of other concerns of social psychologists: they studied persuasion and propaganda for the US military.

After the war, researchers became interested in a variety of fields touching various problems including:

- social problems
- gender issues
- racial prejudice.

In the sixties, social psychologists turned to a variety of new topics such as:

- bystander action
- aggression
- cognitive dissonance

After World War II, in 1952, Michael Argyle pioneered social psychology as an academic field in Britain. In fact, only Oxford and the London School of Economics had departments of social psychology in 1952.

Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour published in 1967 was an important research becoming a bestseller.

Social psychology reached maturity in both theory and method during the 1980s and 1990s.

Social psychology is the scientific study of people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours which are influenced by the frequent imagination or implied presence of others. So social psychology tries to explain human behaviours, his interactions in social situations.

Important figures in social psychology:

An important figure in social psychology is Festinger, L. (1954), *Research Methods in the Behavioural Sciences*.

Other scholars have elevated social psychology to a rigorous discipline:

- Muzafir Sherif (1936) and Solomon Asch (1952) The studies on conformity
- Stanley Milgram (1974) who showed the importance of conformity pressures in social groups and the influence of authority on people
- Michael Argyle who wrote a best-seller “Bodily communication” which is a main research about non-verbal communication
- During the 70s and 80s, we can cite Alice Eagly, Lee Ross, Shelley Taylor, E. Tory Higgins for their research on social cognition. Their research concerned in particular “an understanding of how our knowledge about our social worlds develops through experience of life and the influence of these knowledge structures on memory, information processing, attitudes, and judgement”
- During the 1980s, Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky (1982) became interested in cognitive processes and motivational processes.
Finally, in the 21st century, the field of social psychology has been opened into other fields like social neuroscience with Lieberman (2010): “The study of how our social behaviour both influences and is influenced by the activities of our brain”.

2.1.2. Some definitions of social psychology

- Brown, 1965: “Social psychology studies the mental processes (or behaviours) of individuals determined by the frequent or past interactions that they have with other people.”
- Allport, 1968: “Social psychology tends to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, motor behaviours of human beings are influenced by a real, imaginary or implicit other.”
- Gordon Allport defines social psychology “as an attempt to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others.”
- Leyens, 1979: “At the risk of lacking precision, social psychology deals with the dependence and interdependence of human behaviour.”

- Myers and Lamarche, 1992: "In strict terms, one could say that social psychology is the scientific study of how people perceive, influence and relate to each other."

In summary, we can say that social psychology is the scientific study of people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours which are influenced by the frequent imagination or implied presence of others. So social psychology tries to explain human behaviours, his interactions in social situations.

On the other hand, it should be known that a psychosocial model relates contextual factors and behaviours that can be called "psychological constructions", such as attitudes, beliefs, emotions, knowing that emotions precede the behaviour.

2.1.3. Main fields of social psychology

Attitudes – Persuasion – social cognition – self-concept – cognitive dissonance – social influence – group dynamics – relations with others – interpersonal attraction – interpersonal perception – discrimination – friendship – conflicts – romantic attraction – social cognition – motivation – information processing – judgement – knowledge structures on memory – social neuroscience – culture differences.

This list of research is, of course, far from being exhaustive if we consider social psychology as a science in perpetual change and in constant development. Social psychology is also an empirical discipline. This means that the postulated models must be tested, proven in real situations.

2.2. The situation of the Romas in the European area

According to Reyniers (2009), "The economic and social situation of a large number of Gypsies is deplorable. The numbers are frightening. Between 60 and 80% of working-age Roma in Hungary are believed to be unemployed. More than 60% of Gypsies in Romania live below the local poverty line..."

According to Reyniers (2009), "In Bulgaria, 60% of Gypsies living in towns would themselves be unemployed".

I would add that according to the testimonies, the Roma living in the cities live in slums, neighbourhoods gave up by the authorities. Roma families live in ghettos or run-down neighbourhoods.

In the countryside, the situation of the Roma seems even worse. Some live directly near garbage and public dumps.

Thus, in the south and east of Slovakia, almost all the Roma have no work and live in unsanitary slums. Some are deprived of water or electricity. In winter, living conditions are very difficult.

This situation also exists in Romania near Timisoara, in Arad and elsewhere. In Hungary too, there are Roma's neighbourhoods, notably in Bonyhád, in the villages near Kalocsa, or even in Budapest. The jobless rate among Roma is alarming.

Schooling is difficult because absenteeism is high. In Ukraine, the situation is even more dramatic. The Roma who nevertheless speak Hungarian in Mukacsevo or Uzgorod feel neither Hungarian nor Ukrainian, because they are rejected.

Many children do not go to school. Cold and hunger exist in Roma families in Ukraine. Romas are marginalized and excluded from work.

Tambour, L. (2009) writes in these terms: "The constraint, the threat, the uncertainty of tomorrow are quickly and definitively integrated into their daily life: racism, violent or hidden, is still very present today! "

For Reyniers (2009:21), "In a certain way, this frequent marginalization which today gives rise to various migratory movements towards a utopian Western El Dorado is only the consequence, once again one could say, of these political and nationalist logic which has hurt the Romas so much in the past".

The Romas are often "stigmatized as being social parasites" (Tambour, 2009).

The testimonies of Roma interviewed in their host country and coming from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo or Bulgaria say similar things.

2.2.1. Origins of the Romas

The Romas came from Northwest India in successive waves from the 9th century. They came in more or less large groups.

"Rom" means "accomplished man" in Romani. Rom therefore designates the married man, who is mature and ready to have a family responsibility.

They are called in various ways: "Cigàny" or "Roma" in Hungary, "Olàh" in Romania, but other ways of calling them exist and which also characterize their clans: "Gypsies", "Romanichels", "Gypsies", "Gypsies", "Sinti", "Kalderash", "Gàbori", etc.

The Romas do not have a common language: there are dialects depending on the region, with clan specificities.

For a long time it was thought that the gypsies came from Egypt, but thanks to linguistics and anthropology, we know that they originated from India (Karsai, 1996). For their part, linguists (Rüdiger, Johann, 1782 – Grellmann, Heinrich, 1783) establish similarities between Sanskrit and the Gypsy language.

Research on this subject is that of Vijay, George John (2013, Re-examination of the origins of Romani – Texas Scholar Works at Austin, the US).

According to Liégeois (2007), the analysis of the grammatical and lexical structure of Roma dialects by linguists has made it possible to trace their itinerary. This made it possible to understand that their language is close to Sanskrit.

Language of the Romas seems to be a Central Indo-Aryan language.

According to Turner (1926), the Romas share various sound changes close to the languages of the Central Indo-Aryan region of India.

For their part, Sampson (1923) and Beames (1875), considered that the language of the Romas was close to Sindhi and Punjabi. So they link Romani with other northwestern languages of India.

However, the phonological analysis of the Roma language tends to believe that the Roma language is closer to the languages of the Central Indo-Aryan region.

According to Matras (1999), the ancestors of the Romas who left India actually belonged to lower castes. It would therefore be the living conditions, and/or persecutions, which would have pushed them to migrate.

According to Reyniers (2009), the ancestors of the Romas were probably not all nomads and migrated around the 12th or 12th century in the Byzantine Empire.

For Erdôs (1989), Roma's language which is "Romani" (roma nyelv), but brings together the various human groups or clans using different dialects.

Even if they consider themselves as belonging to distinct groups, such as the "Sinti", the "Arlî", the "Manush", the "Tchourara", the "Kalderash", the "Lovara", etc.

According to Kertesi & Kézdi (1998) the "Lovàrik" or "Lovara" represent the largest group of Roma in Hungary. 90% of gypsies use the Lovara dialect.

The "Lovàrik" were horse traders (horse = lô in Hungarian). They arrived in the 19th century in Hungary, coming from the mountainous southern part of present-day Romania, then called "Havasalföld", a region located in southern Transdanubia (Karsai, 1996).

The "Csuràrik" or Tchourara were tinkers, and the "Kelderàsok" or Kalderash were often boilermakers. They all came from the same region of Romania and were also called "Olàh cigàny", that is to say, "Romanian Gypsies".

Another group, the “Sinti” or “Szintok” were distinguished by the fact that they travelled in caravans and gave circus performances. They were also active in fairgrounds, dealing with rides, carousels (Tomka, 1997). The Sinti group migrated mainly to Italy, Germany, Poland or Austria.

We also know that a large part of the Romas settled in the Carpathian basin, but also in Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Ukraine, in present-day Russia, etc.

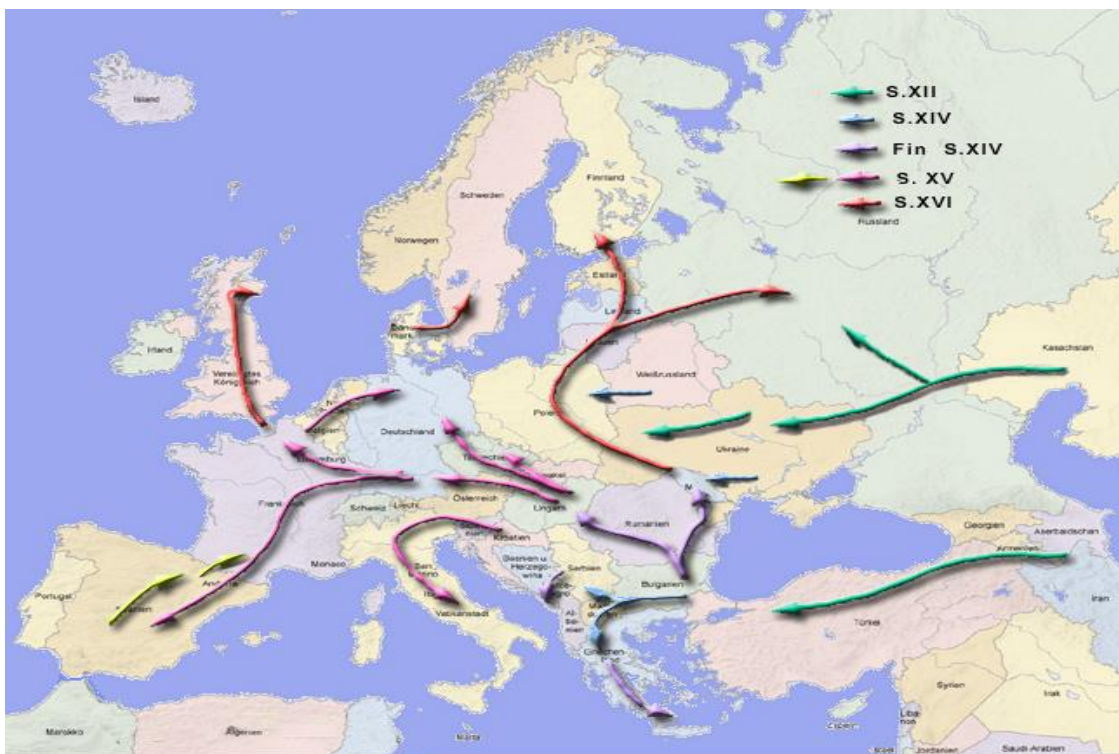
They became largely sedentary, especially during the existence of the Soviet Bloc and the countries belonging to this block until 1989.

But we also find a strong community of Roma in Western countries in Europe: in Catalonia (Spain), in Germany, in France,...

With the Schengen area (opening of borders in the European Economic Community), it is obvious that the deplorable living conditions and the discrimination to which the Romas have been subjected have pushed them to leave their country of origin in search of Eldorado in the countries of Western Europe: Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, France,...

2.2.2.Roma's migration movements

https://m2jc2010.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/migration_des_roms.jpg



This map concerning the Romas clearly shows the migratory movements between the 12th century and the 17th century. The Roma originated in India and passed through Kazakhstan and Iran in particular to come to Europe in successive waves.

2.2.3. Possibility of Roma's migration in the European area

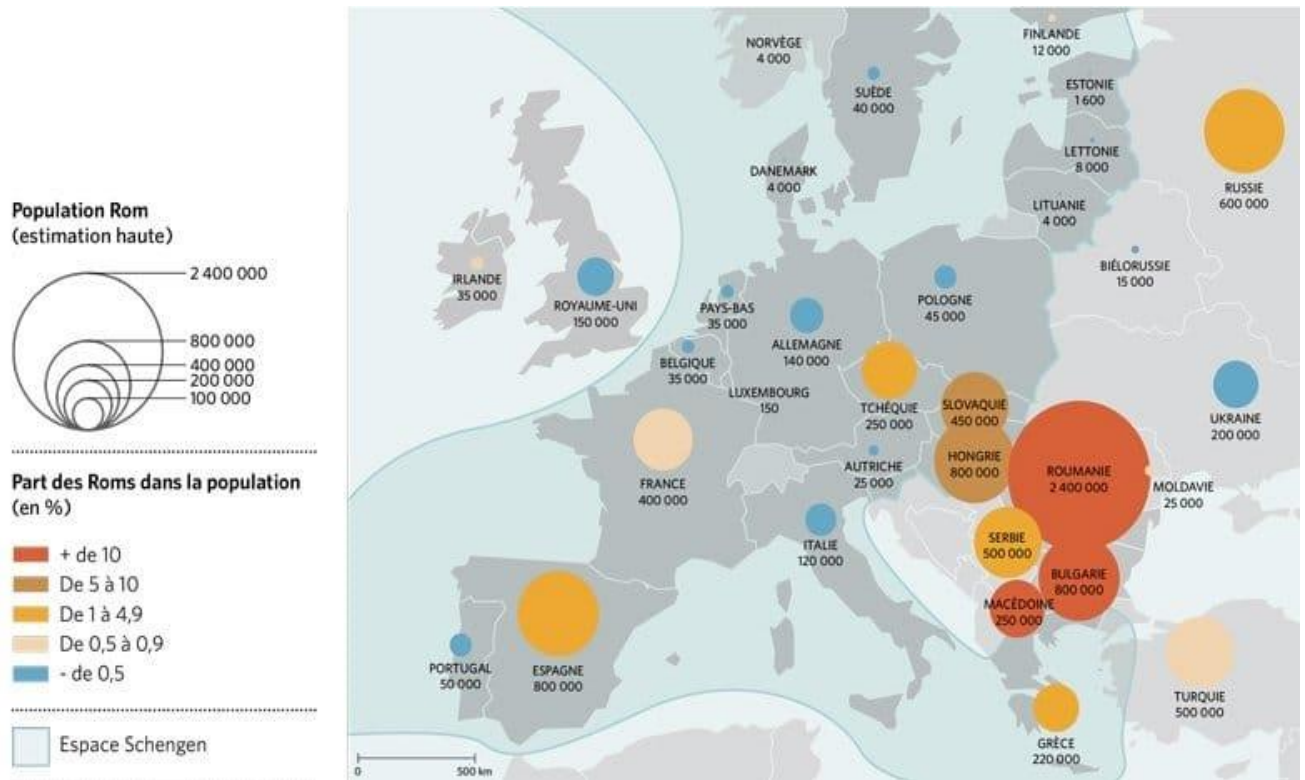
The policy of welcoming migrants from Western countries, with the socio-economic advantages, has also facilitated the arrival of Romas from countries that are not part of the European Union, such as Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia,...

The Romas represent between 12 and 20 million people in Europe.
Here is a map of Roma:

Estimates vary, because depending on the political, discriminatory situation in their country, they do not declare themselves Romas. For example, in Romania, many prefer to say that they are Romanian or Hungarian.

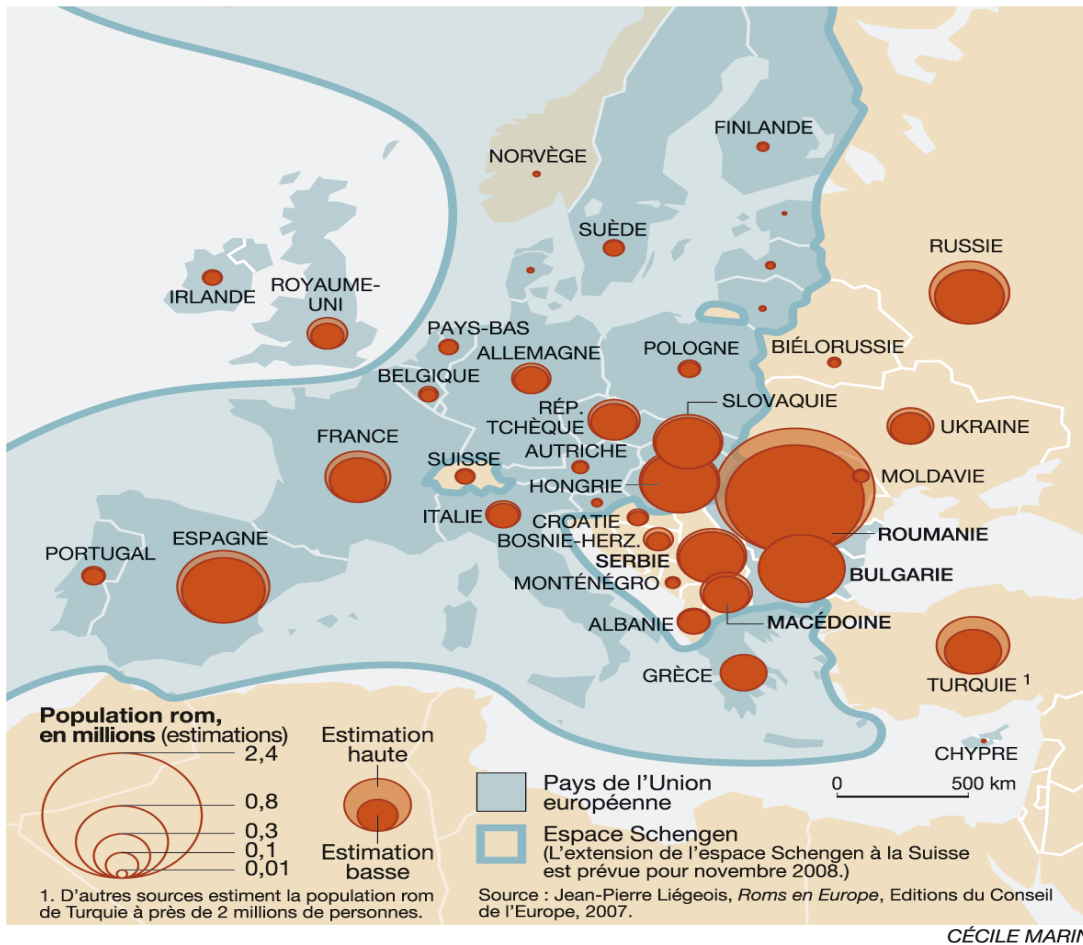
It is the same in Hungary and Serbia. Even in their host country, they do not always say they are Romas, but Bosnians, Serbs, Romanians, Bulgarians,...

It is when trust is established between Romas and Gadge families that they admit to being Roma (Sebök, F., 2010, Difficulties in learning French among Romas children in primary school. Testimonies. Master of Science of Education, UCL).



Source: Table based on sources provided by the Council of Europe

The concentration of Romas is in Central Europe and the Balkans. But significant minorities also exist in Spain, France and the United Kingdom. Further east, in Ukraine and Russia. To the south, in Greece and Asia Minor (Turkey).



On this map, we immediately see that the majority of Romas are found in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the Balkans. It is especially from the Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the implosion of the Communist Regime in the USSR and its satellite countries that migrations began.

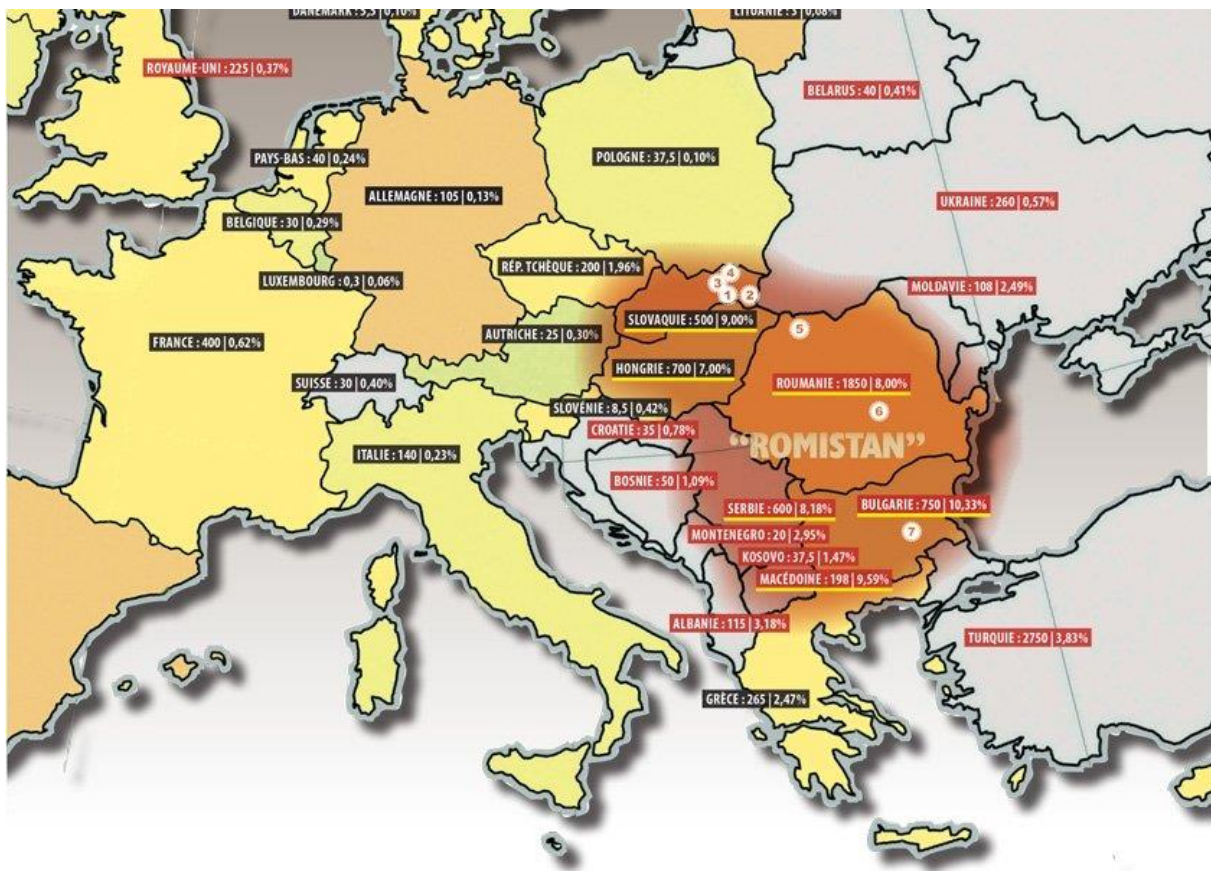
Why not before? Because crossing the border during the "Cold War" period was almost impossible. There was an "iron curtain" with watchtowers, and anyone who wanted to flee was shot down by the border guards!

Migration therefore began after 1989 and intensified during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. The reason for migration in Europe?

Following the disappearance of the communist regime, the Romas were once again precarious, discriminated against, unemployed, without resources. In Central Europe, in the Balkans, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine,... the Romas had no choice but to leave. They had no qualifications to be hired. They were perceived as parasites of the society where a new economic order was taking hold after Communism: a "wild" Capitalism.

In this radical change after 1989, the goal of everyone, but especially the former “apparatchiks” was to get rich as quickly as possible. The Romas had again become a group of outcasts, hence the motivation to leave the country of origin. The fact that the former member countries of the Soviet Bloc have joined the European Economic Community has facilitated migratory movements. The creation of the Schengen area has also facilitated migration (opening of borders and free movement within the European Economic Community).

Here is another map concerning Romas indicating the areas where Romas are concentrated.



On this map, we see that "Romistan", that is to say, country of the Romas, is concentrated above all in Hungary, Slovakia, a large part of the former Yugoslavia, in Romania, Bulgaria and even the northern part of Greece.

But significant communities also exist in Ukraine, Russia and Turkey, which do not enter into the estimate of the number of Romas in Europe. Estimates are difficult to make as many Roma prefer not to say their Roma identity. On the other hand, in the former countries of the USSR Bloc, an assimilation program was implemented.

2.2.4. Forced assimilation, control of people and disparities in satellite countries of the Soviet Bloc

During the Soviet period, the Romas were forcibly assimilated, because they were perceived as being a relic of another age, but also dangerous for a totalitarian regime which could not tolerate unidentifiable human groups and which the regime did not know the location.

The assimilation therefore took place with the following actions :

- Remove the possibility of expansion of the Roma language
- Change of name or creation of a name for those who did not have one
- List the number of people per family, births, etc.
- To favour "sedentariness" and provide housing to the popular mass, including the Romas
- School the children
- Obligation to work and creation of the work card allowing full control over people and what they do, where they are.

The Soviet control seemed perfect in terms of control:
Control by housing, control by work, control by school, border control to prevent flight to Western countries.

In order to reduce possible conflicts, the Communist regime had put in place a social program to annihilate the conflicts. But disparities existed between communist "comrade" countries.

Case of Hungary after the 1956 Revolution. Here are the ideas collected thanks to the testimonies:

- housing costs an insignificant sum
- water was free
- energy did not cost much
- the food was not expensive either
- free primary studies
- free secondary and higher education, but for university registration, it was better if the parents had political party membership
- lack of freedom to choose a study orientation
- zero freedom of expression
- obligation to be well seen by the single political party in order to be able to learn, have a better job, better housing, etc.

If someone was opposed to the totalitarian regime: prison, labour camps (equivalent to the Gulag), police pressure on the family, disappearance,...
In other countries, conditions were even worse.

Case of Romania:

In terms of religious beliefs, 76.36% of Romas in Romania are of the Romanian Orthodox faith, 11.46% are Pentecostals, 3.35% are Roman Catholics, 2.65% are Reformed Protestants, 1.42% are Baptists, 1.09% are Seventh Day Adventists, 1.05% are Greek Catholics, 0.54% are Muslims.
(National census, 2011, Ro)

Under Ceausescu (President for Life during the Communist Regime) was a bloodthirsty dictator who built himself a palace with solid gold faucets! He frequently liquidated those he perceived as his enemies. He had surrounded himself with the Securitate (secret police). Here is a picture painted by Romas, thanks to their testimonies:

- Grand corruption at all levels of administration, health care, police
- discrimination against Roma
- discrimination of Szeklers (who speak Hungarian in Transylvania)
- discrimination of people of German origin (people that Germany bought from Ceausescu)
- famine in certain regions and important corruption and discrimination, more particularly, touching the Romas
- no school for Roma children
- attempts to assimilate the Romas, but also the Hungarian minority
- with destruction of non-Romanian villages and programme of assimilation
- displacement of populations to try to eliminate languages other than Romanian
- Assassinations, disappearance of opponents of the Communist Regime and retaliation concerning the entire family of the opponent.

In the satellite countries of the Soviet Bloc, people knew that living conditions were better in two countries of the Bloc: East Germany and Hungary.

However, these better living conditions were only an illusion, because the Soviet regime was highly corrupt and for a good service of health care, normally almost free, the patients had to give money in black to the doctor. This kind of practice was widespread.

2.2.5.What is disturbing about the Roma way of life?

The Roma disturb with their way of life. If they have become sedentary, they still travel. The way of bringing up their child, their distrust of the Gadjes (the non-Romas), their

big family celebrations which make noise, their customs, their clan spirit, their rebellious behaviour in the face of authority, their customs, their clothing, their language to which they hold, etc.

What reinforces the negative perception we have of them is our prejudices, our beliefs, our certainties.

What emerges from the perception of non-Romas (Gadjes) or what they feel vis-à-vis the Roma will be presented later. As a reminder, the non-Roma population was questioned about "living together" (YES – NO) and in the event of a negative answer, the people who answered the questionnaire had to answer why and give their perception, their feelings.

In any case, the non-Romas seem to fear the Romas when they settle in large numbers in a district, a village, a city or even a region. Living together seems difficult for most people interviewed. The reasons expressed by non-Roma speak volumes about the gap between the two communities.

Negative perceptions, of course, can lead to stereotypes, prejudices, exclusions. All these subjective perceptions can build discriminatory behaviours and actions.

2.3. Roma lifestyle

Inconvenient way of life

The way of life of the Romas is important to know because the main thing revolves around the child. To understand how a Roma family "function" within a group is to know the Roma way of life.

Absences from school are not tolerated in our school system, but family celebrations, the fact of "travelling" while being sedentary is an important thing for Roma.

For Tomka (1997) the communist period had planned their "sedentarisation" which had to go hand in hand with their assimilation. Yet homelessness has remained firmly rooted in their culture.

While initially they moved when they had exhausted local resources to find them elsewhere, these trips were also justified by the discrimination and exclusion to which they were subjected.

However, given that families dispersed in Europe and that the Romas have a strong family culture linked to group identity, it is reasonable to think that nomadism and homelessness were quickly linked to the maintenance of family relationships (Kertesi, G. & Kézdi G., 1998). Even sedentary people, they are "homing pigeons at heart".

Many families move and believe that there is primacy of the family, the clan, the group over the rest. So school absences are sometimes important. The little child does not go to kindergarten if he is tired, we let him sleep. He is considered small, therefore like a child king who eats when he wants, he sleeps when he wants,... As he is small, everyone takes care of him and he stays in his mother's skirts, because he needs it.

If it is a girl, it is already around 9-10 years old that she will have to help her mother so that she learns to keep a house, take care of the little ones. So the school that is too rigid in schedules and rules can oppose their core values. If it is a boy, as soon as he is older, he must follow his father or an uncle to learn the vagaries of life. He must learn to get by in life, which school will not teach him.

For many Romas, school represents a lot of prohibitions for them.

Reyniers (2003) summarizes the development of the child in relation to the outside world as follows:

The child at home is surrounded, full of care, as soon as he goes outside, it is the opposite. And very quickly, he realizes that there is a more difficult rule to assume: behaviour towards time, economically, it is to them that he will have to turn.

"Today I have the impression that from the moment we focus our gaze on the Gypsies, all groups combined, we focus our gaze on a population that we no longer consider to be made up of marginalized people, but that we take by acknowledging a cultural singularity, without really knowing what that covers and implies".

The importance of women in the family should not be overlooked.

According to Reyniers, 2003, *"there is no Gypsy society without Roma women"*.

If it is the man who has the responsibility of bringing the money so that the family can live, it also implies that the boys must learn this from their father. If it is the woman who has almost all the responsibility for the household, for having many children and raising them, the girls must learn from their mother to be the same. But then how to reconcile this with a school obligation that goes until the age of 18?

Still according to Reyniers, 1998, the mother introduces her daughters quite early to domestic tasks. The mother is therefore "the cement of the community". She will play a main role at the festive level by preparing food, but also dancing, music. The mother therefore perpetuates the Gypsy spirit!

It is therefore clear that the family, the clan intends to initiate the girls quite early and for some families, school becomes less important.

Very often the young girl who reaches her 14th birthday (sometimes before) is promised to a member of the clan. Otherwise, anyway, the parents begin to search for her son from a family of the clan who will be a good Rom for their daughter.

According to Reyniers (2003), "In some families, it is frankly about purity, that is to say that the girl cannot do anything with regard to food or the rhythm of her own body".

Thus, the girl will generally enjoy her freedom for less time than the boy. She discovers the law of the clan more quickly.

Culture among the Gypsies is a family and collective matter. This culture is transmitted orally and by imitation.

The problem is that the child who goes to school learns things that the parents often do not understand. More often, they can neither read nor write.

For Reynier (2003), the misunderstanding lies in the fact that “it is not practical knowledge or identity knowledge that is valued” whereas this is the case in the Roma community.

Oral culture is a culture enriched by the many siblings, parents, wider family, group and community. In order for oral culture to be effective in transmitting values, isolation is the worst thing to consider for Romas. Oral tradition is a powerful tool for transmitting memory, but requiring constant interaction in the community.

You should know that the written version of the Roma language is decent and the tradition is still widely oral.

It was around 1920 that the Roma language was codified in written form and the first dictionary published in Hungarian/Roma – Roma/Hungarian, it was in 1994 by Romano-Ràcs Sándor.

2.4. Importance of illiteracy among the Romas

A large majority of adult Romas being illiterate in Hungary and Romania (Vajda, I. 1997). Writing is not really a mode of communication close to their way of life. The relationship to writing is not really experienced positively.

Reyniers (2003) considers that their relationship to writing is limited to official writing (invoices, fines, declarations, etc.).

It is in this space that the children learn everything, orally and by seeing, since the book is not or little used.

For the interviewed Romas in their country, 32/36 admitted to being illiterate and those who can read/write find it difficult to decipher, hence their distrust of writing and everything that is official or administrative. Video recordings were also refused.

I had prepared a questionnaire which was refused at first. So I turned to the life story rather than using the “question-answer” method.

For the Romas having migrated and interviewed in their host country, 28/32 said they were illiterate.

Regarding the musicians interviewed, 13/20 said they were illiterate.

We note that the proportion of illiterates among musicians is lower. Among the seven musicians who can read and write, two admitted to me that administrative papers remained complicated for them to understand.

At the level of knowledge of musical theory, 6/20 declared knowing musical notation and reading it (solfège). This means that a large majority played by ear. According to them, improvisation takes a large part in music, as well as rhythmic memory.

If during the communist period, Roma musicians found work easily, it is also because academic and societal demands were lower, according to them. They like to say that the ancients knew how to improvise.

Currently, the academic straitjacket of higher music schools exerts such pressure that young people may be experts in reading music, but many are unable to improvise (see the testimonies of Roma musicians).

2.5.Exclusion, prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes

Now, I am going to talk about the discrimination to which the Romas are subject in their country of origin, the prejudices, stereotypes, stigmatization and exclusion of which they are often the victims.

2.5.1. Discrimination affecting Romas

In Hungary, a compendium of the forms of discrimination to which the Romas are subject was published by the Ministry of Justice (Igazságügyi Minisztérium, Diszkriminációs jogeset gyűjtemény, Május, 2005).

Against the Romas, there are various forms of discrimination in the sphere of work, housing, school, health care, commerce and services. If for the year 2004, there were a total of 1,527 complaints lodged by the Roma, 97 were deemed to be the subject of real discrimination.

However, it must be taken into account that the Roma do not often go to court, either out of ignorance, or fear, or because they think that it is useless and that it is still the law of the Gadjes. Havas, G. & Liskô, I. (2005) believe that discrimination is very present in the school environment. Kemény, I., (1996) estimates that in 1993, while 10.3% of non-Gypsies in the 24-29 age bracket were unemployed, the percentage of Gypsies was 42.9%.

To this must be added the fact that in 2003, it was estimated that 14% of Roma children did not finish primary school and 50% dropped out during secondary education in the first years and only 4% finished secondary school.

2.5.2. Prejudice against the Romas

The Romas are also the subject of many prejudices. They are said to be thieves, cunning, marginal, fortune tellers, lazy,...

These prejudices have a hard tooth. Prejudice "is an a priori, evaluative and simplifying judgement made about a given social group or an individual" (Benbassa, 2010).

Prejudices can relate to education (teacher interview, methodological part) but also to gender, race, in the workplace or in housing. These prejudices exist and affect the Roma (Igazságügyi Minisztérium, Diszkriminációs jogeset gyűjtemény, Május, 2005). Prejudices can reach the child in the school environment (interviews with primary school teachers, Sebök, F. 2010, Difficulties learning French among Roma children in primary school, UCL).

2.5.3. Stereotypes

These are plates of type or stereotype that individuals construct of others. The term finds its source in the printing press, where it designates a metallic plate highlighted by casting lead (Benbassa, 2010).

Stereotypes can be positive or negative; for example, we will tend to say that if he is a Gypsy, he knows how to play the violin. On the contrary, one might think that the Gypsies are not able to follow at school (Havas, G., 2005) and then it is not surprising that they are sent en masse to remedial education classes (gyógypedagógiai osztályok) in Hungary where 71.2% of children are Roma!

Some teachers in Belgium too easily catalogue Roma children as school misfits and declare that such and such a child comes under special education. Indeed, according to Sebök, F., (2010, UCL), bilingualism in Roma children with no reference language leads to a delay in oral language. Learning oral language.

According to Sebök, F., (2021, PhD, Selinus University) there is a link between the delay of oral language and the learning of writing and the parameter that must be taken into account is the deficit of phonological awareness.

Thus, the teacher who declares that a Roma child is unfit for learning is not only reductive at the level of thought, but harmful for the child.

Instead of setting up optimal psycho-pedagogical conditions to resolve the period of wait in oral language and the deficit of phonological awareness, the child is condemned by sending him to specialized education where he often finds himself with children with intelligence below average.

Reyniers, A. (1998: 44) mentions this: “... *the persistence of negative stereotypes shows that the acceptance of Roma as citizens is not certain.*”

2.5.4. Stigma

Roma are also stigmatized.

Term coming from “stigma”, with a negative connotation and which can be visible or invisible.

(Benbassa, 2010) The stigma may concern the face, the nose (Jew), the skin (swarthy like a Gypsy),...

The invisible stigma is the person who suffers because they are unemployed for example or are divorced, etc. The testimonies made highlight in particular the stigma whose object is the skin colour of the Gypsy, but also clothing (interviews with teachers).

Stigma breeds stereotypes, discrimination and exclusion.

2.5.5. Exclusion

Exclusion can affect various areas: housing, work, social ties through exclusion. Exclusion is a process of weakening where the person is excluded from the social fabric.

Exclusion is most often “a process undergone unless it is a choice” (Benbassa, 2020).

Examples of exclusion are legion; in Slovakia, for example, most Romas are excluded from the labour circuit (Reyniers, 2003). In Romania, the Ghettoization of the Romas is also a form of exclusion (Reyniers, 1998) or the fact that the Roma live in unsanitary housing. The testimonies collected will feed the reality of exclusion which is one of the causes of migration.

Exclusions, discrimination, stigmatization are causes of migration. Stereotypes and prejudices feed negative images destroying the spirit of tolerance.

Chapter 3

Testimonials

The testimonies of Roma families in their host country and the testimonies of Roma families who have remained in their country will shed light on the realities of their daily life, the discrimination to which they are subject, the causes and circumstances of their migration.

These testimonies concern Roma families who left their countries to go to France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Other testimonies relate to Roma who have not left their countries of origin and who live in Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Austria and Ukraine.

The questions that the Romas had to answer freely were directly related to the sub-questions of the research question, namely:

- The forms of discrimination experienced by both migrant Romas and Romas who have remained in the country.
- The reasons for their migration or the reasons for having stayed in the country.
- The essential values to be preserved for the Romas.

- The place of music among the Romas in daily life and during holidays.
- For Roma musicians, their situation before and after 1989.
- A question concerning the possibility of “living together” was put to Romas and non-Romas.

3.1.France: 4 families from Kosovo and 3 families from Romania and one family from Bulgaria

Testimony 1 (T1)

We left our family because of the war in Kosovo, because of the Serbs. They tortured and killed many Muslims.

The fate of the Romas was even more difficult; we were considered subhuman. We lived in a ghetto where only Roma lived. Difficult to get water. We did not always have electricity and our accommodation was very close to the rubbish. Our life was in danger.

Here we are not discriminated against, but we hide the fact that we are Roma. It is better, because for example, some do not like the Arabs, then the Roma, we certainly do not like them.

The Roma identity is difficult to maintain, because there are few of us here and the family has remained in the country. And then the kids go to school and people are different here. School is compulsory and small children go to school. Because of this, children begin to mix languages. We don't always understand them because of that. If a young Roma takes a non-Roma girl, it's over for traditions... Gadjes don't care about our traditions

The only way to keep traditions is for the Roma to stay together and we favour family celebrations. Festivals are important to preserve the language and our traditions.

Core values? The way of raising our children, the family celebrations, the way of preparing the boys with the help of the uncles, the father. Respect for elderly people. The education of girls close to their mothers. Girls must learn to take care of the little ones, help their mothers, learn to manage the household... Girls will not learn all this at school!

Girls must remain pure until marriage, this is very important for Roma.

Music is the soul of the gypsy and helps overcome hardship and suffering. Music unites us.

T2

We are from Kosovo. The Serbs massacred many Muslims. And we had to flee, because we are Muslims and also Roma.

In Kosovo, even the Kosovars did not like the Roma. They considered us like dogs!...We lived in a slum without hot water and the electricity didn't work well. In winter, we were cold. We didn't have a job... I was sorting the waste to try to find old telephones, scrap metal. Sometimes I repaired small cupboards, wardrobes,... to resell them. Life was hard! Solidarity in the family allowed us to survive... But with the war, that was no longer possible.

Roma's identity? Difficult to keep here because the Roma families are scattered... We will not be able to keep our identity, language and traditions if we are isolated from other Romas. The clan is important to preserve our language, our customs. Core values? It's the family! Here people live alone, they hardly have any children... They don't understand why we want many children. They don't understand why we like to live together near other Roma families!

The boys must prepare to earn money for the future family, to manage in life... This is done thanks to the clan, to the family. The young girl must remain pure for her future husband... Families meet, there are parties...

This is how families find a good husband for girls. Marriage between Roma makes it possible to perpetuate traditions... Mixed marriages are rare when it works!... So much the better if it works but for the clan, it is very often a loss...

Music is very important in family celebrations... Music is rhythmic, sung, danced... Music brings Roma people together and warms their hearts. Music is like cement for the clan.

T3

We were discriminated against... By Serbs, Kosovars... No work... We lived in a Roma neighbourhood. We had to flee because of the Balkan war... We had no more food... We left everything there, family, loved ones...

Here it is hard, even if we have to eat! For several years, we have been waiting for papers to be able to work. Here we still have accommodation and the money we are given is just to be able to eat.

People are not used to Roma and it is difficult to live here with a large family... We are not discriminated against, because we do not say that we are Roma...

Already like that, sometimes we feel that we are not welcome in the stores when we go there together!

It is very difficult to find accommodation for a family with more than 2 children and the rents are expensive.

Our customs risk disappearing if we remain isolated from the family, from the clan. Already like that, with kindergarten, the children do not know how to speak our language well and they very often mix the languages...

We would like our children to marry Roma later

It is sometimes difficult to understand them, because we do not know how to speak French well.

Music is very important because it reinforces our identity... Music is strongly linked to meals taken together.

The Roma are travellers... They live in large families, they love family celebrations and music brings us joy and we are closer together, because it is our own music.

T4

Even if life is hard, without the war, we would have stayed over there, in Kosovo! We came so that our children would have something to eat. They also go to school!... Over there, school was not for the Roma... We lived in a slum where the Gadjes did not live.

The children will be better off here, in France, but I think it will be difficult to preserve our Roma identity. Besides, people here don't know that we are Roma and we don't dress like Roma.

Roma music brings us together, yes... family celebrations, music and bonding with other Roma families are unfortunately what we are left with. However, we try to keep our family values and the way of raising our children.

With us, the little ones are the kings. They have few constraints and rules of life. They eat, sleep, play when they want... It is difficult for the Gadjes to understand and because of all this the little child at least until 5-6 years old will not go to school. School if he is tired, if he still wants to sleep,...
School is good, but too rigid and not adapted to our way of life.

Sometimes the school can also tell nonsense that threatens our way of life, our conception concerning the education of a girl.

When Yugoslavia existed, everything was better... No one was starving and there was more solidarity. Life was cheap.

T5

We come from Timisoara (Ro). They changed our name to be more Romanian. Under the Communist Regime, whole villages were moved and Ceausescu wanted to remove the areas where there was a majority of Magyars and Roma. For example, they moved a lot of Roma to cities with a strong Romanian majority, the Magyars to Bucharest, etc.

Going to school for Roma children was impossible and those who went there were put in schools for disabled children.

But during communism, people had to work. If they didn't work, they were put in jail. The only privileged ones were the good musicians or the favourites of the communist regime.

But it's true that we wouldn't starve... Water energy doesn't cost much... But after 1989, we became useless and considered parasites. We left the country because we were dying of hunger and we were strongly discriminated against. What is good here in France is that the children can go to school, but we don't have a job... The only possibility is seasonal work or work in the building industry, but it's hard work... and often undeclared work.

The essential value for us is our Roma identity, even if we hide it, our language and the family. Virginity for a girl is important too.

Boys are freer than girls.

If our young people marry Gajés, it is all this family harmony enriched by our customs that can be threatened.

T6

We come from the outskirts of Arad in Romania.

Forced assimilation existed during communism, yes!

Under Ceausescu, there were many Securitate intelligence agents.

Nobody trusted anyone. The Roma worked, but almost all had shitty jobs... To clean roads, sewers, as unskilled labourers or even assigned to seasonal work.

We lived in ghettos, although Ceausescu tried to assimilate us with strength by changing our surnames. He also forcibly mixed the Roma, the Magyars, the

Germans with the Romanians to mix Romania. He wanted to suppress the Hungarian language and the Roma language.

After 1989, Romanian nationalists became more threatening and we had to leave because of discrimination.... And then we had no work, no accommodation, no food... So it was either leave or die. In France, we hide our Roma identity because here they don't like Roma either... So we say that we are Romanians, even if we want to keep our Roma identity and keep our way of life... The family is essential for us and we must remain united between Roma, otherwise we are lost.

T7

We lived in the city of Cluj in Romania.

I remember that in 1980 it was still a city with a Hungarian majority. Now I know that it has become predominantly Romanian with forced interbreeding, the ban on speaking Hungarian or Roma.... And then they closed a lot of Hungarian language schools to force people to put the children in Romanian schools.

But for us it is even worse, because we are considered subhuman.

During communism, we were not well regarded, but at least everyone had something to eat. After 1989, prices rose sharply and the Roma did not have work. Most Roma live in slums... but at least a certain solidarity unites us... But it's hard and unbearable when we see that Roma children have no future in Romania...

So we left. But here, as immigrants, we don't have work either!... It's difficult to find accommodation for a large family... But what's better is that our children go to school... .

We hide the fact that we are Romas.

For families, it is important that a girl be a virgin at marriage. The pressure is very strong on her. You should know that a Roma girl whose parents find a fiancé must be Roma. The girl is married quite early; mostly around 16.

T8

We come from the outskirts of Sofia in Bulgaria.

There are a lot of racists in Bulgaria. The Bulgarians don't like us because we are Roma and, moreover, Muslims! The strong Turkish minority in Bulgaria doesn't like us any more even though we are Muslims like them.

No work, no housing, except in ghettos... Children cannot always go to school and they are discriminated against...

It was a little better in the communist regime until 1989, because the Roma could find work... even if it was a job in factories or in agriculture... without qualifications... Now it's impossible to find work. Work, either because they ask for diplomas which the Roma do not have, or because they do not want to hire Roma.

In France too, we are discriminated when we say that we are Romas. We say we are Bulgarians and not Romas... It's better for our children too... But it's still hard to find work... so I work in a black-market restaurant and I do the washing up in the kitchen.

The Roma language is the cement of our community. The role of the mother who is to give birth is essential to preserve the community. It is she who is the guarantor of the survival of the clan. The husband must take care of the material and financial possibilities of the family.

Music is important, especially since there are different communities in Bulgaria: Roma, Bulgarians, Turks. Music enriches the spirit of belonging.

To analyse

Main important ideas :

- Forms of discrimination existed before 1989.
- Romas could still find work, but labourer work, without qualifications
- Anyone who did not work could be imprisoned
- There was a forced assimilation, a planned interbreeding, displacements of populations to "Romanianize" the country
- Roma names have been "Romanianized"
- In Bulgaria, the forms of discrimination increased sharply after 1989
- Before 1989, eating your fill was possible
- Going to school was difficult for Roma children
- The communist regime often put Roma children in special schools for disabled children
- The cost of living was more bearable under the Communist Regime
- Families who left the country did so for economic reasons, but in the hope of finding a better future for their children
- Some are subject to discrimination in their host country (finding accommodation, work, etc.)
- Several claim to hide their Roma identity to avoid discrimination
- Families in Kosovo agree with others about discrimination against Roma
- Family, language, culture, clan are essential values
- Gipsy's world is a threat to them and to their way of life; for example, the girl's virginity which is essential for marriage.
- School can be dangerous because it teaches things that go against their values or way of life.
- Music strengthens the sense of identity and strengthens bonds.
- The marriage of young Roma with non-Roma is rather badly experienced, for fear of the loss of traditions.

3.2. Germany: 3 Families from Romania, 1 from Bulgaria, 2 from Hungary, 1 from Bosnia, 1 from Slovakia

Testimony 1 (T1)

We come from Romania. We speak Roma, Romanian and Hungarian. During communism, we were frowned upon, but at least we weren't starving. The political regime wanted to assimilate us, but together we held on and we spoke Roma in secret.

In Germany it is better not to say that we are Romas. Already the Romanians are not well regarded.

We want to gain our culture and our language, but it is difficult.

Music is important at parties and family gatherings.

Music often accompanies the meals that the family shares

T2

We are "Olah cigàny" from Romania. We lived near Bucharest, in a village. During communism, we had work, even if it was a workman's job or a waiter's job, working in the fields.

Yes, Ceausescu wanted to assimilate us with strength and there were displacements of populations, with Romanians who came to mix the population.

After 1989, discrimination increased a lot... We were considered profiteers, thieves, useless and lazy.

Often without diplomas, it was impossible to find work, pay for accommodation, and the children did not go to school, because they were discriminated against and we did not have money to pay the drunk, etc.

Today, it is difficult for us because we are illiterate and have no diploma.

T3

We left Timisoara (Ro).

With communism, you didn't have to oppose and you didn't have too much of a problem, but you had a shitty job! But you weren't starving... Even without a diploma, you could live... Now it has become impossible!

Yes, I regret the old regime, a little.

Music, along with language, are the things that make us have an identity... our values and our traditions allow us to preserve this identity. Our wish, of course, is that our children marry according to our traditions and our customs.

T4

We come from Bulgaria.

In Bulgaria, even under communism, it was difficult for the Romas. And then there are a lot of Turkish Bulgarians too and there were a lot of ethnic tensions.

No, we weren't starving, but it was hard!

We often had worked in the fields, or in town for the road service, for example.

Good musicians had a good life!

Caucescu also loved music, even Gypsy music.

Here it is difficult. Yes, we receive an allowance to survive, but work, no, because without a diploma, it is impossible.

I hope my children will graduate because they go to school.

T5

We come from Hungary.

We tried our luck believing that we will have work here, but no!

As we don't know how to read or write, it's difficult... Even learning the language is difficult.

Our only hope is our children! Here they can perhaps learn at school?

But it is difficult for them too; they tell me.

Before 1989, musicians were adored... Now you don't go anywhere with your gypsy music, except for the tourists who come!... But it is difficult to find a place in the sun as a musician.

Under communism, there was less discrimination than now. But here or there, it's the same thing, people reject us, so we hide that we are Roma.

T6

We are from Hungary

I regret communism, it was better, we had work and bread to eat our fill. Ok, school was hard for us and we felt rejection.

But now it's the same! Difficult to find work, difficult to find accommodation, discrimination exists.

We could not criticize the regime, but apart from that, we lived better and there was less discrimination in terms of work and housing than now.

Dance and music are very important because music and beat dance give us joy and bring families together.

Music is something that unites the Roma very strongly and festivals are possibilities to strengthen ties, discover faces, families and who knows... a husband or a wife?

T7

We left Bosnia

If we didn't have a family here, we would go back, because discrimination against Roma exists here too. At school, it is difficult for our children, I do not have a job and it is more difficult to preserve our culture here.

Culture doesn't exist without music.

I don't know, maybe we'll go back there. With Tito, it was better for the Roma...

Now, we are also very discriminated against. But our children can't go to school, it's luck for them that they don't go to school because of discrimination..

T8

We lived near Kosice (Slo) in a village.

Before, with Tito, it was better!... For Christians, Orthodox and Muslims alike. The others didn't like the Roma, but otherwise we had enough to eat and we could find work.

Here, not at all. The only reason to stay is that we sacrifice ourselves for our children hoping for a better future for them. Music is very important in Roma's life : for him, music gives courage and perseverance to families and to the clans.

To analyse

Here are the most important points from the testimonials highlighted:

- Most witnesses believe that under the Communist Regime they had worked, even if the work was not interesting or rewarding.

- They could eat their fill under communism, which was not the case after the collapse of the regime.
- Discrimination against them has always existed and still exists today, in their host country
- Their hope is focused on the future of their children.
- They think that their children have difficulty in school, but at least in the host country they can go to school and therefore have a chance to succeed in life.
- Music is cement and strengthens family and clan ties.
- The holidays are a possibility to find sentimental ties and perhaps the ideal partner
- Music reinforces identity and belonging to the group and is linked to traditions
- Parents hope that their children will marry Roma to keep traditions.

3.3. Belgium: 4 families from Kosovo, 1 from North Macedonia, 1 from Serbia and 2 families from Romania

Testimonial 1

We are Kosovars.

We live in Verviers. We have no work except in season, I pick apples, pears, cherries in Flanders.

Here it is better than in Kosovo, but life is expensive.

We stay because it is lucky that our children go to school.

We don't say we are Roma.

With Tito it was better there but not now.

Serbs are often racist.

Music is important, it gives joy and we forget the worries.

We don't want to say any more

T2

We left Kosovo

It is difficult to find a house for our large family of 5 children.

Family allowances are very good here.

I don't have a job. My wife and I can't read or write.

I don't want to go back there any more, it's dangerous.

Music is part of Roma's life. Music heals wounds.

Talking about our traditions bothers me a bit.
Can we talk about something else?

T3

We are from Kosovo

The Serbs are mean to us. When Yugoslavia existed, there were no conflicts between the communities... not so much!

We are Muslims and in addition Romas... that is a difficult situation there.

We lived in a slum, without electricity and the water had to be fetched 800 metres away. No work either. It's better here even if I don't have a job. We can eat every day.

Music punctuates Roma's life and is present when there are wedding parties and family gatherings.

Music gives joy but also sadness.

The sadness in the music allows to evacuate the problems which are in us.

T4

We lived near Pristina

We came because we were persecuted.

After Tito, it was shit for Roma.

We lived outside the city with other Romas. No electricity, no heating. We made a fire in the common courtyard, with salvaged wooden planks. Work ?

You laugh ! The children did not often go to school because they were discriminated against.

It's better here.

Yes, of course, music is important for Roma Families and very close to our culture.

T5

We are from North Macedonia

We went back twice to see the family... Discrimination problems exist there: you can't dress how you want, it's difficult to find accommodation, for a Roma it's difficult to find a job.

A Muslim will find it difficult to find work in an Orthodox or Catholic region, especially if he is Roma.

Finding work is impossible, except for small jobs, but not enough to feed a family.

Here, school is possible for our children, but over there, they are stigmatized and rejected by others.

The music of the Muslim Roma is very different from the music of the Christian Roma.

There is the influence of oriental accents and the Turkish influence.

T6

We are from Serbia

There, we have to keep ourselves small and above all not show that we are Romas by our clothes, or speak our language.

With Tito, there was less discrimination, and there was work. Yes, the political system tried to assimilate us.

I didn't go to school, neither did my wife.

Here it is better, our children go to school.

Our music is strongly influenced by the Slavic soul. The music of Muslim Romas is different: a bit like Turkish music sometimes.

T7

We are from Romania

We lived on the outskirts of Timisoara in a neighbourhood where there were only Romas.

Music is something free that we offer to everyone!... There are always musicians among us.

The city has left the communication channels to rot, the roads are in poor condition, the electricity cuts are frequent. There was no radiator for heating like here.

Romas are denigrated, stigmatized in Romania and the police are brutal with them.

My children did not always go to school because of the distance and then the school did not like them.

Here, we are also afraid of the police and everything that the Administration represents.

Yes, here too there is discrimination. We cannot dress in traditional clothes or say we are Romas.

The music depends on the region where the Romas live. There is gypsy music very influenced by Hungarian and Transylvanian music, Roma's music close to Romanian accents, very rhythmic and fast music (typically Roma) and even a klezmer influence... You go to other countries, it will be the same!

The Romas are inspired by the music where they live... Then they appropriate the musical atmosphere... Then they improvise music all the time, transforming the music with the Roma soul.

T8

We left Romania

We came from Cluj area.

We lived in a neighbourhood where only Roma families lived.

The Commune did not take care of our neighbourhood at all, the roads are in poor condition, it is dark at night, the houses have no heating... we manage.

The Roma help each other to survive there.

It's better here, you don't starve, but life is very expensive.

Yes, we have already been discriminated against here too, especially for work and to find accommodation.

We want to keep our culture, our language... So it's better for a young person to find a Roma girl... For the girl, of course, it's the same thing!

Gypsy music is spontaneous, inspired, improvised music... At first, the Romas played for non-Romas, so they adapted to them...

Little by little, gypsy music freed itself and became typical...

This music is fast and syncopated

But there is music and not gypsy music.

To analyse

Important points noted in the testimonials:

- Forms of discrimination also exist in the host country
- Romas hope for a better life for their children
- School is important for children

- Persecution and forms of discrimination as well as precarious life seem to be the reason for their migration
- Music is something free that creates joy but also allows to evacuate sorrows
- Marrying outside the Roma community is seen as threatening to weaken the clan and lose traditions.
- There is gypsy music; for example, the music of the Muslim Romas is strongly influenced by more oriental accents and has undergone Turkish influence.
- At first the Gypsies played for them as a family, but the music was also adapted to non-Roma.
- Gypsy music gradually freed itself by creating the gypsy soul in Music
- There is not one music, Gypsy music, depending on the region, the country,...
- Gypsy music has been enriched with Slavic soul, oriental accents, Turkish and Magyar music, as well as Klezmer music.
- But there is very typical Gypsy music, accompanied by dancing, very rhythmic, syncopated, very fast.

3.4. Netherlands: 2 families from Serbia, 2 families from Kosovo and 2 from Romania and 2 from Bosnia

T1

We are from Serbia (Near Novi Sad)

We are in Maastricht

In Serbia it is difficult for the Roma: no work, and we are very discriminated against. School is also difficult... t

They also want to assimilate us, otherwise they will reject us.

Here the music is not the same as home... It's wild and soulless.

T2

We come from Serbia (Suburb of Novi Sad)

We had to leave because we were starving there and the children have no future and at school they were very discriminated against.

With Tito, there was less discrimination

Here there is less discrimination, but people would look askance at us if we dressed in the traditional way... You have to be careful

Family celebrations are also made for young people to find a potential partner... It's better because the community is getting stronger.

T3

We are from Kosovo (Pristina)

We had to leave because we lived in a ghetto and we were discriminated against.

Here too there is discrimination, but less... and we eat our fill at least.

School is good for our children, but we force them to listen to things that are against our culture...

Virginity before marriage, for example, or homosexuality... but we can't talk too much about that, I think.

I finally found a job after several years here, in a store.

T4

We are from Kosovo

If we stay here, it's because we have a family here and in Belgium.

Alone we would not stay. The mentalities are too different.

We still have to hide our own mentality.

Our music is very different. Once, during a family reunion, we organized the meeting in the street because there was not enough room at home. The music was going loud, but it was a Saturday afternoon!... The police came to stop everything because it was bothering the neighbours.

T5

We are Romanian (Arad region)

We came here because there is no future for our children there.

Yes, Romas are discriminated against there.

Here, I have not encountered any discrimination so far.

Of course we are considered as Romanians and not as Roma.

Very often, we have to remain discreet about our customs, otherwise people are afraid, as if we were savages!

Music is important to us!... Above all, preserving our music.

Music helps us to tolerate life... And then our music is specific according to regions and countries.

T6

We are from Romania

Here it is better for our children, otherwise we would have stayed there.

Yes, we have experienced discrimination here too... concerning our language (at school) and housing... Moreover they do not understand the importance for us of reuniting as a family... it must be said that family reunions are always at least 20 to 30 people... it bothers.

Family celebrations help to strengthen ties, and especially that young people feel that they are not alone... A lot, so we are stronger.

It is better if young people find the chosen one of his heart in the Roma Community.

T7

We are Bosnians

In Bosnia, Serbs are also present and we had to leave the country, because we were Romas and, moreover, Muslims.

Currently, there are strong tensions between Catholics, Orthodox and especially Muslims.

Things are better here, but we remain discreet about our customs, which are frowned upon...

For example, a girl must reserve herself for her future husband, so no outings... But here, morals are very lax, which is inconsistent with our values and customs.

Indeed, there is very little interbreeding among us. A young girl will find her future husband in the clan thanks to the families...

With another clan it is also possible.

This is how the Roma identity can be preserved

T8

We are from Bosnia

Without work, and living in a slum without heating in winter... and that our children cannot always go to school... it's not a life!

It's better here, but their mentality is different from us and they don't understand our culture... There are things we learn at school that we don't understand...

For example, gender equality, the role of the mother and the father, virginity which is an important thing for marriage...

Fortunately, we are a clan and all families support each other to keep our culture, our language and our values.

We are not against a non-Roma taking one of our daughters, but he will have to accept our values and our way of life.

To analyse

Important points that emerge from the testimonies:

- If discrimination existed in their country of origin, the Roma are subject to misunderstanding of their culture in their host country.
- They are subject to forms of discrimination also experienced in the host country.
- The school seems to be perceived as being a lever for upward mobilization with social, labour and personal fields.
- But Roma families value their values and their culture, which they sometimes have to hide or remain discreet.
- The school conveys values that are unacceptable to them and that run counter to their traditions.
- The clan is the cement of the Roma community allowing traditions, values and language to be preserved.
- Large frequent family gatherings are not understood by the natives.

- These meetings are also family celebrations where ties are woven and relationships are strengthened.
- There is very little interbreeding. If there is, then the non-Roma will, of course, be welcomed, but will be strongly invited to adhere to the values and customs of the clan.
- Marrying between young Roma guarantees the preservation of customs, language and values.
- The highly publicized traditions as well as the music of the Roma can bother foreigners. There are different kinds of music by region and country.
- Misunderstanding of a different culture breeds mistrust. People do not hesitate to call the police for fear of an overflow or simply because they are witnesses of a large human group whose behavioural codes they do not understand.
- For a young person, getting married in the Roma community strengthens clan ties, as well as traditions.

3.5. Conclusion concerning all the testimonies of Romas who left their countries.

We can find many similarities in the testimonies of the different host countries. Forms of discrimination also exist in host countries.

A common positive point seems to emerge: access to school for Roma children, which represents hope for parents. However, parents talk about their children's learning difficulties at school.

Marrying a Roma girl is difficult, but possible; however, non-Roma foreigners will be asked to respect the habits and customs of the family and the clan.

Intra- or inter-group marriage seems important for the Roma, because it is in this way that they will be able to preserve their language, their customs, their values, their traditions.

Music is very important in Roma's life and there are different kinds of music in the country.

3.6. Testimonies of Romas in their country of origin

I questioned Romas who remained in their country.

Here is the questionnaire to understand the discrimination they face and why they decided not to leave their country.

Here are the testimonials.

3.7.Hungary

Testimony 1 (T1)

R.L., Gypsy from Bonyhád, 64 years old.

(Tolna region). I simply accosted him in Bonyhád because we knew each other by sight since for many years I went on vacation in the region and I exhibited twice in the small town of Bonyhád.

He wanted to remain anonymous, but allowed him to be called "Vajda" which is the nickname of a Gypsy leader. He worked in a T.SZ.CS. during communism and took care of the cleaning in a pig farm near Pécsvárad (Baranya region, southern Hungary). He never went to school, but he learned basketry and boiler-making in the family.

The Gypsies of Bonyhád and the surrounding area are "Oláh cigány" who originated a long time ago in southern Romania.

In Romania under Ceaucescu, where the Romas are around 2.5 million, entire villages have been destroyed and the Roma population moved to large cities like Temesvár (Timisoara), Nagyvárad (Oradea), Kolozsvár (Cluj) or Marosvásárhely (Tirgumures) to try to assimilate the Roma.

There, communism was hard on the Gypsies, wedged between the Szeklers¹ and the Romanians who hate royally each other.

Migration will increase because the Gypsies are dying there. In Hungary, communism had this positive side of wanting to focus on the fate of the Gypsies, but without worrying about traditions, the way of life and the Gypsy identity.

The negative side is that many have lost their language due to the forced displacement of Gypsies and there is no question of leaving or travelling. Because of all this upheaval, the Gypsy identity has lost a lot. We take him for a thief and lazy... Yet we can give more than what we receive... often we even exaggerate, but

it's the heart that speaks... the others ("gadjes") hold back their emotions except with Music and with their wives ...

That's our difference, we are very much a family and then there are a lot of children at home, it's not dead! The figures we put forward are false because many Gypsies tell themselves to be Hungarians hoping for work or because in some regions the situation is hot because of nationalism and the strong presence of the "Magyar Gàrda" (Hungarian Nationalist Guard led by Vona Gàbor). Three years ago we were asked if we were Hungarian or not! What to say ?

Almost everyone said "Hungarian" yet 30% of the town of Bonyhàd is Gypsy as well as the surrounding area! It's even funny because we didn't ask everyone! Me, it's still fine because with my big moustache people take me for a "pusztai nàbôb" (important person in the Puszta), but for me more typical brothers, in certain villages... the mouth too gypsy what, some are beaten up.

So when we advances are false because many Gypsies declare themselves to be Hungarian hoping for work or because in certain regions the situation is hot because of nationalism and the strong presence of the "Magyar Gàrda" (Hungarian nationalist guard led by Vona Gàbor). Three years ago we were asked if we were Hungarian or not! What to say ?

Everyone hopes for work, but people of mixed race are more likely to go unnoticed. The Roma have never been afraid of tomorrow, but what they are afraid of is that their identity and their language have been taken away from them and now they are being rejected.

Yesterday, it was like a prison where we had to eat but we had no choice of work... since few studied... we were given dirty jobs... Today, we live in fear of tomorrow, we are hungry and when we have seen our face, we are refused work.

...

As there is no work for everyone, it is here that we look for misery... But I don't want to leave my country and lose my roots. I can't write or read, so where should I go? To die elsewhere? No !

The solution is still to leave for the youngest, but it was easier to leave when we had trailers, but during communism we could not live our life. But it's not easy for young people, because many of them don't have a diploma.

Me, when I was young, I went to work in everything: the T.SZ.CS., breeding,... without a diploma even if I learned a lot of things... the family is also a school with us.

Communism did not need graduates, there was work for everyone! Now you need a diploma even to bury a dead man! During communism, when you worked well and you could climb the hierarchy without a diploma, provided you had the party card, of course.

I have a friend who became a lieutenant-colonel because he could howl and he looked like Samson, you know, like Hercules! He has a royal pension now! Our young people have not been used to school and then we put them aside.

Since 1989, it's shit! Everything is expensive. Before, water was free, gas almost nothing! Now the Gypsies are under bridges and in the streets, because without work, how can they pay rent? So they live apart, in shacks, even in winter... If we don't have money, we're shit and then the only hope for young people is to leave (the country). (Testimony, Vajda, Bonyhád, 12/08/2009)

¹ Szekler: Transylvania population of +/- 1,300,000 Hungarian speakers.

T2

J.S., living in Pécs.

His parents had to flee the "Arrow Crosses" in Budapest in 1956 with his parents to go to Austria, then they returned to Hungary in the 70s.

Initially, his parents lived in a trailer and had a small travelling circus.

They were forcibly sedentary and put to work as labourers in the fields.

He is illiterate.

In Austria, my parents had to hide that they were gypsies. The whole family returned to Hungary in 1972 because of discrimination in Austria. The circus was no longer possible and we were forcibly settled. In Hungary everyone had to work under the Communist Regime and everyone had a work card.

The police made sure everyone went to work. In Hungary, on the other hand, there was less discrimination, but we had worked. Since my parents didn't have a diploma...me neither!...We worked in agriculture as labourers. I also played violin... I played without sheet music, because I am illiterate.

Now, after the fall of the Regime, we are useless! It's hard to find work. It's not the same as musicians either... We used to go from restaurant to restaurant!

Now it's over... They don't want us any more. We used to make a lot of black money in the front pocket... now there are taxes and a lot of papers to fill out... A lot of Roma have become tramps. But hey, it's fate! Don't worry too much, time will take care of that for you!...

Now young people are no longer motivated to learn music because there are fewer and fewer restaurants where Gypsies can play music.

Because of that, the Roma are losing skills... Part of their identity!

And then, we Roma, we learned to live on nothing, to get by...

Society plans decide for us... Where is the freedom? The Gypsies value their identity, their language, their traditions, but it is difficult and the young people are no longer surrounded by a large family as before...

They no longer respect anything!...

The Roma risk losing their identity if things continue like this! Going abroad? No, because I don't know what awaits me and then I don't have a job... And I know that over there (Western countries) the Roma don't have more work than here.

The problem with migration is because many do not have jobs. But the problem is that you need diplomas!... Not like before!... Many gypsies are illiterate, so they have no chance of finding work.

The Gypsy community can only survive if the Gypsies hold together.

Now we are recognized as a minority and represented in Hungary.

Communism "sedentarized" us by force: we lost our freedom to travel, but we had worked. Now we no longer have freedom, but we no longer have worked either! So some try to try their luck in the West, but I don't think they will be happier there. I have a cousin in France who told me he had no job and life is expensive in France.

Since 1989, more and more Gypsies have been going to Austria where they have seasonal work, then they come back... But what will they get for their pension?... Life is not very easy now! Yes, I regret the old regime, because at least everyone had enough to eat and life was cheaper than now...

Water was almost free, gas too! Now, we are dying of cold and we have to pay attention to the water consumption...

In Hungary, things are still going well! But in Slovakia, they even created a law that forbids speaking anything other than Slovak, while there are many who can barely speak Slovak!

They say it's not forbidden in private, but if you open your mouth in the street and you don't speak Slovak and the police come by, they'll give you trouble.

...

Most Romas don't have jobs so they steal to eat. Police stop them, and hit them.

T3

Mariska O., is Romni (Gypsy woman), widow and mother of five children, 60 years old, proud grandmother of nine grandchildren. During communism, she worked as a worker in the small factory of Bonyhád where saucepans were made.

She never went to school. She lives in Komlô, a former coal town during communism.

His father took care of the horses and he also traded. He was an important man: he had a lot of work.

I was introduced to Mariska through a winegrower from Szàszvár (town about 20 km away) that I know and to whom I had told very simply that I needed some testimonies on the past, the present and the future of the Gypsies. Since he knew the widow's husband, contact was easy.

I have been a widow since the death of my husband... He worked in mine for a long time. He was an underground miner and had to take care to prevent pockets of gas (firedamp). But after a few years he fell ill. You know, the lungs.

Everyone had no protection, except the chiefs. The Gypsies were good for everything. And then he was promised another cleaner job! Damn life! They transferred him near Pécs (Uràn vàros) where there was a uranium mine. Despite the protections, you know, he was no longer a man...

But I still had five children by him, thank God! And I'm a grandmother nine times! During communism, I had to work in the pot factory in Bonyhàd. My husband didn't want to, but the police had beaten him up. If you refused to work, you were thrown into jail. We had a work identity card (Munka igazolvàny).

For me, the Communists, they killed my man! And then my children couldn't go to school. I was told when I yelled at it that we needed labour and not bourgeois...

Do you see me princess? Besides now my children are grown up and after 1989, the communist bastards squandered the money, the kolkhozes (T.SZ.CS in Hungary), and put everything in your pocket. Have you seen Gyûrcsàny? (Former Prime Minister) He is from Baranya.

He became a multimillionaire in a few years by putting the money in his pocket and selling Hungary abroad.

Look at Horn Gyula, another bastard! He was "AVOS" in the Old Regime (AVH = secret police during communism). He killed people, you know, and he also became a minister by filling his pockets. All the rich now are ex-Communists and we have to shut it down.

But we have lost everything, our freedom, our identity and we are not being taken anywhere now. We have to destroy the walls in some cities! Here, things are still fine because Komlô is a Gypsy town and we fight back if necessary. But life has gone crazy and young people have no work.

I have five children and only one has a job... and still, he goes shopping with his brother. So I help them any way I can.

I have 4 pigs and I cultivate my plot of land... I have a pension of 78,000 forints (about 225 euro per month) for all that we have worked. You would have to pay around 30,000 for water, gas and electricity! So when you know that a "tejföl" (kind of yogurt) costs 279 forint and bread 150 forint counts! There is more than that!

My God! help us! But you see, I don't know how, but the well-placed former Party members, they sometimes have three times more pensions than me and then to them, we almost gave them their house in 1989, but not to us ! Few gypsies own property, you see.

For young people the best thing is to leave, because here it becomes too difficult. The others (gadjes)... but you, I see that you're nice!... They don't take Gypsies to work and more and more Gypsies live in slums or in "putri" (a kind of barracks that there are in the slums) without comfort and everything is expensive.

You know, here in winter, it is often minus 15 degrees (Komlô is a city surrounded by gentle mountains) and everything is expensive so when we go to get coal because there is... You just have to stir a little ! And yet they closed everything after 1989! ...

When we go to look for coal that no longer belongs to anyone, the police comes to piss us off and give us a fine, but we have no money, so they complain!... We can't kill ourselves for that and we have to warm up a bit...

With my children I have always spoken in Roma, it is important. Men are different, but we women hold the family and it is our role to keep the tradition. Unfortunately, many young girls are beginning to drift away from tradition. But I believe that misfortune brings us together.

The language must be found to bring us together again, because many no longer speak it well. I don't want to leave my country to be uprooted again. But I understand the young people who leave, because they can still dream!

The music ? It is part of us... If Roma get together, if families get together, dance and music are important. It welds the Roma...

It allows you to forget. Woes. Too bad there are fewer and fewer Roma musicians. It was better during Communism!

Many young people learned music and if school was difficult, with music, we were still someone... But who wants us now?

(Testimony, Mariska, Komlô, Hungary 08/15/2009)

T4

A.R.

Communism brought the possibility of work and housing.

School was compulsory, but our children had difficulty and many children were put in pedagogical schools for deficient and unintelligent children.
After 1989 and the fall of communism, Romas found themselves out of work, as companies only wanted graduates....

And then, in Hungary, there was a difficult transition period with very high unemployment.

Life is expensive and finding work is impossible. We were discriminated against when we tried to find accommodation in Budapest, but it is possible in the neighbourhoods where Roma live.

Tradition is difficult to keep especially among young people, but in a clan we help each other.

T5
L.P.

I don't really like living in a city but it's the only way to survive.
We lived near Kalocsa, but no work.

Currently we live in Bonyhád and I am a worker to maintain the roads of the commune. The salary is meager and it is difficult to make ends meet.

Yes, we don't say too much that we are Romas... Especially since we are not too swarthy. We are wary of the Roma, we take them too easily for thieves.

During communism, it was better I think... More egalitarian in any case in terms of employment.

T6
K.L.

Before 1989, work was compulsory, otherwise the police would summon you and you could go to prison.

They tried to assimilate us by strength. Before 1945, many Roma still lived in caravans. After 1945, our way of life was considered average. We have built buildings on the outskirts of Budapest for example, or in Komlo where many gypsies live... It is in buildings that the Communist regime asked us to go.

Many have lost their language and part of the Gypsy traditions.
Interbreeding is rare in Hungary.

Forms of discrimination have greatly diminished in Hungary since we were recognized as a "Gypsy entity" and represented in Parliament.
But for a gypsy without a diploma, it is very difficult to find work.

Music has always accompanied the life of the gypsies.

To analyse

Important points :

- Under communism, a relative equity seems to have existed at the level of work, at least in the working World
- Everyone had to work and the police had set up a control system
- The testimonies show a certain nostalgia for the communist Regime
- After 1989, a period of transition created significant unemployment, hitting the Romas hard
- Those who could no longer find work, because they had little or no qualifications
- After 1989, it was also more difficult for musicians to work, because with the liberalization of the market, Roma musicians were less and less in demand
- Forms of discrimination increased after 1989
- Forms of discrimination concern : work, appearance, clothing, housing, education, cultural differences
- The forms of discrimination seem to have diminished with the recognition of the Roma and their representation in the Government as a minority entity
- After 1989, it seems that young people care less about values and traditions
- The economic crisis, unemployment, housing difficulties,... are perhaps an accelerator of the loss of traditions and language among young people.

3.8.Romania

T1

Sz. I., gentleman 67 years old, Romania.

He told me he didn't want a story and not to sign anything as he didn't go to school or record anything as he is suspicious by nature. He wants to remain anonymous. What is special in this testimony is that he talked to us about everything and nothing while taking care of his vines, then his small cellar where he then invited us to drink.

This is where he "dropped" by breaking sugar on the Russians, the Hungarians, the Romanians, the current government.

It must be said that this is a "wealthy" gypsy because he has become the owner of a small vineyard, but, on the other hand, he lives away from the town of Oradea (Nagyvârad) where he shares his small house built of his hands in "vâjog" (a kind of mixture of straw, clay and small pebbles to make it more solid).

He is proud of his house, but he received me in his cellar (which he dug himself with his sons and brothers in the ground and made formwork with acacia trunks for its hardness, its elasticity and its rot-proof nature.

"I did everything, but my father was a very good boilermaker and we lived near Kolozsvâr (Cluj). During communism, I did the grape harvest, the picking, the hay, finally all the work of the land... and when there was no work we were forced to slow down so that there was work. No job ? It didn't exist!

Now I have a shitty little pension and it's not enough for the family so luckily I have this piece of land. I have 5 sons and 3 daughters, thank God, but you know they don't have a job.

So what do you want, I tell them to go to Germany, France or your country... but it sucks! In Romania, we are 2 or 3 million and they say that we are a bump on the back (a sore). In some cities, we are not really welcome.

We don't want them because they are swarthy and then it's true that they didn't go to a lot of school, but under Ceaucescu it wasn't necessary. They all had jobs. The Romas must stay together so as not to forget the past, but the young people no longer know the past so much, because the old die too quickly... and then times change!...

Before, it was the communists and the "Securitate"(*) who hunted us down, dismembering our community, our families to go and work anywhere, now it's Europe that pisses us off with regulations everywhere for everything ! There are no more borders and it's free movement... Yet we are constantly being controlled.

You know, with the Securitate we were not kidding! Very often you came out of it between four boards or else you disappeared.

Roma children are the reason for our existence and they are being taken from us now. We do not like to give our children to foreigners, because they will no longer be ours! When they barely know how to run... it's not normal!

And then at school, they are told, I swear on the heads of my children (he makes the sign of the cross and he kisses his big gold cross attached to a thick, clearly visible chain) that the gypsies are lazy and cavemen! Whore ! And our children are listening to this...

School isn't always good, you know!... They're racist... Yes, it's good for reading, writing, counting, but the rest, they want to destroy our values, our way of life. It bothers the Gadjes because we like to travel! But what ? They do not understand that we want to preserve the freedom to move! You don't need a trailer to move!

...

Yes, there have been deportations of Roma populations in Romania, especially to Temesvár (Timisoara) but they are parked in unsanitary barracks where no one comes, not even the police! Or in "Székelyföld" (Land of the Szeklers).

There, they hate gypsies! But I understand a little!... We are on their land... Ceausescu wanted to mix communities and for that he razed villages... But we hanged him I think? Good for him, he deserved it!

For Gypsies, there is no time! even for work... when there is some!
At home, everything is timed, even when you go to the bathroom! For us, it is necessary to live more naturally according to the needs that come... You eat when you are not hungry and I when I am hungry, that is the difference!...

You give yourself limits and I have none! Time doesn't count for us, it's the result!... And you have to use the time to do something when you need it... So you see, at school, it's all different and then the young people don't know any more whom to listen to: us or them (gadjes).

I'm too old to leave here, but even when I was younger, I wouldn't leave the country, because a little cousin of mine went to France and he told me that they don't like the Roma there either... And then, he doesn't have a job either, but he stays in France because he hopes his children will have a better future... Over there, Roma children are treated better at school than here!

For us, what counts is the family, rather, the families; it's like a big family and we are together to help each other. Rom without a wife, without a child, is like a tree that has no branches. Keeping our language, our way of life, having family gatherings, parties... all of that is important!

The music ? it makes life easier! Music is important to us, it's part of our identity. But the music must be danced.

(Testimony, Oradea/Nagyvârad, Romania, 08/13/2009)

(*) Securitate: secret police in Romania under the communist regime of Ceaucescu.

T2

Family from the outskirts of Cluj (Kolozsvâr in Hungarian)

When people ask me who I am, I say that I am Magyar and not Roma to get out of trouble... Yet there are more Romas in Romania than Magyars or Szeklers!

I stayed here because between Roma we help each other.

And then I heard that the grass is not fresher elsewhere!

The musicians made a better living than us and they looked down on us.

After 1989, the tide turned and now there are many who are beggars... Apart from music, often they don't know how to do anything.

T3

Family of Oradea

Here it is, I was able to find work in the fields... It does not require a diploma and I am courageous and vigorous.

I said to my brother, don't go, there are no fields like here there and you won't find a job!... I was right, he has no job and receives money from the Government to live!... To go there for that?... I would be embarrassed!

T4

Family of Satumare (Szatmárnémeti in Hungarian)

I am crossing the border because there has been work in Hungary for a few years.

It's not a lot, but why leave if there's no work there either?

As I work, I am less discriminated I think

T5

Bernini's family

We lived in a shanty town... Fortunately, I was able to find work fitting tyres... without a diploma!

So we stay here, because food is not so expensive here.

Yes during communism life was easier.

We were less discriminated against than now!

T6
Family of Timisoara

Discrimination is great here and we are going to Timisoara where we have a family... I hope it will be better, if not, maybe we go to Germany to try. Music is the only way to try to forget misery.

To analyse

Important points that emerge from the testimonies:

- The testimonies highlight the existence of various forms of discrimination (work, housing, education of children, etc.)
- Before the fall of Communism, finding work was easier
- Some manage by doing cross-border work, others by finding seasonal work
- Some think that the grass is not greener than elsewhere and we want to stay despite everything
- Others migrate within the country in search of better living conditions
- Others are considering the possibility of finding work in Germany
- Music is an important element in Roma's life.

3.9.Ukraine

T1
Family from the suburb of Berehove (Beregszász in Hungarian), Ukraine

We have 6 children.
They don't go to school. We are Hungarian Roma.

So the Ukrainian authorities don't like us at all. We live outside the city where there are only Roma. Ukrainians of Magyar origin are helped by the Hungarian authorities, but not us.

We don't eat every day because we have very little income from restoring old found chairs, desks.... My husband also lives by buying and reselling mobile phones.

Our children don't often go to school, but here they don't care if you are Roma.

The language, yes, it's something we hide because the police are brutal. He barely tolerates the Magyars, but they don't tolerate us at all.

Very often, the Roma live in slums, in houses that are built with recycled materials... No normal heating as you hear!... There is only one water point for the Roma quarter... The roads are bumpy, the authorities do not maintain them... But even throughout Ukraine, the roads are in poor condition.

In Ukraine, there is also the mafia... people close to those in power who are rich... the others, people are dying of misery.

Music is the only comfort we have left....
We have a lot of children because it's a tradition with us, and then, if we are a lot and we stay together, we have a better chance of not dying.

In winter, we cut and harvest wood... Fortunately, the authorities say nothing!... Otherwise it would be a disaster, and not just for the Romas.

Our community is closed in on itself, because there is nothing to expect from other communities... especially not solidarity with the Roma.

T2
Family of Berehove

We are from the same clan and I can only say the same thing.
I will simply add that what keeps us apart from music are our traditions and our values.

With us, the roles of parents are highly codified: the mother is the one who makes the family bond... She takes care of the children and longer with the girls who must learn to take care of the little ones, to do, to eat, to take care of the household... to be a good wife later (around 15-17 years old).

Virginity is an important thing, otherwise the family is dishonoured. That's why a girl is never alone until marriage! After marriage the new wife must live in the family of his husband and show to her mother-in-law that she is a good and worthy spouse, worthy of holding her place.

For the boys, around 6-8 years old they are looked after by the father and the men of the clan to learn how to get by in life... a life which is hostile to the Romas... He will also learn tricks for surviving, making money... It is the role of the father to bring money to the family...

The Romas also help each other, at all levels, that's a family...

Assimilation can destroy our cohesion and also our way of life which is focused on families, children and survival.

T3

Family from Mukacevo (Munkács in Hungarian)

I had the same stories...

We hold on to our identity, to the family, to our customs, because it is our reason for living and which allow us to survive.

T4

Mukacheve's family

Music, yes, it's important, even when we don't have real instruments, because it's expensive, we use everything we find to make rhythm, noise... for example an aluminium jug, sticks,...and we sing.

It's the way to eat every day... If we are poor, we put everything in common and we share.

T5

Family from Uzhhorod (Ungvár in Hungarian)

Same echo for music and instruments.

My father made an instrument himself, a flute, a neighbour a homemade string instrument...

We put together so that the whole big family can eat...

But it's very hard.

We collect objects and we also sell them

T6

Chop's family

This is a slum, a ghetto for Romas.
No one comes here, not even the police... When they come it's to hit us because they're looking for someone.

The roads are impassable, have you seen?...
People are afraid of us, and we are afraid of non-Romas.

However, you are there and we do not want to eat you!
The police are brutal with us and we are rejected by other communities.

To analyse

- Ukraine seems to be a very inhospitable country for Romas. Police brutality and violence are frequent.
- Rejection and discrimination exist in a country where communities reject each other
- Roma live in slums or hovels outside towns and municipalities
- They are hungry, they are cold in winter, but the Roma have a strength, which is the solidarity between them... even sharing their bread
- The family is essential, the role of the mother and central as a family cement
- The girl is initiated by the mother and the boys by the father and the uncles, older cousins, etc. to learn how to survive in a world which is hostile to them
- Traditions, language, way of life appear to be the important elements to preserve the clan.... Clan which is perceived as the only solution to get by.
- Music is important, and when the Roma do not have instruments, they make it with the means they have at their disposal.

3.10. Slovakia

T1

Here in Moldova nad Bodvou, Slovakia, we are trying to get out of it, but the authorities do nothing for us!... The places where we live are left to rot...

Look at Kosice, it's a beautiful city, but where we are slums... Lunik IX is a district of Kosice, a disgrace for mankind...

T2

It's the same thing in Presov or in Banska!... They reject us, we don't find work...

We are considered as subhuman by some...
Yes, or like goose stealers...

T3

No job, no money, no decent accommodation, how do you get out of it?...

The authorities have promised a programme for us, to make things better, but these are just words...

Above all, they want to hide us because we are talking more and more in Europe about the living conditions of the Slovak Roma...

Yes, we are Hungarian speakers, but that is not why we are liked more...

T4

There are problems with water and electricity... In winter, it is very cold here, but getting warm is a matter of getting by... Families help each other and meet often... This saves heating!

T5

The future of our children is not too bright! They don't often go to school, we make fun of them and as we are illiterate, we don't know how to help them...

The only thing that holds us together is the family!... But beware, it's the whole family, or rather the families...

T6

When a son leaves with a non-Roma daughter, the clan weakens. When it's a girl, it's the centre of the family that is touched, unless the Gadjes also accept our traditions, our values... which is highly unlikely.

We see that among Romanians, mixed marriages (Romanian/Szekler) impoverish the community...

To analyse

- The Romas live in total destitution, fear of the police, of the administration, lack of schooling for children, roads in very poor condition
- Traditions and way of life are similar to other countries
- Solidarity among Roma is strong
- Roma in Slovakia are as desperate as those in Ukraine
- Most of them live in precarious conditions and deplorable sanitary conditions
- The family network in the clan is a source of comfort and sharing
- The cold in winter is a source of encounters, because it makes it possible to share and save food, heating, etc.
- Fears of mixed marriage and its consequences for the preservation of traditions, language and values
- Perception of the clan and the family weakened if a young person marries a Gadje

3.11.Serbia

I met Hungarian speakers Romas in Subotica (Vojvodina),
Novisad (in a slum).

Here are the testimonies :

T1

We live in this hovel that takes on water as soon as it rains a lot...
There is no channelling system here... It's as if we don't exist!
If we complain, we are told that there is no money...

The police are brutal with us and when they come, we must not laugh or smile... Above all, we must remain calm and step aside in front of them... Yes, we are afraid! We don't trust the municipal administration... And then we are made to sign things when we do not know how to read...

T2

Once, some families were forcibly moved to build... But not for us, of course! And the authorities say that the families had signed that they agreed to leave!...

As it is the territory of the Commune or the city, we do not know when it will be our turn to be driven out.

Traditions, language, values are important to us, otherwise we have nothing left... yes, die!

T3

In Vojvodina, Hungarian-speaking Serbs helped us a little and they even helped the children to go to Hungarian school... since we are Hungarian gypsies say the Serbs...

For them, we are not really Serbs, but lazy people and profiteers...

Yes, but if the Hungarian-speaking Serbs accept us, it is so that our children go to their schools, because their population is drying up! But the children follow with difficulty, because few have gone to nursery classes and are not used to sitting still for hours!...

T4

We are taken for savages and our children are poorly adapted to schooling... Serbs who speak Hungarian helped us more than Serbs... There is more rejection from Serbs...

The rejection is greater outside Vojvodina...

T5

When it was Yugoslavia, we lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina... There were no tensions between the three religions!... The Balkan war has ruined everything and now we are in Vojvodina where it is calmer...

There, now the Catholics, the Orthodox and the Muslims look at each other with the eyes of wolves. Moreover, the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina are nationalists and are brutal...

For a gypsy, it is even more difficult to be in the middle of these 3 communities that hate each other!

T6

When you go shopping, you shouldn't go with your whole family, otherwise we are potential thieves... Above all, don't dress in the traditional way...

When our sons marry daughters who are not Roma, they are lost and move away from our traditions... They also lose the Roma language.

To analyse

- Very difficult situation in terms of living conditions in Serbia for the Romas
- They are subject to discrimination and stigmatization
- Children have little schooling when they are small until they are 5-7 years old and when they go to school, attendance is not regular
- The Hungarian Serbs take in the Roma children in order to be able to prove to the authorities that X Hungarian-speaking children are enrolled in school
- The Hungarian community in Serbia helps Hungarian-speaking Gypsies more. They feel more rejection from the Serbian population, especially outside Vojvodina.
- Gypsies in Serbia are discriminated against and find it very difficult to find work or accommodation
- Significant community tensions in the former countries of Yugoslavia (Catholic and Orthodox Christians and Muslims, but also tensions with the Bosnian Serbs
- Loss of identity of young people through loss of traditions and language
- Fears that girls will marry Gadjes who do not respect Roma traditions
- Withdrawal of the Roma community in the face of interbreeding

3.12.Austria

Here is the information gathered from the gypsies. Among them are Sinti (also gypsy people) :

T1

We live in Vienna. Our parents left Hungary in 1956.
My grandparents still lived in a caravan in the Tolna region of Hungary... my ancestors owned a small family circus.
After the war, there was the Revolution of 1956 and the Gypsies had to be assimilated by force... Gypsy caravans were medieval for the Communist Party...

We try to keep our culture, but it is difficult... The young person has a better chance of preserving the traditions if the spouse is also Roma.

T2

Under the Communist Regime, we were young and we fled to go to Austria because a close family was already living in Vienna...
Our parents had many children (8 including 2 sons)...
We had bonded very well and we respected the traditions, the values...

But our children are embarrassed to say they are Gypsies.
2 of our daughters got married and each has 1 child. One of the sons married a gypsy and has 4 children.

The two girls turn away from traditions and even from language...
Only our married son wants to preserve the traditions, our language, our values...
So I can say that mixing Roma with non-Roma cannot work to preserve the language, the traditions and our values.

T3

We are afraid for our children... We have no country and therefore assimilation is a danger for us.
We hope they find a Roma husband and our other son, a Roma girl!

T4

We live in Vienna in a poor neighbourhood where there are a lot of Romas.
We were circus artists, but it's difficult.
So I found a job as a worker in a printing press for machine handling. I learned in 6 months to be a worker.

I regret life at the circus where there was a lot of solidarity.
The Sinti are often circus artists at the start... But all that is lost.

We have four boys and one girl. Two boys are married to non-Roma girls.
Already the in-laws consider us shit and the customs are disappearing. Our two grandchildren do not understand the Roma language.

The music has undergone many influences depending on the region and country,
but Gypsy music now has its letters of nobility. She is furious, syncopated and dancing. But there are also songs for the dead, sickness, crying for sadness and the fate of the Roma.

T5

In Austria, fortunately, we train those who do not have a diploma.
I work in a large grocery store, but I have to hide that I am a gypsy. I say that I am Hungarian, as my name indicates by the way... It is practical.

It is difficult to preserve the language and the traditions, because in Austria, the people, the Administration, the school are quite rigid.

T6

I'm out of work, and it's hard to live with a family of 4 children... Fortunately, my wife learned to sew and does some mending work for a shop, but part-time.
My grandparents were trapeze artists at the cirque...
The tradition has been lost.

Yes, we want to keep our customs, but we must remain discreet in Austria, because in this country, it is a democracy, but it is clearly said that we must assimilate.

To analyse

- Testimonials are similar
- Preserving Roma's identity is a priority for parents
- Mixed marriages (miscegenation) are not estimated by the family and the clan
- To preserve customs, it must be done discreetly
- Several Roma families come from families of circus artists

3.13. Conclusions concerning the testimonies of the Romas who remained in the country

These testimonies show that the Romas do not want to lose their identity, their language, their values, their culture, their traditions. They are afraid of mixing or rather interbreeding through marriage.

The Roma think that it is better for young Roma to marry among themselves, because it is the best guarantor of the preservation of identity and clan, as well as ancestral customs.

They want to preserve their freedom to preserve their way of life.

The Roma language, which seems to have suffered during communism under Ceausescu and elsewhere in the satellite countries of the USSR, through attempts at assimilation and the displacement of Roma populations.

These testimonies indicate a break in 1989 with the former Communist regime: indeed, euphoria had invaded people's minds, believing that everything would be better by escaping from the Soviet yoke. But the Roma were left behind.

The following table summarizes the various causes of migration and we can record, in our opinion, the main causes of their migration:

- great precariousness in terms of hygiene of life
- housing problems
- difficulty finding work in a difficult economic context
- lack of resources to feed
- marginalization and exclusion from the labour circuit
- lack of safety depending on the region (emissary bounty and police abuse)
- migration is experienced as the only way out of extreme poverty
- need to find the Roma identity without worry in the host country
- need to find families who have already migrated
- possibility of strengthening identity through language by avoiding discrimination
- leave to escape forms of discrimination and stigmatization

- migrate to find a better future for their children

3.13.1. Concerning the importance of music

Music is described as a necessary part of Roma's life. Music engenders joy and sorrow, accompanies marriages, like deaths. Traditions and music are intertwined.

Without music, Romas seem to lose part of their soul. There are Roma music according to regions and countries.

If at the beginning the Romas adapted their way of playing, thanks to improvisation and embellishments using the music of non-Roma, they have in parallel developed their own music which can be described either as tears (illness, old age, death,...), that is to say a very syncopated music, dancing, very rhythmic, fast, accompanied by onomatopoeia.

Influenced by Magyar, Slavic, Oriental and Turkish music, Roma's music has been able to free itself little by little and become "typical", recognizable.

Chapter 4

The values

4.1. Core values among the Romas

The interviews highlighted the importance of the following :

- The clan, because together they feel strong; the clan makes it possible to initiate young people, but also to preserve customs. The clan has a leader who can resolve conflicts.
- The education of children at home by the example of the mother, the clan
- Family celebrations to strengthen ties, maintain their culture, find a husband, a wife
- Music is a glue that unites the community
- Music is essential during the holidays. It brings clan members together.
- Losing music is like losing a language
- Daily life shared with the family, but especially with the extended family
- Marriage which is sacred and which is prepared from puberty in the girl who must remain pure (cult of virginity)
- The role of the mother and the father is different. The father brings the money; the mother is the cement of the family.
- Relationships with religion: they are very religious, often superstitious
- Relations with the Gadjes: distrust, it is not their world. It is difficult for them to imagine their daughters or sons marrying a non-Roma.
- Certain beliefs linked to religion or the perception of being discriminated against, worried by the authorities
- Relationships at school : mistrust, because they do not understand the system and cannot help their children. They have the impression of no longer controlling anything, so school can be experienced as a danger for the preservation of their culture, their traditions.

- The importance of their culture allowing them not to be marginal in relation to the clan. The culture of the clan makes it possible to preserve the Roma language which is transmitted only orally.
- Importance of the Roma language, because it is their identity in relation to the world.

4.2. Encounters with the Romas have also enabled me to highlight the following:

- The positive experience of the foreigner by the children of the family is a positive signal for the parents
- Initially suspicious, Romas often test strangers when sharing a meal
- They are helpful with us to an overwhelming welcome
- Initially, they are very suspicious and do not answer the question or give an unclear answer
- When a stranger comes to their home, they are numerous so as not to leave the family member isolated from the family group
- There is a posteriori distrust of the Gadjes
- Members of the group discreetly surround the stranger to find out whether or not he represents a danger to the family
- When a family member is asked a question, several members speak at the same time and reinforce what the questioned member is saying
- It is very difficult to isolate a woman and ask her questions
- It is difficult to ask questions to a mother without the presence of the husband or family members
- At the start, the father is often worried about what will be done with the information collected
- Questioning children even in the presence of the parents is very difficult. It is better to be introduced by someone who knows the family very well and who guarantees that the foreign person does not represent a danger to the family. This can, for example, be a speech therapist who takes good care of the children of the family. It can also be another family member who knows us well and introduces us to the family.

- Once accepted by the family, the wall falls down and the Romas can consider you as accepted by the family; thus mistrust gradually disappears
- A strong sign of confidence is when he asks you for information concerning an administrative paper that they hand to us to explain to them what it is about. In a way, you become a trustworthy confidant, since if they are illiterate, which is often the case, they can take your word for it. You can become their public writer!
- Once they have gained their trust, you risk being frequently solicited, but since they have a different relationship with money than us, they may not understand that you refuse to help them without compensation, since you are considered to be part of the group. This often happens to teachers or speech therapists who take care of their children.
- The counterpart is often the overwhelming welcome, with an offer to eat with them
- Time is much less important to them and if they ask you for something, they can invite you to eat with them. This is the case reported by several speech therapists working from home with their children. Once rehabilitation is complete, they can show a form to fill out that they do not understand and invite them to eat. It is difficult for them to understand that the poor speech therapist has a schedule to respect.
- There is a strong cohesion of the family group but also inter-family (related families, friends, clan)
- Romas very easily exchange positive or negative information between themselves. For example, a speech therapist that the children like will be asked by other parents to also take care of the children.
- They are very attached to their traditions, their values and the music is omnipresent, as well as the dance which is in a way the translation of a state of mind of the moment (joy, pain)
- They mourn the young people who leave to marry a non-Roma, because these young people often found a family where traditions will no longer be lived so much. The fear of language loss is also an element highlighted in the testimonies.

Chapter 5

Living together

5.1. Questionnaire concerning “living together” with the Romas

In this chapter I will talk about the questionnaire addressed to non-Romas. The objective was to use a questionnaire in order to know the position of non-Romas compared to Romas in terms of "living together".

The method was as follows: approach people in a public place on a square or at the exit of a hypermarket. Ask the question, with YES/NO answer. If not, please ask to explain why. We chose the following cities to do the research: Budapest, HU (150 respondents) – Subotica, SRB (150 respondents) – Satu mare, RO (150 respondents).

I chose these cities and countries because I could easily speak the language.

5.2. Questions asked to non-Romas concerning, “living together”

“In a university research context, I would like you to answer YES or NO to a single question: Can you envisage living together with the Roma community? ”.

“If the answer is NO, could you explain WHY? ”.

"Don't worry, your answer will be anonymous."

Sample: 450 people questioned in 3 cities:

Budapest – Oradea – Subotica, i.e. 150 people in Hungary, Romania and Serbia respectively.

Here is the questionnaire with the total of the answers :

Question	YES	NO	WHY
Can you envisage living together with the Roma community?			Note: a directory of answers can be found later, in 5.3.1
Budapest	30	120	
Oradea	22	128	
Subotica	18	132	

5.3. Number of positive and negative answers to the question

After the answers to the questionnaire, here are the answers collected.

For Budapest (Hu):

Out of 150 people questioned, 30 answered “YES” and 120 answered “NO”.

For Oradea (Ro):

Out of 150 people questioned, 22 answered “YES” and 128 answered “NO”.

For Subotica:

Out of 150 people questioned, 18 answered “YES” and 132 answered “NO”.

The total number of people who answered the question "why" is 350 people.

The percentage of “yes” answers to the question concerning possible “living together” with the Roma for the 3 cities amounts to only 15.55%.

If we analyse each chosen city, we obtain the following percentages:

Budapest: 20% of people believe that “living together” is possible
Oradea: 13.33% of people believe that “living together” is possible
Subotica: 12% of people believe that “living together” is possible

These figures are alarming and show the possible tensions between the communities. Such a study would be interesting to carry out in Western countries where the Roma have settled since the 1990s.

However, any comparison would be biased by the fact that the concentration of the number of Romas is not the same in all countries.

What is interesting is the analysis of the answers to the question “why” “living together” is not possible.

5.4. Why people answered, “NO.”

First of all, it should be noted that if we remove the people who did not want to answer the question “Why”, we have a sample of 350 people who answered the question “Why”.

After noting the answers of the interviewees, I created a matrix to identify redundancies and identical answers.

In the analysis of the answers, I took up all the different answers, in order to highlight, not the amount of repetition of similar answers, but the number of original, different answers expressing the perception of the people. This perception, often linked to a negative experience, motivates people to reject or have difficulty seeing the possibility of “living together”.

I have listed the answers of the Romas (YES: NO) then the answers to the question “Why” it is not possible to live together with the Romas.

5.4.1. List of answers to the question, “why it is not possible to live together with the Roma”.

- They are thieves and together they are able to dismantle a car on the spot in a few hours.
- They do not know how to adapt to us, to the modern world. They have different customs from us: they let their children do everything when they are little. The boys can afford everything and the girls are exploited by the mother and the family.
- No respect for others, especially if it is a non-Romas. They have different customs. For example, their daughters are sometimes promised as early as 4 years old to another member of the clan.
- They are quite backward in relation to our way of life. For the problems between them, they have a kind of clan leader who can try to settle conflicts between them.
- They don't have the same logic as us: save money, buy a house,...
- They live from day to day, in the immediate future... No plans for the future. They don't know how to save, except for parties or a wedding.
- They are quite withdrawn. In fact, interbreeding is not frequent. When that happens, there are a lot of family problems, because at home everything has to be shared apparently!
- Often when a white girl marries a Roma, the Roma family wants her to assimilate into Roma culture. This creates family tension. Often it is heartbreaking and half the time, the couple does not work... But the problem is when there are children!
- They are not clever. They steal everything. They do not respect the school or the teachers.
- For an introduction to a job, you have to explain several times before they understand what they have to do.
- I am the boss and I know that as soon as my back is turned, he no longer works.
- They intermarry and often live in clans. They are suspicious of everything and they have no word.
- They intermarry and often live in clans. They are suspicious of everything and they have no word.

- They are sedentary, but at the same time they have not lost the desire to travel. This explains why they often move and can buy a house compared to us.
- Inbreeding is strong among them, which may explain their adaptation problem.
- They are not reliable, neither in the work nor in the promises made.
- Many landlords complain that they do not pay their rents.
- They ransack the houses, even if they occupy them; there are even those who steal electrical cables from buildings, bicycles, motorbikes, etc.
- Many are illiterate and downgraded, so they beg. Look downtown of Budapest, there are plenty of Roma beggars. They sleep on the sidewalks, they have no roof.
- In the communist period, they were no longer held and they were forced to work, otherwise, it was the sanction or even prison. When there is no authority, they take advantage of it.
- Some are good musicians, but they don't know how to do anything else. But since the change of the system, after 1989, life has become more difficult and restaurants no longer want them.
- They know how to play music very well, but mostly by the ear, but nowadays we want graduates and they are illiterate.
- They easily attack fragile people: they steal old women, a bag, groceries or when leaving a store, they ask for food or money.
- A Roma alone is not dangerous; when there are several of them, they are dangerous. They easily play the knife!
- They respect nothing, they are dirty, they destroy everything, I won't say more!
- They drink like sponges and then become very aggressive, even in their family.
- They live among themselves and have not adapted. They have been on our backs for hundreds of years and they have never adapted to society.
- The Communist Regime considered them to be middle-aged, backward people. We offered them work and housing. We even tried to assimilate them by force. We tried to send them to school for their children! Watch today! Too bad for them that communism has disappeared.

- For us, in 1989, there was a transitional period, a period of slump, but we adapted to the new capitalist regime, but not the Romas! I believe it is because they have always lived hand to mouth and are unable to think of a plan for the future.
- I think that the drama of the Romas is the illiteracy that we have not been able to solve since the end of the 19th century. Illiterate parents do not support their children. It is a cultural gap and it is therefore difficult to understand each other and live together.
- During changes in the political system, they go from downgrading to downgrading, except for a small percentage of them. And it is the same phenomenon in all countries. Difficult to live together with all that.
- They did not learn, already during their childhood that it was necessary to learn at school and to make an effort to succeed, to build a goal in life which comes later, of course. As a result, we and they cannot at all share the same vision of things, of life... Living it together is therefore difficult.
- In Western countries, they criticized us and even accused us of racism! But you will see, they will also realize that they cannot do better than us with the Romas! Too bad they don't have a country they could live in!... But without us, it would be better.
- In order for us to live together, they must give up their clan, culture and assimilate. There is too much of a gap between them and us.
- Interbreeding is a possible way, but I don't think it's possible for them. Likewise, would not like my daughter or son to marry a Roma. Not out of racism, but they have a way of life that is too different from us.
- We should find them a country of their own, because we are too different and living together is impossible.
- As a teacher, I can say that there are few children at the top of the class at school. Most of them fail, have problems with oral language, have difficulty learning to read and write. It is not for nothing that they do not succeed in school and that at university, Romas are rare. These academic failures make them vulnerable and lag behind in a society that is increasingly requiring in terms of knowledge and qualifications. In these conditions, it is difficult to live side by side, because the differences are too great.
- I have nothing against them, but let them not come and impose their way of life, their way of raising their children. Not respecting the property of others.

- In Romania, Hungary or Serbia or elsewhere, I believe you will have the same echoes, the same feelings about the Roma. It is very difficult to live together, because the perception is different in terms of goals in life, family education, school, acceptance of common rules, professionalism in work, etc.
- Children do not learn well in school because they are often absent
- Parents don't care about school or are unaware of the value of school
- They steal chickens, ducks and rabbits. I had to stop raising rabbits because I was regularly robbed. Now they are smart! They're probably telling a distant family member to come and rob us. Now I can't say it's my Roma neighbour. But my rabbits have been stolen since he became my neighbour.
- They do not stop begging... They also send their children to beg or steal.
- They are lazy. I have worked with several Roma in construction; I do not know of one who has been applied to his work. And then they come, they don't come.
- In terms of work, it is impossible to work in pairs, because I know that I will do the work alone, for both of them.
- They cannot be trusted; they have no voice.
- The whites are prey for them who are the predators. They don't even bother stealing from apartments any more. They send their children, but wait until the owners or tenants are absent. There are 12 apartments in the building and there has been a break-in in 4 apartments! We've never had that before. Now there are three Roma families. I'm not saying they're the thieves, but they let everyone in, they never close the front door of the building.
- They do not respect anything in the condominium, they deteriorate the common space. You can come and see in the building of 18 apartments. There are 3 Roma families for 6 years and the corridors are dirty, the children play in the elevators. The parents don't tell them anything!
- We always have problems with them. We live together in the same building, but it's untenable. You often have to call the police for the noises, thefts, damage they do to the building. The police have come several times to calm them down, but the problems continue!
- There is a common garden in our building, but the 3 Roma families occupy it all the time. Before the garden was flowery, now the garden is ugly... They cut the flowers, ransack the decorations, the children climb the trees and tear off the leaves for nothing. After a while, I'm going to move.

- Live together? You laugh? They are large families unable to make their children obey. When you make a remark to them, the children laugh at you.
- Once, I scolded a Roma child who was playing with the switch in the commons. The mother came out and assaulted me! They are not civilized, that's all! How do you want to glimpse a common life with them in a building or elsewhere?
- They break everything in their house, they often don't fix anything. They don't care: if the house is dilapidated, then they go somewhere else! Respect for property, they don't know what it is.
- They are invasive. When a neighbourhood is full of Roma, soon it's the city, because they have a lot of children.
- They are quickly aggressive and angry and when one of them has a problem with a blank, they come to eight to intimidate us.
- When there is a family in the village, it is OK, but as soon as there are several of them, it becomes problematic with them.
- Living with them is impossible, because they have values that we do not have.
- Living with them is difficult, because as soon as there are many of them somewhere, they want to rule the roost. They have no stability; they do not respect the lease concluded during a rental. They can leave overnight, like carrier pigeons.
- Living with them is problematic because they are quickly aggressive and they have a different notion of property. They respect the fact that something does not belong to them. So they happily fly in fields, vineyards, fruit trees, etc.
- Having a discussion with them is a problem because they don't respect the laws so much, which is a written rule. They live as if they have nothing to lose.
- You may notice that when a town, village or neighbourhood is invaded by Roma, the real estate value goes down. This is the case in certain districts of Timisoara (RO).
- People leave when there are too many Roma, because they don't respect the rules, there is rubbish everywhere, they steal, damaging everything in the houses. Even the police no longer come for neighbourhood disputes... They come when someone is injured or blood is flowing or for a car theft.
- When there are too many Roma in a neighbourhood, they bother us, it's insecurity, because many Romas drinks a lot. There is one who comes every time to piss in front of our house when he is drunk. The next day, I told him

not to do that any more. He said to me: "shut your mouth if you don't want trouble".

- I had to leave my village because there were more and more Roma, they party very late, there are many of them during family celebrations and they make noise, they don't respect the neighbours.
- Several times I told them not to use my front yard for cars park. It must be said that they are 11 in their house and we are four, with our two children. So I called the police who explained the neighbourhood rules to them. Since then, they throw their waste at our house. We threw a brick at our car, the children spit on our children. It's impossible! So we sold the house for half its value and moved to another town. Our house was bought by non-Romas. They phoned several times to say they were sorry, because they had problems with the Roma in the neighbourhood.
- They do not stop screaming their music while they live in buildings where respect for tenants must exist.

5.4.2. Analysis of responses

Apart from a few aggressive responses or racist type responses, what stands out is the misunderstanding between different lifestyles, different ways of raising children, a very different perception at the level of the common rules to be respected, respect the spaces.

In fact, it is the notion of "conviviality" that does not work and that is different, i.e. different lifestyles as well as a different vision of the family. Indeed, among the Romas the family is a fairly big clan, whereas among the Gadjes, the family seems more restricted, especially during family celebrations.

Among Romas, even extended family is invited, which means that family celebrations, for example, can include up to 200 people or more. Educational design is also very different. Indeed, the parents of non-Romas children seem to include school as a priority in the education of children in parallel with the family, whereas among the Romas, this is much less the case.

Socialization at school, through school, does not seem to play enough among the Romas either. Many Roma children are dropping out of school in Western countries where Roma have been welcomed, particularly in Belgium. (Sebök, F.2010, UCL - 2021, SU.)

However, the integration of these children can only be done through family education, but also education, which is becoming more and more important. Miscegenation is another problem. It seems far from being a reality in the countries of Central or Eastern Europe, as indeed among migrants, where young Romas mostly marry each other.

Yet the two communities have lived side by side for several centuries. It should be noted that among the Romas who have migrated to Western countries, we observe the same thing: young Romas of the second generation and even of the third generation most often marry each other.

Living together seems to be possible only through the voluntary action of a unifying government whose objective will be to reduce cultural disparities, but also disparities in school education.

Finally, the period after 1989 seems to have been unfavourable to the Romas. Having lost their jobs, they gave up because of socio-economic changes in the 90s, they have become useless for the other community, underqualified. Their situation is dramatic, even for those who left to find Eldorado in Western countries, such as Belgium, the Netherlands, England, France, Germany,...

It is to be feared that the same problems that they encounter in the countries of Central Europe and even further east such as Ukraine, will also appear in the Western host countries. These problems : multiple precariousness

- Difficulties getting a job
- Difficulties in finding accommodation for large families
- Difficulties of coexisting with the natives because of their way of life
- Difficulties in school education
- Difficulties of assimilation
- Difficulties in the emancipation of women in Muslim communities
- Difficulties in installing equality between girls and boys (school, work, freedom of choice, etc.)

Chapter 6

Importance of music in Roma's life

Now I will talk about the importance of music among Romas, especially during holidays and even in everyday life. From the outset, what appears to be important among the Romas is the dance linked to music according to the testimonies.

The syncopated rhythm, the rhythmic prowess to the sounds of the music for the men and the sensuality of the dances for the women seem important.

At weddings too, music plays an essential role, as well as in times of mourning.

The instruments vary by region, but the main instruments in Central Europe are:

- String instruments
- Accordion
- Guitar
- Jerk
- Sandals
- Cimbalum
- Clarinet or tãrogato (special Hungarian wind music instrument)
- Tambourine

6.1.Gypsy music at the crossroads of other traditional music

We can say that Gypsy music must be used in the plural because the Romas, over the centuries, have known how to appropriate the traditional music of the countries where they lived, by creating Gypsy variants.

This was the case every time there, where they passed.

This is how the music was enriched by gypsy accents: Magyar, Slovak, Czech, Romanian music, music from the former countries of the former Yugoslavia, klezmer music, music with jazz accents, Russian music, etc.

Alongside this enrichment by adaptation of existing music, Gypsy composers and musicians have also contributed their creations: think of Django Reinhardt, Danko Pista, Lakatos dynasty of violinists and many others.

6.2.Musicians under communism and after the fall of communism

I wanted to know what the possibilities were for Roma musicians under the communist regime and after the fall of the Communist Regime in 1989.

The testimonials concern musicians from the following countries:

Hungary – Romania – Serbia – Austria.

I was able to collect twenty testimonies. Answers are similar showing the difficulties after the fall of communism.

6.3. Twenty testimonies of Roma musicians

Here are the testimonies that I have been able to have and which reflect the words of Roma's musicians. These testimonies were collected in Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Austria.

1.

I come from a family of musicians that goes back to Bihari János (18th century) who was a composer and virtuoso violinist (Dobzsay László, 1998), I have always been immersed in music. Musicians were more adored during the communist period, when many Gypsy groups flourished. I succeeded after 1989, but I was lucky that many did not... I play concerts in various countries in Europe...

The overwhelming majority, illiterate, suffered from losing their freedom under a closed regime where excessive planning left few individual freedoms or a possibility of an expression of identity to the Romas.

2.

If communism took care to provide housing for the Roma, as well as work, it was at the cost of freedom of expression, freedom of movement so dear to the Gypsies, the loss of identity of a fringe of the Roma population, especially the poorest, as well as the loss of the Roma language...

This explains the quarrels about the figures around the Roma population in Hungary, which in reality revolves around a million souls...

During communism, everyone could eat at noon without a problem and so the lack of freedom was probably bearable for some. Now there is no more food for many Roma and they are trying to regain their freedom but they realize that it is more difficult than before communism... For the musicians it was better!

3.

Times have changed and our way of life is banned and many musicians are starving because before there were musicians in almost every cafe and now there is nothing and everything has become prohibitive.

Before, the state sponsored a lot: music, circus, theatre, education, etc. But the problem you see is that young people have no school, nothing... and then we don't really understand our sometimes quick reactions in business...

4.

You know, with us it's simple: "you want it or you don't want it!... Except with the "csaj" (women), it's more complicated (laughs)...

Communism wanted to assimilate them! So it's hard to find a job. So we take the Gypsies for good for nothing, but even at school, there is racism!

Unless you go to a school where there are plenty of Gypsies, but there, the level is zero. But the Gypsy you see is a proud person, and therefore the more we discriminate against them, the closer he is to his identity. But he is also a creative man, especially those who are musicians or craftsmen, but too bad, I admit, that we are misunderstood by the gadjes....

The musicians lived in better conditions than now...

Society was more egalitarian...

5.

For the non-Romas, we are unpredictable, but that's because we like parties, the spontaneous and the unexpected... and the gatherings are disturbing because they are more individualistic... we look for each other and we cultivate that! .

Music for us is sacred and gives hope to our daily life.

Before 1989, Gypsy music was valued more

6.

This misunderstanding, I think, comes from the fact that we don't look at life in the same way, neither time nor space... Well, there has been a Gypsy Hymn since 1993... (I had a copy that I translated to put it in the appendix of this memoir...)

Before, the music was in everyone's ears and we had worked, people were happier, even with less freedom. We suffered more with this lesser freedom, but it was still better than now where we have to leave because there is neither food nor work and you are beaten up in certain countries like Slovakia or Romania...

7.

Me, it's fine, because I go everywhere in Europe to play Gypsy music and this way I find my freedom, but it's not possible for most Gypsies, because the younger generation loses the musical tradition and then, what is left? ...

Music is part of the traditions and young people are losing this tradition... They prefer to listen to shitty music!

8.

Most Gypsies learned to play the instrument from the age of 3, like me. They did not go to the Academy (Conservatory here). To do what ? Those who come out of the Conservatory don't know how to play what we play.

9.

It's been in our genes for centuries. I no longer know how to speak Roma perfectly but a mixture with Hungarian, Romanian... when I speak with my family or with friends with words of our own...

Music and dance are gypsy treasures.

Before 1989, people respected our music more... Now, it has become a luxury of the rich or a curiosity to go and listen to in concert!

10.

I speak Hungarian and also Serbo-Croatian, also a little English which I learned on the job... it is important when you are a musician, otherwise where you want to go to play....

Before 1989, musicians could go from restaurant to restaurant, to the fairground, go and play at a non-Roma birthday party, etc. It was more free!... Now it's all over...

11.

Young people today no longer know how to speak Roma very well, or how to play music well... The life of musicians was easier under the Communist regime.

12.

Currently, there is still a revival, especially since the 2000.

We identify talented and motivated young people and we tell them to go to music school in addition to what we can teach them...

13.

Before 1989, there were fewer requirements than now!

A young person must have a music school bachelor's degree or master. I know how to read a score, but slowly.

I play everything by ear and I have an elephant's memory... I improvise and I make flourishes that even graduates ask me how I do...

But that's not what will feed me

14.

Before, I had a small orchestra that toured...

Now I'm alone and out of work

15.

If we don't get together, gypsy music will become a parlour curiosity. It was better before and more popular.

16.

As for me, I have a cousin in Austria who opened doors for me and I can perform in restaurants in Vienna... This is not the case for the majority!

17.

I played seasons in Germany, because the older generation still likes to listen to Gypsy tunes. Young people are no longer so interested, too bad, because the musical tradition is in danger of disappearing. Before 1989, I was going to play in 10-15 villages and there were always requests.

18.

Before 1989, I played in a "Gypsy Band" of 5 musicians and we could live from it. Now I'm out of work and playing in the streets.

19.

Life today is not the same as before 1989!
There's no point complaining... Either we're lucky or we're not... And since I play everything by ear, even Sarasate or Monty's Csárdás, or the "pacsirta" (lark), I no longer have contracts... and then, I finally found work in postal sorting!...

20.

If I had to summarize before and after 1989?
I would say that we have gone from a period conducive to artistic creativity, to shitty living conditions! Life wasn't always easy, but you didn't have to fight to find lunch for a musician.

6.4. Analysis of the testimonies of the 20 musicians

According to the testimonies, their relationship to the senses seems different from that of us.

From an early age, gifted children are cared for by virtuosos ("Primàs").

These children develop a perfect digital mastery as well as a phenomenal auditory memory. They can learn complex music without sheet music, just by the ear. Unfortunately, the world has changed and the standardization of training means that diplomas are now required for everything, which sounds the death knell for ear virtuosos.

The golden period of musicians seems to be 1960-1980
After 1989, most musicians and small orchestras disappeared from the music circuit. Some had to change jobs, others became beggars or street musicians.

If under the Communist regime, musicians were adored and filled their pockets with undeclared tips, after 1989, taxation, the reorganization of tax administration meant that they could no longer live with tips. They are also no longer under contract for companies, restaurants, etc.

After a major break in 1989 when musicians became “a useless luxury”, since the 2000, there has been a revival of Gypsy music in various countries. Community-based youth support helps young people develop their musical gifts, but they must go to music school if they want to be credible.

Knowledge of languages is important for travelling and making a career.
Most musicians say living conditions of life before 1989 was better.
Current demands limit the possibilities of living as a musician.
Being a virtuoso, but not knowing how to read a score, is no longer conceivable.

The older generation is still careful to Gypsy tunes, but this is much less the case among young people today.
As a result, popular Gypsy music risks becoming parlour music or a curiosity.

Chapter 7

Integration of Romas in the European area – Issue of “living together”

This vision presupposes political will and financial resources. This implies the construction of a “living together” acceptable to the various communities.

7.1. Issue of “living together”

To facilitate “living together”, a Government committed to this path should:

Reduce the community fears of each other and this by promoting diversity, but also by promoting multicultural programmes

Amend the law on compulsory education and in especially making education compulsory in nursery school, in order to promote the learning of the language of the host country.

Create effective learning centres for the country's language for adults to facilitate integration.

Accelerate the possible employment of migrants, quickly giving them financial autonomy. It is ineffective to make migrants wait for sometimes years, before they have a work permit.

Establish a real school mix by quota of migrant children / native children and avoid entire neighbourhoods of Roma and schools where there are few or no natives.

Promote social diversity at school: there are indeed schools for the rich and schools for the poor!

Reduce the “maschism” of knowledge. Indeed, the role of the Roma girl is already less envious than that of the boy who can afford more things.

A “male/female” equity in the programmes would make it possible to rebalance a trend.

Promote cultural diversity in public places allowing a better understanding of the other and annihilating fears.

Combat ghettos and ghettoization which are sources of community tensions.

Fighting community disparities.

Create a positive image of interbreeding because the more a community has an identity, the more it risks being closed.

Interbreeding is important for society when there are strong segregated minorities.

7.2. The dangers of the absence of interbreeding in a country with a high proportion of immigrants

The most important danger is the risk of fractures because of the gaps between several identity cultures.

Another danger lies in the fact that if at the socio-economic level, there are societal or economic problems, scapegoats are sought.

Ghetto is not a good condition for sharing culture, values, language, tradition. The risk is to create scapegoats.

Interbreeding seems to be a path to follow in order to digest or expand or combine the differences in order to create a new identity mould encompassing the differences and representing a single new identity culture.

However, most Roma parents experience interbreeding as a danger of losing their language, their values, their traditions.

8. Conclusions

During this research, I was able to meet a lot of families who were kind enough to testify and I thank them.

I can answer the questions of my research

Yes, there are forms of discrimination concerning Romas who have remained in the country.

Discrimination also exists in the host countries.

The reasons for having left their country can be explained in the majority of cases :

For economic reasons

Because of forms of discrimination and stigmatization

The dream of better living conditions for their children, including school.

However, school is sometimes difficult for them to understand.

The school can endanger customs and traditions and they believe that the school can teach things contrary to their vision of things.

They try to stay together even in the host country, otherwise there are important family celebrations to weave and strengthen family and clan ties.

I was able to collect their testimonies concerning their essential values. They are very attached to their values.

The importance of music

Music is essential during events, but also in everyday life. Music frees from evils and is a rooted gypsy expression at the crossroads of various types of music and countries where they live.

If Gypsy musicians were somewhat favoured, adored before 1989, after 1989 was a very difficult period when many had to change jobs or become beggars or homeless. The knowledge of languages and the fact of going to school for some created the possibility of restarting or starting. This restart was made possible by the identification of young talents held by the group.

A striking example is the group "The 100 Gypsy Violins" which successfully harps on concert halls in Europe. Some have created their little "band", others, but rarer, are guest soloists. Nevertheless, many could not survive the fragile period of 1989.

Living together

Regarding the perception of Roma by non-Romas, it is striking to note how the two communities are compartmentalized, not really knowing each other.

Beliefs, the fear of the other take precedence over dialogue and the search for understanding of the other.

Assimilation is not necessarily the right solution for these people of more than 15 million souls without a country. A good percentage of them, however, claim that central Romania is their home of origin.

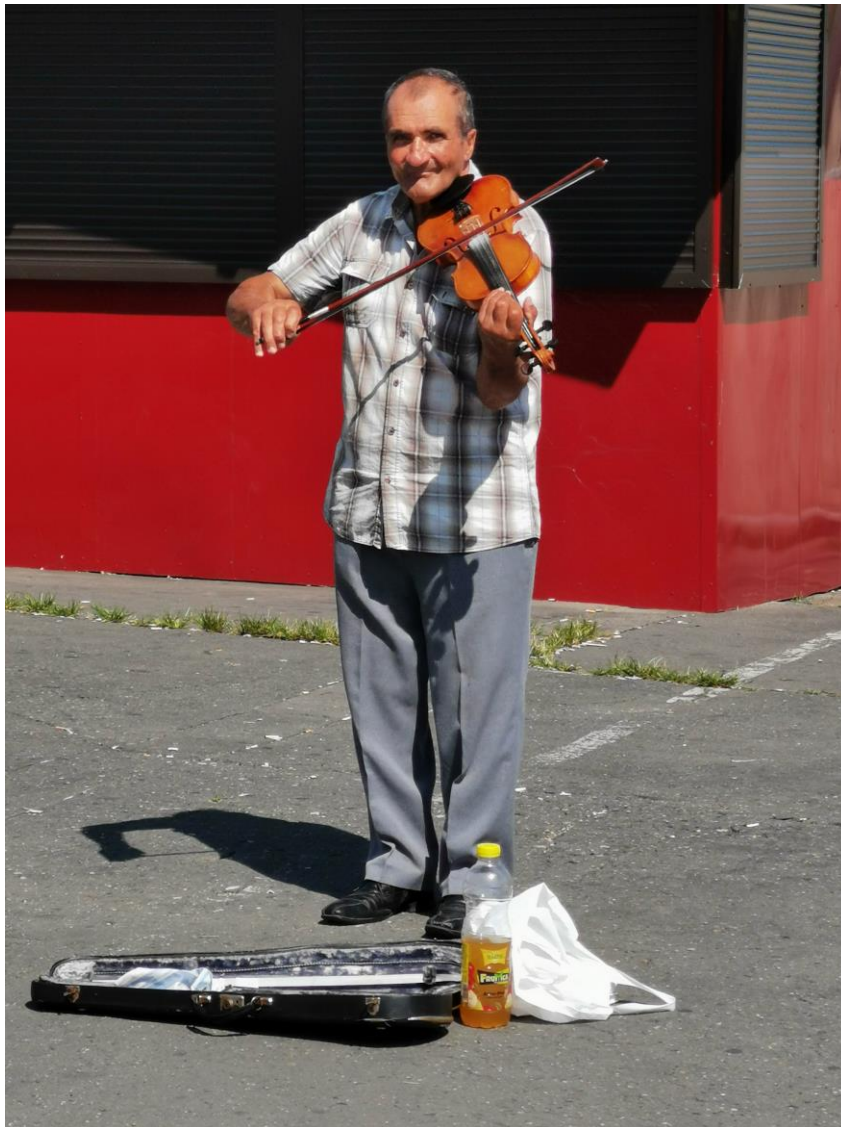
If assimilation is not the solution, because they want at all costs to preserve their customs, their values, their way of life, their language (the only way to survive because they have no country), each community (Roma and not -Roma) should find a place of understanding where tolerance would allow them to live together and chase away the beliefs and fears of the other.

Interbreeding will be difficult as long as the Roma community is withdrawn and that on the non-Roma side, negative impressions and beliefs generate forms of discrimination.

9. Annexe

Personal pictures

Photos : Roma playing violin in Budapest

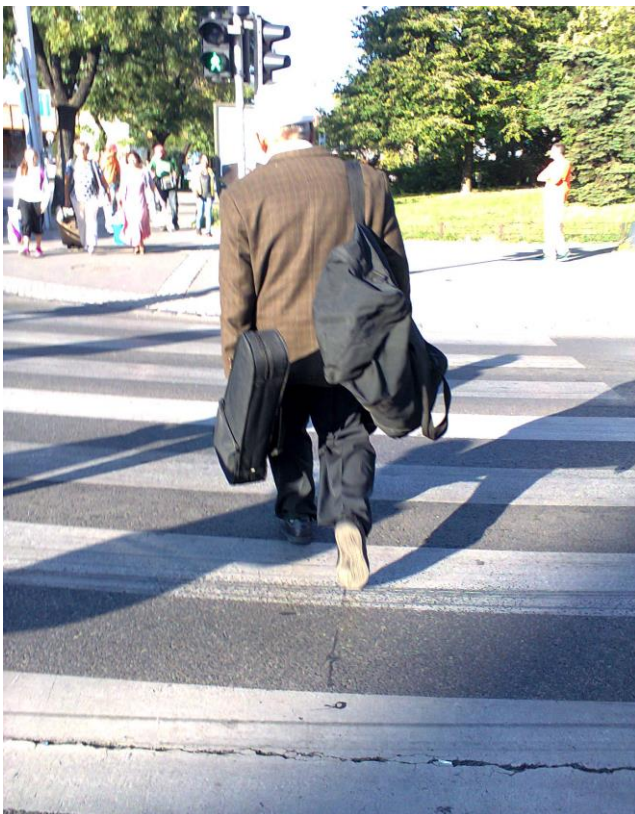




Interview on street with a gypsy musician



Roma musician usually playing violin in the street (Budapest)





Roma mother with her child



LA NON-SCOLARISATION EN FRANCE DES ENFANTS ROMS MIGRANTS

ETUDE SUR LES OBSTACLES A LA SCOLARISATION DES ENFANTS ROMS MIGRANTS EN FRANCE



Photos de couverture © Louis Saadi-Freskas



Roma pupils

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