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## **Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority**

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**Abstract.** *According to data obtained from Romania census we can observe a tendency of a continuous increase in the evolution of the ethnic structure of Roma ethnic population, but a comparison with the results of complementary studies raises question signs regarding a change of an identity nature. For this reason, the paper analyses identity elements specific to Roma communities in Romania, presented in specialty literature (linguistic, social, economic, educational and judicial elements) and resulted from an investigation based on questionnaires and on an interview focused on groups. The results show the fact that the belonging to a tribe is a main characteristic of Roma population. The ability to speak Romani is low; in Romania there are cases of entire communities of a Roma people which lost their language. Nowadays we can observe a trial to revive the Romani language through inter-cultural programs and the promotion of books and dictionaries. The economic profile of persons of a Roma ethnicity is discouraging, characterized by small incomes, of social assistance or by the performance of poorly paid activities which cannot guarantee a secure income. In the affirmation of a Roma ethnic identity cultural traditions are the ones that come first. The construction process of an identity is now centered on a cultural affirmation, on the mobilization of resources from the community, by encouraging and forming intellectual and political elite. A reconsideration of the Roma ethnics in the structure of the contemporary Romanian society must necessarily begin as a redefining of an identity realized by these ethnics.*

**Keywords:** *Roma minority, ethnicity, identity changes, Romania, 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

### **Introduction**

One of the most recent aspects brought to the Romanian public attention is connected to the fact that during the last decades the Roma minority has registered a fluctuant increase, fact which caused a difficulty of an exact establishment of its number and thus a difficulty in a national public politics prognosis for this ethnicity. According to the results of the 2011 census, the number of Roma ethnics from Romania is of 619.000 persons, representing 3,2% of the total of the stable population<sup>1</sup>. According to the data published by NIS, in 2002 the number of Roma ethnics from Romania was of 535.000 persons - 2,5% of the total of the stable population<sup>2</sup>. According to 1992 census, there were 409.723 Roma ethnics in Romania, representing 1,8% of the total of the stable population<sup>3</sup>. Still, according to other statistics, the number of Roma ethnics from Romania would be a lot greater: the Institute of Research of Life

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Statistics, *Romania in numbers*, Bucharest, Breviar Statistic, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Statistics, *Population and housing census*, vol. IV, „Ethical and confessional structure. Population according to ethnicity for the census of 1930-2002, on counties, 2002”, www.insse.ro, accessed on 25.12.2020.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate>, accessed on 25.12.2020.

„Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority”, *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 111-123. Quality estimated their number in 1998, between 1.452.700 and 1.588.552 (hetero-identified), from which from 922.465 to 1.002.381 (self-identified)<sup>4</sup>. The statistics of the World Bank estimate around 3 million, Amnesty International 2,2 million<sup>5</sup>, and the European Commission between 1,8-2,5 million – fact which can show a massive ethnic solidarity and a conversion to a majority culture<sup>6</sup>.

### **Problem Statement - Identity changes among romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority**

In Romania, in most situations, the analyses approach regarding the Roma community has been and still is realized from an ethnic perspective. Instruments of identity changes and measurement are mainly censusing, for which affidavits are free. Still, official censuses are not able to offer a real figure on the basis of an ethnic auto-identification. According to censuses realized in Romania we can observe a tendency of continuous development in the evolution of an ethnical structure of the Roma population ethnicity, but a comparison with the results of complementary studies rises question marks regarding an ethnic identity change.

### **Purpose of the Study. Research Methods**

The purpose of this study is the identification of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations that stand at the basis of person auto-identification of a Roma ethnicity. For this reason, we have proposed to analyze identity elements specific to the Roma community in Romania, elements which represent landmarks of an identity nature.

The research design contains methods of information collection: qualitative (study of texts and interviews) and quantitative (investigation based on questionnaires), methods of information processing: texts analyses (selection, synthesis and comparison) and the SPSS software, methods of research data interpretation: content qualitative analysis and outputs of the SPSS software, by using tables with frequencies and percentages, cross tables, charts and Pearson correlations. The study of texts and official documents facilitates the underlining in a general frame of the evolution of identity changes of Roma ethnics information regarding the history, the specific and the presents of romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority. An investigation based on a questionnaire brings a plus of objectivity, in the case of an identification of the present characteristic of the Roma community in Romania.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.edrc.ro/resurse/rapoarte/Roma\\_of\\_Romania.pdf](http://www.edrc.ro/resurse/rapoarte/Roma_of_Romania.pdf), accessed on 20.12.2012.

<sup>5</sup> I. Gavril, *What problems does the non-declaration of the Roma ethnicity raise in the census*, <http://spunesitu.adevarul.ro>, accessed on 23.11.2020.

<sup>6</sup> D. Sandu, *Roma Communities of Romania. A Map of Poverty Based on the PROROMI Survey*, Bucharest, World Bank, 2005, <http://www.anr.gov.ro>, accessed on 23.11.2020.

The analysis of the sample obtained on a field study contains the following indicators: the county, in which the instruments were applied, the type of locality in which the subject lives, the gender and the age category in which the subject is framed. The sample of this research is composed of a number of 669 persons of a Roma ethnicity from 5 counties, in a proportion that is approximately equal to the urban environment 51,3 % and from the rural environment 47,7 %.

The analysis of the sample from the age category perspective, the subject of the study is a part of, allows us to observe a relatively balanced distribution, with an anticipated plus for the first age category. Thus, we have 42,9% persons of a Roma ethnicity in the 1<sup>st</sup> category, 16 – 25 years; 29,4% in the 2<sup>nd</sup> category, 26 – 35 years and 27,7% in the 3<sup>rd</sup> category, 36 – 46 years.

### **Findings. Identity elements specific to Roma minority**

#### **Landmarks and linguistic characteristics of Roma minority**

A great scholar said that the true history of the gypsy race is found in the study of their languages. Thus we present a few documentary aspects of the gypsy language<sup>7</sup>:

- The first samples of gypsy language were published in England in the year 1547, but these were identified as samples of Egyptian language.

- Three studies that research the gypsy language dialects are very important in the demarche of establishing its origin: Alexandre Paspati (1870), „Études sur les Tchinghianés ou Bohémiens de l'Empire Ottoman”, published in Constantinople; John Sampson (1926) „The Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales” and O Gjerdman and E. Ljunberg (1963), „The Language of the Swedish Coppersmith Gypsy”. The authors identify in the gypsy language dialects specific to the geographic area from which they origin.

- 200 years ago it has been mentioned for the first time that the Romani language has an Indian origin, due to its resemblance to certain Indian speeches, and the trend lead by Sir Ralph Turner (in his paper „The position of Romani in Indo-Aryan”, 1927) confirms through research this affirmation. Of course, the opponents of this trend, led by John Sampson, sustain that the Romani language has its origin in the North-West provinces, lands left in the 9th century by the nomad gypsies.

Over time, the writing standards for the Romani language were totally lacking. Nowadays we can observe a trial to revive the Romani language through inter-cultural programs and the promotion of books and dictionaries.

Starting from the premises that the language represents an essential identity element we have questioned the ability and the frequency of Roma ethnics to speak Romani in comparison, for example, to Romanian.

*Table 1. The ability to communicate in Romanian*

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<sup>7</sup> F. Angus, *Gypsies*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2008, p. 17-29.

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		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	Good	552	82.5	82.5
	medium	74	11.1	11.1
	low	25	3.7	3.7
	I don't have	18	2.7	2.7
Total		669	100.0	100.0

*Table 2. The ability to speak Romani*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	good	177	26.5	26.5
	medium	90	13.5	13.5
	low	115	17.2	17.2
	I don't have	287	42.9	42.9
Total		669	669	100.0

*Table 3. The ability to speak Romani in communities where Roma people represent the majority*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	another	87	36.9	36.9
	Romanian	33	14.0	14.0
	Romani	48	20.4	20.4
	another	68	28.8	28.8
Total		236	100.0	100.0

We can observe the fact that at the level of the sample questioned, the ability to speak Romani is low. The loss of the Romani language is not specific to some individual cases in which gypsies left their origin groups and were assimilated by neighboring communities, fact which can be observed in the answers of people leaning in communities where Roma people represent the majority. In Romania there are cases of entire communities of a Roma people which lost their language, but it is possible they kept their group awareness and life style.

### **Landmarks and social characteristics of Roma minority**

The landmarks of the Roma population migrations are especially important and numerous in the establishing of the identity of this ethnicity. Most studies confirm the Asian origin of gypsies, the origin country being North India. Donald Kenrick considers that the gypsies departure from India was produced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.C., when the shah Ardashir (224-241 A.C. conquered and transformed the North of India into a colony belonging to Persia (today's Iran)<sup>8</sup>. Relating from a chronicle written by the Arab Al Utbi

<sup>8</sup> D. Kenrick, *Rromii: from India to Mediterana. Roma migration*, Bucharest, Alternative, 1998, p. 18-19.

during the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.C. – Marcel Courthiade considered that the departure of the old gypsies towards Europe, towards the West, had place at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, on the 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1018.<sup>9</sup>

The gypsies' migration towards Europe was realized gradually during more centuries. Different documents confirm the presence of gypsies in different European regions<sup>10</sup>: the letter of the Constantinople patriarch, Gregorios II Kyprios, from the year 1283 speaks about taxes that should be taken from the so-called *gypsies*; during the year 1322 a Franciscan monk, Simon Simeonis from Crete described a group of gypsies that have had lodged in caves and Arabian long tents, near Candia (Iraklio); In Moldavia during the year 1385 we could find texts that confirmed the *gypsies slavery*; a document signed by the Venetian governor of Naupliei during the year 1397 speaks about privileges for *acingans*; between 1407-1416 we could find chronicles confirming the presence of gypsies in Germany; in 1521 The Swedish chronicle of Olai Petr relates about the ones that travel from one country to another and which are called *tater*; during the year 1526 D. Jao III from Portugal edicts the expulsion of *Ciganos* etc.

As we have already mentioned, the first documentary confirmation of gypsies on today's Romanian territory dates from the year 1385. At that moment the ruler for the Romanian Country, Dan the 1<sup>st</sup>, offered to the Tismana Monastery the possessions which first belonged to the Vodita Monastery. Among these goods, movable and immovable, we could find 40 dwellings belonging to *atigans*<sup>11</sup>. The establishment of gypsies in this geographical area was due to „the discovery of favorable economic niches brought from India or which were learnt in the Byzantine Empire: the processing of metals and wood and entertainment”<sup>12</sup>.

The conclusion of these two studies represents essential characteristics of persons of a Roma ethnicity: the fact that they organized in groups when they travelled with the purpose of finding favorable economic in order to value their abilities. Always found at the border between art and the need for money, the gypsies' crafting and customs are the ones that offered a name to *gypsy tribes*. I. Chelcea recognized the following gypsy tribes<sup>13</sup>: *smiths, fiddlers, day laborers, flower sellers, boots cleaners, tinsmiths* (the crafting abilities of settled gypsies - fireplace builder), *wood crafters - shovelers, pot crafters*, smiths, duffers, gurbets, sieve makers, cauldron makers, bells makers, bear leaders (the occupations of nomad

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<sup>9</sup> M. Itu, J. Moleanu, *Indian culture and civilization*, Bucharest, Credis, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> J. P. Liegeois, *The Roma in Europe*, Bucharest, Bureau of the Europe Council, 2008, p.15-18.

<sup>11</sup> [http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rromii\\_din\\_Rom%C3%A2nia#Istoric](http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rromii_din_Rom%C3%A2nia#Istoric), accessed on 20.12.2020.

<sup>12</sup> Centre of Documenting and Information regarding Minorities from the South-East Europe (CEDIMR-SE), *Roma from România*, <http://www.ardor.org.ro>, accessed on 01.11.2020.

<sup>13</sup> I. Chelcea, *Roma from România (ethnographic monography)*, Bucharest, Central Institute of statistics, 1944, p. 37.

„Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority”, *Astra Sabvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 111-123. gypsies). To these we can add<sup>14</sup>: *Gabor* (Hungarian gypsies, which in the past dealt with tinsmithing, but nowadays also deal with ambulatory commerce with carpets, blankets and home objects), *cauldron makers* (their traditional crafting refers to the processing of tin, from which they make cauldrons, treys and kettles), *Lovars* (Hungarian gypsies which dealt in the past with horses trade).

The results showed by data from the realized investigation, show the fact that the belonging to a tribe is a main characteristic of Roma population. For the option another tribe we can mention the tribes specific to regions where the questionnaire was applied: miners, blacksmiths, horse dealers, fiddlers, builders and tismanar.

Table 4. The tribe Roma ethnics belong to

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Home builder	133	19,9	20,2	20,2
	Cauldron makers	104	15,5	15,8	35,9
	Miners	20	3,0	3,0	38,9
	Tinsmith	2	,3	,3	39,2
	Silk craftsmen	10	1,5	1,5	40,8
	Bear leaders	18	2,7	2,7	43,5
	Brick builders	95	14,2	14,4	57,9
	Gabor	6	,9	,9	58,8
	Another	136	20,3	20,6	79,4
	None	136	20,3	20,6	100,0
	Total	660	98,7	100,0	
Missing	System	9	1,3		
Total		669	100,0		

We have already stated that it is possible for Roma ethnics, even if they don't know or speak the Romani language, to have kept their group awareness and their life style. The belonging to a tribe is not a characteristic only of the newly formed communities of Roma ethnics. An ethnic affiliation is thus understood through its specificity - an affiliation to subgroups (tribes) - the pride of belonging to an ethnic subgroup, measured directly through a favorable attitude towards the Roma history and specific.

<sup>14</sup> D. Grigore, *Rromaniipen. Fundamentals of Roma identity*, course support, Timisoara, Parudimos Association, 2010.

### Economic landmarks and characteristics of Roma minority

The type of community in which Roma people live has deep implications in their qualification. Thus for Roma people coming from compact and isolated communities we can find characteristics as the lack of a qualification or the presence of competencies in traditional crafting. As they move away from these communities, get qualifications, usually in modern crafting. In the study realized: 8,8% of Roma people questioned live in Roma communities, 26,5% live in communities where the Roma population represents the majority and 64,7 % of the persons interviewed live in communities where the Roma population represents the minority.

*Table 5. The presence of Roma citizens at the community level*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	Roma community	59	8,8	8,8
	Community in which Roma citizens represent the majority	177	26,5	26,5
	Community in which Roma citizens represent the minority	433	64,7	64,7
Total		669	100,0	100,0

Socio-economic statistic data are rare, mainly as a result of the fact that many citizens of a Roma ethnicity are not registered as members of a specific group. The lack of these data is at the same time the result of a limited integration of gypsies into an official economy<sup>15</sup>. The political Romanian climate found in full changing lead to an evolution of traditional Roma occupations: 3,9% in 1992 and 10,3% in 1998. Researchers explain this reviving on the basis of the Romanian economic evolution 1992 until 1998. During this period many gypsies lost their jobs, being forced to return to their traditional occupations. Another explanation, offered by the same researcher, would be the accent that many organizations put on the reviving of traditional occupations.

The analysis of income sources of the persons interviewed underlines the fact that the state is the one that sustains this category of citizens. 34,8% of the income sources mentioned at the first choice and even 54,2% of the income sources specified for the second choice in the questionnaire can be framed in the social help category. Independent activities cannot be neglected as income sources, being mentioned in the first choice with a percentage of 6,1%. In this category chimney sweeping, iron collection and/or nonferrous materials collection and day laborers are the most important. I among these activities considered to be secondary we can mention: small business, music, and house-keeping or construction labor. In the lack of other sources, the child support is

<sup>15</sup> E. Bakker, "The economic situation of Slovakia's minorities" in S. Trifunovska (ed.), *Minorities in Europe*. Croatia, Estonia and Slovakia, T.M.C. Asser Press, The Hague, 1999, p. 189-207.

„Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority”, *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 111-123. followed by ambulatory clothing commerce, day labor and help received from parents in percentages that are in relatively close percentages, but also a series of less meaningful sources, as music.

*Table 6. Categories of income sources*

No.	Income sources	Number of choice		
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
1.	Salaries incomes	26,1	6,5	0
2.	Social help	34,8	54,2	0
3.	Agriculture	,8	2,8	42,9
4.	From abroad relatives	8,2	13,1	14,3
5.	From independent activities	6,1	3,7	0
6.	Other sources	21,9	19,6	42,9

Thus the economic profile of persons of a Roma ethnicity is discouraging, characterized by small incomes, of social assistance or by the performance of poorly paid activities which cannot guarantee a secure income.

### **Educational landmarks and characteristics of Roma minority**

The education of ethnic minorities in Romania is defined in two general frameworks: policies for minorities and policies regarding access to education for disadvantaged groups. The main emphases of educational policies for Roma minority have resulted since 1990. The emphasis has shifted from Roma school mediators, Roma school inspectors, through positive discrimination measures aimed at ensuring special places for Roma students in the education system, or through the Second chance Program, to emphasize the importance of access to pre-school education. During the process of accession of Romania to the European Union, various European and international institutions have played a major role in defining the policies for Roma people. Multiannual Phare Programs had a special impact, mainly through the allocation of financial resources by the European Commission for social inclusion. Strictly monitored during the accession process, the Romanian Government has worked out a number of general policies for Roma people, which had important reference on education<sup>16</sup>.

National statistics shows that of those persons aged 91360 over 6 years following an educational level, 42148 (46,1%) were in the primary level, 43346 (46,1%) were in a secondary level, 2552 (2,8%) were in a vocational school and 2747 (3%) were in a high school. 0,6% are found in the higher education institutions of short or long duration<sup>17</sup>.

Despite progress made in the last 10 years following affirmative action and other initiatives implemented in Romania, there remains a constant gap between the Roma and non-Roma in terms of achieved educational

<sup>16</sup> J.P. Liegeois, *Roma in Europa*, Bucharest, Council of Europe Information Office, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> National Agency for Roma, <http://www.anr.gov.ro/html/Statistici.html>, accessed on 01.02.2021.



background. Therefore, from the people who declared themselves as Romanians, 14.8 % graduated higher education, and from those who declared themselves as Hungarians, 10.2 % graduated higher education, while within the group declaring themselves as Roma, the proportion is of just 0.7 % (3,397 Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority having higher education were identified in the census).<sup>18</sup> This situation is found also in our sample in terms of the level of education:

Table 7. *Level of education*

Level of education	Primary school	Secondary school	Compulsory education (10 classes)	High school	Vocational school	Higher education
Procent	50,9%	36,1%	9,6%	2,1%	0,7%	0,4%

Education is the strongest tool in the hands of adults and children from marginalised groups which can raise them out of poverty, both socially and economically. In Romania, kindergarten enrolment rate for Roma children aged 3-6 years is way below that of the majority population, 37 % of Roma children vs. 77 % of non-Roma children<sup>19</sup>. Two out of ten Roma children do not attend school, and the most cited reason is the lack of financial resources<sup>20</sup>. One out of six Roma parents invokes ethnic discrimination as the reason for their children's weak school attendance<sup>21</sup>.

### **Judicial landmarks and characteristics of of Roma minority**

On Romanian territory gypsies were enslaved for 600 years, overpassing the number of slaves of another ethnicity (Tatar and even Romanians), so that in their usual language and even in the administrative one the word *slave* became synonym to *gypsy*. The idea that gypsies came from the South of the Danube as free people and slavery was a specially created institution for this population, during the Middle Ages - idea circulated by some gypsy militants - has no support, because the phenomenon of medieval slavery didn't characterize only the Romanian Countries, but it was present in all neighboring countries (the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Slave countries from the South of the Danube): „the slave represents a movable, it lacks judicial personality, it doesn't count in front of the law, he cannot confess, the slave's family could be

<sup>18</sup> Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian, *Citizens belonging to Roma Minority for 2015-2020*, p.7, <https://ec.europa.eu>, accessed on 01.02.2021.

<sup>19</sup> The World Bank, *Toward an equal start: closing the early learning gap for Roma children in Eastern Europe*, 2012, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> A. M. Preoteasa, M. Șerban, D.Tarnovschi, *The Condition of Roma in Romania. Between Social Inclusion and Migration*, Bucharest, Soros Foundation România, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> L. Surdu, *Roma school participation, non-attendance and discrimination in Romania*, Bucharest, Vanemonde, 2011; cited in United Nations Economic and Social Council, Draft country programme document Romania, 2012, p. 3-4.

„Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority”, *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 111-123. spread between more owners, the owner could sell the husband or the child to another owner. The Administration controlled this population”.<sup>22</sup>

During the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a change of authorities' politics concerning gypsies took place, due to new Enlightenment and uniformist vision from Vienna. We have to underline the fact the gypsies' abolition of slavery act, emitted by the emperor Josef the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Especially during this period, but also during the following century imperial authorities lead a politics of ethnic assimilation of gypsies. These were forbidden from living in temporary establishments, from speaking their language and from using their traditional clothing, to circulate freely from one shire to another (thus introducing for this purpose the use of passports), to own horses and wagons, for men (over the age of 16) the obligation to follow a military stage is introduced, and for children the obligation to follow school laic and religious courses; land owner have the obligation to offer them to gypsies lads for them to cultivate, most of them practicing agriculture.

Enslavement was followed by a project of settlement, by offering judicial and social conditions and even occupational similar to peasants that represented the majority of the country citizens. But this project had been compromised by the Rural law of the ruler Al. I. Cuza from 1864: the landlords tried to drive gypsies away from their lands, where authorities tried until 1850, to settle them.

The effects of state politics with a racist character during the Second World War and the episode of Transnistria deportations, contributed to the consolidation of mistrust and violence of gypsies towards authorities. The use of statistic and evidence bureaucratic resources of the population in the context of this collective trauma, is a cause that needs to be mentioned for the gypsies' reticence towards the official assuming of the gypsy ethnicity.

The minority assimilation politics, of socio-cultural and economic uniformity and of literacy of literacy assumed by the communist regime, the cultural and economic effects of globalization and of politics of adhesion and European integration associated with the re-institution of democracy, the economic difficulties and the difficult access to quality education and to social services for the poor population, the persistence of racism towards gypsies brought their contribution to the dissolution of the Romanian gypsy community identity.

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<sup>22</sup> [http://www.adevarul.ro/interviurile\\_2\\_plus\\_1/Viorel\\_Achim-\\_Marea\\_migratie\\_a\\_tiganilor\\_abia\\_incepe\\_0\\_334166865.html](http://www.adevarul.ro/interviurile_2_plus_1/Viorel_Achim-_Marea_migratie_a_tiganilor_abia_incepe_0_334166865.html), accessed in 2.12.2020.

The word *gypsy* is still keeping, in the Romanian collective thinking and in the Romanian language, the profound pejorative sense, determining and being determined by the negative social representation of gypsies. The following sayings are used even nowadays: *The gypsy will remain gypsy until the Easter day, When the gypsy become emperor he hanged his father, The wicker is not a tree as the gypsy is not human, The wicker is a barrel wood, not the gypsy a leading man, The gypsy is not human until he steels, When the gypsy reached the shore, he drowned' and many others.* Besides the says mentioned expressions from the current vocabulary are also used, as for example: *Begging like a gypsy, Fighting at the opening of the tent, Fighting like gypsies, Fighting as being in front of the tent opening.*

In this context, an interesting aspect for the study of the Roma community is the relation of its members to the community; the trust degree and the relating with other persons from the same town or with the institutions of the state. According to correlations, the level of education cannot be connected to the manner in which this appreciates the relation with the family members, with neighbors, with the people from the community and the representatives of the state institutions.

Table 8. Correlation education level – relating level

	The education level graduated	How do they appreciate relations with the family members	How do they appreciate relations with neighbors	How do they appreciate relations with the inhabitants of the same town	How do they appreciate relations with the personnel of the state institutions
How do they appreciate relations with the family members	1	,013	-,025	-,015	-,073
Pearson correlation					
Sig. (2-tailed)		,808	,635	,771	,167
N	368	367	367	366	362

We can observe on the basis of the correlative study that persons with the ability to relate transfer these abilities in the interaction with the family, with the neighbors and with other people from the community and with the representatives of the state institutions. Roma ethnics found in relations with the people from their community are also found in good relations with their neighbors (a significant strong correlation of 0,615) and with the representatives of the state institutions (a significant strong correlation of 0,696). On the other side Roma ethnics that don't relate very well with other

„Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority”, *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 111-123. people from their community have problems with their neighbors and with the representatives of the state institutions.

### Conclusions

The history of Roma ethnics from Romania, especially after the Second World War, during the communist period and even in the context of its disappearance and the liberalization of people circulation towards the Occident bring its contribution in the establishing of the present distribution. The reticence towards the assuming of an ethnic identity in the case of partially assimilated gypsies, the spirit of independence of small Roma communities, where these still survive, of segregation towards other communities, derives from the historical circumstances presented. The economic difficulties and the difficult access to quality education and to social services for the poor population, the persistence of racism, characteristics presented in today's Romanian society bring their contribution to the dissolution of the ethnic identity of the Roma community in Romania.

All the characteristics presented in this paper are mainly the consequence of extrinsic demarches provoked by history, by the social, the economic, politics and the judicial, which had as purposes the expulsion of Roma ethnics or their ignoring or their assimilation. The particular characteristics are the situations in which we can speak about real actions of empowerment of Roma ethnics for a socio-economic affirmation and adaptations, with attention and respect for the ethnic unity and integrity

We may state that the Roma community was formed due to cultural traditions but also due to external factors as discrimination and marginalization which confirm the fact that the identity is a game of auto-identifications and hetero-identifications. The extrinsic and intrinsic resorts that stand at the basis of the auto-identification of persons of a Roma ethnicity intertwined. Today it seems that in the case of Roma ethnics identity doesn't represent a declarative action, as the frequent use of the Romani language, but more a group awareness and a life style. An ethnic affiliation is more understood through specificity - the affiliation to subgroups (tribes) - the pride of belonging to an ethnic subgroup with traditions and customs. The construction of an identity is centered today on a cultural affirmation, through the mobilization of resources from the community, through the encouragement and the construction of intellectual and political elite.

The purpose presented of an identity construction of a Roma ethnicity (with a noble purpose) is to raise the statue of a community member from the *Roma* one (a term with pejorative connotations) to the *Romani*, symbolical speaking from *slave* to an equal status with any citizen of a country, by keeping the right to auto-identify as a member of the gypsy community. We also have to remember in this context the word *Romani* as a common name given to all

gypsies in the world<sup>23</sup>. *Romani* is an old word of the Romani language, used for the belonging to a Roma ethnic community: „Romani had a great emperor, a Romani. He was our prince. He was our pad shah. The Romani people lived then all in one country in a good vilayet. The name of this vilayet was Sindh... this was a clean country (beautiful). You could find there a lot of happiness and joy. Everyone lived ok there.”<sup>24</sup> - a fragment of the Roma history in the vision of a chimney sweeper from Bulgaria, Ali Ceaușev, a reflection of his wish to identify with a people, with a strong ruler.

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<sup>23</sup> M. Block, *Moeurs et coutumes des Tziganes*, Paris, Payot, 1936, p. 43.

<sup>24</sup> G. Sarău, *Rromii, India și limba rromani*, Bucharest, Kriterion, 1998, p. 14 .

„Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority”, *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 111-123.