Patterns of Inter-ethnic Relations with the Roma in the Carpathian Basin

Patterns of Inter-ethnic Relations with the Roma in the Carpathian Basin:

Stigmatising Distinction

By

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INTRODUCTION

In the early 2010s, I carried out applied anthropological research with a team in a settlement in Northern Hungary to assess its conflict potential in relation to the Roma-Hungarian population. The settlement was predominantly inhabited by elderly Hungarians, as well as Roma people, who made up almost half of the population. Based on the fieldwork and the interviews conducted thus far, their relationship appeared to be rather tense and conflictual. With a university student, I visited an elderly couple in the village centre to find out their views on local Roma-Hungarian inter-ethnic relations. Much to our surprise, the elderly couple had a guest, a Roma woman in her forties. The husband was lying in bed. The Roma woman was sitting on the bed next to him, holding his hand throughout our visit. We soon learned that the elderly man was her godfather. She would stroke the sick man and smile at him constantly – it was clear to see that the three of them had a very close and intimate relationship. Sensing the unusual situation, we did not mention the Roma. They, however, soon did when we asked them about current relations in the settlement. The elderly couple pointed out that there were "decent" Roma families in the village but the ones that had moved in from a nearby settlement after the regime change made life very difficult for the villagers. They set out a long list of problems: these "not decent" Roma keep the local elderly people in fear, steal from them or rob them, and they are unreliable and violent. The couple's Roma goddaughter, who was a descendant of a local gypsy musician family and had been living in Budapest for two decades, confirmed this view. Our conversation made it clear that the godparents did not regard her as a Gypsy because she did not live and behave like the newcomer Gypsy families living in poverty. We were also surprised that the Roma woman, who had a middle-class lifestyle, used the same stigmatising labels for one group of the local Roma as her godparents. In my previous fieldwork, I also found that Roma families who are similar in their way of life and values are accepted and not classified into the category of Roma, and integrated Roma families distance or even dissociate themselves from their peers who live 'the Roma way.' There are thus two categories of Gypsies in local communities: those who are viewed as a stigmatised group and those who have left the negative category.

One of the most characteristic features of East-Central Europe is the inter-ethnic relations of different ethnic and religious groups, that is, multiculturalism. One of the main goals of the research carried out by the Cultural and Visual Anthropology Institute at the University of Miskolc was to reveal the mechanisms of the acceptance of a different cognitive, relational and behavioural model in the local societies selected. Analysing recent patterns of inter-ethnic relations among different ethnic, religious and cultural groups is a current challenge in anthropological research. During centuries of living together, the different ethnic groups formed cultural ties without which their culture today cannot be understood. Multiculturalism is a notion that is suitable to a complex but unified anthropological analysis of the cultural processes characteristic of the region investigated. In order to do so, the one-dimensional nature of research needs to be discarded in favour of a precise analysis of factors defining cultural diversity. In my view, multiculturalism may be best understood through the analysis of several factors according to unified criteria. In order to extend knowledge on the topic, empirical research has been carried out in Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia and Hungary. In all the chosen settlements the main focus of research was the ethnic, religious, economic and social dimensions of multiculturalism. The complex analysis of different local communities is aimed at identifying trends and patterns the interpretation of which may lead to theoretical understandings of strategies of inter-ethnic relations and types of cultural relations existing among different ethnic groups.

For the past 25 years, I have worked as a lecturer and head of the Institute of Cultural and Visual Anthropology at the University of Miskolc, Hungary. I have investigated practices of Roma-non-Roma local inter-ethnic relations in different field sites in the Carpathian Basin. I have participated in several applied anthropological projects and contributed to the production of strategic documents. It is my professional conviction that exploring and understanding the internal perspectives of people living in a culture is of paramount importance in the scientific study of stigmatised groups. The number of Roma people in Hungary has doubled in the past 20 years – having reached an estimated 860,000 by now. This is more than ten times their number in 1893. The increase in the number of settlements inhabited exclusively by the Roma is a new phenomenon[1]; previously only Alsószentmárton and Csenyéte belonged to this category. The restructuring of the population is typically taking place in the small rural areas of Southern Transdanubia and Northern Hungary. Previously, only the areas of Ormánság and Cserehát were affected but in the past 20 years a so-called

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[1] Tünde Virág, "A cigányfalu mint jelenség és értelmezési keret," (The Gypsy Village as a Phenomenon and Interpretative Framework) Replika, No. 4. (2017): 45–62.

'gypsyisation corridor' has emerged in the border zone from Nógrád to Békés counties, and the proportion of the Roma population is also increasing exponentially in the inner peripheral areas and larger settlements.[2] In Baranya County, three villages (Alsószentmárton, Gilvánfa and Pálmajor) are now exclusively Roma settlements, while in Csenyéte, Tornanádaska and Rakaca in Borsod County are also Roma settlements, and soon several other settlements will also experience this process. In the medium term, dozens of settlements are already at risk. The exclusively Roma settlements in Baranya are not inhabited by any Boyash Gypsies and in Borsod they have no Romungro or Vlach Gypsy inhabitants. It is important to emphasise that the process of gypsyisation is no longer confined to individual villages, but is now taking place in entire regions.[3]

The spatial distribution of Gypsies was already unequal in the late 19th century but in the past 20 years this polarisation has intensified and a concentrated Gypsy population has emerged in several border and inner peripheral areas. It must be stressed that the areas densely populated by Gypsies today were also peripheral in the past. As a result of the political perceptions and practices of the 1970s, Hungarian villages were increasingly abandoned by their inhabitants and practically withered away. In the ghettoised areas, the social structure of the autochthonous population is eroded, that is, only elderly people live in these settlements, while the social structure of the Roma living with them is stable, with a considerable number of Roma children. The settlements where Gypsies are in the majority are characterised by a natural ethnic homogenisation. There has also been a radical change in inter-ethnic relations. Local Gypsies have been completely excluded from the internal division of labour and are no longer needed in the local farming system. The transformation of the internal structure of the Gypsy community, changes in values and ways of thinking, as well as former differences in the quality and way of life, has been intensified. There is a well-visible and considerable distancing in the relations between the

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[2] János Pénzes and Patrick Tátrai and István Zoltán Pásztor, "A roma népesség területi megoszlásának változása Magyarországon az elmúlt évtizedekben," (Changes in the Spatial Distribution of the Roma Population in Hungary in Recent Decades) Területi Statisztika, No. 1. (2018): 3–26.; Patrik Tátrai, Ágnes Pálóczi, and István Pásztor, and János Pénzes, "Etnikai besorolási gyakorlatok. A cigányság külső kategorizálását befolyásoló tényezők," (Ethnic Classification Practices: Factors Affecting the External Categorisation of the Roma) Socio.hu, No. 2. (2017): 45–65.
[3] Gábor Biczó. "Alkalmazott társadalomtudományi kutatások és a roma kisebbségi közösségek integrációja – kortárs kihívások". (Applied Social Scientific Research and the Integration of Roma Minority Communities – Contemporary Challenges) In Peremhelyzetben (In a Peripheral Situation), ed. Veronika Bocsi (Debrecen: Didakt, 2015), 11–30.

sub-communities that make up local societies and a rigid separation, especially in the relationships between children. Individuals who follow the values of the majority society are ostracised and denied by the rest of the Gypsy community. The Roma community has become fragmented due to the relationship with the majority population and the different lifestyles.

In the past, Gypsy-non-Gypsy inter-ethnic relations were generally free of conflicts. However, after the regime change, shifts in ethnic proportions and the drastic deterioration of Gypsies' living conditions led to an increase in the number of conflicts. A completely new situation has come about for both sides. The distinction concerning Gypsies was prevalent in the previous period as well. Today, however, due to the transformation of the internal relations of local society, it is pronounced and it creates a conflictual situation. In practice, this means that the behaviour of some Roma families generates conflict but local non-Roma apply this to all Roma people. While in the past they made a clear distinction between 'decent' and 'problematic' families and had a different relationship with them, now they want to exclude all Gypsies from their world because they view them as a threat to their lifestyle.

The spatial segregation of ethnic groups living together in rural settlements in Central and Eastern Europe is still a prevalent phenomenon. Boundaries between different ethnic groups may be maintained through stereotypes. Drawing on Eidheim's categories, these stereotypes are created, on one hand, by dichotomization, characterised by the acceptance of asymmetrical relations as a basic principle, the presence of exclusion and disdain, and an elaborate system of stereotypes. Eidheim defines dichotomization as a process of mutual distancing between different ethnicities, an 'us' vs. 'them' type of relationship and opposition. Complementarisation, on the other hand, is not based on opposition: cultural differences are communicated through ethnicity, and their existence is treated as a fact and often as an advantage, so complementarisation is a process of 'us' and 'you'.

Categorisation of living in a space is of special significance in inter-ethnic relations. Different groups have different views of the ethicized spaces inhabited by ethnically divergent groups interpreted in a process of dichotomization or complementarisation. Spatialized difference thus regards other ethnic groups either as segregated or as a space with a dominant ethnic character. In the former case, spatial segregation implies a devaluation of the way of life there, while in the latter it merely denotes the existence of physical and symbolic boundaries. The ways of life of the segregated groups are thus assigned to a particular type of spatiality, which is value-filled. My study of ethnic cohabitation in the Carpathian Basin found that Roma-non-Roma cohabitation practices are always based on

opposition, regardless of whether it is Romanians, Saxons or Hungarians that the Romas cohabit space with.

My hypothesis is that *in Roma-non-Roma inter-ethnic relations the relationship between the two ethnic groups living together is characterised by mutual separation (dichotomisation), whereas in inter-ethnic relations not involving Roma people – despite a continuous construction of borders between the two ethnic groups and efforts to maintain it – the relationship is not based on opposition but on mutual interdependence, i.e. complementarisation.* As I see it, anthropological literature does not sufficiently take into account the fact that this phenomenon, which can only be observed in the Roma-non-Roma relation, is crucial for the process of social integration of the Roma and, more specifically, for the social application of anthropological knowledge. My objective is to show how these two distinctive types of ethnic border formation can be captured in the inter-ethnic relations of local societies. The research aimed to explore the local (spatial) embodiment and local constraints of inter-relations, comparing not the terrains themselves but the mechanisms within these inter-ethnic relations.

I pointed out that when the spatial separation between the Roma and non-Roma subcommunities living together is dissolved, those who are closer to the other group in their way of life and values are no longer identified in the category of opposition, but all others who do not live in the same space and do not share the same way of life are still considered as belonging to the Roma ethnic group, and so their perceptions and interactions are based on opposition. In contrast, when living together with non-Roma ethnic groups, the relationship is complementary from the outset, which, albeit maintaining differences in a physical and/or symbolic way, recognises and considers the other ethnic group's independent way of existence as equal to their own.

In studying inter-ethnic relations through anthropological fieldwork, I am primarily interested in the relations and mechanisms by which Roma people in these local communities escape stigmatising distinctions. As an anthropologist, I have investigated ininter-ethnic relations in various local communities in the Carpathian Basin. I must stress that I try to take stock of the range of components that determine inter-ethnic relations and to identify possible patterns through case studies. Consequently, great caution is needed in terms of generalisability. I do not share the view that inter-ethnic relations are so specific that they make any generalisation impossible, nor do I believe in the practice of talking about local models after studying but a few local examples of inter-ethnic relations.

The first chapter outlines the theoretical methodological framework of the book. My main aim here is to present the distinctive approaches to Roma

in the three dominant disciplines dealing with them (history, sociology and cultural anthropology) and to highlight the differences deriving from their current disciplinary specificities, which hinder the development of a complex academic approach to Roma. I will point out that the juxtaposition of synchronic and diachronic approaches, as well as structuralist and culturalist perspectives, prevents the production of knowledge about Roma that could be compatible for representatives of different disciplines. With reference to international examples, I shall argue that neither sociologists nor cultural anthropologists can avoid adopting a socio-historical perspective in the study of the Roma. As rigid disciplinary approaches hinder the inter-relatability of the findings of the two disciplines, a convergence of sociological and anthropological perspectives could, in my view, contribute to changing the way scholars talk about the Roma.

I will make two detours in the book, two 'excursions.' In Chapter III, I discuss the characteristics of the accusation mechanism which Langmuir calls chimerical prejudice: on the basis of Hungarian examples of the anthropophagy accusation, I will relate Langmuir's concept to the blood accusation model applied to Jewish people and operating for centuries, and point out not only the similarities but the differences as well. Accusations of cannibalism represent extreme forms of stigmatising distinctions against the Roma; yet, they also offer an opportunity to interpret the socio-historical context of the mechanism of accusations against them in a broader context and historical process. The second excursion is the final (XI) chapter of the book, in which I present the characteristics of Romanian-Hungarian inter-ethnic relations in three settlements in the Tövishát region of Romania. Through the detailed presentation of a conflict-free model of inter-ethnic relations based on mutual recognition, the case study of Tövishát aims to show how the operating model that creates a system of mutual gestures which then establishes the local 'ethos' among local Romanians and Hungarians has evolved over centuries of inter-ethnic relations. The inter-ethnic relations of Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania is not always this balanced but in other cases, the relationship between the two ethnic groups is at least complementary. Hungarians have lived in Tövishát as a diaspora for centuries and the 'necessity' of inter-ethnic relations has created an interdependent model of inter-ethnic relations between Romanians and Hungarians. This practice provides a detailed picture of the essential differences between Roma and non-Roma inter-ethnic relations and allows for demonstrating the validity of the hypothesis in the concluding chapter.

Chapters V, VI and IX each present different examples of Roma and non-Roma inter-ethnic relations through a case study based on my own

fieldwork. Chapter V explores and analyses Roma-Gypsy and Hungarian-Roma inter-ethnic relations in a multi-ethnic settlement in Romania: Zăbala in Székelyland. The fieldwork carried out in 1997 was repeated in 1998, and the components of the process of change are described in detail in the chapter. Chapter VI discusses a specific case of Roma-non-Roma inter-ethnic relations, that of Uila (Romania), where the Roma lived together with the Saxons from the mid-18th century on, learned their language, adopted their customs and converted to the Lutheran religion. Uila exemplifies a successful process of acculturation, where the inter-ethnic relations of the Roma and the Saxons – albeit an asymmetrical relationship – was not based on opposition. Since the Saxons left Uila, the Lutheran church has been used by the local Roma, who now form the largest Lutheran congregation in Romania. They are the keepers of the Saxon language, religion and tradition. Chapter IX investigates Hungarian-Roma inter-ethnic relations in the village of Csernely. Although during the period of socialist modernisation the social integration of the Roma was successful, this process came to a halt after the regime change, when unemployed Roma people from the surrounding settlements moved to the village. In contrast with Zăbala and Uila, it was not the rural lifestyle but the industrial and mining way of life that brought the Hungarians and the Roma closer together and facilitated the social acceptance of the latter.

Two chapters of the book (X and IX) present applied anthropological case studies of complex programmes promoting the social inclusion of the Roma, analysing their functioning and the usability of anthropological knowledge in them. The two case studies discuss very different contexts. Makó is a rural town – and previous county seat – in the South Great Plain, where the former working-class neighbourhood is now a segregated area inhabited by Roma families. I conducted applied anthropological research there in 2015 and prepared a feasibility study for a social urban rehabilitation intervention in the Honvéd district. The chapter not only details the operation of the project but also provides methodological reflections on the role and functioning of applied anthropological knowledge in Hungary. The other applied project took place in a settlement in northern Hungary. As part of a complex innovative development programme, anthropological methods were used to study the potential for a Roma-Hungarian conflict before the construction of a biomass plant.

A separate chapter (VIII) of the volume of the volume examines the role religiosity plays in the social integration of the Roma. International and Hungarian research both emphasise the prominent role of religion and point out that Roma people's joining local religious communities is a crucial step for acceptance and social integration. The chapter focuses primarily on the

case of Roma individuals and communities who have undergone religious conversion and the concomitant changes in their lifestyle that facilitate successful social integration. The role of neo-Protestant and charismatic movements is highlighted, emphasising that in this case, it is not merely individuals joining a religious community but entire Roma groups and communities, whose religious conversion leads to social acceptance and integration accompanied also by a positive experience of Roma identity.

During almost three decades of anthropological fieldwork on inter-ethnic relations, I have found that in the multi-ethnic local communities of the Carpathian Basin, Roma-non-Roma inter-ethnic relations are always based on opposition, regardless of whether the latter are Romanians, Saxons, Slovaks, Ukrainians or Hungarians. After presenting the theoretical-methodological framework and historical processes, the book shows patterns of Roma-non-Roma inter-ethnic relations that emerge through case studies. Its main aim is to produce knowledge of practical value through academic research, which can be directly applied in the fight against the exclusion and stigmatisation of the Roma today. Thus, the book discusses two applied anthropology projects where research results have been used in urban regeneration and development projects. It interprets cannibalism charges against Gypsies as a typical type of chimerical prejudice. In the case studies, it contributes to existing research by interpreting the inter-ethnic relations of different ethnicities in the local socio-historical context, in the local embeddedness of inter-ethnic relations, as a constantly evolving and changing phenomenon, focusing on the performativity, dynamic interaction and functional role of relations.

Although the book is primarily aimed at academic researchers, the range of people who may be interested in it is relatively wide: it can be used by practitioners in social research (social policy experts, project experts) as well. The new perspective is the practical value of the knowledge produced by the research findings, as well as emphasising the fact that the characteristic majority attitudes to and the stigmatization of the Roma (based on opposition and asymmetrical relations) in inter-ethnic relations requires a new basis for social policy interventions for the social integration of Roma.

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Kotics, József. "Ethnic Dimensions of Subsistence Strategies. Roma and Non-Roma Households with Long-Term Unemployment Problems." In *Marginal Position: Writings from the Field of Romology*, edited by Veronika Bocsi, 211–234. (Debrecen: Didakt, 2015).

Kotics, József. "Gypsies as the Keepers of Saxon Culture? The Role of Saxon Culture and Evangelic Religion in the Identity of a Local Transylvanian Gypsy Community." In *Fields and Theories: Selected Essays from the Field of Romology* by Lippai Balázs Romani College, edited by Gábor Biczó, 263-280. (Debrecen: Didakt, 2019).

Kotics, József. "Integration or Segregation of Gipsies?: Case Study from Zabola, Háromszék, Romania." *Central Europian Political Science Review*. No. 26 (2006): 71–84.

Kotics, József. "Interpretations and Approaches to the Inter-ethnic Relations of the Roma and Non-Roma in Anthropological Research." *Acta Ethnologica Danubiana*, 2023 (in print)

Kotics, József. "Local Society and the Biomass Project in Csernely: The Impact of Conflicts between Roma and Non-Roma Hungarians on the Realization of the Project." *Materials Science and Engineering. A publication of the University of Miskolc*. No. 1-2 (2012): 51–57.

Kotics, József. "The Types of Gypsy–Non-Gypsy Cohabitation.: The Example of a Local Transylvanian Community." *Szellem és Tudomány*. Special Issue 1. No. 11 (2020): 320–330.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

My volume aims to provide a comprehensive overview of approaches in anthropological research to the inter-ethnic relations of Gypsy/Roma[4] communities with other ethnic groups. It primarily focuses on the question of whether academic and applied anthropological research, which are nowadays markedly different, show divergence and distinctive features in terms of their theoretical framework, the methods applied and textual strategies. Concerning the inter-ethnic relations of the Roma and the non-Roma, the study demonstrates how the context of knowledge production and employing knowledge of practical value in research on inter-ethnic relations are related. The paper also reflects on the issue of the compatibility of knowledge contents produced within disciplinary frameworks.

Research on Gypsies in Hungary is extensive, and one common characteristic is the divergence of perspectives due to the wide range of disciplinary approaches. Although today both international and Hungarian studies attempt to define themselves as distinct disciplines under the notion of Romology, these efforts are not successful, since they represent rather heterogeneous approaches.[5] While previously linguistic and ethnographic

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[4] In Hungarian academic research there are two different practices regarding the terms Roma/Gypsies. The first one considers Roma as the only appropriate and acceptable term, due to the negative connotations of the concept of Gypsies in public and political discourse. Using the terminology Roma/Gypsy, I follow the other naming practice. As indicated by a number of current national and international examples, the term Roma, coming from the Romani language, is not accepted by certain groups, such as the Boyash, who continue to refer to themselves as Gypsies, but further examples also suggest that despite, the negative connotations of the term, many groups are reclaiming their former name because they consider it a vital component of their identity.

[5] Zoltán Beck „A romológia és annak valódi tárgya," (Romology and its true subject,) Romológia, No. 2-3. (2013): 8-34.; Gábor Biczó. "Az alkalmazott romológia és a hazai kritikai etnográfiai fordulat". (Applied romology and the Hungarian critical ethnographic turn). In Számvetés és tervezés: A néprajztudomány helyzete és jövője

research used to dominate Romology, today historical and social sciences (sociology and cultural anthropology) are increasingly becoming the dominant disciplines.[6] Social geography is also gaining ground in Romology and plays an important role in the interpretation of social processes regarding the study of space.[7] Considering the above, it is not at all surprising that there is no unified theoretical framework for research on Gypsies and that research topics are very broad. This leads to a lack of coherence between research results, which, although pertaining to the same subject area, are not comparable and the research findings are often incompatible.

When interpreting Gypsy cultural heritage and the scientific study of the inter-ethnic relations of Gypsy lifeworlds with the majority society, we are confronted with the difficulty of defining the meaning of the concept 'Gypsy.' In fact, the elusiveness of the object of research is one of the few components that connect the contemporary sociological, anthropological

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a 21. században ((Reckoning and Planning: The Place and Future of Ethnography in the 21st Century), ed. Fruzsina Cseh and Csaba Mészáros and Balázs Borsos (Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó, MTA BTK Néprajztudományi Intézet, 2020), 431–448.; Anna Orsós ed. A romológia alapjai. (The basics of romology). (Pécs: Pécsi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Neveléstudományi Intézet Romológia és Nevelésszociológia Tanszék Wlislocki Henrik Szakkollégium, 2015); Đurić Rajko Romology Belgrade: Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021.

[6] Péter Berta, Az erdélyi gábor romák presztízsgazdasága. (The prestige economy of the Transylvanian Gábor Roma) (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 2014); Péter Berta, Materializing Difference: Consumer Culture, Politics, and Ethnicity among Romanian Roma. (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2019); Csaba Dupcsik, A magyarországi cigányok/romák a hétköznapi és a tudományos diskurzusok tükrében: A magyarországi cigányság a cigánykutatások tükrében, 1890-2008. (Gypsies/Roma in Hungary in the light of everyday and scientific discourses: Gypsies in Hungary in the light of Gypsy research, 1890-2008). (Budapest: MTA Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont Szociológiai Intézet, 2018); László Fosztó, Ritual Revitalisation after Socialism: Community, Personhood, and Conversion among Roma in a Transylvanian Village Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia: HSAE. (Berlin: LIT, 2009).; Csaba Prónai, Cigánykutatás és kulturális antropológia (Gypsy research and cultural anthropology. (Budapest–Kaposvár: ELTE BTK, 1995); Michael Steward, Daltestvérek. Az oláh cigány identitás és továbbélése a szocialista Magyarországon (Brothers in Song. The survival of the Oláh Gypsy identity in socialist Hungary). (Budapest: T−Twins Kiadó, 1994); Boglárka Bakó, Tiszta munka. A látható cigányok (Clean work. The visible gypsies). (Budapest: Eötvös Kiadó, 2017).

[7] József Nemes Nagy, Terek, helyek, régiók. A regionális tudomány alapjai (Spaces, Places, Regions: Basics of Regional Science), (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 2009).

and historical studies of Gypsies. Researchers find it difficult to define Roma groups–highly diverse in terms of their lifestyle, ethnicity and social status–as individual entities separate from the rest of society.[8]

In the context of the interpretation of Gypsy cultures, we must attach particular importance to the issue of scientific perspective. Although we are dealing with the same historical phenomenon, diametrically opposed perceptions prevail. There is a profound difference between the approach of historical science and that of minority policy and sociology. Historical research on Gypsies in Hungary interprets the centuries-old, shared history within the relationship between minority and majority society, in "the paradigm of the changing models of inter-ethnic relations."[9] In contrast, approaches in minority politics[10] and sociology[11] consider the history of the Hungarian Roma possible to be told in another paradigm, that of the history of suffering and persecution, developed as an interpretative framework for the history of the Gypsy in Europe.

The results of the various disciplinary approaches to Gypsies have indicated from the outset that the groups under study are characterized by highly complex and diverse cultural traditions; yet, for a long time, they were perceived as a single group in sociological discourse. The reason for this can be traced back to "the desire to preserve the construction of the object under study."[12] From the 1980s onwards, a paradigm shift has taken place–a fundamental change in the perception of the Gypsies as a homogenous entity can be observed. Social science texts dealing with Gypsies increasingly display the recognition of heterogeneity. The essential point is that, since based on social science facts about the Gypsies, the latter

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[8] Márton Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," (The Discursive and Historical Construction of the "Gypsy" Category)." Anthropolis, No. 3. (2006): 51–60.

[9] Pál Nagy. "Cigány csoportok és együttélési modellek változásai a Kárpát-medencében a 15-20. században". (The Transformations of Gypsy Groups and Models of Inter-ethnic Relations in the Carpathian Basin Between the 15th and 20th century). In Romák a történelemtanításban. Történelemtanárok 17. országos konferenciája (The Roma in History Teaching. 17th National Conference of History Teachers), (Budapest: Történelemtanárok Egylete, 2008), 35–50.

"Cigány csoportok és együttélési modellek változásai", 36.

[10] Balázs Majtényi, and György Majtényi, Cigánykérdés Magyarországon 1945–2010 (The Roma Issue in Hungary 1945-2010), (Budapest: Libri Kiadó 2012).; Balázs Majtényi, and György Majtényi, A Contemporary History of Exclusion: The Roma Issue in Hungary from 1945 to 2015. (Budapest, New York: Central European University, 2016).

[11] (Dupcsik, A magyarországi cigányság története)

[12] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 51.

can no longer be described as a homogeneous group, and that "the goals set by the homogenizing discourse wishing to separate the Gypsies from other groups on the basis of objective criteria are hopeless."[13]

From this point on, research accepting the heterogeneity of Gypsies unanimously claims that "the Gypsy" as a group does not exist and has never really existed. The idea of a homogeneous Gypsy culture is a category constructed by researchers. It goes without saying that this shift in attitudes does not imply that the existence of individual Gypsy groups is questioned, as they have undoubtedly existed and continue to exist. The main question these studies have had to answer was why the social status and identity of the groups perceived as Gypsies by their environment are determined by their categorization as Gypsies (or as "not True Gypsies"). In this context, the main aim of the research is to explore the differences and similarities between the groups perceived as Gypsies and to see if and how it is possible to describe these groups based on a common denominator.[14] This endeavour is made considerably more difficult by the fact that different disciplinary approaches adopt rather divergent viewpoints, which in many cases operate within an ipso facto limited interpretative framework. There is a fundamental conceptual difference between sociology and cultural anthropology. The two social science disciplines have completely different contexts for producing knowledge about Roma people. Sociological studies of the Gypsy significantly reduce the importance of the issue of heterogeneity by not attributing a role to the ethnic/cultural dimension. From the sociological perspective, social status is the sole factor in the analysis of Gypsy groups. Consequently, sociologists consider Roma lifeworlds to be primarily grasped through the concepts of exclusion and poverty. This perception, however, is called into question by a large number of non-poor Gypsies in social processes.[15] According to sociological approaches, existing in marginality is the basic condition of the groups called Gypsies and is interpreted as a constitutive element of these groups reproduced in their marginality. The reason for this is persistent racism from the majority society, which may vary in intensity but, in their view, is present in every historical period and results in a "discrimination exposure". Sociological research has an avowed "socio-political" commitment.[16] In their view, the

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[13] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 51.

[14] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 55.

[15] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 53.

[16] As Csaba Dupcsik points out, "Ever since social sciences exist, there has been a recurring debate about whether it is possible for science to be value-neutral, objective, free of political implications, etc. In the present case, I can circumvent such general positions with one constraint: in this specific field; that is, in Hungarian

elimination of the structural disadvantages and exclusion suffered by Gypsies can only be achieved through the intervention of political elites, primarily by transforming the fully unjust dysfunctional mechanisms of the social care systems. It follows that they do not attach any significance to ethnic factors in the case of individual Roma groups. In other words, though recognizing the heterogeneity and diversity of groups, they still do not regard ethnic identity and cultural aspects as important in the understanding of each group.

In contrast, a basic characteristic of anthropological research on the Roma is that it does not discuss the issue of inter-ethnic relations of the Roma and Hungarians in general but interprets it in the local socio-historical context, in the local embeddedness of inter-ethnic[17] relations, as a constantly forming and changing phenomenon; that is, it focuses on the performativity, dynamic interaction and functional role of relations. Due to the historical tradition of anthropological research, the synchronic, idiographic and emic[18] approaches are also applied to research on Gypsies, which thus does not attach importance to the historical dimension and the study of macro-structural components.

As Márton Oblath so aptly puts it, instead of the one-sided "True Gypsy" approach of ethnography and Romology, the anthropological study of Gypsies aims to present the various Gypsy communities and their cultures and get them acknowledged in constantly separating positions of "In-Sein."

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social science texts of the present and the recent past dealing with the Roma – I do not think so". Csaba Dupcsik. "A magyarországi cigányvizsgálatok cigányképe". (The Image of Gypsies In Hungarian Research on Gypsies) In Kisebbségek kisebbsége. A magyarországi cigányok emberi és politikai jogai (Minority of Minorities: The Human and Political Rights of Gypsies in Hungary), ed. Mária Neményi and Júlia Szalai (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2005), 255.

[17] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 51.

[18] The definitions of these concepts are the following: 1. the term idiographic refers to the basic relationship of the humanities to the object of their study: it is a description of a phenomenon in terms of its individual specificity, contrasted with the nomothetic (related to universal statements) approach of the natural sciences; 2. the emic (as opposed to etic) approach seeks to grasp cultures 'from within,' on the basis of their own categories, as learned through direct experience; 3. the synchronic (as opposed to diachronic) view establishes a relationship with the object of scientific analysis on a perspective based on the simultaneity of the observer and the phenomenon observed. Cf. Gábor Biczó, "Az alkalmazott antropológia és a gyakorlati értékű tudás: a történeti előzmények, a kritikai fordulat és az etikai önreflexió társadalomfilozófiai háttere," (Applied Anthropology and Knowledge of Practical Value: Historical Antecedents, Critical Turn and the Social Philosophical Background to Ethical Self-reflection) Tabula, No. 2. (2014), 4.

Here, it is the selection of the communities examined that continues to ensure the preservation of a joint construction of the object in anthropological studies and allows the texts to refer to each other.[19] According to Oblath, it is through the selection of the object that anthropologists can have the communities they study completely separated from the majority society. They search for and find Gypsy groups that, in their interaction with "settlers,"[20] "peasants," and "gadjos"[21] have adopted survival strategies that have ensured both their material reproduction and the preservation of their ethnic identity required for it, in inter-ethnic relations with the majority society. These survival strategies[22] are unequivocally linked by anthropologists to the cultural system of the groups under study, which is interpreted as the ethnic specificity of the group.[23] Thus, in the anthropological analysis of these completely separate groups, total différance from the majority becomes a common characteristic. In anthropological representations, the relationship of Gypsies with the majority society is considered acceptable and interpretable only for the sake of subsistence. In this way, anthropological studies consciously depart from the approach of ethnographic studies, which previously dominated Romology and regarded Gypsy cultures as exotic, as well as from the sociological tradition that studied Gypsies in terms of their social status.

> The reflexive turn within sociology separates itself from its own disciplinary tradition of demanding an account for the progress of assimilation and emancipation, on the one hand, and from the counter-discourses of involutionist anthropology, on the other.[24]

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[19] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 52.
[20] Bernard Formoso, Tsiganes et sédentaires. La reproduction Culturelle d'une société (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986)
[21] Michael Sinclair, Steward, "Brothers in Song: The Persistence of (Vlach) Gypsy Community and Identity in Socialist Hungary." Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1987.
[22] Aparno Rao, ed. The Other Nomads. Peripatetic Minorities in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Cologne: Böhlau, 1987); Leonardo Piasere A ciganológusok szerelmei. (Válogatott tanulmányok) (The Loves of Gypsiologists: Selected studies). (Budapest: ELTE BTK Kulturális Antropológia, 1997); Wim Willems. "Außenbilder von Sinti und Roma in der frühen Zigeunerforschung". In Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion des Zigeuners. Zur Genese eines Vorurteils, ed. Jacqueline Giere (Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus Verlag, 1996) 87–108.; Wim Willems, In Search of the True Gypsy. From Enlightenment to Final Solution (London: Frank Cass, 1998)
[23] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 52.
[24] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 56.

While from the point of view of sociology, cultural anthropologists–wishing to preserve the specificity of the subject under study–cherish the myth of "the Gypsy who survives against the odds," thus weakening social policy proposals made in the interests of Gypsies, from the point of view of anthropology, sociologists–preserving the myth of the "culture of absence" and the "absence of culture"–deprive the Gypsy of the real capacity to act.[25]

At the same time, sociological and anthropological studies of the Gypsy formulate new points of reference by reflecting each other's disciplinary tradition: sociology rehabilitates the homogeneity of Gypsies through an externalized cultural momentum (the way Gypsies are perceived by their environment), while anthropology finds a common feature of Gypsy communities in a cultural component, the commonality of survival strategies. The aforementioned specificities of the two disciplines still operate unreflected in research practices today. Therefore, the two disciplines retain their own distinct approaches, which limit the possibilities of interpretation for both disciplines. Sociology does not make use of the methods of cultural analysis that allow for the reconstruction of differentiated prejudices and perceptions of Gypsies as embedded in the cultural system, while the anthropological perspective seems to forget the possibility of a symmetrical analysis of the process of becoming a Roma and finding themselves outside former categories, as well as of successful and unsuccessful life strategies.[26]

The disciplinary differences in approaches between sociology and anthropology are put in a different light by the discourse that goes beyond previous classical theoretical explanations of the reproduction of poverty, summarized by Béla Janky in his study[27] on Orlando Patterson and Ethan Fosse's 2015 book.

The change of approach in sociology in North America, which has been going on for a decade, is also of great importance for the approach to Roma-Hungarian inter-ethnic relations, both in terms of reducing separation within the discipline and contributing to the development of more effective policies.[28] Without going into details, some of Janky's theses that are relevant to the problem under consideration shall be highlighted here. Fierce opposition from representatives of the structuralist position to the inclusion

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[25] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 56.
[26] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 58.
[27] Béla Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza: Gondolatok Orlando Patterson és Ethan Fosse 'The Cultural Matrix: Understanding Black Youth' című kötete kapcsán," (Reproduction of Poverty: Back and Forth from Structure to Culture. An Essay Based on 'The Cultural Matrix' by Orlando Patterson and Ethan Fosse)." Socio.hu: Társadalomtudományi Szemle, No. 2. (2016): 89–102.
[28] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza," 90.

of the concept of culture in explaining the reproduction of extreme poverty
was "partly political: culturalist explications inevitably reinforce victim-
blaming since they suggest that for a positive change not (only) public
policies but the poor (also) have to change and that changes in behaviour
cannot be made by others."[29] There is a sharp opposition between the
classical culturalist understanding of ethnicised poverty and the so-called
structuralist position. The culturalist explanation assumes that ethnic
minorities living in extreme poverty are primarily hindered in their social
integration by the incompatibility of their centuries-old value systems with
the behavioural patterns that lead to success in modern market economies
and/or the norms regulating cooperation in modern civil societies.[30] This is
in stark contrast to the classical structuralist view, which believes that
structural constraints affect the behaviour of people from different
ethnic/cultural backgrounds in the same way. According to this view, "inter-
ethnic variance in resources and options in decision-making underlies the
differences in behaviour observed among ethnic groups."[31] Unlike in the
culturalist approach, the social policies that ensue from this explanatory
model are based on desegregation and positive economic incentives, which
are expected to produce considerable and rapid results. The past decade saw
a convergence of contemporary versions of these two approaches.[32] One
reason for this is that culturalists now use the concept of culture in a more
comprehensive sense, rejecting the former dominant view that its main
characteristic is a coherent, comprehensive, intergenerational value system.
Following this conceptual change, the previous notion that the (minority)
poor differ from the majority of society in their norms pertaining to inter-
ethnic relations between communities and/or in terms of their values related
to the economy is no longer considered valid. In contrast, the new
understanding stresses differences in action skills, communication styles
and relationships of trust, which help maintain symbolic boundaries
between groups, which, however, contributes to perpetuating cultural
differences.[33] In Patterson and Fosse's view, "in societies affected by
ethnicised poverty, a certain minority poverty culture cannot be delineated.
Several different cultural milieus coexist, often literally side by side."[34]
Drawing on this claim, Janky concludes that "there is no unified Gypsy

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[29] Orlando Patterson and Ethan Fosse, ed. The Cultural Matrix: Understanding Black
Youth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015)
[30] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza," 91.
[31] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza," 95.
[32] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza" 96
[33] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza," 96.
[34] (Patterson and Fosse, The Cultural Matrix: Understanding Black Youth, 16)

culture, poor culture, or poor Gypsy culture."[35] On the other hand, the structuralist perspective has also undergone changes. It is now widely accepted that inter-group differences, which are difficult to explain by structural factors, do exist, even in the case of behavioural patterns that considerably influence life chances. It has also been recognized that the political and ideological denial of such differences does not serve the interest of the social sciences, social policy and the groups concerned.[36] Janky concludes his analysis of the convergence of these two previously diametrically opposed views with the following proposition:

> "Cultural effects should not be denied, but rather better understood by those (myself included) who, on a moral/ideological basis, only consider efforts to change structural factors acceptable and worry about the inherently victim-blaming ideas of common culturalist interpretations."[37]

In North American sociology, the failure of socio-political practices to address ethnicised poverty has motivated the convergence of structuralist and culturalist approaches. Oblath's study suggests that in European academic discourse on Gypsies, the joint interpretation of sociological and anthropological views on Gypsies may be aided by asserting a social-historical approach,[38] which is characteristically linked to the so-called "Dutch school," the work of Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems.[39] The novelty of their approach lies in examining the categorization of Gypsies in relation to specific historical periods and discourses. Focusing on authorities, folklore, scholarship and popular literature, they explored the classification systems used to define the meanings of the term Gypsy. They then investigated the specific practices, likewise, varying in space and time, that may be associated with the stigmatization, resettlement, education and regulation of Gypsies.

> The main issue is to clarify how Gypsies, who constantly moved in and out of the category, developed life strategies within the field of play defined by the constructions of the external environment, how and to what extent they assimilated or secluded themselves in the ever-changing environment, and

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[35] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza,"97.
[36] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza," 100.
[37] Janky, "A szegénység újratermelődése: A struktúrától a kultúráig, és vissza," 97.
[38] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 56.
[39] Wim Willems, and Leo Lucassen. "The Church of Knowledge: Representation of Gypsies in Encyclopaedia". In Gypsies and Other Itinerant Groups: A Socio-Historical Approach, ed. Leo Lucassen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 35–52.

how the dynamics of regulation and adaptation led to the emergence of 'Gypsy' ethnic cultures.[40]

This approach is linked to constructivist approaches of contemporary research on ethnicity.[41] Instead of the earlier image of ethnic groups existing within static, strict boundaries, this view focuses on the flexibility of the groups and the situational nature of ethnic identity.[42]

> Ethnicity should be seen as a relational variable, rather than as a "variable similar to culture," which not only develops as the result of the combined effect of several factors (characteristics of social status and cultural practices) but is also strongly embedded in the social context that determines the place of the ethnic group in the inter-ethnic relations of the society that encompasses it. In other words, the category "Gypsy" is an empty category and only gains its content through its relationship with non-Gypsies.[43]

Brubaker's claim that the focus of the investigation should be ethnicizing schemas, and the actors categorizing ethnicity and the schemas themselves, rather than on a group-based interpretation of inter-group relations, is also important from the aspect of the study of the inter-ethnic

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[40] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 58.

[41] Fredric Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference (Boston: Little, Brown and Co.1969); Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives (London, Chicago: Pluto Press1993); Fredric Barth. "Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity". In The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries", ed. Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers (The Hague: Het Spinhuis, 1994), 11–32.; Margit Feischmidt. "Megismerés és elismerés: elméletek, módszerek, politikák az etnicitás kutatásában". (Recognition and Acknowledgment: Theories, Methods, Policies in the Research of Ethnicity) In Etnicitás. Különbségteremtő társadalom (Ethnicity: A Society that Produces Difference), ed. Margit Feischmidt (Budapest: Gondolat – MTA Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2010). 2010), 7–29.

[42] Richard Jenkins, "Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power," Ethnic and Racial Studies, No.2. (1994): 197–223.

[43] Judit Durst. "'Gondolom, hogy cigányok... ennyi gyerekkel...': etnicitás és reprodukció két észak-magyarországi romungro közösség példáján". ("I Guess They are Gypsies... With This Many Children...": Ethnicity and Reproduction Through the Example of Two Romungro Communities in Northern Hungary)." In Etnicitás. Különbségtermelő társadalom (Ethnicity: A Society that Produces Difference), ed, Margit Feischmidt, (Budapest: Gondolat, MTA Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2010). 173–194.

relations of Gypsies and non-Gypsies.[44] In studies on Gypsies that implement a social-historical perspective, the history of European Gypsies "is interpreted as a series of classification procedures that regard the history of moving outside categories as crucial not only due to the transformation of the identity of individual Gypsy groups but also as interpretable in these classification procedures."[45]

In a study implementing new perspectives, Sándor Borbély, evaluates earlier anthropological and sociological research on inter-ethnic relations in the following way: "Despite the increased and diversified research interest, however, the traditional concepts and models of interpretation used to describe local cases and the asymmetrical inter-ethnic relations that provide their framework (border formation, segregation, assimilation, separation, nationalism, ethnic stigmatization, etc.) are increasingly losing their power to illuminate."[46] Borbély identifies several reasons for this change:

> From the 1970s on, one important consequence of the disciplinary separation of ethnic studies and its becoming an autonomous field of knowledge was that the study of ethnic differentiation and certain discrediting mechanisms associated with it (prejudice, discrimination, segregation, subordination to power) were removed from the scope of analysis of the comprehensive and complex system of practices creating hierarchy. The problem of "ethnic" inequalities has become a privileged – and, in a sense, overexposed – subject of inter-ethnic relations situations, which very often fails to shed light on the multifariousness and diversity of relations of different qualities that develop within local communities and the most important interconnections of the mechanisms involved.[47]

Borbély bases his critical remarks on the fact that anthropological and sociological research identified Gypsies as a social problem, and that in inter-ethnic relations, representatives of both disciplines primarily considered aspects of division between coexisting groups and emphasized the conflictual nature of inter-ethnic relations. His insight is linked to Gábor Biczó's research, predominantly focusing on the study of steady inter-ethnic

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[44] Rogers Brubaker, Ethnicity without Groups (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 2004)Rogers Brubaker, and Frederic Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," Theory and Society, No. 29. (2000): 1–47.

[45] Oblath, "A 'cigány' kategória diszkurzív és történeti konstrukciója," 58.

[46] Sándor Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák egy vegyes (magyar–roma) etnikai összetételű határvidéki településen," (Compensatory Mechanisms and Balancing Strategies of an Ethnically Mixed [Hungarian-Roma] Community in a Borderland Settlement) Erdélyi Társadalom, No. 1. (2014): 191–216.

[47] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák," 191.

relations, examining the balancing techniques and social practices that create and facilitate them as key components.[48] According to Borbély, the prevailing perception is that "ethnic differentiation and the extreme manifestations accompanying it (ethnocentrism, nationalism, xenophobia) are factors with a high potential of conflict which, in the long run, 'endanger' interpersonal and intergroup relations or, at least, make it rather difficult."[49] He believes that research analysing the phenomenon of adverse ethnic, economic, social and legal discrimination against Gypsies takes the form of "a critique of the current crisis of the domestic political system; the injustice of state, economic, social and distributive mechanisms; in short, of modern compensation mechanisms and balancing strategies for the malfunctions of democracy."[50] However, the fact that the 'Gypsy question' is heavily saturated with politics, as well as the solidarity of researchers with oppressed and often disenfranchised minority groups, in Borbély's words,

> Often develop perspectives of limited cognitive value in the scientific analysis of ethnic inequalities. For instance, one consequence of a normative, value-based approach may be that scientific discourse on the Roma – either explicitly or implicitly – tends to evaluate the mechanisms of social exclusion (discrimination, prejudice, negative heterostereotypes, segregation, stigmatization, economic and status inequalities) negatively, and mechanisms of inclusion positively.[51]

By contrast, Borbély argues that the power practices (exclusion, segregation, demotion, subordination, etc.) accompanying the ethnic differentiation of Gypsies and Hungarians "should be investigated exclusively in the context of the compensation procedures (inclusion, appreciation, equalization, etc.) that determine the quality and local value of the given actions."[52] Based on his own research experience, he believes that social and symbolic practices of exclusion and stigmatization should not be examined in isolation, as it would lead to a complete misinterpretation

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[48] Gábor Biczó. "Az etnikai együttélési egyensúlyhelyzetek elmélete: a szilágysági Tövishát északi falvainak példája". (A Theory of Equilibrium Situations of Ethnic Inter-ethnic Relations: The Example of the Northern Villages of Tövishát in Dealurile Majei) In "Megvagyunk mi egymás mellett...": Magyar–román etnikai együttélési helyzetek a szilágysági Tövisháton ("We Are Good Side by Side": Hungarian-Romanian Ethnic Inter-ethnic Relations in the Tövishát region in Dealurile Majei), ed. Gábor Biczó and József Kotics (Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Kulturális és Vizuális Antropológiai Intézet, 2013), 53–104.
[49] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák," 191.
[50] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák," 194.
[51] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák," 194.
[52] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák," 191)

of these phenomena, which occur simultaneously with the practices that counteract them and are mutually overlapping. Consequently, Borbély asserts that,

> Ethnic discrimination, and relationships of subordination and superordination in inter-ethnic relations are – from the aspect of the parties involved in inter-ethnic relations – behaviours that do not break but, quite contrarily, adhere to norms: they are an integral part of traditional experience in local, rural society. Power imbalances are therefore a sign of not the malfunctions (anomalies) of the local community, but rather of its resilience and stability in the face of change.[53]

In view of this, ethnicity itself as a mechanism of difference-making is usually constituted in the context of status and power inequalities, that is "through the asymmetric integration of culturally distinct groups."[54] Interpreting the asymmetrical nature of inter-ethnic relations – as revealed by sociological and anthropological research – from the perspective of the actors of local societies, Borbély concludes that these relations may appear to be a conflict between groups to the outside observer but are, in fact, more of a 'functional tool' for establishing ethnic balances. Based on the research findings of the Hungarian and Gypsy subcommunities studied, he perceives ethnic discrimination not as a threat to the democratic operation of local society but rather as a resource that can be converted into various types of capital. In his view, both parties involved turn to this resource "in the symbolic struggle to define and transform Hungarian-Roma relations."[55]

Based on the methodology of community and multi-sited ethnographic research,[56] recent qualitative sociological research on ethnicised poverty exceeds the former disciplinary boundaries and research practices of anthropology and sociology.[57] In its theoretical-methodological grounding,

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[53] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák," 196.
[54] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák,"196.
[55] Borbély, "Kompenzációs mechanizmusok és egyensúlyteremtő stratégiák," 198.
[56] George Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World-System. The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," Annual Review of Anthropology, No. 24. (1995): 95–117.
[57] Éva Kovács and Zsuzsanna Vidra and Tünde Virág. "Az etnicitás reprezentációi és mindennapi gyakorlatai". (Representations and Everyday Practices of Ethnicity) In Kint és bent. Lokalitás és etnicitás a peremvidékeken (Outside and Inside: Locality and Ethnicity on the Margins), eds. Éva Kovács, Zsuzsanna Vidra and Tünde Virág (Budapest, L'Harmattan, 2013), 78–111.

it seeks to investigate the logic of the interrelationships between local, territorial, national and global levels.[58]

> Nonetheless, the questions posed were not about culture but forms of social organization instead. Nor did we view the relationship between the lifeworld and the macrostructure of society as dichotomous: for us, one of the aims was to explore the spatial mappings and local forces of these structures. It was convenient to apply the multi-sited approach, through which we wished to compare not the sites themselves but the aforementioned mechanisms.[59]

To achieve these goals, a methodological approach was developed, the procedures and results of which may also be used outside qualitative sociology. A conscious effort was made to find a research strategy that "may be suitable for generalization in terms of how social phenomena and actions operate.[60] Generalizability is hoped to be achieved by finding the multiple connections between the micro and macro levels.

> As opposed to the anthropologists cited so far, for us it is essential to have a micro-level model that also incorporates macro-level perspectives in some way since at the micro-level there are macroeconomic, -social and -political impacts that cannot or can hardly be influenced locally. We must not forget that the state and its institutions, social and political elites, and media discourses likewise play a role in the shaping of ethnic boundaries.[61]

Connecting to the above theoretical considerations, I see the study of Gypsy-Hungarian inter-ethnic relations as feasible only by the harmonization and combined application of the social-historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives.

From the aspect of the study of inter-ethnic relations, I find the following five factors common to Gypsy lifeworlds–and identified by the disciplines mentioned above–particularly important:

1. There is no single uniform Roma/Gypsy history and culture.
2. The Gypsy diaspora is a transnational group of people who lived/live in a minority everywhere and, therefore, have a minority identity.

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[58] Éva Kovács and Zsuzsanna Vidra and Tünde Virág, ed, Kint és bent: Lokalitás és etnicitás a peremvidékeken. (Outside and Inside: Locality and Ethnicity on the Margins). (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2013), 25.
[59] Kovács et. al. Kint és bent: Lokalitás és etnicitás a peremvidékeken, 25.
[60] Kovács et. al. Kint és bent: Lokalitás és etnicitás a peremvidékeken, 25.
[61] Kovács et. al. "Az etnicitás reprezentációi és mindennapi gyakorlatai," 80.