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Values and Education in the Roma Communities

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Abstract: All over the world, the Roma continue to be shrouded in secrecy. Their way of life, habits, clothing, ornaments, etc. are aspects that remain unknown. Where do the Roma come from and what are they looking for in our country, how have they settled, are questions that most of the nations in which the Roma have settled, have asked themselves. Some have found the answers; others are still looking for them.

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1. The Roma Origins

The country of origin of the Roma is India and their migration took place in successive waves: around the end of the first millennium, and the beginning of the second millennium AD. The first migrations of Indians heading West (hence the ancestors of the Roma) is said to have been in 224 AD, when the Persian Shah Ardashir (224-241 AD) conquered Northern India (modern-day Pakistan), which he afterwards transformed into a Persian colony. (Kenrick, **1995**) However, a definite landmark on Indians' migration from India could be considered the 241-274 AD period, during the reign of Shapur I, when he brought the Indians to Kabul, as workers "*salahori*" at the Shuster's dam. (Grigore & Sarău, 2006, p. 8)

According to the Unicef study "*Roma ... in search of self-esteem*", the term "*gypsy*" comes from a variation of Greek, from "*athinganos / athinganoy*", the meanings of the word being "*pagan*", "*heretical*" of "*untouched*" or "*impure*". The first documentary attestation of the Roma in the Romanian space is from 1385. The term (a)gypsy *(Ro: "aţigan")* which later became gypsy and indicated the social status of slave, not the ethnicity, was reported in the documents of the Vodiţa monastery. The term "Roma" is an old word from the Romani language which refers to the ethnicity of the Roma and not their social status. (Grigore et al., 2007, p. 9)

The Roma do not use the word "gypsy" (Ro: „ţigan"), in the Romani language it does not exist, instead, almost all researchers have concluded that *ahtiganos* comes from the medieval Greek (Byzantine) language and means untouchable, intangible. The word "gypsy" was first attested in a monastery in Georgia in 1068 (then in the Byzantine Empire), in the writing of a monk who said that the Athiganoyi were a group of erectics, nomads, star readers, wizards; and he advised the Christians to avoid them. The word Athiganos, translated into other languages, is similar to the Greek pronunciation: cigani (in Slovak), ciganie (in Polish), tsiganes (in French), etc. and has a pejorative meaning. In Germany, the use of the term zigeuner and its derivatives were prohibited by law and the terms were replaced by the phrase Roma und sinţi. In English - the oldest form "gipsy" was also replaced by Romani (Romani language, Romani people, etc.). (Grigore & Sarău, 2006, p. 14)

Romani Language is part of the Northwest Indian subgroup of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language and it is one of the 27 main Neo-Indo-Aryan languages by number of speakers (also named *modern index, neo-index, modern Indo-European*). Romani and three other languages: Shinghaleza, Kohistani and Maldivian are on the verge of extinction in the Indian subcontinent. From the approximately 14 million Roma, 9 million are

spread in Asia, Europe, North Africa, America, North, Central and South (Australia), out of which about 7 million keep their native language.

Wali Istvan, a Hungarian theologian, noticed the connection of the Romani language with the Indian one, as well as the familiar sonority between the Indian students and the Roma students from his country (1753-1754). This discovery was later confirmed by reputable Roma specialists: I. C. Ch. Rudiger (1782-1793, to some extent), H. M. G.Grellman (1783-1787), M. Graffunder (1835), A. F. Pott (1844-1884), Heinrich von Wislocki (1884) etc. (as cited by Grigore & Sarău, 2006, pp. 6-12).

The Romanian language borrowed some common Roma words such as "mișto" ("good" in Romani and "beautiful" in Romanian) or "baftă" („luck", „destiny" in Romani and „good luck" in Romanian). (Sandu & Grigore, n.d.)

Initially, the Romani language was only in oral form but now it also exists in written form. For example, the Roma in the United States speak both English and Romani. The Romani language has Greek, Arabic, Slavic and Sanskrit influences. (Vivian & Dundes, 2004)

The most reliable source that provided conclusive evidence regarding the Roma, their history, traditions and language was linguistics. With its help, the connection of the Romani language with the Indian languages was established, its affiliation, the area where the Roma came from, the road they traveled from the Indian area to the Balkans, the approximate dating of the period when the Roma ancestors must have left India, etc.

The migration of Roma in the world, the fact that the world did not know exactly where they came from, created many legends. Among the best known is the legend collected by Ali Ceausev ("coşniţar" Roma (artisan who made twig baskets) from Sumen, Bulgaria), which was later on published by Donald Kenrick in *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (Kenrick & Puxton, 1973): *"We had a great emperor, a Roma. He was our prince. He was our padishah. At that time, the Roma all lived together in a country, in a good village. The name of this village was Sindih ... This was a clean (beautiful) country. You would find a lot of happiness and a lot of joy there. Everyone was doing well. The name of our emperor was Maramengro Dev. He had two more brothers. Their names were Rromano and Singan. All good and beautiful, but a great war came. Muslims did it. The soldiers destroyed the Roma country. They scorched the ground. All the Roma fled their country ... The three brothers took their people on distant roads. Some went to Arabia, some to Armenia and others to Byzantium. They became poor in those countries."*

In the article "Crossroads of Culture and Health", authors Carrie Vivian and Lauren Dundes (2004) argue that the Roma migrated from India in around 1000 to create a near-global diaspora, especially in the Middle East

and Europe. (Sutherland, 1986) Furthermore, the Roma were persecuted throughout history, especially in Eastern Europe, because the majority were convinced that the Roma were the ones who made the spikes that were used for Jesus Christ's crucifixion. (Kemp, 2002). With this in mind, the majority started organizing "gypsy hunts".

2. The Roma from Romania

As for the Roma from Romania, the period in which they entered the Romanian space is still on debate. The first documentary attestation of the Roma in Romania dates from 1374 (1385) and coincides with the "attestation" of the Roma slavery in the Romanian space (Dan I Voievod donates to his foundation, the Vodița monastery, "40 gypsy settlements"). Other sources designate the 9th century as the period in which the Roma reached the Romanian provinces of Wallachia and Moldova for the first time. Jonatan Fox (as cited by Hancock, 1999) mentions that the Roma came to Romania in the 11th century when they left Northern India and Pakistan that we know today. Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu analysed and translated (between 1867-1877) a variety of documents that were in the archives of the Tismana monastery. One of them, from 1387, signed by Mircea cel Bătrân, attests the form of a reception note dated with the year 1385 about 40 families of slave gypsies that were offered as a gift. (Hancock, 1999). As it can be observed, "most sources indicate that the Roma came to the Romanian provinces in the 14th century, a period similar to the beginning of Roma slavery in the Romania space. (Grigore et al., 2007, pp. 9-10)

Another version is that the Roma came to the Romanian space when the Mongol invasion took place, in 1241. The Tatars brought with them Roma artisans, who after the withdrawal of the Tatars remained under the Romanian rulers as slaves. (Achim, 1998, pp. 22-23)

The liberation of the Roma took place only in the middle of the 19th century. At the same time, in order to better understand the Roma tradition, we need to mention the Holocaust period, when under the regime of marshal Antonescu and the Nazi ideology, the Roma from Romania were deported to Transnistria to be exterminated. However, a considerable number of Roma returned to the villages where they belonged. (Achim, 1998, pp. 136-148)

3. Roma Gentiles

From the Roma gentiles, approximately 16 are mentioned, out of which the most important are the following:

- "*boldeni"*, "*cărămidari*" (Roma who made bricks), "*fierari*" (Roma who worked with iron), "*spoitori*" (Roma who were tinsmiths), "*ursari*" (Roma who trained bears), "*căldărari*" (Roma who made products like buckets, boilers etc. from cooper), "*argintari*" (Roma who worked in silver), "*rudari"* (Roma who worked in gold, soft wood and collected forest fruit), "*corbeni"*, "*lăutari*" (Roma who singed), "*horahane*"(Turkish Roma), "*lovari"*, "*vătraşi"* (Roma who worked in agriculture*)*, "*gabori"* (Roma who were trading), "*ungre"* Roma (Hungarian Roma).

The Roma could be identified as belonging to a gentile depending on the spoken dialect, and, at the same time, by the profession practiced by the members of a gentile. For example: boilermakers known as "*căldărari*" deal with wood processing and make boilers, buckets, kettles and other similar objects.

If we were to group the Roma according to the dialect they speak, the most important dialects are the following:

- *Ursăresc, Căldărăresc, Spoitoresc* and *Carpatin* - of the Transylvanian Roma (Hungarian Roma, *Gabori* and *Lovari*).

Therefore, these are the most widespread dialects, but apart from the Roma nations who live by them (*Ursarii* - the bear dialect, referring to the Roma who trained animals) and other Roma people who speak the same dialect, but without recognizing its origin, as it happens, for example, in the case of the *Corbeni* Roma (people from the region named Corbeni). The *Corbeni* Roma people speak the same dialect as most Roma. "*I get along with all Roma regardless of the dialect spoken, but less with Hungarian Roma. But the Corbeni Roma family is very widespread (the most widespread) since we speak in the same way as the Boldeni, Ciobotari, Ursari, Roma from Craiova; in our country, men used to deal with merchandising (selling, buying horses) and women with fortune-telling.*"

At the same time, the *Ursăresc* dialect is the most widespread, being spoken by the Roma *Ceaunari* (the ones who make cauldrons), *Pieptănari* (the ones who make combs) and *Florari* (the ones who sell flowers). Besides the Ursari that are very prevalent in the cities from the region of Moldova (Iaşi, Vaslui, Bacău, Râmnicu Sărat), there is also a Roma gentile which is quite widespread in this area (Moldova) that is called *Modorani.* (Grigore, n.d., pp. 12-15)

Thus, we could conclude that the Roma *Corbeni*, *Ursari*, some of the *Lăutari* (musicians) (the Romani speakers), *Boldeni* (the Roma who also sell flowers), Ciobotari (Roma shoemakers), *Pieptănari*, *Ceaunari* and *Vătăşeni* speak, with small differences, the *Ursari* dialect.

"*We, silversmiths, get along with all the Roma except the Hungarian and the Spoitori Roma. Even with the Ursari, we understand each other better; we resemble the dialect with the Căldărari Roma.*"

"I can tell you about Modorans that they speak a dialect different from Ursari, but they still have words from the Ursari dialect. However, I can tell you that the Modorani have a dialect that is closer to the Căldărăresc dialect" (Grigore, n.d., pp. 12-15).

From the testimonials listed above, we understand that the *Căldărăresc* dialect seems to be spoken, with small variations, by *Argintari, Modorani* and *Căldărari*.

Depending on their occupations, the Roma may be classified as follows:

• **Boldeni (florists)**, the Roma who used to make artificial flowers for different types of wreaths, and today they sell flowers and deal with merchandise;

• **Cărămidari/Cărămizari**, the Roma who manufactured burnt and unburned clay bricks (they have origins in the following gentiles: *Ursari*, *Vătrași* and *Rudari)*;

• **Fierari**, Roma who once worked with iron, including hardware and locksmithing, made iron tools, tied iron carts and shod horses;

• **Gabori**, Hungarian Roma, Hungarian speakers, who are found mainly in Transylvania and Banat, and who, traditionally, were tinsmithers, but who nowadays trade with carpets, blankets and various household items;

• **Xoraxans (Turks),** Turkish Muslim Roma who are Turkish speakers and thus are deeply influenced by the Turkish culture; they settle mainly in Dobrogea region;

• **Spoitori**, Roma who once practiced smelting or tinning of metal vessels, but today work with ferrous and non-ferrous metals;

• **Căldărari**, Roma who process copper, from which they make boilers, cauldrons, trays, kettles;

• **Lăutari**, Roma musicians, especially instrumentalists, mostly originate from *Ursari* and *Vătrași*

• **Lovari**, Hungarian Roma, Hungarian speakers, settled mainly in Transylvania and Banat; they used to practice horse trade;

• **Ursari**, Roma who, in the past, dealt with "walking" with the bear, then, through professional reconversion, turned to iron processing, combing (processed bone and horn and made combs and other objects from bone and horn), sieving (processed animal skins and made sieves) and singing;

• **Romungre**, Hungarian Roma, Hungarian speakers, deeply influenced by the Hungarian culture, settled mainly in Transylvania and Banat, and engaged in trade;

• **Rudari**, Roma who, for the most part, have lost both their mother tongue and the traditional Roma culture, and who are deeply influenced by Romanian culture and deal with wood processing, making spoons, spindles, forks, alibis, furniture, objects from twigs;

• **Argintari**, Roma who used to process silver and gold and who now mainly make jewelry and other ornaments;

• **Vătraşi**, assimilated/acculturated Roma who were sedentary a long time ago, who lost their mother tongue and the traditional Roma culture and are deeply influenced by the Romanian culture.

4. Traditional Roma Occupations

The most important traditional occupation of the Roma is *metalworking*. "Iron processing includes specialization by trades: blacksmithing, locksmithing, horseshoes, carpentry and ironwork. The blacksmiths make agricultural tools, household objects, iron elements for constructions and installations. The locksmith makes and repairs padlocks, latches, hinges, keys and various types of door and gate locks. The farrier shoe horses, oxen and donkeys. Carting or tying of the carriage consists of pulling the rails on the wheels and making the iron ties of the carts or sleds. Tinsmith, in which pipes, gutters and roofs are made, is the profession practiced especially by the *Gabori* Roma." (Grigore, n.d., pp. 12-15).

In addition, *Căldărarii* process copper, they repair copper vessels for household use (brandy boiling pots, cauldrons, trays, pans) or for worship (baptismal cups, Epiphany pot, church cups). The most important working technique is "*alămirea ţigănească*" (gypsy brass), an old process, transmitted within the family and kept secret. It guards the great mastery of hammering copper. Spotters took care of tinplate copper vessels, which is a job that has almost disappeared. Among the traditional crafts of the Roma are also the processing of precious metals: gold and silver. *"Silversmiths make jewellery, harness (spurs), clothing (buttons, buttons), household items (cutlery, bowls, trays, gilded salt shakers, gilded silver cups, cups) and religious objects (censers, candlesticks, baptisms, candles, crosses)."* (Grigore, n.d., pp. 12-15).

Among the special techniques they use is the watermark technique, "the technique of relief modelling by hammering and the art of inlaying with precious stones."

The *Rudari* Roma developed a series of specializations in wood processing:

> "the actual practice made by *Butnari*, those who produce wooden household objects (plates, cups, donuts, threshing machines) and by

Covătari / Albieri those who make basins and broods; *lingurăritul* practiced by *Lingurari,* those who make spoons, teaspoons, cups, spoons, poles;

fusăritul practiced by *Fusari*, craftsmen in making spindles; *lădăritul* practiced by *Lădari*, specialized in making furniture (tables, chairs, cabinets), but especially in dowry boxes, lacquers (small wooden boxes), barns and thrones (large boxes for holding corn or other cereals)" (Grigore, n.d., pp. 12-15).

A special branch of Roma gentiles is *Corfari*, who weave objects like baskets from hazelnut, wicker or willow twigs. At the same time, **Lăutăria** is one of the most famous traditional Roma crafts. The list of great names of Roma fiddlers begins with Barbu Lăutaru and his memorable encounters with Franz Liszt and ends, depending on the era in which they lived, with Cristache Ciolac, Fănică Luca, Petrea Creţu Solcanu, lăutarii din Clejani, Grigoraş Dinicu, Fărîmiţă Lambru or Ion Onoriu.

This profession are passed on from father to son; it is practiced in groups, with the band, in *taraf* (Roma specific type of band) and more recently, at events such as weddings, parties or fairs. Originally, *lăutăria* did not mean you have to know the musical notes in order to practice it, because it was thought and learned "by ear", today though, many fiddlers also have specialized studies. The instruments they use, ordered by frequency, are the following:

- the violin (including a type of improvised violin, in fact a viola with a semi-circular bow or six strings)
- the lute
- the tambourine
- the accordion (taken from German music)
- the bass (as the fiddlers call the cello and the double bass);
- *cobza* (a multi-stringed instrument of the lute family of folk origin)
- the guitar
- the bagpipe
- the willow, poplar or reed whistle (like Pan's flute)
- the tambourine (used by bears)
- the clarinet

The fiddle music is based on a large dose of improvisation, which is why some Roma fiddlers have now chosen jazz, "it is spontaneous, rich in rhythm, melodically varied; it develops wide interpretive valences (sometimes imitating bird trills), outlines subtle rhythms. It uses combinations (from gentle to passionate, from pathetic to exuberant, from graceful to impetuous);

uses changes of rhythm and measure, the syncope (jerky tone and prolonged phrase), repetition and the technique of variations. In some geographical areas (Spain, Portugal) it processes elements of Arabic rhythm taken from "canto flamenco" of Andalusia. In other areas (Balkans), it harmoniously combines the rhythm imposed by local music with "flowers" (sound variations) of oriental style, especially Turkish, such as "*manea*" and "*meterhanea*" (originally Turkish love songs, predominantly instrumental, rarely sung, jerky, in mourning rhythm). These songs began to lose their popularity in their place of origin starting with the end of the eighteenth century, but the fiddlers retrieved some of their style elements." Roma music, whether vocal or instrumental, is part of the artistic manifestations of the community by either having a ritual-like (wedding song, lament, etc.) or non-ritual-like (love song, swing song, etc.) character.

Fiddle music is a traditional Roma occupation; therefore, it brings income and belongs to professional performers (vocal or instrumental) of local folk music. Roma artists take musical motifs or phrases from Roma music or even the interpreting "style" of Romani music ("rromane gilă" / Roma songs) and transpose them into fiddle music, without creating confusion between the two musical genres; this phenomenon is known as the "Roma manner" of interpretation.

Among the forgotten or endangered Roma crafts are bone and horn processing, which was used to make combs, buttons, knife handles, pipe handles, shepherd's bat heads and gunpowder horns. Also, animal skins processing through which big and small sieves were made; animal hair processing, which was used to make various types of painting brushes; brick working, the horse traders; and bear trainers. (Grigore, n.d., pp. 12-15)

5. The Roma Identity, Assuming the Ethnic Identity

UNICEF's "*Roma ... in search of self-esteem*" research shows that Roma identity has been obscured along time. In all Roma categories (rich, poor), forms of dualism that aim to ensure what is believed to be integration into Romanian society are present. When the social environment allows it, some Roma may have a dual identity. "In formal environments such as school, work or the relationships with neighbours, they show their Romanian identity, while in the family environment, they show their real identity, as Roma." (Grigore et al., 2007)

Another way of camouflaging the ethnic identity is that of omission ("*when you are well received in a group, in someone's house - my face does not betray me*"). Ethnic identity can be disguised by physical appearance or social status:

"Why should he learn the Gypsy language at school, in order to have an accent, for Romanians to laugh at him? I know Gypsy and what did it do for me? If I wanted to, I would have taught him Gypsy, but I didn't want to: don't you see how white and beautiful he is, you could say he is Romanian, what is he, lower than the Romanians are? Let them think he is Romanian!" Argintari gentile woman – 39 years old, 8 grades, Bucharest.

"Did the fact that you were a brunette force you to say that you are a Gypsy? - Yes. I think that if I wouldn't have been a brunette I wouldn't have said that I am a Gypsy ..."- Roma girl, 20 years old, *Ursari* gentile, Alexandria, Teleorman county - The effects of these frustrations lead to the refusal of assuming the ethnic identity.

Roma with a good socio-economic situation, who do not speak the Romani language and are culturally assimilated by the majority ethnic group, refer to the **Romanipen** (authentic Roma values, beliefs) as a distant reality, from which they estranged by reaching to higher studies and / or by accumulating material goods:

"I don't speak Gypsy, I have nothing to do with gypsy, I studied, I have a job, I have a house, I have everything I need, I left the gypsy behind, I have nothing to do with it"- Vătrar Roma man, 43 years old, high school graduate, Alexandria Teleorman county.

The Roma identity can thus be cultivated in a limited space of activity or development, only in the heart of the family. At school for instance, the Roma may face otherness or problems related to the skin colour.

The traditional poor Roma see the Roma who have left their community as a kind of Romanians, who escaped from poverty, the predominant feeling being a mixture of subtle envy for their success and slight contempt for the fact that they have left themselves assimilated, that they deny their ethnic identity and they abandoned their traditional values.

The majority assimilated Roma, who do not speak their mother tongue, are labelled "*Gypsies*" with all the related negative attributes (dirty, thieves, fools, villains), as opposed to the Roma who preserve their ethnic values, including those related to traditional crafts, of which they feel emotionally connected and which are still some of the income and overall life essentials.

The Roma who have a good socio-economic situation, speak the Romani language and partially preserve the values of the traditional Roma culture refer to **Romanipen** as an internal reality, deeply lived, of which they are proud: "*our girls marry virgins, this custom is rigorously kept: my daughter was 22 years old when she got married and she was a virgin!*" Roma from the *Lautari* and *Ursari* gentiles, 42 years old, high school graduate from Zece Prăjini, Iaşi

County; "*We have our traditional food: thickened pickled cabbage, stevia food and cakes with hemp cream*" – Roma from *Ursari* gentile, 56 years old, 6 classes from Zece Prăjini, Iaşi county. (Grigore et al., 2007, pp. 25-26)

Wealthy traditional Roma who speak the Romani language consider themselves the true Roma, they refer to **Romanipen** as their intrinsic reality that comes as a set of absolute values. The language and the traditional wear, the crafts and customary justice are the most important elements that justify their belonging to the Roma ethnic group.

We can conclude that living the authentic ethnic identity and the increased self-esteem level depend primarily on the cultural factors. The current identity of the Roma was built on the history of social exclusion and institutionalized racism. The consequences of history are visible even nowadays, in the collective mental model that the majority has, and that pushes on their individual consciousness, sometimes preventing their whole life to know and understand the Roma as otherness. From a cultural and social point of view, the Roma are still a cultural and social group marked by exclusion. (Grigore & Sarău, 2006, p. 61)

6. Integrity and Assimilation

"Integration presumes that the individual in his relations with others acts with his whole set of norms, traditions and principles and the one who receives the interaction from him accepts and sees as normal all these principles. The concept of assimilation is the opposite of integration, assimilation assuming that the individual in his interactions and his relationships with others no longer values his own characteristics, cultural and ethnic features." (Grigore et al., 2007, p. 54)

The Roma status is quite difficult to be owned and is not at all advantageous. The desire to be assimilated can appear in the Roma mentality at the moment when the Roma identity is perceived by the others as a stigmatized one. Assuming the social stigma presupposes a solid and well-defined ethnic consciousness, although only after the post-December period (after the 1989 Romanian Revolution against the communist regime) the Roma ethnicity began to develop a politico-cultural identity (through introducing teaching in Romani, special places for Roma in high schools and universities, etc.). Among the interviewed people, the lowest desire for assimilation was observed in Roma who speak the Romani language and who keep the Roma customs.

7. Psychological Theories on Minority Influences

Before presenting some of the research related to the education and values of the Roma people, we will present some theories on the minority influences. Due to their nomadic condition, the values and education of the Roma were shaped by the nations they came across during their migration and which were also influenced by the Roma.

Moscovici (as cited by Boncu, n.d.) called the "***functionalist paradigm***", a theory in which the mechanisms of social regulation that ensure the perpetuation of norms were studied; the way in which individuals adhere to the norms of the majority. The group exerts a strong pressure towards uniformity by eliminating any divergence of opinion through severe sanctions. It always wins in front of the individual, who must give up any disagreement and comply with the norm. (Boncu, n.d.)

Hollander (as cited by Boncu, n.d.) - ***the theory of idiosyncratic credit*** claims that the leader has the change initiative, but only after complying with the rules, thus wining this position in the community. (Boncu, n.d.) (*Căldărari Roma guided by the Roma leader)*

Moscovici (as cited by Boncu, n.d.) - the "***genetic model***" or "***interactionist***" relies on the idea that social conflict is the general mechanism of influence. Individuals not only adapt their behaviours to the group norms but can also propose norms. He argues that the individual or the small group of deviant individuals in relation to the dominant norm are at the origin of innovation. Thus, a minority can gain influence even if it is powerless. (Boncu, n.d.) (*Ursari Roma and Pavlov's experiment)*

Moscovici ((as cited by Boncu, n.d.)) - ***the theory of conversion*** - credits the indirect influence of the minority to the socio-cognitive conflict caused by the intervention of the minority source. (Boncu, n.d.)

Martin (as cited by Boncu, n.d.) - argues that the latent influence of the out-group minority is greater than that of the in-group minority. The minority induces ***conversion*** when its specificity is recognized and its true nature is out-group. (Boncu, n.d.)

The theory of psychologizing - consists in attributing the minority discourse to some psychological characteristics of the source. Establishing this correspondence by the target makes conversion impossible. Psychologizing does not have the same effects in the case of the majority, which makes it a specific protecting strategy from the minority messages. (Boncu, n.d.)

Thus, this theory seems to be the most appropriate when we talk about the values in the Roma community. The majority (i.e. the Romanians) largely rejected these values, traditions, etc. of the Roma, as an effect of psychologizing over the majority population.

Clark (as cited by Boncu, n.d.) following a study on minority message censorship argues that censored or banned minority interventions become more effective. (Boncu, n.d.)

This theory confirms the resistance of the Roma minority to the influences of the majority, the resistance to the process of assimilation.

Table 1 - Theories on values

Domain	Values	Source	Author
Education	• Purity • Fraternity • Responsibility for the other • Honour (Pakiv)	*"Rromani Education and Ethno-culture"* (handbook)	Grigore (n.d.)
Health	• Sickness = Evil	*Roma history and traditions*	Grigore & Sarău (2006)
	• Wellbeing as a state of the whole family • The more you weight the healthier you are	*Gypsies: The hidden Americans*	Sutherland (1986)
	• Roma do not agree on autopsies • Roma do not agree on organ donation • The body is sacred	*The Crossroads of Culture and Health Among the Roma (Gypsies)*	Vivian & Dundes (2004)
Living	• The palace	*"Rromani Education and Ethno-culture"* (handbook)	Grigore (n.d.)
Family	• Love • Marriage • The girls' virginity • Life engagements	*"Rromani Education and Ethno-culture"* (handbook)	Grigore (n.d.)
Solving misunderstanding/Customary law	• Roma trial	*Roma history and traditions*	Grigore & Sarău (2006)

Clothing	• Decency • Long skirts	*"Family life and the position of women in Roma communities"*	Voicu & Popescu (2009)
	• Upper body - pure • Lower body - impure	*"Rromani Education and Ethno-culture"* (handbook)	Grigore (n.d.)
Budget	• The family budget is managed exclusively by women	*"Family life and the position of women in Roma communities"*	Voicu & Popescu (2009)
Household	• Women are housewives and raise children • Men work outside the home	*"Family life and the position of women in Roma communities"*	Voicu & Popescu (2009)

Source – Autor's own compilation from various sources mentioned in the table

8. Education

In the research report "*Family life and the position of women in Roma communities*", Malina Voicu and Raluca Popescu (2009) (Open Society Institute Budapest) showed that the values that are transmitted mainly through children's education involve obedience to the parents' authority and the community. Children must be submissive and respectful. Education should never encourage initiative, autonomy or independence. These greatly influence the family relationships that will later on be created, because the young generation will have to obey to the rules of the community and the will of the parents regarding important decisions, such as marriage. Through education, Roma girls learn to listen to their parents and future husbands and never question the will of any of them. The situation changes when we talk about non-traditional communities where girls decide who to marry on their own and the couple's decisions are usually made by mutual agreement. However, the fundamental values acquired through education do not encourage social change but rather *the preservation of the existing order*.

Education has a prominent effect on the way gender roles are structured as well as on the modelling of intra-family relationships. A high level of education is directly associated with accepting gender equality. Roma children's access to education and the stock of education have been a significant issue for Roma communities. The lack of chances to continue studying after elementary school as well as the reduced educational levels,

consist in elements that lead to the preservation of traditional gender relations within these communities.

In the work *"Romani Education and Ethno-culture"* (course support) by Delia Grigore (n.d.) - the Roma child is described as an embodiment of absolute purity, a guarantee of the continuity of the gentile. Traditional education consists in training the Roma child in the spirit of fraternity, mutual help, and responsibility for the other. In order to become responsible, the brothers take daily care of each other, starting with the age of 5-6 years, the girls start taking some household chores and the boys start to learn the crafts of their fathers, and are allowed to participate in the men's meetings from an early age, 7-8 years. Both making the children accountable and teaching them to develop their abilities to cope with life independently, from a relatively young age are appreciated and praised by the family and the Roma community.

The fundamental concepts of the traditional Roma family are "phralipe" (fraternity) as a way of mutual help and collective responsibility and of "pakiv" (honour, reconciliation, trust, faith), as a way of reconciliation and building a healthy self-image. Helping each other and collectively taking responsibility of one another, along with the mutual fraternal feeling are essential elements of the concept of "phralipe" - the essence and basis of the traditional Roma society. In order to preserve the ritual purity, the code of ritual politeness includes ways of addressing in which the affection is shown by expressions such as*: mo phral* (my brother) or *mi phen* (my sister); and through these ritual questions *kasqo neamo san? / so vica si tut?* (what gentile are you from? / what nation are you from?) the Roma identity is confirmed.

The principles underlying the Roma children education are based on the presumption that they are little adults, endowed from birth with the ability to express their will, desires, emotions and intelligence. To these, purity is added, their lack of experience being the only minus. Children are protected to the extent that their desires could become laws, they have freedom, and their progress is encouraged by praise and encouragement while being given the opportunity to take on significant responsibilities from an early age. Boys have the duty to help their father in his occupations, and the girls learn and practice the household chores from an early age, in order to become good daughters-in-law.

Children are exposed, from a very young age, to stimuli similar to those intended for their parents, being considered equal to adults and able to understand everything they are told. In order to be strong, the boys are taken to an older relative or someone prestigious from the community so that the child can tell them "*kus te dares*!" (Curse him if you dare!). Thus, training the boy's capacity to interact with ease and strength. When he receives a violent

response from his relative, the boy must show stoicism, mastery and courage. In this way, the community educates the defence power, moral strength and resistance to frustration that the child must develop. The success of this stage of his formation is accompanied by praises and wishes: "*t-aves zuralo aj baxtalo*" (Be strong and lucky!).

With many relatives, the child feels protected in the community, but he must prove that he respects the rules of the gentile. As the children are pure, they are given access to any information, including about intimacy, however, girls are mainly educated in shame (*lavajo*) to determine them to avoid any contact with non-Roma men (gadgii), thus respect the restrictions and preserve their virginity. The rules and restrictions imposed by *shame* are more rigorous for girls, who are forced to wear long skirts from the age of 5-6 years.

In order to understand the feeling of fraternity present in the Roma community, it is necessary to observe the relationship between brothers. All brothers of the same age are equal; none having the right to show superiority or to have an arrogant attitude towards one another, o the other hand, the older brother is seen as the substitute of the father and hence treated with more respect.

Children are also educated in the spirit of "*phralipe*". No one forbids them anything verbally: "*do not do this*". Apparently, no control is exercised over them. They are equal to adults, on the condition to teach them the codes of the community, in the form of a slow natural initiation, without prohibitions. Yet educating them to resist frustration, the key to spiritual power and sign of maturity, respect - "*pakiv*" - brotherly shared responsibility - older brothers educate younger brothers - and the sense of shame "*lajavo*", an essential element in interacting with the family model from which any deviation is either sanctioned or subjected to a reparative ritual process.

All this forms the ROMANIPEN, the fundamental law of the Roma. (Grigore, n.d., p. 19)

According to the study "*Family life and the position of women in Roma communities*" (Voicu & Popescu, 2009), there is a large gender gap between Roma women and men when it comes to access to formal education given that 23% of women Roma did not access formal education while only 15% of Roma men did not access formal education. This gap is even more visible between Roma women and women from the majority population. If 23% of Roma women did not access formal education, the number of women from the majority population is six times lower, 4%. Roma girls are usually expected to complete their studies sooner than Romanian girls do. At the same time,

the percentage of Roma women who consider that primary education is sufficient for girls (21%) is two and a half times higher than the percentage of women who have the same opinion about boys (8%). In 76% of Roma families, the mother is the only one who has the responsibility to attend school meetings and maintain relationships with their children school. The mother is also the main support children get for homework.

Based on the responses of Roma women whose children go to school, it was found that 19% of Roma children currently study in a segregated environment - that is, their classmates are mostly or entirely Roma. 83% of the Roma women whose children are enrolled in segregated schools said they would prefer their children to receive an education in a mixed learning environment. Of the Roma women surveyed, 56% considered that in the current education system their daughters suffer from gender discrimination in school.

Roma women claim there is a strong gender segregation also when it comes to career orientation for boys and girls. Roma women in our sample considered the following areas and occupations suitable for girls: education - teacher and educator (28%); health care - doctor or nurse (27%); textile industry - mainly tailors (23%). Instead, jobs suitable for boys are driver (19%); car mechanic (19%); engineer (15%); doctor (14%) and lawyer (12%).

A clear picture of inequalities for Roma women and men education results from data provided by a large-scale study conducted by the Research Institute for Quality of Life (RIQL) in 1998. For the intergenerational analysis, the RIQL study used the following generational definitions:

- 'Younger' refers to people between 17 and 25 years
- 'Middle age' refers to people aged between 26 and 45 years
- 'Older' refers to people over the age of 45

The results of this study show that gender inequalities persist among Roma over the age of 16 in terms of the opportunity to access formal education. Roma men (14%) compared to Roma women (23%) benefit from a higher access to any formal education. From the perspective of an intergenerational analysis, a model of a slight reduction of gender inequalities can be observed when considering school enrolment. From the older generation, the percentage of women who have not received formal education is more than double than that of men (35% for women and 16% for men). "The ratio is dropping for the middle-aged generation (19% for women and 11% for men) and is even reversing for the younger generation (17% for men and 16% for women)." (Voicu & Popescu, 2009)

The extent of gender inequality for vocational schools (i.e. the number of Roma women and men completing vocational school) varies from one

generation to the next, yet Roma women of all generations are still disadvantage. The number of Roma men from the older generation who graduated a vocational school exceeds that of women by a margin of five points. Three times more men than women from the middle-aged generation graduated from vocational school, while "only" twice as many Roma men than women from the younger generation received vocational training. The gender inequality rate from one generation to another for middle school and university showed a tendency towards gap balancing between Roma women and men. However, the general number of Roma who end up having completed higher education remains very small. The illiteracy rate is higher among Roma women than Roma men. Thirty eight per cent of Roma girls and women over the age of 10 are illiterate, while only 33% of boys and men face the same situation. A secondary analysis of data of the RIQL database reveals that the percentage of women who did not receive formal education is higher in rural areas (26%) than in urban areas (19%). Roma women from urban areas are twice more likely to complete vocational school than Roma women in rural areas. The residential foundation (urban / rural) similarly influences the probability of completing secondary education. Five percent of Roma women in the city complete high school, compared to 2% of Roma women in the countryside who manage to complete them. The research showed that Roma women, on average, have a significantly lower level of formal education compared to the majority population of women in Romania. The percentage of women without formal education is statistically 6 times higher for Roma than for the total female population, and the percentage of women who have completed higher education is about 8 times lower for Roma than for the general female population.

In the Roma communities, the women from the research sample expressed a general desire to provide their children with a higher level of education than what the data shows they should expect. Evidence of high aspirations to receive education contradicts the widespread stereotype that Roma do not want to benefit from education. In fact, the survey data shows the dissonance between high aspirations and low chances of receiving an education, which generates social frustration among Roma. From the Roma women interviewed, the majority expect a lower level of education for girls than for boys. The percentage of women who believe that primary education is sufficient for girls is two and a half times higher than the percentage of women who have the same point of view about boys. At the same time, more women expect boys to complete secondary or higher education and by far fewer expect the same for girls. Data from qualitative research confirm the results of the quantitative study. The views expressed by Roma women during

focus group interviews show that they favour higher levels of education for boys. Roma women give the following reasons for their preferential treatment:

- Men are the ones who earn money and bring income to their families because having a better education and job training can help ensure a consistent income for the family;

- Men need a better education in order to maintain their roles as family leaders.

"*We have no expectations regarding girls*," said a Romani woman, commenting on girls and Roma education. "*She is likely to get married tomorrow, then follow her husband and not have to study. Besides, her husband probably won't let her get a job anyway.*" In another discussion group, a Romani woman said, *"Boys should finish school, because women have to sit by the cooking stove"*, as the saying goes, *"the man brings the money home"*. Most Roma women who participated in the group's discussions agreed that a girl's success in life depends largely on a successful marriage. Therefore, it is less important for girls to receive education. Another motivation for less supporting girls' education is the belief expressed by many Roma women that women should have a lower social status than men should. Several Roma women also said that, from their perspective, if girls continue school after puberty, they are less likely to be eligible for marriage. (Voicu & Popescu, 2009)

9. Health

"The binary vision of the world, comprising the opposition pure (rr. Uso) - impure (rr. Maxrime) is found, at the level of the relationship with the supernatural, in a Manichaean-type belief, similar to the Persian dualism, in which both the forces of good, represented by God (rr. o Del / Devel) as well as the forces of evil, represented by the Devil (rr. o Beng) are complementary and at the same time necessary to the world. (Grigore & Sarău, 2006, p. 56)

Also in the category of evil are the diseases, against which they have developed ways of protection related to the use of their denominations in Romani, for example: linguistic euphemism (naming the disease with a nicer name) and the taboo of the disease (naming the disease with a different name than it actually has). For example, cancer and sexually transmitted diseases are called *"jungalo nasfalipe*" (ugly, bad disease), and after talking about someone in any of these situations, one should say: *Othe leske!* (Let him be there!).

"The denomination belongs to the transcendental dimension of human existence. This "*aver anav*" (another name / nickname) protects against disease. It is said that the disease looks for the child whose name it knows, but cannot find him if his identity is hidden under a secret name. Therefore, most

Roma children have a certain name in their birth certificate, but in the community, they are called by another name "*rromano anav*". (Grigore & Sarău, 2006, pp. 56-57)

The article "*The Meaning of Health, Well-Being, and Quality of Life Perceived by Roma People in West Sweden*" (Karlsson, 2013, p. 1) shows that Roma perceive their health and life well despite marginalization and discrimination.

The Roma understand the idea of health as a collective phenomenon. Thus, collective health is what matters to them. Within their community, Roma feel safe and this brings satisfaction to their lives. Respondents expressed a strong bonding feeling towards their families and relatives, which can be explained through the close social connections within Roma families and the communities. "Internalized traditions, values, customs, etc. are assets (cultural capital) that act as a buffer against stress and difficult life situations in Roma communities; yet they have a minimum value outside the Roma society." The "*inside*" world feels trustworthy and predictable. However, many Roma respondents suffered from the non-Roma negative attitudes, which is why Roma said that their confidence in society and non-Roma is either very low or zero. Thus, one question remains: how long do the feelings of well-being and satisfaction last when the Roma leave the safe environment of the community to experiment the "*outside world*"? (Karlsson, 2013, p. 1).

According to the results, having a job and a good education are essential health factors for Roma. Respondents relate to health and well-being in terms of the whole family, rather than through individual experiences. The results of the study indicate that Roma see health as a resource and skill that helps in the process of self-management. Roma people have developed over time survival strategies that they still use nowadays. "It seems obvious that the strong feeling for the community, their families, the social network, as well as traditions, are significant parts of the coping mechanism behind the paradox that the respondents in the study perceived a good health as an indicator for a good life quality." (Karlsson, 2013, p. 1)

In the article *The Crossroads of Culture and Health Among the Roma (Gypsies)* (Vivian & Dundes, 2004), it is demonstrated that Roma have certain beliefs and behaviours about health and medical care that, from a cultural point of view, are different. Knowing these aspects and the different "*cultural adaptations*" is important in taking care of their health. Among culturally diversified patients seeking for healthcare in the United States, Roma or Gypsies in particular have different beliefs and practices that can be challenging for health care providers. (Kemp, 2002) Roma are less familiar with the factors that influence both the delivery and the quality of healthcare. Roma attribute the quality of their health to luck and believe that the more a

person weighs, the more likely he is to be luckier and thus healthier. Weight is believed to be a sign that indicates good health and good affluence. (Sutherland, 1986)

The Roma defend and support their belief in the folk medicine they inherited from their ancestors. The Roma consider it pointless to immunize children, most of whom avoid vaccinating them. Roma do not believe that bacteria and viruses are the ones that cause disease, but rather impurity and so-called dirty places. (Sutherland, 1986)

Roma believe that evil spirits or the Devil cause serious illness by visiting Roma who keep their homes unclean. The devil is also responsible for epilepsy and tosca, a disease of the nervous system. For this journey to be completed all the body parts must be in place because the soul will appear in human shape. Roma also believe that a person's body is sacred." (Vivian & Dundes, 2004)

That is why, when a Roma patient dies, the medical staff should not ask the Roma family if they are willing to donate organs because they would only offend the family during their moments of mourning. (Vivian & Dundes, 2004)

10. Housing

In order to express a pertinent perspective on the satisfaction that living in a palace gives, in the traditional culture of the *Căldărari* Roma, it is necessary to mention that the *Căldărari* Roma were the last nomads that Romania had. Yet, they were later forcibly stagnated during the totalitarian communist regime in the '60s at the same time with another phenomenon called forced cooperativization processes. (Grigore, n.d., p. 24)

"Roma nomadism is somewhere in the middle, between identity and economic category (commercial nomadism due to social marginalization) or survival strategy." The latter gives social status to the community and leads to what might be called the cause-effect-cause circle. The nomadism of the community is given by the fact that its members practice specific trades, which involve moving in space. At the same time, because it is nomadic, it acquires a marginal status "but this nomadism, in turn, has as its cause, in addition to ethno-psychological determination, social marginalization, exclusion, expulsions." (Grigore, n.d., p. 24)

The type of housing they choose, living in a tent, is specific to Roma features and is based on their conceptions and needs, requiring a special connection with nature and a certain conception of the idea of ownership.

While the sedentary human lives with the feeling of land ownership and builds around his house a true existential philosophy, the nomad is alien to this feeling of attachment to a place, he is free, he feels detached from the concept of territory, which gives specific characteristics to his mental structure. The Roma carefully choose the place of temporary residence, usually next to a forest, at the base of a hill, by a river, near a cave, on the shore of a lake or on the edge of a village. "They mark their territory not in the sense of self-ownership, but to purify it and surround it with a protective magic circle - the head of the community surrounds the camp three times, riding his horse which is a symbol of authority and an apotropaic sign of the community. This way of marking the territory is part of the Indian heritage, the *ksatrya* caste - the warriors – that were doing the same in the old Indian theories." (Grigore, n.d., p. 25)

The Roma camp (community) is organized in two concentric circles, the one on the outside consists of carriages, and the one on the inside consists of tents. The circle, being the perfect shape, protects the camp both symbolically and practically. The Roma use a specific technique of raising a tent. They insert three thick stakes into the ground, in the shape of a triangle and then they tie it very well at the top, with thick rope. Over the stakes, they apply a solid tent cloth, previously painted with tar to prevent water from penetrating. They tie and stretch the cloth well first and then all the ends of the stakes. They fix the top from the three joined stakes, and place leaves and hay on the ground. "In winter, either dig huts in the ground, semi-buried houses, or put the cart under the tent, and put a few thick layers of straw on the ground. Children sleep in the cart and adults on the ground. The food is kept in the cart and a fire is lit in front of the tent." (Grigore, n.d., p. 25)

The nomad is a strong man marked by the relationship with nature, with the cosmos. He wants to keep this communion in all its forms, so for him, the tent is not a home, it does not separate him from nature, but it is like a garment, only protects him from the cold. "The tent as a garment, as an extension of one's being, which has all the characteristics of an anthropomorphic creature (tent mouth, tent soles, tent head, etc.) develops a philosophy of freedom and unity with the natural - that habitat harmony reduced to the essential, simplified to the maximum - in order to offer the individual a deep relation with the environment. The space of his home and the common spaces form, for the Roma, a continuum, the tent, later the caravan/carriage are spaces open to the whole community; just as there is no sense of land ownership, no one cannot speak of private space in the sense of that of the *gajikano* (non-Roma) model." For a being who prefers a place shared with the community and who calls his co-ethnic "*phral*" (brothers) and

"*phen*" (sisters), to have a personal room and thus to experience loneliness is one of the most terrible things that they can experience. Therefore, freedom in relation to others and the fraternal collective spirit, together with the mutual sharing of responsibility in relation to one's own, are principles of nomadism.

Nomadism in Romania was banned during the communist dictatorship. Nomadism became a form of internalized stigma, which could only be rejected thorough a true ownership of sedentary life, by creating the strongest form of sedentary habitat, the *palace*, the one to be preserved in time and space and to be passed as legacy. All this, unlike the nomadic spirit, having nothing to do with the previous vision, marked by a clear indifference in the concept of property.

The *Caldarari* Roma are the last nomads of Romania, they copied the way the majority lived and even surpassed it precisely in order not to be called nomads. Their palaces are built this way, especially to compensate for the fact that they do not have social positions and because of their desire to prove that they are sedentary.

The pride of being well seen by the other people - "*dikhlo*" develops within the framework of a culture that emphasizes the image / the appearances, in which what others think about you substantially matters.

"In this way, the Roma palace is more than a home; it is especially an element of social representation, de-stigmatization, (re)construction of self-esteem and recognition in society." (Grigore, n.d., p. 26-27)

11. Family, Social Relationships

The family is the value that defines Roma culture. They believe that *"Daśtil te avel tut but love, kana san korkoro naj tut khanć"* (Even if you have a lot of money, if you are alone you have nothing).

Through the system of cultural kinship, *"phralipe",* the family of a Roma is, in fact, the community, which is why we can call it "*community family*". The traditional marriage between young Roma takes place by consensus of the two *"xanamik"* families (parents in law), without the need to be formalized outside the community. Only through marriage do *"o ćhavo"* (boy) and *"i ćhaj"* (girl) become members of the gentile, being called *"rom"* (man of ours, husband, Roma) and *"romni"* (woman of ours, wife, Romani).

The status of women in the traditional Roma family bases on several behavioural and attitude patterns. Depending on the level of responsibility at which she is, various roles are attributed to her. As a "*"ćhaj bari"* (virgin / unmarried girl), she must maintain her physical and spiritual purity to honour

her gentile". She is responsible for the purity and honour of her family, she is not allowed to leave the community unaccompanied and she is under the tutelage of her parents. Only through marriage, she can consider herself an adult. As a *"bori"* (daughter-in-law), she must listen to the head of the family and let him protect her. She must offer *"pakiv"* (respect and honour) to the parents-in-law and live by the customs of her husband's people, who also became her people. She must cultivate a strong sense of duty and worship her mother-in-law. As a "*Romani*" (wife), she manages the household, raises and educates children and, almost exclusively, she keeps the family money. As a *"daj"* (mother), she must raise her children in the spirit of Roma customs and norms, she is responsible for her children, especially the girls, and she has to worship her sons and daughters. As a *"sasúj"* (mother-in-law), she coordinates the house. Moreover, she becomes the main character in her daughter-in-law life, more important than her husband, „*o sastro*" (father-in-law) does. At the same time, she supervises her daughter-in-law and coordinates the family from inside. She decides on what to spend the money of the family and chooses the partners for her children. As *" „Phuri daj" / „màmi" / "baba"* (grandmother), she has a very important status in the community as she becomes the subject of infinite care and attention from the family. As well, she becomes the main advisor and possessor of many premonitory, reparative and protective values and gifts.

Marriage is a lifelong alliance between two families, the bonding relationship - *"xanamik"* - being as strong as that of blood, the members of the two families having the obligation to support each other in any situation, not to refuse anything to each other and give each other full confidence. The so-called *"bride price"*, the amount of money paid to the girl's family by the groom's family, is, in fact, a kind of payment for future children, who will belong to the husband's family and who he must take in exchange for a symbolic value, thus strengthening his reputation, and therefore his status within the community." This payment is the most valuable for the Roma marriage: the virginity of the girl. In most cases, the money will be used for the new couple. A guarantee for the durability of the marriage, of the solidarity of the confinement and of the good treatment of the girl in the new family. The *"bride's price"* is the recognition of the girl's value and her material contribution to the family after marriage (*„i romni kerel buti and-o kher*" she will become a housewife). It is a protection of the future bride in the husband's family, but also guarantor of mutual respect *("pakiv"),* reward from the boy's parents for the girl's parents, with no exchange function, but as a symbol, thus traditionally in gold, not in money." The traditional Roma themselves make the mistake of translating into another's language a concept deeply rooted in

their own cultural mentality, which cannot accept a denotative translation, but only a connotative-ethno-cultural one. For instance, when a Roma says: "*this is how it is in our community, girls are sold when they marry"*, he erroneously translates into Romanian a concept specific to the Roma that does not mean *"to sell"*. He is actually trying to simplify the concept for a better understanding of the Romanians, but, without wanting to; he plays the strings of those who misunderstand the situation and brings arguments in favour to the denigrators of the Roma people."

The Roma do not use the term *"bikinel"* (to sell) when talking about the girls' marriage, but *"pokinel"* (to pay) whose meaning is not only denotative, but also connotative meaning: *"to cherish"* the bride's virginity, *"to value", "to put price, value", "to compensate"*; to exchange the symbol of purity with the symbol of gold, both values representing honour and social prestige in the traditional Roma community. In this sense, the phrase closer to the truth of Roman culture is *"appreciation of the purity of the bride"*, not *"the sale of the girl at marriage"*. The boy's family offers to the bride and groom their future house. The bride's family, i.e. the girl's mother and grandmother also share the responsibility for the new marriage. They must contribute symbolically and financially to the marriage through the dowry they give to the bride before the wedding, which consists of gold jewellery, clothing (it is recommended to give to the future wife skirts for the next 10 years), furniture and household items. Marriage at a young age (girls of 12-13 years old, boys of 14-15 years old), in the traditional Roma culture (5-10% of Roma still keep this norm), is nothing more than consecration through community recognition and parental blessing of some possible natural tendencies of that age." In fact, when the girl is taken from her parents' house at a young age and installed in the house of her future husband, there is no intimate relationship between the two husbands for a long time. *"The girl becomes her mother-in-law's daughter -"she sleeps under her mother-in-law watch"*- and her husband's sister. She is protected and educated by her mother-in-law, so that later, sometimes even after a few years, she can take over the role of wife." It is, indeed, an advanced form of engagement: the girl becoming *"terni bori*" (young daughter-in-law). While in traditional cultures, the emphasis is on the community good, where the individual interest can easily be set aside, in modern cultures the emphasis is on the apparent well-being of the individual, according to which the state of the community is reanalysed and often sacrificed so the former be fulfilled. In this way it can be explained "the freedom of the individual in relation to the system of constraints and recommendations of society and the relatively easy acceptance, without complexes, of starting a family, be it potentially, only

through sexual relations, without consecration and community recognition." (Grigore, n.d., pp. 16-19)

Modern cultures take the risk of unbalancing the community, because changing status, without informing the family, is a danger of creating undesirable alliances, "loss of social cohesion and legal coherence of human existence, which can even mean experiencing trauma, physical and psychic, by the individual abandoned to the fortuitous factor of his illusory liberty." Traditional cultures refuse to take this risk through permanent ritual involvement in the lives of individuals. Early marriages also have the role of ensuring a process of subtle psychological accommodation, both for the two partners and for the members of the two families. "Another cause of early marriages of the Roma is of historical nature: during the time of slavery (1374 - 1856), the boyars had the habit to sleep with their slaves, who were also given to guests. To this purpose, virgin girls were preferred, so in order to protect the girls, Roma families preferred to marry them faster. The virginity of the bride is sacred, due to several factors: it is the basis of Roman morality, of the conception of pure and impure; it presupposes a rite of inauguration, of creation, as well as the first pregnancy and birth; it is a guarantee keeping the blood of the gentile pure. The responsibility for the girl's prenuptial life rests, as is natural, entirely on her family, especially her mother. Sometimes, the two families that will become family, the two *"xanamika"* (parents-in-law) decide to marry their children even before their birth. This ritual commitment / vow is called *"promising the children"* (rr. *"Solaxadimos e ćhavenqo"; "ame semas dine and-o solax"* = we were promised) and is followed by successive reunions of the two families, especially at the anniversaries of their son and daughter, so that those who are promised may know each other, be friends and accommodate, long before the date of marriage." (Grigore, n.d., pp. 16-19)

In this way, the children first become brothers and sisters, with marital love growing naturally, over the years, as a solid and deep feeling. This feeling gives durability to the Roma marriage, because it goes beyond the limits of the often-transient passion that would have been the basis of a modern marriage often completed by a divorce. There are other forms of marriage in traditional Roman culture. One of these is the possibility of the mutual choice of a *"bori"*, the brother from a family marrying his brother-in-law's sister. This ritual exchange - *"paruvimos"* reduces the wedding expenses by half (weddings are done together), revokes the payment for the bride, but comes with risks of a unilateral divorce, which could lead to the divorce of the other couple, only the *kris* having the power to decide the dissolution of one marriage and the continuation of the other. *O naśimos* or the escape marriage is a form of deviant marriage, but accepted through reparative rituals, out of the desire of

traditional culture to include and repair any deviation, instead of excluding the deviants, thus we can notice a great desire to put the equilibrium of the community first. (Grigore, n.d., pp. 16-19)

In the research report *"Family life and the position of women in Roma communities",* Voicu and Popescu (2009) highlight the idea that for the Roma, whether if they come from traditional communities or not, rural or urban, whether if they are women or men, young or old, the concept of family is the most important aspect of their lives, and within it – the children.

In addition to tradition, there are pragmatic motivations for this belief. In the case of girls, a basic explanation is given by the rule of virginity, which is very important for the community. Girls marry very young to be protected from the temptation to make mistakes. The Roma have the custom proving that the girl is virgin by showing the bed sheets from the wedding night to the whole community. This test is necessary to avoid scandal among families in the community. (Voicu & Popescu, 2009, p. 9)

In non-traditional communities (rural and urban), the age of marriage is still low. Although there are fewer constraints, most young people marry before turning 18. "Later marriage remains more of a wish for mothers, because in reality, most young people *"get married"* at the age of 14-15 and have children from this age." The difference between them and traditional communities lies more in the attitude.

In all group discussions there were different opinions about the right age for marriage. There was a unanimous agreement only on the very young age, under 18 years old. All participants agreed that both the boy and the girl should be at least 18 years old before marriage. Furthermore, some opinions militate for an older age, towards 25 years while other opinions believe in a younger age, of 18-20 years, especially for girls. (Voicu & Popescu, 2009, p. 10)

In non-traditional communities, both urban and rural, the most important criterion for marriage is love. It is essential that the two partners love each other. Parents do not intervene in choosing the future spouse, as they are only informed by the children. Usually, "the girl leaves with the boy", regardless of whether the parents like it or not and stays with the boy for a while, until the parents agree with their marriage. Afterwards, the parents discuss the aspects related to the marriage ceremony and the help they can give to the young people. If the parents have the opportunity, they also organize the wedding. Thus, the girls or the boys in the community choose "whom they like", usually "boys keep an eye on girls". After marriage, the young couple lives in the parental home of one of them, usually with the boy's family. Currently, community houses host three generations: parents, children and grandchildren. Sometimes, if the families do not like the union between

the young people at all, they choose to "escape together". Most of the time, after a while they return to the community." (Voicu & Popescu, 2009, p. 12)

In all the studied communities, even in the urban ones, marriage is endogamous. In general, partners are chosen from their community or from neighbouring communities. However, ethnic similarity is a condition in all types of communities. Even in urban communities, it is important for the partner to be a gypsy, for fear of causing problems in the extended family.

The respect for family and husband was unanimously mentioned. Lack of respect can justify even domestic violence. If the wife does not show respect to the husband, it is considered that she deserves to be beaten by the husband. Respect translates into obedience and submission. The loyalty of the woman is also strongly valued. Thus, the standard portrait of the Roma wife must have the following qualities: housewife, faithful and submissive.

In addition, the man's qualities correspond to his role as head of the family and the main source of income for the family. A good husband is a man who takes on the responsibility of supporting his family.

In all types of communities, even non-traditional urban ones, in most cases Roma are not legally married. The formalization of the relationship is anyway impossible in a first phase, once many of the relationships start at the age of 14-16. Thus, if desired, the official marriage comes later, once the partners reach the legal age. According to cultural rules, moving together and having children is the equivalent of marriage. The term cohabitation does not exist for Roma and has different connotations. The meaning of the term in colloquial language is of lovers, but having children gives the guarantee that the two are married. Living together without children is closer to the significance given to cohabitation (i.e. lovers).

The responsibility for creating a pleasant environment in the family belongs especially to woman. She has the role to bring harmony in the family. "The expressive function of women, on a traditional model, also illustrates her inferior status in the family and in the community: *"When arguing, the woman must give in. He must be a man ... and the woman must be silent ... the woman must have a lower status ... and the man a higher one."* (Vereşti, women under 35)."

Family quarrels are often considered a gift: *"Ei, don't they get along! They get along in time. Now you have to get along."* (Sarulesti, women, over 35 years old). Problems, sometimes even domestic violence are perceived as a component of the couple's relationship and family life. It is not a source of significant dissatisfaction. The reasons for the misunderstandings are invariably the material difficulties.

Marriage is a lifelong covenant for the Roma. In rural communities, both traditional and non-traditional, divorces do not occur unless the woman

is unfaithful. In urban areas, divorce seems to be more accepted yet it is also very rare.

In all communities, whether traditional or non-traditional, the only reason for unanimously accepted separation is the infidelity of the wife. The infidelity of the husband is still accepted and considered a part of the attributes of his masculinity. (Voicu & Popescu, 2009, pp.13-14)

12. Solving Misunderstandings - Customary Law

In the traditional Roma communities (*căldărari, ursari, argintari* etc.), most conflicts are internally solved - *"maśkar e phralenqe"* (between brothers), in the community court meeting - *"i kris"* - preceded by the debate of the case between relatives - *„o divano"* (talk). "Appealing to a lawyer brings shame to the gentile, because it would prove its inability to handle such situations and to do justice. The trial is done by sages, old people, who are not related to those who are judged, decisions are made by agreement and "justice is distributive: both parties have their share of justice and must be satisfied; since there is no absolute truth, trust and mutual respect are the basis of communication and communion. (Grigore & Sarău, 2006, p. 45)

The role of traditional Roma trial is to eliminate conflicts within the community and to reconcile the parties being on trial. The trial is done only between members of the community, which is why when the conflict is between a Roma and a non-Roma, the traditional trial is impossible to do. To ensure the neutrality of the judge, he must not belong to any of the families in conflict, or if that is not possible, he is even from other community. He must have a fruitful life experience, be respected and appreciated by the Roma group, have an impartial attitude and know in detail the Roma traditions. He is responsible for the correctness of the process and decides on which of the traditional, un-written laws of the community to be applied in the case. A group of neutral observers make up a kind of jury, many of whom are usually part of the judge's family. They also have the duty to maintain the order during the process. "Many times his family is transformed into a legend, serving as a model for future generations. The court assembly comprises an odd number of *krisinitori*, exclusively men. They are famous for their honour, wisdom, rank and material power (this makes them incorruptible), and among them must also be the oldest representatives of the Roma, age being one of the criteria for selecting judges." (Grigore & Sarău, 2006, p. 45)

Non-Roma or representatives of state institutions are not accepted at such meetings. The trial lasts for 3 days: on the first day, the plaintiff and his witnesses are heard, on the next day the defendant and his witnesses are heard,

and on the third day, the verdict is given. Access to the process for all community members is free. They cannot restrict the access for any Roma. Both the judge and the members of the jury have the right to ask questions to the witnesses and to express their own opinions regarding the testimonies heard. Although only the judge has the authority given by previous cases experiences and tradition, the members of the jury can also address these issues. Once both parties have expressed their views, the members of the jury may present arguments in favours of one of the parties. In fact, all the men present have the right to express their point of view. Women, if invited, are allowed to speak only if they are directly involved as a claimant, defendant or witness. One of the traditions of the Roma is to avoid the direct involvement of an individual in a situation that could become embarrassing. This is the reason why messages are sometimes sent through intermediaries, who act as lawyers. Additionally, the parts must not offend/curse each other; this way lawyers show their tact and diplomacy.

For both the depositions of the parties and those of the witnesses, the fundamental element that gives credibility is the oath - *"solax" or "solaxadimos"* -, examples often used are "*te merau me"* (May I die if I lie!) and *"te meren mirre ćhave"* (May my children die if I lie!). False oath can cause illness, death and even exclusion from the community, by declaring the person as impure ("*maxrime*"). After the hearings, the judges withdraw to analyse the situation. At the debates can also attend young people elected from the community, but who are not allowed to speak. The community does not take part at the debates, which take place in great secrecy. The Judge talks with the members of the jury in order to reach a consensus on the final verdict. The judges then return to the meeting place and the verdict is finally given, yet not before the verdict fee is paid. Usually, the price that a judge charges as a verdict fee is 10% of the fine the defendant will receive and is paid equally by the two parties involved. The verdict does not aim at punishing the guilty party, but rather at compensating the injured party (s), reconciling the parties and long-term peace in the community. Typically, each of the two parties must pay a sum of money to the other and promise, by oath, that they will not create conflicts with the other side, that they will forgive and make peace for good. A trusted person is chosen as the guarantor for each oath. If the verdict is agreed by the parties, time limits shall be set for the payment of the fine and the parties shall be required to swear that they have finally settled the dispute and make peace at the so-called conciliation table (rr. "*pakiv*"), where the full court and the entire assembly that was present at the trial will participate. The judge is the guarantee that the conflict is really closed.

"The approach of traditional Roma justice is distributive and compensatory justice. The punishment of the guilty is sought less than the compensation of the victim, which results, most often, in the payment of a sum of money by the guilty party to the victim and in a table of reconciliation - "*pakiv*" - where each of the parties receives its share of compensation. The fundamental idea is to reconcile the conflicting parties and to re-establish the intra-community equilibrium." Sometimes judges impose punitive measures that are bound to the supernatural. For instance, if an accused is not found guilty, although there is much evidence against him, judges can propose and impose curses (rr. *armaja*), the effects of which, from their point of view, are assured. The purpose is to get the accused to testify under the pressure of fear of the curses. *Kris-initiators - "krisăqe rroma"* - are often elderly people - *"bitter phure"*, to whom the community owes faith and respect. The traditional Roma culture has a true cult for the elderly, as a pendant to the cult of children.

A Roma family will never send their elders to an asylum, no matter how good and luxurious that asylum is; excluding them from the community would mean their spiritual killing, therefore it would prove to be a mortal sin. The elderly woman receives special attention: without impurity, but blessed with the maternal miracle - she is responsible for the education of her grandchildren as *"phuri daj"* (old mother), she has prestige and has influence in the community. Elderly women have the right to smoke or pass in front of those who smoke, eat and drink with men, organize purification rituals. The old woman's balance and opinion may even exceed, in the event of an unresolved conflict, the judgment of the *kris*, a situation in which she has the last word. All members of the community want to share their meal with the old woman. The blessing offered by *"i phuri daj"* protects from any misfortune just like the blessing from God.

In conclusion, a typology of Roma institutions of intra-community control and sanctions could be projected, as well as a typology of their meanings and attributions as follows:

- *i kris* (traditional Roma judgment / assembly), as a form of amicable settlement of intra-community conflicts;

- *krisinitor* (judge), as a court of moral prestige and self-constitutive landmark;

- *bulibașa* (traditional leader), as the supreme authority in the community and as an intermediary in the relations between the Roma and the non-Roma authorities;

- *i pakiv* (reconciliation, trust, honor, faith), as a form of reconciliation and reconstruction of self-image;

- *o Rromanipen* (the law of traditional Roma culture), as a system of norms and reference values of intra-ethnic identity;

- *o phralipe* (brotherhood), as a form of intra-community solidarity and collective responsibility;

- *o phuro* (the old man), as a factor in transmitting past experiences / values to the present and to future generations;

- *i phuri* (the old woman) and *i drabarni* (the healer, the witch), as a complementary inductive-reparative and catalytic-protective factor. (Grigore, n.d., pp. 21-23).

13. Clothing, attitude towards the body

The rules on how Roma women should dress are very strict whether we are talking about traditional or non-traditional communities. According to these rules, women must dress decently, with long skirts, covered so that no stranger can see their legs or other parts of the body. Moral rules are very restrictive in terms of a woman's loyalty, and any misconduct is severely punished by her husband or the community, with indecent clothing being considered a sign of infidelity. (Voicu & Popescu, 2009, p. 27)

The entire life philosophy of the traditional Roma culture is based on the opposition pure / "uźo" - impure / "maxrime". The ritual purity consisting in respecting the universal order and harmony by respecting a pattern, and the ritual impurity, invisible but spiritually present, consisting of the deviation from the pattern. Through impurity the intra-community balance - that was pre-established by a series of laws of conduct, whose validity and viability has long been verified by the experience of previous generations - is broken. If the Roma do not want to be excluded from the community, they have the obligation to respect the laws of purity. Complying with these rules is part of the responsibility that each individual has and of the whole community and it manifests through the sense of shame - *"lasipe"* -: the way in which children, and especially girls are educated. Many rules refer to the human body and ritual hygiene, starting from the concept that the body is divided in two, from the waist up - the pure upper part, and from the waist down - the impure lower part. The eyes, head and mouth are pure and clean elements. Kissing on the mouth, in the family or between members of the same sex is a gesture of trust and brother-hood. Kissing the eyes is a sign of special consideration, but it can also be a gesture of taking someone's power and subordination, which is why it is avoided. The family greeting: *"xau te jakha"* (If only I could eat your eyes! – with the meaning of deep affection) is a sign of love and shows the desire to protect. The head is the residence of

luck - *"baxt"* - and honor - *"pakiv"* - which explains the seriousness of a curse such as *"te xav tirro śero"* (If only I could eat your head!), which means the symbolic loss of honour. In opposition to *"te xav tirro ilo"* (If only I could eat your heart!), an expression of maximum tenderness and shared feelings of brotherly love."

The body part from the waist down should always be covered, for both women and men: Roma women wear long skirts, never short skirts or pants; Roma men wear long pants, never short, the knees being considered the most indecent and provocative parts of the human body. Shirts and blouses are washed separately from skirts and pants, in different recipients and the water from them is never mixed. Furthermore, the recipients for washing kitchen utensils (cutlery, dishes) are separate from the ones for clothes, all for fear of impurity. (Grigore, n.d., p. 16)

14. The Budget, Money Management

In traditional communities, decisions are made predominantly by men, because women do not think they should intervene in any way. Sometimes, in-laws are also involved in making decisions for the young family, which is to some extent justified by the powerful relationship between the in-laws' family and that of the newlyweds.

Another controversial topic in non-traditional communities, but perfectly agreed in traditional ones, is about who keeps and administrates the family budget. The traditional convention stipulates that women manage the family budget, although the man is considered to be the main supporter of the family, and the one who makes important decisions related to the allocation of the budget (purchase of durable goods, potential investments). The justification given is that women stay at home, are virtuous, and spend money rationally, while men could spend it on unnecessary things like alcohol or other temptations outside their home. The women know what is necessary and good for the house, while the man tends to spend money careless. Actually, this way of managing the budget indicates to a different power relationship within the family. Apparently, women have no decision-making power, having an inferior status that stops them from having an open opinion in the family. There is a number of mechanisms through which women can indirectly participate in family decision-making. Thus, they have power and express it in the relationship with the husband. Being the depositories of the family's money, no expenses can be made without them knowing. They control in a way what happens in the family even if apparently they are not allowed to have an opinion. (Voicu & Popescu, 2009, p. 29)

15. Household

Housework is also explicitly separated by gender, women have to take care of the house and children, and men have to be responsible for the yard and everything that involves household chores, but outside the home. Thus, the women cook, shop, take care of the house and take care of the children, and the men bring water, carry wood, take care of the yard and take care of the animals. The precise distinction between what a woman has to do and what a man has to do in the household is also kept by non-traditional communities, both in rural and urban areas. It should be pointed out that in the urban environment the domestic work that used to be done by men outside the house has disappeared, which has created an imbalance between the works that the two partners have to do. However, all participants in the group interviews argued that domestic work should be done exclusively by

women. It should be noted that in this issue even young Roma girls with higher education share a traditional gender ideology and see the gender separation of domestic work as a natural one.

It is also interesting and important to point out that although the employment of women in the field of work is quite accepted; it does not modify or change at all the gender roles. The family hierarchy is preserved; the men and women still have distinct roles. (Voicu & Popescu, 2009, p. 37)

16. Conclusions

The origins of the Roma, their history, their routes for centuries, are still not fully known by the Roma from Romania. Only after 1990, the history of the Roma started to be acknowledged. However, not all Roma know their origins. The coming of the Roma in the Romanian Lands *(Țările Române)*, the period of slavery, the Holocaust from the 1940s, all these were overlooked, somehow forgotten and thus unknown. The communist regime did not allow the information about the history of the Roma minority to be public. Communist rulers kept a policy of assimilation: the Roma were not permitted to express their ethnic identity or speak the Romani language. Consequently, forced assimilation / loss of ethnic identity has occurred at a large scale. However, the Roma managed to pass to their successor both the Romani language and their traditions verbally. Tradition is a cultural treasure that the Roma fortunately did not give up on from their beginnings until the present days. After 1990, the Roma could finally express / assume their ethnic identity and have access to information, so that the new generations could be aware of their roots and history.

The term *gypsy* is still in use today. The Roma in many rural communities call themselves Gypsies. This is precisely because, for centuries, the majority called them in this way, so they became accustomed to it, without knowing though, that this term actually means *filthy*. Currently, even if the Romani language is taught in schools (at the request of parents), young Roma in urban areas speak very little Romani, precisely because of the communist assimilation policy which forced the Roma not to speak in Romani. The Romani language has several dialects but a speaker of one Romani dialect can also understand the other dialects. Romani-speaking Roma understand the dialect of the Roma from another country, but the greater the geographical distance, the more difficult it is to understand the spoken dialect. The Roma from Romania have similar traditions to the Roma from Bulgaria, for instance, or the Roma from Russia, Serbia, Albania, etc. In addition, the language

spoken is very similar. It would though be harder to understand the Roma from England or from the USA.

The castes or the Roma gentiles usually prefer to live in compact communities, i.e. each caste should be in a community; for example, the *Ursari* Roma have their communities and do not interfere with the *Căldărari* Roma, etc. Marriages are preferred to be within the caste of which the young are part of and not from different castes. However, alliances frequently occur.

The traditional occupations of the Roma, even if less now, have persisted, the Roma from some communities still know how to make those handicrafts of yesteryear. These special crafting abilities are currently transmitted to the young generations in a very low percentage. The programs carried out by the civil society, which frequently targeted this crafts field, unfortunately had a short-term impact. A long-term strategy to relaunch traditional crafts, to adapt them to the 21st century, is yet to be implemented. Thus, these trades are somehow forgotten which endangers their future permanence. However, we could say that the Roma have reinvented themselves. They oriented towards liberal professions and became business people. All Roma, even the young ones who have a qualification, prefer to get a job that gives them freedom to move around, outside an office and organize their time at will. Most claim they feel asphyxiated at the office; they feel bound by a work schedule that they must follow regardless of whether or not they have tasks to do. Regardless of the season, they prefer working outdoors on a schedule set by them. The Roma see the efficiency of work differently from the majority, thus their integration / inclusion is difficult. When it comes to inclusion, there are many perspectives; the majority on one side and the Roma opposing resistance on the other side.

The effects of modernity also influenced the Roma communities. The Roma currently see formal education as being important, but also see it as a threat. Even if school gives you a certain status, its price is quite high: loss of tradition, of the virginity cult, of ethnic identity. However, Roma do not fight against school education, they understand that nowadays it is necessary. Even if the community is largely resistant to current influences, there is a struggle to preserve the tradition. The influence of modernism unwillingly affects the Roma community as well. Non-formal education is considered to shape the future adult and prepare him for life. The responsibilities that are tailored to each are those that are believed to train the individual for the future and make him an adaptable person. As it also ensures the preservation of values and tradition there is much emphasis on this type of education.

When talking about the health status of the Roma, one can say that as long as they can meet and interact with each other, they are healthy. Even if

they have health problems, they do not overthink them, because they consider that if their state of mind is good, then they are healthy. Generally, the Roma avoid saying they are sick. They believe that the expressed disease would be an intercommunication blocker, especially in closing business deals. It is important for them to show well-being, health.

For the Roma it is imperative how they live. Even if it is no longer customary for Roma to live in tents, in carriages, due to the phenomenon of becoming sedentary, Roma are used to living close to each other. There are homes where up to three generations live or, the relatives have houses nearby so they can help whenever needed. Even in the urban areas where most of them live in blocks of apartments, the Roma make sure to live as close as possible to their relatives. Of course, this is not always possible, but they try to keep in touch even when they live in close neighbourhoods or in the same city. For traditional Roma, it is very important that the toilet be outside the house, so that it does not get filthy inside. They have a bathroom in the house but without a toilet. They do not have up floor bathrooms for the same reason: in order to avoid filthiness.

Regardless of the environment/caste they come from, for the Roma, the family remains the most important. It fulfils the individual from all points of view. Regardless of their professional status or position, the Roma are loved and cherished within the family. Marriage is considered the most beautiful and important event in a person's life. Everyone's life depends on the success of the marriage.

The so-called inferior status of the Roma woman is in fact an appearance. The Roma woman allows her husband to feel superior. In fact, it is about the respect she gives to him as a husband. Problem solving, decision making are made discreetly by the couple, always with the consent of the wife. Moreover, the woman manages the family budget and the whole extended family (the community) agrees with it. No expenses are made without the consent of the wife, which gives the woman satisfaction. The fact that the woman is silent in front of her husband, in the presence of others, is in fact a proof of diplomacy. She allows and encourages her husband as the head of the family and the one who has to manage the outer issues and responsibilities of the house, but in reality, the woman is in control of the decisions that are made. In this way, the woman can openly ask for support from her husband's relatives, who will be there for her, if necessary.

The Roma trial, the *Criss*, as it is called, is unfortunately less and less common in the Roma communities. In the urban environment, it disappeared, given that the Roma are more dispersed in space and, at the same time, as an effect of urban modernization. However, there are traditional

communities that still use such a form of traditional trial. The given verdicts are respected by the Roma and no question of non-compliance is ever posed. The Roma trust their judges because they know the tradition and judge accordingly.

Moreover, they cannot be bribed thus they are impartial and the goal they pursue is the good of the community as a whole, not just of the family asking for justice. Such practices are welcomed because they have dampened numerous aggressions between Roma clans and created harmony between the communities. It should not be neglected that state authorities also participated at some of these trials: judges, representatives of the Police, representatives of the City Hall, etc. These trials have often solved intra-ethnic and even inter-ethnic conflicts. The Roma trials correctness on verdicts and procedures determined that even the state institutions, both Romanian and international, recognize their value and accept the given decisions.

In a nutshell, even if the Roma traditions resist at the pressure of the current times, we cannot deny the fact that inside the communities appeared disputes generated either by the status of women, or by the importance of formal education, clothing, etc. "What is evolution? How do we evolve? Is modernism really evolution or just time's fashion? Is this fashion benefitting us? Is it suiting us? Is it healthy for the community?" These are the questions that the new generations of Roma, who are influenced by both the community tradition and the Romanian society, are asking themselves. How will they manage traditional and modern beliefs, what will the Roma eventually choose, how will they fight for their community values and how will they interlink these values with the novelty of the 21st century are to be seen in the future. We hope that these dilemmas will be answered in a healthy and useful way, one that will lead to a good communication and fruitful intercultural exchange between the Roma and the majority population. May each of the two take from the other's culture what is good and beautiful because as Dostoevsky once said, "beauty will save the world".

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