



UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA

MASTER'S DEGREE IN POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF CONTEMPORARY
SOUTH AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

DEPARTMENT OF BALKAN SLAVIC AND ORIENTAL STUDIES

Thesis:

Views of identity politics of the ROMA in Greece

Supervisor: Agelopoulos Georgios

Student: Chatzikonstantinou Eleni

Thessaloniki,

December 2012

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to offer my profound thanks to my supervisor Professor Georgios Agelopoulos for his generous assistance and insight in writing my dissertation. Additionally, I owe a great debt to my friend Maria Sotirakoglou who championed me in my decision to commit myself to this undertaking. My deepest thanks to my friend and teacher Katerina Naskoudaki for her meticulous eye in editing this work.

This thesis could not have been written without the countenance of my parents Dimitrios and Anna Chatzikonstantinou who offered material and psychological support. To my brother George Chatzikonstantinou, I extend my deep appreciation for always being there from the very beginning of my academic career.

Contents

Abstract.....	4
Introduction: Defining the topic discussed.....	5
Aspects of ‘Gypsiology’: The study of the Roma in international literature.....	8
The Roma in the Greek social sciences literature.....	14
The construction of the Gypsy identity (processes and their dimensions).....	22
Conclusion.....	32
Bibliography.....	34

Abstract

Gypsies as a pan-European population are a matter of concern in many countries. As a result, in Greece, they constitute a 'close' social group that during the years maintained its structure and identity. What unified the Gypsies is their language, their customs and traditions. Despite the fact that the Greek society tried to incorporate them with different strategies they still remain culturally different, however marginalized. Their identity has a dual construction, the one is the self-image of the Gypsies and the other is the Gypsy-image of the majority population. The Gypsies in order to maintain their identity have strong family bonds, follow their customs and traditions, do not hesitate to travel and relocate in case of need and they are occupationally independent.

Key words: Gypsies, Roma, Gypsology, Gypsiness, construction of Gypsy identity, Gadje, Gorgio, self- identification, hetero-identification

Introduction: Defining the topic discussed

It is well known that the problem of the integration of the Roma is not only national, but also European. Despite the efforts and the funds that the European Union provides for the integration of the Roma in the dominant society, stability is visible considering this aspect. The Roma people are the most numerous and most disadvantaged of all ethnic minority groups living in Europe. Despite the fact that Gypsologists have given the image of a homogenised and unified group, the Gypsies discriminate themselves not only from the non-Gypsies but also from the Gypsy people of other groups- the categorization is made on the basis of being a member of an ingroup or outgroup.

Moreover, an unbridgeable gulf is evident from early years between the Gypsies and the non-Gypsies as well as between the reality of the Gypsies and the belief that non-Gypsies had for them, which is based on prejudice. The Gypsies have been abandoned by the states and the history (that is obvious as they are not mentioned anywhere in the history textbooks) and what follows them is myths and rumours which at least recognise them as a pan-European population. An example could be the fact that Greek Nationality was given to the Roma populations only in 1955, but actually this came into effect after 1979, when new legislation was voted, in order to find the solution to this issue (National Committee for Human Rights 2009, p.10). Additionally, it is true that some of the myths about the Roma may have been intentionally cultivated by themselves in order to avoid the threats of their extinction. The absence of proper information, even in our days, is a part of the myth that surrounds the Gypsies and it is well known that superficial knowledge on a matter leads to unfairness.

Gypsies migrate for different reasons. One could be the persecutions that they suffered which has led them to flee as they frequently faced phenomena of violent expulsion from their homes, sterilization of the Roma women, expulsion of their children from school and so on. Another reason could be the organised chases which have led either to fleeing or even to death (Liegeois 1994, p. 31). As a coincidence, the hostility towards the Roma has had as a result a furtherance for better host conditions.

The Greek government, in its endeavour to unify the Greek society in its establishment under the conviction of multiculturalism had a negative or even indifferent, at best, attitude towards the Gypsies. Social exclusion of the Roma is constant, which gradually until today seems to deepen, supported by the strong social-economic transformations of the Greek society in the last decades.

In the last decades, while there has been an “explosion” of reports regarding the Roma, which are voted by international organizations, at the same time there is a huge gap between their adoption and their implementation. This “explosion” is mainly estimated on the Roma basic principles of residence, health, education and unemployment which have to change in order for the integration of the Gypsy people to be successful. Even the current National Strategic Framework (NSF) for the Roma which is hoped to be materialized by 2020 focuses on the change of these measures, suggesting the possible solutions.

Even if these aspects are of paramount importance this thesis focuses on the Gypsy identity. The first part of this thesis analyzes significant researches being carried out on the Gypsies. Specialists on the Gypsies tried to analyze their Gypsiness, namely the way that someone behaves in order to be considered a Gypsy.

Depending on the time period when their articles or books are written, researchers focus on different aspects. The early writings present a uniformity based on the origin of the Gypsies, their language, their relocation and their social exclusion. The first researches were namely aimed at finding the origins of the Gypsies through language and physical characteristics. Many details are given on their course of wandering during the years and the possibilities of their transformation after a long sojourn in a country. The reason why the Gypsies relocate is due to persecutions that lead to flight or due to organized pursuit with identical results. The researchers try to unveil all the reasons leading to flights embodying historical events and information. Furthermore, researchers raise a question in the beginning of their study and they gradually attempt to analyse it through their analysis. Indicatively one of these questions is ‘to what extent are the Gypsies People of Europe’. Subsequently, the interest of the researches changes radically. Researchers try to understand why the Gypsies are still a unique group and have not assimilated into the indigenous population. They use innovative forms to investigate the Gypsies as anthropological fieldwork, long stays with them or

even form surveys examining how the non-Gypsies and, especially the instigators of education, regard the Gypsies.

After the review of the literature, there is a chapter which considers the gypsy identity and how its twofold construction is theoretically formed through the self-image of the Gypsies and the Gypsy-image of the majority population. These two constructions are largely contradicted. The rejection of the former and the acceptance of the later would result in the Gypsy assimilation, but also in the loss of their cultural identity. Finally, this thesis presents several basic elements which, in my point of view, aid in the maintenance of the Gypsy identity. We could not omit from this list the bonds of the family and its structure, their customs and traditions, the role of travelling and their connection with occupation.

In this thesis I have used the terms Roma and Gypsies in order to refer to this unique population under review. Although there are certain societies who do not adopt the term 'Roma', it is used to apply to all so called Gypsy groups. These two terms are synonymous and are used interchangeably. Moreover, the Gypsies themselves call the non-Gypsies 'Gadje' and 'Gorgios', designations that will be found in the following chapters.

This paper is edited based on books, articles and sources which consider the topic of the Roma from a sociological, anthropological, legal and political point of view. The verification of ideas was done via internet sources which are mentioned in the bibliography. Concluding, the paper is the consequence of a bibliographical and internet research examining the surveys being held considering the Roma and how their identity is constructed via self and hetero- ascription.

Aspects of 'Gypsiology': The study of the Roma in international literature

Gypsiology is a sector that deals with matters considering Gypsies. It cannot be considered as a discipline as it does not have a specific epistemological background; it is rather the outcome of different personal research projects as scholars attempted to unveil the secrets of this unique group of people. In the classical form of Gypsiology we find studies concerning the Gypsy language, 'race' and origins. The most recent form of Gypsiology deals with defining characteristics of the Gypsies in direct reference with the social and cultural exchanges, relations and contacts with the native population. In order to understand this context, a number of studies will be analyzed below.

Among the most reliable and most cited sources on the origins and course of the Gypsies throughout the centuries are those of Angus Fraser and Jean- Pierre Liegeois. For this reason we will begin our analysis from these two books.

In the book 'The Gypsies', Angus Fraser tries to answer an important question. 'To what extent are the Gypsies people of the Europe?' In order to come to certain conclusions, he starts his historical book with reference to the linguistic evidence of the origins of the Gypsies in India as it is thought that the only way to research the real history of the Gypsies is to research their language. In retrospect, Fraser, studies the Gypsies' anthropological background with reference to physical and genetic studies which indicate their distinctive identity by making a hypothesis, however, not coming to any conclusions. Fraser continues with the migratory relocations of the Gypsies into Persia and Armenia, into the Byzantine Empire where they always had an inferior social status and in the margins of the Gadge (a word that is used by the Gypsies to characterize non-Gypsy people in the Romani language). In the fifteenth century Fraser detects their first movement into Europe. Gypsies appeared as organized groups of pilgrims who requested financial assistance and which they were awarded Here, Fraser clarifies that Gypsies were not discreet anymore, as they used to and began appearing in the public eye. The fact that they were finally discernible is called 'the big ruse'- a trick to get them in the open. Gypsies devised a strategy- that of being pilgrims- in order to exploit and increase chances of survival, under their religious forms, which would offer them better living conditions than they had in the Balkans (p.p. 69-73). Fraser offers a detailed analysis of the aggressive legal actions

and persecutions that the Gypsies have undergone from the fifteenth century onwards. The Gypsies were divided into smaller groups who spread across the length and breadth of Europe, a development which attributed to the continuous persecutions by the local populations and the efforts of local communities to impose social and ethnic integration. Moreover, there are many details about the Holocaust of the Gypsies and the Jews in Germany. These two groups were the only ethnic groups that the fascist ideology suggested their outright extermination as they were thought to be dangerous-Framedrasse (foreign race) whose blood was a 'deadly threat' to the authenticity of the German people (p.p. 259-260). At the end of World War II European Gypsies, who managed to survive, redistributed massively and Fraser writes about the policies that different governments adopted towards them. As aforementioned, Fraser's book is clearly a historical one, with an abundance in detail. He tries to present a history of the Gypsies in Europe, with reference to Asia and America and to other European travellers, like the Tinkers (Irish travellers), and to describe their present status in virtually the whole of Europe. At the end of the book, Fraser, concludes that the case of the Gypsies illustrates that a common culture can survive any obstacles. He also adds that no matter how small and vulnerable a minority may be, it has the right to remain different. That was eventually the core of each host society which while at first tried to reject the Gypsies, then tried to assimilate them (p. 323). To return to the initial question, if Gypsies are people of the Europe, Fraser concludes that they have every right to consider themselves Europeans after so many centuries. He complements that in fact they are included among the very rare peoples that are thought to be (pan-)European (p.p. 11-14).

Jean- Pierre Liegeois in his book entitled *Roma, Tsiganes, Voyageurs* (in his original title) gives an answer considering the role and the responsibility of the local and regional government in cultural and social problems of nomadic populations. Under the umbrella term Gypsies and Travellers, Liegeois includes groups with nomadic backgrounds reviewing many differences arising from their history, their course, their language and their contemporary situation. It is a classic book with many historical details providing basic information on the Gypsy way of life helping the reader to understand its oddity. It is necessary to clarify that it provides broad and factual information about Gypsies and Travellers covering almost all of the European Countries. This book is separated in two parts. The first one addresses social and

cultural data and describes not only the basic characteristics of this group, but also the institutions of the host or home country. It is really worth noting the fact that Gypsies and Travellers form a 'mosaic' of different groups worldwide. This implies two things. It means that they connect with each other, but it also means that each element of the group has distinctive characteristics which differentiates it from the rest. The second meaning gives specificity to the structure and content of each group (p. 67). The second part of the book deals with the social and political situation where the financial, legal and educational situation of emigrants in many host countries is analyzed. Many details about the behavior and the politics that were obtained about Gypsies and Travellers in many countries, unveil the cultural values and ideologies that dominated in the rest of the population. The fear of riots, that even the reference to these groups had caused, is evident not only in the local population but also in the reactions of the state and the local government. There is common treatment of these groups by the states and the variations are quite rare on a path that passes by the politic of exclusion in the politic of inclusion. Both the predicted treatment of Gypsies and Travellers and the image that is created is almost common in all European countries.

Another book which is worth mentioning is J. Okeley's 'The Traveller- Gypsies'. This is the first monograph to be published on the Gypsies in Britain using the perspective of social anthropology. The first record of the Gypsy groups in the UK dates back to the early sixteenth century and their origin was, and still is, the subject of ethnographic debate. Okely studies the Romani identity especially from an historical perspective but the curious thing is that nowhere in her book does she give a clear definition of what a Gypsy actually is. Specifically in the early chapters of the book, she gives bits of fragmented information about the origins of the Gypsies and the history of Gypsiology adding particular misrepresentations about them. Okely continues with data and details from her four-year fieldwork. At first, she lived in a caravan in four Gypsy camps and in the course of her stay she lived near the camps, being visited by herself or visiting Travellers (p. 39). Another important element is the position that the Gypsies hold in the economic structure and their occupations. The ideology and the practice of self-employment is made quite apparent as Gypsies cannot be supervised or forced to work. Wage-labour is not consistent with their ideology, making it quite irrational, as it increases the levels of their unemployment.

Okely continues with a chapter clarifying that the Gypsies are not passively copying the beliefs of the dominant society (p. 77), even if the society attempts to assimilate them. Moreover, in her text things that was considered to be taboo and unclean and mostly related with Gorgio (i.e. non Romani people, Gadge as mentioned above in Frasers' review) were unravelled. Specific references cannot be omitted, especially the attitudes of the Gorgio towards the Gypsies, and the Gypsy way of life or kinship, the image of Gypsy women and social matters that are not acceptable be the settled population. Lastly, even if Okely wrote this book years ago, she came to a conclusion that many writers confirm that 'History has demonstrated the survival of the Gypsies as an ethnic group, despite attempts towards their extermination' (p. 231).

In his book, 'The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics' Zoltan Barany tries to examine the four most prevalent types in the Eastern Europe regime namely the imperial, the authoritarian, the socialist and the democratic. His rationale lies in the premise that a regime type is the one that determines state policy which, in turn, explains the changes in the conditions of the marginal group where the Roma are included (p.p. 3-4, p. 23). The results of such research have brought to light the fact that indifferent to the country and its regime structure present and past the Gypsies were always at the very bottom of social, political, economic, cultural, and racial hierarchies. He begins his analysis with an assessment of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and then focuses on seven contemporary nation states: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and FYROM. After making a review of the regime types and the policies that they applied towards minorities, Barany mentions the sources of the political marginality and ethnic mobilization in order to outline the Gypsy marginality. In the following chapters Barany turns his study to the Gypsy way of life under the emerging democracies which was caused after the political and economic changes of the 1990s. It is true that discrimination towards the Roma exists in Eastern Europe, but admittedly the Roma are no angels or heroes, they are a group in poverty that needs aid in overcoming their present situation. The high rate of illiteracy is one of the prevalent factors that should be modified. As there are not many jobs available for these illiterate people this results in the augmented unemployment rate in this group (p.p. 251-252). During this period we face a paradox. Even though the situation changed for the better, for the Roma, having benefited from full

employment, free education, health care and other state-supported policies, still remained at the bottom of the socioeconomic scales. This was due to the fact that the Roma did not really want to undergo these changes as this would irreversibly change their traditions and cultural values. The most positive effect of this period is that the Gypsies succeeded in organizing themselves and were finally mobilized politically. Barany states that the 'Romani marginality can be alleviated only through long term, committed state policies, changes in societal and Romani attitudes, and the continued support of international organizations and NGOs' (p. 360). Lastly, Barany makes harsh accusations towards those who want to transfer the problem of the Roma integration at a European level, and as mentioned above, concludes that only international organizations and NGOs can find a solution and are responsible for the Romani integration. He finishes his book in a rather pessimistic way as he quotes one activist's sayings that there is no way to ever resolve the Gypsy problem to the satisfaction of both the Roma and the societies around them.

Istvan Pogany with his book 'Human Rights and the Plight of the Romani People' tries to convey the plight of the Roma people to his readers. He focuses on the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe and points out that the problems they face are chronic living under third- world conditions. Pogany's entire book contains real stories narrated by the Roma as he interviewed many Romani people from different backgrounds. By doing so, Pogany gives depth to his analyses and tries to avoid generalizations and stereotypes that are created when a topic is analyzed without evidence or specific data. He presents the Roma as he knows them, as people possessing the full range of individual traits and qualities, good and bad, found amongst any other national or ethnic group. Pogany in a whole chapter focuses on the Roma Holocaust or as it is called Porajmos by giving real evidence as he interviewed elderly Roma from Hungary and Romania. Finishing his chapters with the historical overview from the appearance of the Roma until the final Collapse of the Communist administrations, Pogany deals with social, political, legal and financial aspects that the Roma face. The topics that were analyzed with the consideration of the book's second demarcation include poverty, education, employability and their exclusion from the labor market and experiences with the criminal justice system. Moreover, what is really fascinating is the fact that wherever the stories took place there is a connection with poverty and the data reinforces the opinion that things worsen because of it.

Another really important factor is that the Roma are not interested in their history, even the ones whose life has not been afflicted by poverty, as they do not set the standards and they distance themselves from others because they feel culturally different. The position of women in the Romani culture is regarded as one of much lower status than that of men and bearing in mind the already inferior position of the Roma we can understand the difficulties that they face. They are frequently subjected to physical assault, abductions and restrictions which confirms the recognition and the effective protection of the fundamental rights of Romani women at the level of both national and international law (p.p. 123-126). Finally, the book examines the failure of criminal justice systems to help and give fairness to the Roma in their discrepancies with the local people. The positive side nowadays is that there are many NGOs, Roma activists and remarkable commentators who publicize all over the world the human rights of this minority and try to allay the extreme social exclusion and discrimination experienced by the Roma. In the whole book the high level of influence that Barany's writings exerted on Pogany is evident.

The Roma in the Greek social sciences literature

In Greece, as social sciences have only recently developed, the academic knowledge of Gypsies initially came from translations of books written by foreign authors as the ones mentioned above. Following the example of Gypsology, we have recently witnessed the publication of a number of studies conducted in Greece. In these studies authors usually based their findings on fieldwork and long periods of living with Gypsies influenced by the research on the methodology of social anthropology.

Dimitris Ntousas in his book 'Rom and racial discrimination', based on examples of his fieldwork and long-term habitation with the Gypsies in many settlements in Greece, attempts to improve their position in Greek society in order for them to receive equal treatment. Well disposed towards the Roma, Ntousas gives examples of their demoted life over the years and at the end of the book sets a number of views that could help the Roma to have equality, equity and social liberation in Greek society. In the first part of his book he refers to the Gypsies' course from their exodus from India to their entrance in Europe. The interesting part of his description is that Western European countries from the 16th to the 19th century tried to solve the Roma problem by overseas displacements. Many Gypsies migrated to America, Africa, Alaska, Australia etc but were not there of their own will (p.p. 73-75). Then he analyzes their social organization, civilization and culture. Their social stratification has in its basis the family and following a bottom –up process they form the clan, tribe, social race, ethnic group and finally the nation of the Romani (if we can talk about a nation of the Roma as the only common denominator is their language). Moreover, emphasis is placed on the value of stories and fairytales as they are considered the basic characteristics of their social consciousness (p. 97). Ntousas dedicates a great part of this volume to the Roma educational exclusion which affects the people's later employment. He gives data on this educational apartheid from different places worldwide and blames the state as it poses the basis of racial segregation in education and society. Furthermore, begging and child labour are not only a Roma racial trait but traits of each social group that has no permanent residence, lives on the poverty line and necessarily tolerates state and social indifference. In later chapter in his book, Ntousas deals with social and state situations that Roma women experience as they have minimal rights. They lacked education not only due to discriminations unveiled by the negatively supportive state, but also due

to the patriarchal structure and culture of the Gypsy family and society that formulate stereotypes and attitudes on the role of Gypsies (p. 196). Turning to the empirical part of the volume, he did fieldwork in three prefectures of the country in Karditsa, Chios and Florina. After quoting data he concluded that each Roma community is a special case where diversity, complexity and a society's social mosaic is emphasized in the Gypsy society. However, Ntousas went further by conducting another type of fieldwork interviewing 357 teachers, kindergarten teachers, secondary school teachers and students from educational departments in four areas in Attica. His aim was to gather information on the attitudes, stereotypes, prejudices and teacher's fears in order to detect information about the way that Roma children are treated by the instigators of education. The findings are rather disappointing as the lack of knowledge is translated into the lack of awareness that is prohibitive in these educated people considered to be the instigators of the educational process. In the last chapter, Ntousas, points out that the solution to the problem of discrimination is to face it as a general, massive problem of the poor people, labourers, teachers and students. Through international education all these subgroups that constitute society could allay racism and nationalism and finally confront and solve the Roma problem. The state has never been on the Roma side so it would be irrational to expect its unprecedented aid.

A book that gives a different meaning to the space where a person inhabits is that of Efi Karathanasi with the title 'The Roma habitat'. The given notion 'habitat' implies not only the concept of the controlled space but also the rules that determine it (p. 15). Karathanasi separates habitat from housing as she does not only care about the structure that they live in, but about the general space of their residence. The way Gypsy groups live is really difficult to be understood by indigenous people and that incomprehensible situation mutates into stereotype as people judge by external factors alone. In the Gypsy language there is no word for 'habitat' and after the writer's research it could be interpreted by the process 'stay- load- leave'. Namely the Gypsies stay in an area as long as they need and without apparent reason they load their belongings onto vehicles (wagon, van, car, etc) and leave for the next destination. This Gypsy 'habitat' is a transportable social process, the way that the Roma civilization is explained in their bio-space (p.p. 42-45). The Roma shifting and their consolidation in a place are mechanisms that alternate and the existence of one is

always subject to the overthrow of the other (p. 91). These movements are a much more complex phenomenon than those of nomadic people whose continuous movement leads finally to a permanent establishment. In the case of the Gypsies, the relatively long stay in one place, is a last resort only temporary and can be abandoned at any time. All this secrecy and unorthodox situation has one ultimate goal. It concerns the survival of the Roma community and their otherness that characterizes it and differentiates them from the consolidated community. The reason for the Roma movement is mostly associated with the employment availability of an area. Namely, they move when they cannot find the necessary means for physical survival. Mobility characterizes their entire life. The Roma do not have any reliance on stable and permanent objects as this would change their social and spatial behavior (p. 131). The Roma are totally indispensable in the economies of non- Gypsy people, as they undertake jobs that non-Gypsies underestimate. The Roma, as Karathanasi notes, live in the margins of the cities because they do not want to be assimilated into the Greek society and these places are spaces that any non- Roma would like to live (p.p. 202-204). The sovereignty of the ground has no significant importance in their life as everything is transient and they understand the existence of a space, even the property of someone else, only for its utilitarian value- although this often leads to their expulsion (p.p. 253-257). The Gypsy 'habitat' depends on kinship that unites and divides families, it is open to relatives, but closed to non- relatives and permanent residents. Concluding, Karathanasi assumes that what the non-Gypsy society considers housing for the Gypsies it is something very different. Living on the limits of the cities and not in them, they succeed in maintaining their social structure and their cultural identity.

Another well- written book is that of Aliko Vaxevanoglou entitled *Greek Gypsies: Marginals and Family Men*, which presents the results from many interviews taken from the Gypsy inhabited settlement in Agia Varvara. The book is divided into three parts. Before analyzing them we have to clarify that Vaxevanoglou is a writer that does not follow the chain of events but rebels in facts and stereotypes which do not exclusively belong to the group of the Gypsies. On a more analytical side, she begins her book with reference to the knowledge people have of the Gypsies and how it is constructed. She blames the states because even though every state has had Gypsy population in their territories for years, only when funds allocated by the European

Commission did they decide to defend and protect different cultural particularities of the Gypsies. Moreover, the participation of Gypsy associations was prerequisite in order for the funds to be given, Vaxevanoglou notes that suddenly without previous connections, Gypsies from different communities started to socialize and finally hastily created associations and a Pan-Hellenic Federation (p. 30). Meanwhile, we have to underline the fact that the Greek Gypsies differentiated from the European Gypsies as they declared that they saw themselves as Greeks and then as Gypsies. Furthermore, she criticizes all 'obvious data' that compose the Gypsy characteristics (i.e. their skin colour, their Indian origin) and attributes blame to Gypsiologists and to the field of Gypsiology. She regards Gypsiology to be a para-scientific field which is based on myths in order to exploit its results using a stereotypical construction. In the second part Vaxevanoglou explains that the Gypsy way of life is exactly the same as the Greek one but 50 years hence. She gives examples of their lifestyle and points out similarities of poor people worldwide to Greek Gypsies. It is this the level of poverty (including their clothing) that differentiates them in a rather capitalist country. The last part of the book deals with the notion of marginality and the institution of the family. Margins are defined by the structure, history and evolution of the society so its borders are variable. Due to conjunctures a margin is reproduced and marginal people resemble each other as there is absence of economically stable and socially accepted means of livelihood (p.p. 90-91). In the margins we find really poor people and due to last years events with more and more immigrants crossing borders, has augmented this marginal area. Sources reveal that most ancestors of today's Gypsies inhabited Agia Varvara when they arrived in Greece, in 1922, along with other refugees, wandering throughout Greece doing, like all poor Greek people different occupations. Whilst refugees are easily incorporated in Greek being Greek they need to follow the requirements of the capitalist economy, Gypsies stayed out of this system doing with jobs of the informal economy. As aforementioned the Gypsies cannot follow paid labour so the occupations they prefer are independent. Mainly as peddlers and traders, they have invented many ways in order to sale their goods. Lastly, Vaxevanoglou deals with the Gypsy family which in structure has many similarities to the Greek traditional one. Family and employment for them have many connections as in their family, Gypsies find their labour force and their children are their only means for their future survival. Vaxevanoglou notes a pejorative perspective for education as school is only for boys who cannot become traders and girls have to terminate it prematurely

in order not to 'stain' the family's reputation. Finally, she analyzes the strategies and the rules that young people have to follow in order for a wedding to be socially accepted. Bride-stealing and match-making are practices that are still alive in Gypsies societies.

Roma in Greece is a really thorough volume composed of ten articles each of which gives an excellent interpretation on the Roma contemporary development and constitutes the first separate publication of the Greek Society of Ethnology. The introduction -written by Maria Papapoulou and Elisabet Koppasi- Oikonomea- where data is reported on writings about the Roma, is followed by an article written by Konstantinos Zareiris and Nikolaos Ksirotiris. These two scholars dealt with the Roma from Arato which are located in the prefecture of Rodopi. As their scholars name it, it is a rather demographic and genealogical study dealing with matters of fertility and mortality. They managed to construct the genealogical trees of the residents by conducting interviews and studying archival material (p. 33). Moreover, they detected that inbreeding during the years has decreased as many married non local people. Concluding, the case of migration gives the main route which effected gene transfer to or from a geographically defined genetic tank (p. 69). The next article of Athansios' Gotovos deals with the Gypsy identity in Greek society and how this identity developed when combined with the Greek one. Notions such as minority and culture are defined and a conclusion is given that there are two prevalent minority types: the religious and the national/ ethnic one. It is inferred that the Roma according to public opinion belong to the ethnic minorities (p.p. 119-120) and that gypsy identity is possibly subjected to prejudices and stereotypes due to the immigration of many gypsies from neighboring countries who cannot be incorporated into Greek society (especially immigrants or refugees with gypsy identity from Albania) (p. 116). Self-definition and hetero-definition are terms used to describe the Gypsy identity. However, further research will be mentioned in later pages. Kathryn Kozaitis researches the Roma who inhabit Agia Varvara in Athens. These people attempted to establish their identity by asserting their rights. Using various strategies they aimed to establish their Gypsiness in order to create a desired pattern for non- Gypsies, a fact that helped them in the struggle of survival. For that reason Kozaitis names them a hybrid culture as they succeeded in facing Greek contemporary conditions through many changes in their cultural beliefs (p.p. 160-161). The following article, written by

Chatzitheodoulou- Loizidou and Tampaki, comments on the Rountarides' life which is a group of Gypsies located on the borders of two municipalities in Athens, Zefiriou and Acharnes. The Rountarides do not always prefer to be called Roma, but occasionally accept this name due to the fact that they wish to be a part of a group. However, being called "Gypsies" is unacceptable. This classification does not differentiate them, but appraises and establishes them as a part of a minority. Evangelos Avdikos attempts to explain how the place that a person grows up in can stigmatize him, exemplifying the Katsiveli, who established residence beyond the railway lines on the edge of the city of Alexandroupolis. Even though the first Katsiveli (those who resided there after the Second World War) did not care about how they were characterized as the squalid living conditions helped them (i.e. in begging), this has now changed. New generations endeavour to be accepted through education as their place of residence and their religion cannot make them socially acceptable. Anna Lidaki gives an incredible explanation of the Roma lifestyle. She claims that there is little difference compared to the Greek life but in a rather traditional way. The Roma just could not succeed in totally changing their customs and traditions; they simply failed to modernize or urbanize themselves. Yvonne Hunt presents the Ababas, Roma women from Serres, who used their inner powers to do good. Even if the Roma women were thought to be associated with magic and sorcery, this ritual event is rather a way of celebration as it comprises food, dance and singing, in the case of wedding, and sometimes is used to cast out evil spirits, in the case of an illness, something that may be connected to their Indian origins. Then Nadina Christopoulou exhibits the significance of fairy tales in Gypsy life. As Roma children do not have a written history to learn, they hear it through the storytelling of an elder. But the content and the context of a story interacts and is formed somewhere between the sphere of fantasy and reality. It is part of the Gypsy formed identity as they grow up with stories. The last two articles of this volume address the Gypsy connection with labour. Elisabet Kopasi- Oikonomea deals with how the Roma maintain their identity even when the Greek capitalist society tries to incorporate them. An answer could be found in the fact that the Gypsies were never enthusiasts of paid employment and thus keep doing odd jobs which ensures their evasion of the control of the dominant society and economy (p. 302). Antonis Liapis presents the craft of the Muslim Roma basketry in Thrace which on its own reveals a nomadic lifestyle. Apart from the raw materials and tools used in the making of the article

analyzed, its knitting which was differentiated from other types was made by either settled or wandering Gypsies. Basketry refers semantically to Gypsy origins as no other cultural group has intensively dealt with basketry as they have (p. 321).

Sevasti Troumpeta edited a well- developed book, which through the different topics each writer studies, the general condition of the Roma in Greek society is described, this is also evident from the title of the book which is the 'Roma in the modern Greek state'. One can easily identify from the beginning of the book the problematic concern of the Greek societies coinciding with the general 'Gypsy stereotype' is evinced as it could be found in different time periods and places. The Gypsy and the Jew correlation is also dealt with in this book mentioning one major difference. While the Jews are trying to conquer power, the Roma lack any ambition for development (p. 22). Moreover in the book's introduction Troumpeta makes a potpourri of incidents that reveal the Roma contemporary condition. The Gypsy Lore has no connection with Romani studies whose goal is not to study just Roma but their history and their position in the relation to national and global society (p. 34). She also deals with identity matters and how the Roma have been regarded through the years, but it will not be dealt with any further, as it is analyzed in the chapter below. In the chapters following Troumpeta's introduction we encounter the article by George Koutzakiotis who informs us about early evidence of Greek bibliography about the Roma even before the establishment of the Greek state. Thereafter, Troumpeta again analyzes the fact that even if the Roma are frequently referred to in writings and frequently assisted the Greek State (in war times) they still cannot be an integrated part as the factor that determines their unchanging character is their origin. They cannot be considered part of Greek society and part of the nation as their inclusion would not allow homogeneity in Greek society (p. 117). Additionally, Eva Politou tries to prove that even though the Roma have taken part in the incidents of World War II and in the Civil War, this was not enough to make them a specialized part and verify their collective attitude towards the era's events. George Markou's article constitutes an interesting and realistic work as he discusses the Roma's main problems: housing, employment and education. He analyzes the different programmes implemented for the 'Roma's sake' but the basic problem is that no one has ever taken an interest in the Roma's needs and wishes. Even if the society's mechanisms are put into effect, they cause social exclusion rather than inclusion (p.p. 181- 182). Manolis Rantis

explains chronologically the Roma's forms of organization and concludes that nowadays the sectors of organization and representation are worse than ever. Before the last chapter George Mavrommatis cites an excellent text considering the aspect of education for Romani children. He studies the different programmes (as Markou in a previous text) that elaborate the Romani children, criticizes them and finally comes to the conclusion that even though a lot of money has been allocated for these initiatives there is no evidences to consolidate the success. Unfortunately, in the Greek educational system there is lack of sustainable structures that could ensure that the Romani children have the opportunity to complete compulsory education (p.p. 217-218). Finally, the essay of Ioanna Athanasopoulou who through her studies of archival material demonstrates the existence of social stratification in the Roma of Kerkyra and the correlation of the Roma way of life and that of the rest of the local society. Concluding we can assume that in this volume the representations, the position and the action of the Roma in the contemporary Greek state are thoroughly examined.

This small analysis of a selection of well known books make us understand the roots that Gypsiology has followed during the years. These scientists from different scientific fields tried through personal work to unravel the characteristics of this marginalized group. This chapter dealt with the queries of the Gypsiologists and in the next chapter the definitions of their identity will be analyzed.

The construction of the Gypsy identity (processes and their dimensions)

People form part of groups given common characteristics that they possess. A person's sense of who they are is based on a group's membership which forms the social identity. Referring to the identity of the Roma we can comprehend that it has a dual construction. These are the self image and the one that is constructed by non-Roma people, it is in other words the Gypsy-image of the majority population. (Riga-Daimonakou, 2002)). It is true that for a very long period, the Gypsy identity has been in the hands of the non-Gypsy specialist, as their information consists of people's knowledge about the Gypsy image. The subjects that were found appealing to these specialists were only in the sphere of knowledge, while others were ignored for a number of reasons like the fact that some might simply look more attractive or exotic (Hancock, 2000).

Consequently, the Gypsy identity is constructed in two ways: as an imposed and as an adopted identity. The imposed, as mentioned above, is namely the description used by the natives while the term adopted means the procedure of self-identification performed by the Gypsies themselves, on the basis of being culturally different (Csepeli & Simon, 2004, p.134). Up to this day there has been a tendency for the Gypsy identity to be built by non-Gypsies, which is based on the external perception and leads to the Gypsy isolation. Non-Gypsy specialists have always striven to control and define Roma identity. Even when Gypsy behavior has asserted itself in ways contrary to the specialists' expectations, it has been seen as a shortcoming on the part of the Gypsies (Hancock, 2000).

As aforementioned, an individual acquires his identity through participation in one group or another. It is not his personality that makes him recognizable but the position he possesses inside the group that defines his identity. On this assumption lies the cultural data that defines the common characteristics or differences in Gypsy groups (Liegeois, 1999, p. 70). From the Gypsy point of view, self-identification is a significant mechanism for establishing ethnic identity, namely to discern who are 'us' and who are 'others'. To the Gypsies this basic separation is made between them and the Gadje, i.e. the Gypsies and the non-Gypsies. It is really significant the fact that each Gypsy group differentiates itself from another and thought to be the one that is authentic towards other Gypsy groups. The Gypsies of a particular group can

understand that they possess similarities to other Gypsy groups because they commonly have main differences from the Gadje. To this assumption we base the Gypsy perception that they belong to a wider entity (Fraser, 1998, p.p. 12-13). Concluding, we assume that 'identity' is a social as well as a cultural construction. Social, because identity is the means of communication, through which self-identification is made, but also because connections and bonds are enhanced between groups. Cultural because it defines not only some cultural characteristics, but also social and financial bounds, which by example can be determined by the space (Avdikos, 2002, p. 191).

Recalling the imposed identity, it could be assumed that there are main characteristics which compose the Romani identity in contemporary Greek society. These characteristics are the result of temporal research data and are listed in three. First of all, emphasis is given to the Gypsy origin and how their course evolved over time. Secondly, the fact that the Gypsies accept the notion of race which they are part of, carves the ethnic border. Last but not least, is the fact that the Gypsies accept that they have 'Gypsy characteristics' a fact that explicates such Gypsy behaviour inside the group as Gypsy connection with the majority of the society. All these data are well known through bibliography and prove how societies compose Gypsy identity (Gotovos, 2002, p.p. 121-122).

Over the years hetero-identification has created many negative views for the Gypsies. Taking into account this hypothesis, we can see that in fixed attributes of a Gypsy all the negative characteristics that could be found in an indigenous identity are apparent, namely characteristics that natives would try to exploit for themselves (Gotovos, 2002, p.p. 123). As a consequence, negativism towards a group creates bias that is a form of racism. Unfortunately, the Gypsies have always been the scapegoat and at times their life, has been mixed up with immigrants who come in Greek territory from neighboring countries causing turbulence inside Greece. It could be recalled from earlier pages that the Gypsy identity has been subjected to prejudices and stereotypes due to the immigration of many Gypsies from neighboring countries that could not be incorporated into Greek society.

This duality in the construction of the Gypsy identity has largely concerned Gypsiologists. Many texts have been written about the Gypsy identity and its

characteristics. If the Gypsies want to become accepted, they have to change. They have to lose their identity and to live another life, namely an alienated life (Lidaki, 1998, p. 344). As is aforementioned, according to Gypsiologists, social inclusion coincides with the loss of cultural identity and alienation. Apparently, the Gypsies have to choose between maintaining their ethnic identity or losing it in the name of acceptance and inclusion (Dafermakis, 1999, p. 42).

In reality, the state has tried through the 'integration policy' to incorporate the Gypsies. However, the 'integration policy' means the assimilation and establishment as it tries to include them in a civic and social way, whilst the dark point is that the rejection of the Gypsy identity and Gypsy territoriality are prerequisite. This policy follows the patterns of the dominant society living in the margins the needs and the traditions of this poor social group. In any case, the Gypsies have the chance to maintain their social and cultural identity. It is the dominant society itself that poses to the Gypsies the dilemma of assimilation or marginalization. It is the society itself that defines the margins as mentioned in earlier pages. Concluding, it is evident that the society creates the ghettos as it refuses to accept a different social and cultural identity within its boundaries (Karathanasi 2000, p.p 290-291).

Through identity people can categorize themselves and others; they define themselves and can be defined by others. Taking into account basic indicators as customs, movement of the families, occupation, attitude towards school, etc we conclude that this group has main and obvious characteristics that is embodied in the social category of 'Gypsies' (Chatzitheodoulou- Loizidou & Tampaki, 2002, p. 175). Gypsies are not the ones that choose their cultural identity but Gypsiologists do so and they present a constructed imaginary picture of the Gypsies but without their verification. This constructed image has the characteristics of a Gypsy culture that is not changeable but homogeneous and has to remain unchanged. In fact, the beliefs of the Gypsiologists condemn Gypsies to marginalization. As a consequence, according to Gypsiologists, the Gypsies have to sacrifice themselves in order to maintain the 'purity' of their 'race' (Dafermakis, 1999, p.p 38-39). Although some constructed characteristics are derived from the intense racism in this chapter, we will try to clarify the characteristics and behaviours that constitute the Gypsy identity.

Aspects of family

A first matter that could be dealt with is that of the family. In the Gypsy life everything revolves round the family which has many functions. It is not only the financial unit where its member can find occupation and solidarity but also the educational unit where the person is safe, protected and socially reproduced. The only stable element in the Gypsy life is their family. Furthermore, as the Gypsies lack stable geographical and occupational bonds, they can rely on their family for the construction of their identity. The Gypsy woman is the one that contributes to the construction of her children's identity as well as being responsible for their upbringing. She also has an educational role of paramount importance as she is the one that secures the survival of the Gypsy group (Liegeois, 1999, p.p. 90-93). The roles of the husbands are clear and explicitly distributed. These roles are different but complement one another. The men have the power of decision making while women manage the family (Karathanasi, 2000, p. 190).

The Gypsy family has two goals: to survive and to reproduce. The Gypsy children are for their parents the only guarantee, 'the only property' for their future survival, for the survival of the 'race'. That is the reason why the Gypsies give birth to many children in order to succeed the continuity of their survival. They do not conceive the existence of their children as another member that needs food but as another child that will financially support the family (Vaxevanoglou, 2001, p.p. 134-149). Nowadays, due to modernization, beliefs have changed and when a couple is married, it tries to gain its financial independence and live away from the family of the husband. However, as long as they remain in the margins compared to the institutions and functions of the contemporary society, their reliance on their family and the Gypsy environment will remain top priority (Vaxevanoglou, 2001, p. 169).

Gypsy Law

Moreover, the Gypsies are accused of the secrecy that dominates their life. They speak a language that the non-Gypsy cannot understand something that cannot be easily taught. They use their language in their everyday life a fact that enhances their uniqueness. The use of a separate language is a key as noncomprehension is a way of being invisible. This invisibility may be an intentional strategy to prevent the Gypsy

cultural integration by means of outsiders' knowledge and understanding (Weyrauch & Bell, 2001, p.58)

The Gypsies do not have written laws but they follow a system of laws. They learn them during their lifetime from the elders; unwritten, besides, the Gypsy law has coexisted for hundreds of years. Their traditional system contains characteristics that are not existent in the native's society. The Gypsies follow a social and moral order really indifferent to what the Greek legal system dictates and enforces. The Gypsies either exclude rules and institutions of the natives or modify new ones and also include their own laws (Kozaitis, 2002, p. 146). This set of unwritten laws, namely the way that the Gypsies follow in their system, is the core of native enculturation and social control. The Gypsies learn for good what is lawful and what is not, and conform to the social order of the in-group for their whole life (Sutherland, 1986). This contradiction and the fact that they are not subordinated in the Greek legal system augment their desire to maintain their identity. Moreover, the Gypsies are subjected to strict rules some of which will be mentioned in order for their significance to be understood.

kris

Gypsies as mentioned in earlier pages, live close to their relatives or Gypsies that belong to the same group. They generally do not have problems as their familiar and relative bonds are very strong. In case of a dispute, they have a Gypsy court which is called kris where all the disputes that the Gypsy people have with one another are heard. They do not have lawyers but a committee with a reputation of fairness that adjudicates the result. Kris is a symbol of peace and stability in the family and community even if authorities credit it for reducing offences among the Gypsies (Kozaitis, 2002, p.p. 148-149).

Endogamy

Furthermore, endogamy is a very common characteristic in the Gypsy societies. With the term endogamy not only marriage within the group is implied, but also between relatives of a family. Gypsies traditionally are married at a young age (usually at the age of about 12 years even if in the last decades the age limit has increased for both girls and boys) and the virginity of the bride is prerequisite. Although endogamy is

not a strict rule, it constitutes social strategy for the survival, the maintenance of heterogeneity between the different Gypsy groups and finally the protection of the Gypsy society structure (Karathanasi, 2000, p.192). Gypsies themselves explain that the pattern of the family reproduction is based and initially explained from the maintenance of the virginity custom as it poses primary value in order to choose a wife (Vaxevanoglou, 2001, p. 157). It is not accidental the fact that all the Gypsies accept the custom of the virginity and refer to it as the symbol of the Gypsy differentiation.

Wedding

The wedding plays a significant role in the Gypsies lives as it is the constitutive act that determines the Gypsy family (Ntousas, 1997, p. 80). In order for a marriage to be contracted for the Gypsies there are two options. The first one, which is suggested, is the match-making and the second one is the bride-stealing, which is observed when the children are in love or when one member of the couple is not acceptable by the other's family. Bride-stealing is considered to be blackmail towards the families that refuse to understand their children's feelings (Vaxevanoglou, 2001, p. 163).

Marime

In addition, there is another matter that appears a complexity, that of female impurity. Impurity is determined by the rules of marime, which affects women as they are thought to be impure and it imposes on them constraints and isolation during menstruation, post partum and in pregnancy (Weyrauch & Bell, 2001, p.p. 32-35). In order not to pollute males there are rules that define the details of daily interaction, which will not be a matter of concern in this volume. In Gypsy law, adherence to values has to be demonstrated by compliance to the rituals that support these values. This is a way that makes them members of a group and differentiates them from the non-Gypsy as they share common behaviours.

Taking into consideration the above customs and rules, are easily apparent basic similarities between the Greek and the Gypsy society. The only contrast that is presented is that the Greek society has modernized and follows the European and capitalist way of life, whilst the Gypsy one did not change its values.

Tales

Even though Gypsies have been accused of being ‘storytellers’ without significant activities to deal with, the importance of fairytales in their life, is evident. Fairytales from ancient India, where it originated, hitherto is mainly a social phenomenon for the Gypsies. Gypsy fairytales reflect the image, or better, it is the mirror of the Gypsy world as well as presenting their relationships with the Greek society. Fairytales are one of the major characteristics of their social consciousness and as a result they are real without any clue of fiction. They compose the everyday events with fantastic situation where the Gypsies are presented as redemptive characters as they achieve whatever they want and finally are the heroes of the fairytales. Furthermore, they can be conceived as historical stories because through these younger Gypsies learn about their past, history and origins as their history is not written. Basically, social environment and the characteristics of the society that they inhabit give the data and the material in order for the fairytale to be developed. Gypsies consider themselves wronged because they know that they are in the margins of a country which they regard as their home country. Fairytales come up to their expectations as they make them feel that they have succeeded in their inner sense. Lastly, the time of fairytale unites the family as they are all together and enjoy them (Ntousas, 1997, p.p. 89-116). Even the institution of fairytale, could contribute to the construction of the Gypsy identity. To conclude, the Gypsy tales provide a sense of belonging and continuity for the members of the Gypsy societies. Moreover, through fairytales the Gypsies understand the historical forces that shape their destinies. This innovative narration is an attempt to historicize identity, as well as the making of history (Xristopoulou, 2002, p. 287).

Installation

As mentioned in earlier pages, the Gypsy society adjusts its occupations and its financial structure in order to be ready when needed to move. It is namely ready to activate at anytime the binary system, this alternation from installation to relocation (Karathanasi, 2000, p. 92). It is common knowledge that installation on its own does not convert Gypsies to conventional citizens nor does it mark the abandonment of their way of living and working (Fraser, 1998, p.p. 314). The fact that the Gypsies want to live beside and not inside the borders of the dominant Greek society (in the city of Thessaloniki for example) has an explanation. They prefer living on the

borders of a city and not inside it because they would lose their social structure and their cultural identity. Even this kind of alienation has its roots in the maintenance of the identity. On the other hand, if they choose to live abandoned with no connection to the dominant society they would have probably disappeared as a race (Karathanasi, 2000, p. 264).

Occupation

It is really noteworthy the adaptability that Gypsies denote to the labour market and in the needs of consumers that predominate in the Greek society. Their poor educational level forced them to do jobs where the knowledge of grammatical skills is not required such as traders and agricultural workers (Markou, 2008, p.p. 158-159). It has been observed that the Gypsies do not have occupations that include them in the sphere of paid manpower. They prefer being independent, without anyone giving commands and pointing out to them. They do not want to subordinate to Gadge although their economy is related and dependent on their connection. If they do so, they will lose the main characteristics that would change their identity.

The Roma are specialized in occupations that members of the dominant country avoid doing. Based on this assumption it could be assumed that the Gypsies follow this path because they try to maintain their freedom and the control of their financial activities. The Roma are only willing to specialize in activities that let them remain out of the control of the dominant society and economy (Koppasi- Oikonomea, 2002, p. 302). It is evident the preference of the Gypsies for and the successful practice of self-employment and occupational flexibility. This way of earning a living is consciously chosen and cannot be merely explained as the result of bias against Gypsies and their unjust exclusion from the opportunities of the wage-labour market (Okely, 1983, p.33).

Taking into account urbanism and industrialization and other European pressures we understand that the Gypsies were able to maintain their autonomy by exploiting the opportunities offered by the dominant state. They resisted the temptation to join paid work as did others. Gypsies have never negotiated their freedom, their ethnic identity or their flexibility regarding their professions and their place of residence. Even when things changed and the construction and sale of goods weakened and harvesting the

crop was done by machine they did not resign. A less flexible culture would be subjected to the requirements of the majority population, without maintaining its identity (Fraser, 1998, p.p. 226-227).

Education

Another really remarkable aspect in Gypsy life is that of education. From Greek point of view there is a tendency of prejudice and negativism towards the education of the Gypsies. It is a fact that the Gypsy children do not attend classes as native children do and there are gaps in their educational procedure. Non- attendance apart from the obvious reason of racism towards the Gypsy children from their classmates and their parents as well as from their teacher is also due to the constant relocation and to the fact that children have to work.

But how do Gypsies confront the institution of school? The answer is not 'like us' as the expectations of the Gypsies are far from the purposes of the school. First of all, as Ntousas describes, school did not consider the characteristics of Gypsy habits in their occupations. The Gypsies travel continuously in order to find better working conditions. This results in the movement of the whole family, part of which are its children, who learn from their parents without specializing in one occupation.

In Gypsy society children have to work from an early age in order to earn their living and become useful in the Gypsy family as they are seen as a work-force. The Gypsy parent has a wish for his child: the school learning to follow and continue the learning that they receive in the Gypsy family. Additionally, the major interest is given in exercising capabilities that connected to paternal occupation. Secondly, school and its instigators seek to include the Gypsies in the dominant society, which causes reactions on the part of the Gypsies, resulting in the estrangement of the Gypsy children from school. As there is nothing to recall its oddity, the Gypsy child feels alienated and finally leaves school (Ntousas, 1997, p.p. 139-141).

The abstention from school is not only due to alienation but is also connected with the Gypsy principles and traditions. The Gypsy girls have to interrupt school early either to undertake household chores or not to tarnish the family's reputation. Consequently, girls can only attend school if it does not seem dangerous for them, despite the fact that it is better for them to stay at home with their peers. Although things have

changed over the years giving a relative freedom to the Gypsy girls, they are always in the sphere of supervision of the male members of the family. On the other side, that of the Gypsy boys, this supervision is rather very significant and the school is like a hobby. For the boys, the school is not just indifferent but has a negative meaning for them. According to the Gypsies beliefs the attendance of school for the boys means that they failed to cope with the needs of trade and as a last resort they go to school (Vaxevanoglou, 2001, p.p. 150-153).

Moreover, the school is an external institution, related to the education of the Gypsy children. The Gypsy child is used to being educated in the sphere of its family and the different educational system of the school causes disorders. Consequently, the Gypsy child is negatively disposed towards school as it is not used to accepting commands and arbitrary rules and logically abandons it (Liegeois, 1999, p.p. 94-95).

Nowadays, Gypsy parents desire their children to be educated and to obtain basic education, but simultaneously they believe that this education would not provide them with better conditions in their life. This is mostly due to the prejudices of the society and to the fact that almost no employer wants to hire a Roma for an employee. Most Gypsy parents consider education ineffective as time and money is needed in order to gain low and disputed results (Mauromatis, 2008, p. 202).

There are many elements that compose the Gypsy identity. The Gypsies on their part try to avoid being assimilated in the Greek society as this would jeopardise their oddity. All these institutions, laws, customs, characteristics, and so on, that have been mentioned, manifest the desire of their race to remain alive. They conquer all the barriers that try to alienate the Gypsies from their past.

Conclusion

The social identity of each person is connected to historical constructions, namely events that occurred in the past and are restructured continuously, even though they define one's present. The Roma identity, following this logic, is connected to historical constructions but do not present any progress, a fact that is based on the social exclusion of the Gypsies and in the way that their presence is explained by the non- Gypsies. Gypsiologists are those that present the Gypsies as a cultural group of people totally indifferent to the dominant one. This assumption is not wrong but the diversity of the Gypsies, their notable characteristics, are the ones that enhance negativism towards them. The fact that the Gypsies do not change over the years provokes reactions and therefore exacerbates the already tense situation.

The Gypsies are perceived to be Gypsies from the dominant society because they bear those characteristics that spontaneously integrate them in the Gypsy group. Perhaps the most important factor of Gypsiness is the division of the world into Roma and Gadge, a division that has contributed to the absence of large-scale integration of Roma into mainstream societies. The different way of life is the result of a different understanding of the bio- space, which has its roots in infancy and is finally obtained during the socialization process. The Gypsies may be people of the margins given their livelihood activities, but they live according to the social terms of the institution of the family.

The dominant society tries with its administrative mechanisms to enforce its strategies through different measures and policies whilst the Gypsy society tries through strategies of relocation or isolation for example to survive. Even though the Roma are continually enriching their identity according to the characteristics of a city that they inhabit, they cannot form their life as one of the indigenous people. Living in the margins of the social and physical environment, the Gypsies are not able to participate in the institutions that the indigenous people have learned to participate in their lives. This abstinence of participation in social, cultural and even political institutions is their survival.

The Gypsies always work within the economy of the country that they inhabit, they depend on this economy and its labour market and consequently they are thought to have an "open" financial structure. However, the Roma are not willing to specialize in

an occupation, besides it will enable them to remain outside from the control of the Greek society and economy.

Another common misunderstanding about the Gypsies is that they are a homogeneous population. To the contrary, they are an extremely diverse ethnic group that can be differentiated according to lifestyle (nomadic or sedentary), tribal affiliation, occupation, language, religion and country of residence. That is the reason why Gypsiologists as Liegeois argue that they form a mosaic of different groups worldwide.

Education even for the Gypsies, is an institution of minor importance, seems to be the less painful way in order for the Roma to be integrated in the Greek society. It is rather difficult to change their multiannual occupation or their traditional beliefs and customs.

During the last decades serious attempts are observed targeting in the collapse of the social marginalization of the Gypsies in Greece. The Greek state tries to find solutions for the problems that the Gypsies face daily. However, the real needs of the Gypsies and the powerful institutional mechanisms functioning from the dominant society are parameters that are always underestimated. This leads to a dead end without any results. Different European programmes relating to the Gypsies cannot help in the demolition of social exclusion without education and sensitization of the dominant society. For this reason, local initiatives for the incorporation of the Roma would form a first step in this struggle. Local society and the Gypsies that inhabit the area could develop mechanisms of survival and protection of this different culture.

Bibliography

- English bibliography

Barany, D. Z. Itan. *'The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics'*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2001.

Csepeli, Gyorgy and Simon, David. *'Construcion of identity in Eastern and Central Europe: Perception and Self- identification'*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Vol. 30 (1), p.p. 129-150, 2004.

Hancock, Ian. *The Struggle for the Control of Identity*, (2000) available at: <http://www.reocities.com/~patrin/identity.htm>

Hunt, Yvonne. *'The Ababas: A Rom Ritual'*, *μ*, 2002.

Kozaitis, A. Kathryn. *'Embrace of shelter: The cultural hybridism of Athenian Roma'*, *μ*, 2002.

Okely, Judith. *'The traveller-gypsies'*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1983.

Pogany, Istvan. *'The Roma Cafe: Human Rights and the Plight of the Romani People'*. Pluto Press, London 2004.

Sutherland A., "Gypsy Women, Gypsy Men: Cultural paradoxes and Economic Resources", in Joanne Grumet (ed.), *Papers from the Sixth and Seventh Annual Meetings Gypsy Lore Society*, North American Chapter, New York, 1986.

Weyrauch, O. Walter and Bell Maureen Anne, *'Autonomous Lawmaking: The Case of the "Gypsies"'* in Weyrauch Walter (ed.) *'Gypsy Law: Romani Legal traditions and culture'*, University of California Press, London, 2001.

, . ‘ μ μ μ 19 ’, ‘ μ
 . μ - - ’, μ
 (μ), . , ,2008.

Liegeois, Jean-Pierre. ‘ μ , , . ’
 (μ . .), . . , ,1999.

, . ‘ μ μ μ ’, ‘
 μ ’, , ,2002.

, . ‘ ’, , ,1998.

, . ‘ ’, ‘ μ ’,
 , ,2002.

, . ‘ μ
 μ ’, ‘ μ
 . μ - - ’, μ
 (μ), . , ,2008.

μ , . ‘ μ μ ’, ‘ μ
 . μ - - ’, μ
 (μ), . , ,2008.

, μ . ‘Rom . , ,
 , μ ’. Gutenberg,
 ,1997.

, – μ , . ‘
 : ’, ‘ μ ’,
 , ,2002.

, . ‘ μ 1940 μ
 μ ’, ‘ μ . μ -
 - ’, μ (μ), . ,
 ,2008.

, . ‘ μ
 ’, ‘ μ
 - ’, μ (μ), . ,
 ,2008.

, - μ , . ‘
 ()’,
 , 108- 109, 2002, 257-283.

μ (μ μ). ‘
 μ ’, , 2002.

μ , . ‘ μ
 - ’, . , 2008.

μ , . μ μ : ,
 () μ , ‘ μ
 . μ - - ’, . , 2008.

‘
 μ ’, μ , μ 2011.

Fraser, Angus. ‘ ’ (μ).
 , 1998.

- , μ , . ‘
 μ
 ’, ‘ μ ’, , 2002.

, . ‘« ’ μ , ...»: μ
 μ μ μ’, ‘ μ ’,
 , 2002.

- Internet sources

www.oikokoinonia.gr

www.worldbank.org

87.202.192.243/romnet6/node/98 (RomNet)

www.dikadi-rom.gr

www.romalert.com

www.grsr.gr