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Preserving traditions and modernization

Identity patterns of three generations of Romani women[1]

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ABSTRACT

The impact of globalization and modernization not only transforms Romani life at the individual level, but also changes the framework for the social integration of traditional communities, the way culture is transferred and socialized, while adding new content to the expression of Romani culture as well as identity and community values. In this transformation process, the dual role of Romani women in the development of new integration schemes is crucial for the minority group. As the guardians of habits and traditions in the socialization of the growing generations of the community, they ensure the continuation of traditions of identity, and at the same time – in response to environmental challenges – they are also the initiators of the changes needed to integrate into the majority society. The aim of the study was to explore the mechanism of this dual role – that is the preservation of tradition and the modernization for integration. In addition, within the framework of research, by examining three generations of Romani women belonging to the same family, we analysed the changing patterns of identity and looked at the extent to which the preservation or abandonment of traditions has contributed to the social integration and assimilation of Romani people over the past 20 years.

KEYWORDS

Romani women, identity, additive and substitutive acculturation, tradition, modernization

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INTRODUCTION

The modernization process of recent decades has not only made a difference in the life of the majority society, but it has also had a significant impact on the life of the Romani society. In a changing environment, traditions are taking on new meaning, the way culture is transmitted, and the values that determine the day-to-day life of the community are also shaped. Of course, the process of change does not mean the permanent disappearance of Romani traditions, but rather the appearance of new values, behavioural patterns, and identity variants in many cases instead of existing ones or in addition to them.

In all societies – including Romani communities as well – women play a key role in the transmission of values and cultural patterns and in the integration of the growing generation into society. However, it is not easy to fulfil this role of socialization, when environmental changes over the decades have fundamentally transformed the role of Romani women in communities and the environment to which members of minority groups need to adapt in order to effectively integrate. There is no easy-to-learn recipe for the commitment of women responsible for socialization to the values and traditions that guarantee the preservation of ethnic identity in a rapidly changing environment and their commitment to the integration models promoting the fit into the majority society, which, however, weaken the bonds of belonging to an ethnic community.

Accordingly, research on the role of Romani women in cultural and value transfer is considered to be of key importance, since successful social integration of the minority group and the continuation of traditions that distinguish it from the majority society but reinforce belonging to the community primarily depends on how women of key importance in socialization can balance between tradition and the challenges of modernization. (Koczé–Popa 2009)

In this study, we examine three generations of Romani women belonging to the same family, with the aim of understanding the role and importance of tradition and modernization within each generation, and of the changes in patterns of socialization within the family as well as the factors influencing transformation. In the first part of the study, we highlight some of the decisive elements of identity formation, in the second part we present the methodological tools of the research, and in the third chapter, we analyse the identity patterns and integration strategies of three generations of Romani women.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF IDENTITY FORMATION: INTEGRATION, ASSIMILATION, MODERNIZATION, TRADITION

With the rise of globalization and modernization, the categories that define ethnic identity, both the schemes offered by the majority and minority communities, are transforming, as they are no longer as stable and unequivocal as they were decades ago. Changed frameworks lead to identity change, identity crisis, loss of tradition, or reinterpretation of tradition in particular communities.

In the fast-changing economic and social environment of the XXI. century, the statement that identity consists solely of ready-made elements in traditional communities and that there is no alternative for the individual to choose his/her identity or reshape the elements of his/her identity is no longer valid. (BERGER–LUCKMANN 1966, OGBU 1978, KRAPPMAN 1980) The idea of the changing elements of identity is, of course, not new, since Lewin pointed out in 1972 that personality development and, consequently, identity is a factor in the dynamic interaction of the individual and the environment; and with mobility and environmental change, the sense of identity of the group and its members changes as well. (LEWIN 1972)

In a multicultural society, with the completion of individualization, it is possible for an individual to be a member of several groups, and to develop his/her identity and its defining elements by himself/herself. (CSEPELI 1997) Consequently, the elements of personal and social identity are undergoing transformation. (PATAKI 1986) While the focus of personal identity is on individual life stories, when social identity is created, the individual shares some of his/her characteristics with others, but in a modernized society, he/she does so in a personalized way. (PATAKI 1998, BREWER–WEBER1999, THOMPSON 1996) As a result, the growth of the individual space leads to new identity categories created by individual efforts rather than stable identity elements.

This change is seen in the development of ethnic identity among minority groups (BINDORFFER 2001, TURNER 1975), including Gypsy communities too. Everything that the Gypsies have received so far and taken for granted in their closed communities, the spaces and social groups reorganized in the course of modernization have made social relations insecure. The weakening of their previously naturalized culture and traditions forced the Gypsies to decide for themselves what is the value to them, what identity they would choose, and how they would organize their lives, using their own "knowledge and resources". (BECK–BECK 1996) Faced with new patterns that have been made more prestigious by the majority society – through modernization and globalization – the members of the minority group have gradually lost the traditionally held beliefs through socialization, which were maintained in their closed community.[2] This process has accelerated the change in the content and form of identity and may even result in assimilation.

However, the evolution of an individual's ethnic identity is the result of a process by which a person belonging to a minority group make oneself aware of belonging to a particular group. Ethnic identity assumed in different situations varies in many respects, depending on the advantages or disadvantages of belonging to a minority group in an individual's life. If majority society is associated with negative stereotypes against the minority group, individuals may choose to "end" their minority group membership by leaving the group and assimilating. (TÓTH 2008)

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[2] This change was facilitated, among other things, by the difficulty of incorporating Gypsy traditions into the norms expected and accepted by the majority society because of their "indefinability". The questioning of the credibility of traditions by members of the minority group also raises questions and leads to a loss of credit for previously held values and customs. (HEELAS 1996)

When we speak of assimilation as a completed process, we are talking about the merging of previously distinct socio-cultural groups. However, if we consider assimilation as a process, we follow the interaction from the first steps to the complete merging of the group in four key areas: cultural, social/structural, biological, and psychological. (MARGER 1991, YINGER 2002) Following the unification of the four areas, we can speak of a new ethnic group.

Our study focuses on the process of cultural assimilation *(acculturation),* during which members of the ethnic minority gradually adopt elements of the culture, clothing, language, religious, and behavioural patterns of the majority society. (MARGER 1991) Marger distinguishes between additive and substitutive acculturation as well. Additive acculturation is when more or less different cultures come into contact with one another and the culture of one group adds new elements. However, in the case of substitutive acculturation, new ones appear instead of the old cultural elements. (MARGER 1991) In this sense, acculturation is a process that does not always mean complete assimilation, as can be seen within the Romani group. Keeping one's own (separate) culture and reinforcing it with new elements can also be explained by the benefits of belonging to a separate community. For example, a sense of security stemming from belonging to a community, a more stable social network, high-prestige cultural elements (such as visuality, a sense of music) specific to the community, etc. In this case, members of the community are interested in preserving their distinctiveness in a certain degree and form. Separation and the development of positive elements of identity and inclusion in the culture of the majority are further enhanced by the fact that belonging to a minority group has features that can be easily distinguished by majority society and that group membership cannot be easily "denied". These can be for example dominant race characteristics (such as skin colour), language, hair style, clothing, as well as distinctive habits and patterns of behaviour. In this case, the members of the group try to introduce new, high-prestige identities into their own culture, instead of maintaining prejudices. This phenomenon has also been observed in three generations of Romani women. To avoid total assimilation, they ritualize some elements of the original culture, thus losing their old content and gaining new ones that can be more prestigious and serve as tools for individual self-identification.

2. THE RESEARCH SITES, APPLIED RESEARCH METHOD AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

2.1. The research sites

The role of women in society can best be understood by examining their status in their micro-environment (BEBEL 1976).

For our empirical research, we chose a settlement in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, which is one of the most densely populated micro-regions of the country inhabited by Gypsies, close to Mátészalka. Their population here was 3,380 people on 1 January 2015 (KSH 2015). In 2001, 14% of the inhabitants of the settlement declared themselves to be Gypsy in the census, and 24.63% in 2011 (KSH 2001, 2011). Today, these ratios have risen, but we need to wait a few more years for the next credible census, so we can only rely on estimates. According to social workers working in the settlement, 70% of the inhabitants consider themselves to be members of some Romani groups – Olah Gypsies or Romungro. Most of the settlements are inhabited by Olah Gypsies, who cherish their traditions the most among the Gypsy groups.

Among Olah Gypsies mostly living in closed groups, even the majority of the younger generation wears rose skirts, characteristic jewels, and braids, and they use Gypsy language more often than Hungarian in their daily communication. The focus of our analysis was deliberately on a closed Olah Gypsy community living in the settlement of Nyírség, as this resulted in a more marked breakdown between the generations as well as the majority and minority societies.

The living conditions of the families living here have undergone significant changes in recent decades. The "shabby houses" (putri) of Romani settlements were liquidated in the late 1980s and "Cs" type homes (reduced value) were built instead of them. The precondition for the construction of the "new" dwellings was at least one-year continuous employment, which for a time resulted in a steady employment of a significant number of men.

Due to the unfavourable regional location of the settlement, commuting was common – and it is still prevalent among men. Usually in the capital, but many works in other parts of the country. Romani women typically stay in the settlement with their children and take only occasional jobs to improve the family's financial situation. Thus, the standard of living of the family, the roles within the family and the division of labor – the pattern transferred to the next generation – were fundamentally influenced by the fact whether the Romani men were working and to what extent they were present in family life.

By the early 1990s, most of the available jobs had ceased, and the four-street "Cs" type new homes had become colonial nature again. Despite initiatives taken in recent decades to eliminate these settlements, the situation has not fundamentally changed.

An ecclesiastical denomination plays an important role in organizing the life of the settlement, which pays special attention to its task of promoting the integration of the Gypsy population. The role of the Church is not only limited to religious activities. Through numerous programs and events, it seeks to mobilize the resources of the Gypsy community and strengthen the identity of its members. The organizers would like to make Gypsy people value their culture and strengthen their Romani identity. Through their initiatives, they guide the local community towards social advancement and the preservation of local values. They create opportunities for sustaining bilingualism, bringing community traditions, customs, and generations closer together. Every effort is made to bring up a new generation of Gypsies in the settlement, who is bound to their own traditions and customs.

2.2. Applied research method and characteristics of the sample

In our case study, we would like to investigate the substitutive acculturation process of MARGER (1991) by analysing the cultural relations of three generations of Romani women. Through interviews and participatory observations with three generations of women from the same family, we examine the constraints and opportunities of old cultural elements in their case and how they give way to new ones. The chosen research methods also provided an opportunity to learn not only the observed phenomena but also the personal perceptions of the interviewees: how they evaluate and experience these changes. 35 interviews were conducted during the research, all of which were recorded with a Dictaphone. Interviewees were not disturbed by the presence of the Dictaphone but were more than happy to tell someone about their daily lives, their joys, and their troubles. The study included details of interviews conducted in a closed community, but we also used the experience gained during interviews in the surrounding area to expand on each dimension. (See *Annex 1* for additional features on the subjects of the referred interviews.)

The three generations included in the sample are currently of working age. The grandparent generation is in the late fifties, the parent generation is in the late thirties and in the early forties, while the grandchild generation is in the early twenties.

The framework of the study does not allow us to analyse all the relevant dimensions of the acculturation process revealed in the research, so we focus on three decisive dimensions in this paper. First, we examine the most striking area, the presence and appreciation of traditional clothing. Secondly, we analyse the role of Romani language in the transmission and use of the identity. Finally, we present the changes in gender roles within the family, focusing on two areas – the role expectations for work and parenting. The test dimensions are decomposed by generation, analysing the most important changes.

3. IDENTITY PATTERNS IN THREE GENERATIONS

3.1. The generation of grandmothers

The oldest generation – the grandmothers' generation that followed the tradition most closely – was born between 1958 and 1963. As the age at birth of the first child is significantly lower in this community than in the majority society, members of the grandparent generation are still of active job-seeking age and work in the community, mostly in supported public employment.

Grandmothers turned 20 years old in the mid-1970s, when, due to rural industrialization, the "dual-earner" family model was born in Hungary as a result of women's employment. Compared to 30% in 1971, the proportion of Romani women employed by the end of the seventies and early eighties reached or even exceeded 50%. (JANKY 2005)

However, this generation did not appear in the open labor market either then or in later years. Although in the seventies the gates were opened for the employment of Romani women, women did not take advantage of this opportunity in the studied settlement. The traditional female roles in their case have not changed. Their attitude to work and their roles within the family can be explained not only by the strength of traditions but also by the labor market situation of the examined settlement. The regional location and the isolation of the settlement as well as the distance between the open labor market jobs prevented Romani women from working. In addition, the high rate of Romani people in the settlement, and the tradition of being an Olah Gypsy, was the dominant framework of behaviour. Traditions in the settlement were more massive than in other settlements and within other Romani groups – precisely because of their isolation and homogeneous culture. Opening up and contact with other communities will be only seen in the second and third generations, when the internal interpretation of tradition and the relationship of women to tradition will also change.

3.1.1. "The skirt from which others can see that I am an Olah Gypsy woman..."

Appearance and clothing are a demonstrative part of identity, as well as they also determine its reproduction. Changing traditions are most noticeable by the outside observer in the field of clothing.

In the life of Gypsy women of the first generation, traditional clothing plays an important role. For generations of grandmothers, the headscarf, colourful, floral-patterned long skirt is a must-have for everyday life, both inside and outside the micro community. Their clothing is not just a holiday

appearance. They can often be seen in these well-known, typical Gypsy clothes during the weekdays. However, nowadays they wear their traditional clothes as mixed up with age-appropriate modern clothes, for example they wear t-shirts instead of blouses, and they are more permissive to the patterns when wearing a scarf. However, the under and upper wear are traditionally washed separately, and the special handling of garments is very important, because everything "below the waist is unclean."

"... oh, my mother wore it like this, she did this too... The last thing I should do to wash that laundry with my other clothes, because how others would look at me, I should throw it out then because it would be dirty..." (1st generation woman, 3rd interview)

Traditional clothing is a way of expressing their Gypsy ethnic group showing the strength of their identity and belonging to a group not just to those in their community, but also demonstrating their identity to the members of the majority society, by being Olah Gypsies.

"We are different" (1st generation woman, 3rd interview)

"You know the skirt is important, if I don't speak anything, they should still see that I am an Olah Gypsy woman based on my skirt. But I don't wear all kinds of skirts, because a non-Gypsy woman would wear them too, and then how would they say that I am an Olah Gypsy?" (1st generation woman, 7th interview)

"Well, XY doesn't insist so much anymore that I should always be in a skirt, but I do get used to it ... I don't feel comfortable in pants ... I respect our traditions, unlike many other Gypsy women, I'm proud of this ... wearing my skirt reminds me of my mother and my father ... it's like a heritage for me..." (1st generation woman, 11th interview)

"... Oh, if I went to the street in pants, do you know how much they would laugh at me? They would mock me. They would say, look at that old Gypsy woman, how does she look like, and not just Gypsies would say this, Hungarians even more so." (1st generation woman, 12th interview)

Jewellery and long hair are essential accessories for their outfit. Big gold ring earrings, gold chains, beautiful rings on their fingers, are all part of their outfit. Almost all first-generation Romani women wear these jewels as basic accessories. In addition to expressing their identity, jewels are a means of expressing their social status – as well as cultural affiliation with the community and the Gypsy ethnic identity. By wearing jewellery, they emphasize their financial position and indicate how much they have achieved in life.

"... I love my jewellery very much, aren't they beautiful? Even when I was a girl, when guests came to visit my father, I always had to wear them all or else he started swearing, shouting at me how do I look like, we are not broken gypsies... and now if my skirt doesn't look the way it should, then my husband yells at me." (1st generation woman, 11th interview)

Long hair is the ornament of Romani women, especially in the grandmother generation – because it still has *"a weight and meaning to wear"*. According to the older generation, if a Romani girl does not have long hair, it means a straight path to assimilation. Long hair appears as a kind of mystery and a means of identity in their case. Short hair is identified with shame, so it is common that if a Romani woman breaks a rule, her hair will be cut off.

"XY cheated on my son, and since we don't do that here, I cut off her hair ... there was no arguing, everyone knew it had to be that way..." (1st generation woman, 3rd interview)

The appearance of this generation, including clothing, jewellery, hairstyle, and related symbols, can be interpreted as a value, but also as a clear message to members of the community and to those outside the community, saying to them: I belong here. As the possibilities of the grandmother's

generation were limited – due to the unfavourable territorial definition of the settlement – even after the regime change, they did not enter the labor market and did not have to conform to the norms of the majority society. This situation has further strengthened their Gypsy identity and following traditional patterns. In their case, clothing is one of the main features of their local and ethnic identity, giving a symbolic expression of having an almost "uniformed" outfit. The exclusion, contempt, and rejection of the Gypsies by the majority society only further strengthened their identity, which was reflected in their clothing as well. Their often seemingly "artificial", over-traditional clothing, appearance, including their colourful skirts, buns, striking jewellery contribute to the strengthening of their Gypsy identity and becoming even more distinct from the majority society.

3.1.2. "... if I didn't speak Gypsy language, my family would be ashamed of me ..."

What makes someone a member of the community? Just by adapting his/her lifestyle and habits to the expectations of the community, or perhaps speaking the particular language or consider it as a native language? Nowadays, most of the Romani communities use only the Hungarian language. However, some of the Gypsies are bilingual, meaning that they also speak some version of the Gypsy language besides the Hungarian. We also discovered cultural and generational differences in language usage.

Knowledge and use of the Gypsy language by first-generation women is commonplace. The community of the studied settlement uses the Cerhar version of the Gypsy language. They speak Gypsy language more often than Hungarian within their family, on the street, among themselves, and sometimes even in shops in the centre of the settlement. The use of language is one of the strongest expressions of their ethnic identity, an important symbol of their belonging to the community. From those who do not speak the Gypsy language within their smaller family and friendly environment, they often keep some distance. In spite of the fact that the Gypsy language is in decline and used less and less in everyday communication – see 2nd and 3rd generations 2 – for these women, "being trapped" in the closed community and less contact with non-Gypsies made it possible to maintain and strengthen the Gypsy language. Language often strengthens Gypsy self-consciousness more than habits and lifestyles (CSEPELI–ÖRKÉNY–SZÉKELY 1999) – of course, these are still important to them. In their case, knowledge of the Gypsy language determines the strength of their integration into their community and the way they think.

Celebrations in the community create such communication situation – talking with their Gypsy-speaking relatives, neighbours, singing together, greetings – that further strengthens language use.

"... who doesn't speak Gypsy language isn't a true Gypsy then ... here is my grandchild for example, who understands everything, but doesn't want to speak the Gypsy language, only Hungarian ... apart from some Gypsy sayings, that's all..." (1st generation woman, 11th interview)

"Even in the shop, I sometimes say to the Hungarian woman 'me mangavmanro' – I ask for bread – but she's okay with this, because she knows that I speak the Gypsy language everywhere... if I didn't know the Gypsy language then everyone would wonder why, and my family would be ashamed of me... that's how I grew up, my mother and father talked to me like that and so did I talk to my children, my grandchild... but now you have to understand what I'm saying, right?" (1st generation woman, 7th interview).

"... It was XY's birthday lately, we celebrated it here in the house, singing and greeting in Gypsy language, do you know how good that was?" (1st generation woman, 12th interview)

Gypsy language is used unconsciously by the generations of grandmothers and is not conscious, but rather emotional. Often, if they are not only surrounded by members of their own community, they automatically speak in Gypsy language. Using this language, they are better able to express themselves and their feelings, as this was their primary language during their socialization. There are unwritten rules and expected behaviours regarding language use in this generation. For example, if they say hello to someone in Gypsy, they expect that person to answer in Gypsy language as well, or if they do not want the Gadjos to understand what they say, they should only speak in Gypsy. Many members of this generation can only chat with their own age group in Gypsy language. The use of language is intended to illustrate their attachment to the Gypsy lifestyle. For them, knowing Gypsy language is not a shameful knowledge, but rather a source of pride.

3.1.3. "... it is natural that my husband has the final word ..."

The old, traditional expectations and roles in the family model continue to exist in the generation of grandmothers, despite the fact that many of them have already entered the labor market and work within the framework of supported public employment in the settlement. Work does not mean fulfilment in their case; it does not add more to their lives. They work because, financially, not all of them can afford to have just one earner in the family. They continue to fulfil the roles of women within their families – serving husband, children – and this is considered to be decisive. They have also raised their children in such a way that girls and boys have separate roles and responsibilities within the family, in the household. Thinking about traditional female roles and their "evolution" has not been influenced by modernization – the word of grandmother and mother-in-law is sacred. According to the interviews, the roles of this generation in the family can be compared to the roles of women living in traditional peasant society. As their age and labor market status changed, the burden of work expected in the family remained unchanged, as their primary tasks included serving the husband and managing the household – then the care of their children, grandchildren. Even today, managing the household, washing, cooking, and cleaning are not the man's responsibilities. When managing money, or when it comes to making the most important decisions, man has the final word. If the husband dies (died), then his son "takes over" the father's place and status in the family. In the grandmother's generation, women do not pay bills to this day, they do not handle important matters, because in many cases this would result leaving the town and community, which men would not allow.

These roles, tasks in this generation, are taken for granted by women and the inheritance of tradition to the next generation is a natural process. This is how the next generation was educated as well. Their behaviour and thinking are deeply influenced by the system of norms of the traditional Gypsy community that they received from their parents during their socialization. To this day, if a Romani woman breaches a rule, she will be subject to an immediate sanction, and it is most typical of this age group to adhere to it. They consider judging important, so that men can listen the "guilty" person and make a decision about the case – even without the presence of the "accused" – in order to relieve tension in the life of the community and thus maintain a strong cohesion.

"When the girl was home, she always had to serve her brother, she had to wash, cook, help me at home, that was her job..." (1st generation woman, 3rd interview)

"Oh, such a question, of course my husband has the final word, I cannot go to another city to deal with a case because he won't let me... I have no problem with it, he's just jealous and that's all, that's his job." (1st generation woman, 11th interview)

The first generation of Romani women, despite being of working age, they have limited participation in the labor market and are financially dependent – men decide on the use of money. Although many live without husbands, their views on work, income, and social roles remain unchanged, while reality – often by necessity because they are left alone – goes beyond the traditional form of operation.

Demonstration of belonging to the community in all possible forms (clothing, language, habits) is characteristic of the generation of grandmothers – in the three areas examined, which are closed in geographical and social terms as well. Because of their generation status, they would have a leading role in the family – the word of grandmothers is sacred – but due to the changing environmental conditions – grandchildren move to other cities or settlements – they can no longer fulfil this role; thus, their role as cultural transmitters and identity makers is significantly limited, which mostly only reaches the next generation.

3.2. The generation of daughters

Economic and social development is uneven across time and space, which is why there are significant differences between regions – unemployment, investment, net income, etc. Following the change of regime, the social and economic transformation made the differences between the different regions of the country even more marked. (Marselek–Pummer 2003) The settlement we examined is located in Northeast Hungary – as mentioned earlier – where the employment rate was one of the lowest in the country during the period under review (KSH 2018). Due to its regional location, second-generation Romani women in the late eighties and early nineties were thus less likely to enter the labor market than members of the previous generation or their peers with more favourable regional conditions.

Second generation members were born between 1970 and 1975. As they grew older, Roma employment rates gradually declined. Exclusion from the labor market intensified in the second half of the 1980s and peaked after the change of regime. As a result of the transformation crisis triggered by the transformation of the market economy, the Romani people have been squeezed out of the labor market in large numbers due to the collapse or significant narrowing of low-skilled sectors – construction, heavy, light industry, mining, and agriculture. The proportion of Romani women in employment – compared to 50% in the late 1970s – dropped to 16.3% (Janky 1999) after the change of regime, even in regions where it used to be easier to work.

We did not encounter the "backflow" of second-generation women in the examined settlement in the mid-1990s, because they did not move to work in other settlements due to the regional disadvantages mentioned earlier. The employment rate of Romani men has also deteriorated significantly in these years, making it harder to keep a job and in many cases, they had to go far for work and income.

3.2.1. "Clothing is only part of the feast day culture..."

The relationship of second-generation Romani women to traditions and social roles was significantly influenced by the fact that men were away from the family for extended periods of time.[3] At first, this absence meant only commuting, and later on, we could see many leaving the family and community.[4]

The absence of men and women staying on their own created a specific situation: second-generation Romani women, despite the difficulties in the labor market in the 1990s, had to work to support their children and the household. Due to the absence of men, the Romani women were taken out of control of men and at the same time they were placed in the role of the father-husband supporting the family. This provided the ability (or meant a compulsion?) to cross the boundaries of their closed communities and to increase contact with members of the majority society. The forced change of role, frequent contact, and co-operation with members of the majority society also changed the generation's relationship to tradition. This first appeared in their clothing habits. In their case, they no longer wear headscarves or skirts, they prefer to wear pants for comfort and practicality, and because of external stereotypes, they can more easily "melt" into the majority society in this way. *"Life without a skirt, headscarf"* is not viewed well by the wider environment – especially the older generation – therefore, a kind of internal barrier was formed within this generation about what to wear when, where, and how to avoid conflict. Jewellery and the role of long hair are not as important as for them as for the older generation, and mobile phones are much more likely to be an expression of their social status. At community events where more Romanies meet – for example Romani cultural events and Gypsy fair in the settlement – they wear their skirts and jewels to signify the respect for the acceptance of expected habits and clothing. There is a sense of duality in respecting and abandoning traditions: inner community-bound values and norms begin to disintegrate under external pressure. The changes indicate a transitional phase in which the former norm systems are loosened, but the new values are not yet solidified. Because of this duality and insecurity, transition often involves tensions and conflicts: in this situation, it is not clear who is doing what is right or wrong.

"... yes, the Gypsy language is important as well as the skirt and others... but because I don't wear a skirt or I want my son to learn how to cook, I couldn't be an Olah Gypsy? That would be weird." (2nd generation, 8th interview)

"When we get together on bigger occasions and we go to XY, I usually wear those clothes, but wearing them on weekdays, I certainly wouldn't... Don't worry, my mother-in-law says her own arguments about this..." (5th interview)

"Ahh I no longer wear skirts, not even on occasions, I don't even have one... I don't need those, I'm currently attending a course, there are two Romanies there, but they are Romungros, neither of them wear these skirts, and now if I wore them everyone would know that I'm a Gypsy, but I'm not even that brown as you see (laughing out loud)..." (2nd generation woman, 10th interview)

"I wear pants as you see... if I go to XY, I don't want them to look me any further" (2nd generation woman, 2nd interview)

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[3] In 1971, about 85–90% of Gypsy males of working age, aged 15–59, were in active employment or in regular employment and 10–15% of them had casual or seasonal works. The regime change brought about a radical change as only 28.8% of Romani men remained employed. (Csoba 2007)

[4] The husbands of the first-generation Gypsy women practiced traditional Gypsy professions, which mainly extended to the surrounding settlements, so they did not break away from their community and they had no contact with non-Gypsies as often as the second generation.

Traditional clothing is not as important for them as for the older generation. They are only visible at major community and church events. However, the lack of traditional clothing in the everyday life often provokes dislike in the older generation, which they often express.

The interviews revealed that in their case, the reasons behind leaving clothing include the integrate into the majority society, to avoid discrimination in the labor market, to find an easier position in the labor market and the rise of global fashion in traditional communities as well. We can say that the change in their clothing is the result of both internal and external decisions and constraints, which often cause internal conflicts, both within the community and within the individual's value system.

In the thinking of second-generation Romani women, clothing as an Olah Gypsy identity element is no longer as important as for the older generations. Their appearance on the labor market has also transformed their everyday clothing habits. The preference for practicality and comfort over old customs is a sign of their integration into the majority society. They only wear traditional clothing at common church events, less and less as a sign of identity based on inner conviction, but rather as a sign of respect for the older generation.

3.2.2. Language use as a latent pillar of identity and belonging together

The use and knowledge of the Gypsy language plays an important role in the life of every second-generation Romani woman – they use it daily – but only in their own closed community, within their families. They consider it important to teach their children how to use the Romani language, but they do not expect them to use it every day – either in the majority society or in their own closed community – compared to the older generation, who expected them to use it frequently, and they still expect this from third generation girls. By teaching the language, their purpose is not to further inherit and pass on traditions – and thus to transfer the Gypsy identity – but rather to facilitate communication with the older generation and to avoid the arguments with them.

Knowledge of the Gypsy language has a function other than communication for the second generation – it is often used to "exclude" those from the conversation, who do not understand the language. For them, language has an identity-forming power, strengthens a sense of belonging and provides a basis for their cultural autonomy.

"Knowing the Gypsy language is rare, and I'm proud of that, because it reminds me of my family..." (2nd generation woman, 2nd interview)

"It is important for me to be able to speak Gypsy, and we speak Gypsy with our neighbours and here in the house too... I also say things in Gypsy to my two kids at home, but I don't ask for it like my mother did in the past, when she asked me to speak only Gypsy or Hungarian..." (2nd generation woman, 6th interview).

"Do you speak the Gypsy language? Now you see, if I don't want you to understand something, I just switch quickly and now I can say whatever I want..." (2nd generation woman, 8th interview)

Knowledge of the Gypsy language is one of the most important components of their ethnic identity, essentially a sign of their belonging to their culture. Knowing the language and, most of all, its use within their community, has an integrative role, as it creates a sense of belonging to a group of Gypsies who speak the same language within their group. They prefer to use their own Gypsy language in their family circle and environment, which shows that they are not only rationally attached to their language, but also have a deep emotional connection with it. Language

is seen as a value by them, but it is no longer used as a primary language in the socialization of the growing generation – unlike in their childhood. This is due to the negative perception of the Gypsy language by the majority society, which is why they do not consider the use of Gypsy language as important, but they consider its knowledge as significant, because it is considered to be an expression of the Olah Gypsy identity. However, since they entered the labor market, they are aware of the value and usefulness of the spoken language in the labor market and therefore they do not account for the language deficiencies of their children in the use of the Romani language.

Despite all the changes, the language plays a very important role in the formation of identity in the examined settlement. Knowing and using it within a given group will result in a much stronger attachment to the community than clothing or appearance. Appearances change more rapidly, but intrinsic values, cultural and linguistic affinities are more strongly embedded and, as a result, they change more slowly.

3.2.3. Romani women in a dual role

Changes in family structure have also led to a shift in roles within the family within the closed Romani community.

The majority of second-generation Romani women were "divorced" and raised their children alone.

"... no, it's not that easy... he started to work in Pest, then on day he didn't come back... he isn't interested in our children, and he doesn't give money, but I wouldn't want it anyway..." (2nd generation, 6th interview)

The burden of financial security was also placed on women, which posed a major challenge to them.[5] Until the mid-nineties, they tried to organize their lives according to the old routines and replaced men's lost income with social benefits. However, following the gradual decline in the value of their social benefits, they began to work more and more frequently from the second half of the 1990s. Often, even at the price of being aware of it, working can lead to moving away from their community.

The role of second-generation Gypsy women living in the settlement is no longer confined to previously adopted child-rearing and household management. In order for the family to survive, they had to enter the labor market, because this was the only way they could raise and educate their children. With the undertaking of man/father roles, women also re-evaluated roles within the family. Their children are no longer raised according to the traditional family model. Serving a son is no longer an unquestionable duty for a woman, though traditions are still a daily routine.

"When there are events here in the house, we women cook, then serve the food for men, and we don't sit down at the table until everyone has food in front of them... but I don't see why we have to do this... there are things we leave and there are some that we don't, and I don't really understand why this can't be left out." (2nd generation, 10th interview)

With the change in the status of boys/men within the family – no longer the sole breadwinners of the family – their role in managing the household has also changed. Mothers find it essential that boys should play their part in managing and arranging the household, just as girls do. However,

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[5] For the older generation, there was no precedent for women to raise their children alone. They lived in modest circumstances, but the financials were created only by men, so that family-related tasks were the only responsibilities of women.

they also attach great importance to the education and employment of their daughters, since for a Gypsy woman, taking their own lives as an example, work and income provide a stable basis.

"I also teach my girl so that she doesn't have to do everything, and if she'll have her own family, she should know that even a man has to participate in household chores because she won't be able to do it alone beside working ... but I'll teach her how to cook and everything which my mother taught me, but that's not what life is all about." (2nd generation woman, 10th interview)

"The older boy can already make pancakes, and even if I were sick, he would do everything helping his sister because he knows that her sister has to learn a lot at school. It's true that these are not big things yet, like making pancakes, washing dishes, but these mean small steps ahead." (2nd generation, 2nd interview)

"I'm the only one who manages all the bills, I manage the money ... now no man should tell me what to do, because I have the last word..." (2nd generation woman, 6th interview)

The power of the homogeneous community in which they live can no longer exert its influence as strongly as in the first generation. More frequent encounters with members of the majority society have a greater influence, which does not mean giving up or abandoning Romani traditions and culture, but rather reinterpreting it, and adjusting to the *"more accepted by the majority"*. The reason for the change – compared to the older generation's identity – may be the weakening of the Gypsy traditions beyond the normal generation gap. Community pressure is no longer as strong as that of the grandparents' generation, indicating a weakening of the integrative power of the community. In addition to the pressure from their families, expectations and values in the majority society also affect their lives. Among the second generation of Romani women, the amount of time spent outside the family has increased and the main stage of their lives has become the space created by the majority society.

Among the three identity-forming elements examined – language, clothing, roles –, one of them stands out, which determines their belonging to the Olah Romani community even within the life of the second generation: language. Based on their knowledge of the language and their use within their micro community, they identify themselves as Olah Romani women, and they identify with it internally as well. Clothing and family roles, behaviour patterns in the Romani community (e.g., male predominance) work under the influence of external pressures, if they work at all, and they no longer play a decisive role in shaping their identity. The second generation of Romani women is characterized by the "no longer, not yet" condition. The two dominant elements of ethnic identity are no longer considered indispensable for identity formation, but the significance of and identity with the language has not been questioned among them, either in the feast day or in everyday culture.

3.3. The generation of grandchildren

The third generation can be called the children of the nineties. When this generation was born, the employment rates of parents were very poor compared to the majority society: the number of unemployed and inactive (people living on benefits, disability pensions) was high. For many families, the only source of livelihood was child support. In spite of all this, the life of young people born in the 1990s was greatly influenced by the expansion of education at the end of the period,

as well as the emergence and expansion of various educational and scholarships to support Romani people. A study by István Kemény in 2003 also shows that from this generation, more and more Romani young people have completed primary school and appeared in institutions providing graduation and profession. (Janky 2005) Moreover, Romani girls are present in institutions providing graduation at a higher rate, which means that traditional family patterns are being pushed aside and modernization is on the rise. (Kemény–Janky–Lengyel 2004) As a result, the approach, mindset, and interpretation of the third generation we investigate is completely different from that of the first- and second-generation Gypsy women. They interpret the notions of traditional symbolic systems, morality, language, and traditions in a different way.

Members of the third generation enjoy greater freedom and opportunities in many areas of life than members of the previous generation. However, there is a price to expanding freedom and choice: their identity and belonging to the Olah Gypsies are at stake. There is a daily (re-)interpretation of the traditions among them that define belonging to a community, and the boundaries of identity are becoming uncertain.

As second-generation Gypsy women considered it important to educate their daughters, members of the third generation were in contact with members of the majority society – from early kindergarten age – for a long time. Adapting to the norms and values of the majority society in the course of institutional socialization, primarily within the school system, led to the weakening of the norm system of the traditional Romani community, resulting in a generation gap between the second and third generations.

3.3.1. The sometimes-appearing Gypsy roses

The deviation from tradition affected first and foremost the traditional Olah Gypsy clothing. This is the most striking difference between particular generations. In the grandmothers' generation, this clothing is a must. Clothing expresses a sense of belonging together and has a strong integrative role even today. Third generation Olah Gypsy girls no longer see the importance of wearing Gypsy clothes, headscarves, or having a long hair. Even traditional dresses for festive occasions are worn only to avoid confrontation with the older generation. Their dresses no longer follow the traditional Gypsy clothing and they usually wear ready-to-wear outfits. Yet, in the form of a piece of clothing – t-shirts with roses, floral jeans – or pairing it, traditions are back again, sometimes subtly indicating their ethnicity. For members of the majority society, these signs do not appear, but for the older Olah Gypsy generation, these colours, patterns, clothing pieces have a meaning and they alleviate conflicts between generations. In the grandchildren's generation, these symbols are used to express a rediscovered/undertaken identity.

For third generation women, the jewellery that their grandparents wore as an expression of their social status no longer appears. The status symbols used are much more typical of members of the majority society: nails, mobile phones, clothing, and shoes brands.

"I love rosy, floral dresses, but as much as I'm wearing them now, more roses are already too Gypsy..." (3rd generation woman, 4th interview)

"I've little jewellery, I don't wear much, it doesn't mean anything to me... it says more about me if I've Adidas or Nike shoes..." (3rd generation woman, 1st interview)

Abandoning traditional clothing is primarily due to a change in the values prevailing among the younger generations. The outward expectation of "assimilation" that is imposed on them by the majority society and the fear of prejudice further exacerbates their abandonment of traditional clothing and identity symbols. According to the interviews, in most cases this does not involve any internal conflict, but rather a result of a conscious decision that may facilitate their social integration or, where appropriate, their assimilation. The sign of advanced integration is the symbolic conscious wearing of Gypsy motifs, which also indicates a decrease in fear of prejudice and a stability in their status.

3.3.2. "... if I spoke in Gypsy, they would shut out me..."

Not only traditional Gypsy clothing is affected by the frequency of contact with the majority society, but also the use of Gypsy language. While the generation of grandmothers used Gypsy as their primary language, everyday language users are rare among the members of the third generation: Gypsy language is not present as an active means of communication for them but rather as a passive knowledge/skill. Although they know and understand their language, they are unable to use it or are reluctant to speak it, even within their close environment. In many cases, assimilation patterns can be discovered in the background of lack of language skills or its presence as a passive skill. Because they are often in contact with members of the majority society, they fear that if they would accidentally and routinely speak Gypsy in their non-Gypsy environment, that would result in their rejection.

The interviews revealed that they consciously do not use the language within their own community and that they also choose their vocabulary in the company of Hungarians in order not to "reveal" themselves.

"I don't use language at home, I understand everything, but if I spoke it at home, I might not notice myself at school and I would accidentally speak in Gypsy, and then everyone would look at me weird and they would shout out me... so I just simply don't use it anywhere" (3rd generation woman, 9th interview)

Third generation girls would love to blend in with majority society. They are the ones who are the most aware of the difference between the two ethnic groups, and therefore, because of their acceptance and integration into the majority society, they tend to be more aligned with the majority society.

3.3.3. Dual identity with new character features

The coexistence of older and younger generations in a community allows third generation Olah Gypsy girls to clearly distinguish between past and present patterns of life, culture, traditions in their community. Attitudes towards change, continuous learning, career development, self-actualization, a changed attitude towards community leaders, and signs of modernization are the most spectacular in this generation.

The transformation of roles within the family had already begun with the second generation of women, but the third generation Gypsy girls had grown up in the pattern that it is not only the woman who is responsible for housekeeping and raising children. Through the example of second-generation women, they see that women can play more roles within the family, which affects their perception of traditional family relationships and division of labor. The division of labor within their families does not develop in the traditional way; there is hardly any difference between male and female tasks. Their brothers cook the same way as they do when needed. Serving their mate and future husband, and raising their child is not considered to be their sole task, but rather a shared one. The members of third generation already manifest this role change at community events as well, and they do not serve male members.

"If I have a husband in the future, I won't serve him, because he has both hands and legs, he can serve himself if he wants something, right? And if I go home from work and I'm tired, somebody can put food in front of me too." (3rd generation, 4th interview)

"I told my mom that XY can do the same dishwashing as I do, because it's not engraved in stone, that we girls have to do it..." (3rd generation woman, 1st interview)

By breaking away from their traditional community and continuing their studies in cities, their self-definition is dependent on the socio-cultural context of the local environment.

Despite turning against or re-interpreting the values and traditions of the community, the third generation of Gypsy girls consider themselves as Olah Gypsies when it comes to identity. However, their identity is defined by other categories expressed by different symbols. For them, the recognizance of an Olah Gypsy girl is her eyes, her saturated emotional expressions, her characteristic gestures, her knowledge of dance, and her musicality. Members of the third-generation associate identities with the above-mentioned and not with language, clothing, or traditional roles/habits. The identity-building traits they mentioned are not as prominent as clothing or language usage, yet they are able to discover, identify, and represent values that they feel are more common alongside symbols and hidden dimensions of the Gypsy community, which makes them feel a little more compared to the daughters of the majority society.

"... you see, I'm not dark-skinned, and even I have to go solarium to be tan... you don't tell who the Gypsies are by colour. We Gypsies know who a Gypsy is, I'll tell you if I look into her eyes whether she's a Gypsy or not..." (3rd generation woman, 9th interview)

The contrast between the majority and minority societies, the strength of social prejudices, has an impact on ethnic identity consciousness. In many cases, third-generation girls are only able to "get rid" of the subjugation of the community and at the same time preserve their Romani identity, which adds value to them, by redefining their identity-forming dimensions and elevating themselves out of the affirmative dimensions of prejudice in majority society, while placing it in an identity relationship that is invisible to the majority, but decisive for them. The identity definition of this generation – as opposed to that of the older generation – comes not only from parents, grandparents, and the community, but also, the identity dimension system developed for members of the generation under the pressure of the majority society – in many cases, prevailing latent – is also decisive at least to that extent.

SUMMARY

In our study, we examined three generations of Olah Gypsy women to show how changes in Gypsy traditions affect identity change and integration into mainstream society. During the analysis, we analysed three identity dimensions: clothing and attire, language use, and changes in women's roles in the labor market and within the family.

Integration has already appeared in the life of this closed community, preserving certain traditions, and abandoning others of their original culture.

External, structural factors – as we have seen – have greatly influenced the identity dimensions of the Romani people and the changes in their roles within the three generations. The economic, political, and social processes of different decades gave different chances, socialization patterns and strategies for Romani women. Sometimes they reinforced Romani traditions, sometimes they were being pushed into the background. In case of the first generation, we saw a clear *"identity picture of the Olah Gypsy",* with only a few signs of the acculturation process (e.g. forced female labor in 2010)

The second generation is in transition. Their linguistic attachment is weakened, their lifestyle is transformed and their relationship to culture is affected. The precarious situation created by the regime change and the multitude of options offered by modernization have shaken up their seemingly stable social and cultural environment and pushed them for transformation. The majority of Gypsy women living in the settlement have to raise their children alone, as men have disappeared from their family. This situation necessitated the acquisition of new patterns of adaptation and had to re-interpret their ethnic identity, their relationship to culture and traditions, as earlier patterns were no longer applicable in the changed circumstances. For this generation, we are witnessing a clear additive acculturation process where members of the generation are forced to adopt the values and behaviours of the majority society in order to survive. Continuous abandonment of identity elements associated with minority culture and a dynamic process of assimilation are typical of them.

In the case of the third generation, we are already experiencing a highly advanced assimilation process, which is uniquely coloured by some elements of substitute acculturation. The majority of the interviewees identify themselves as Olah Gypsies. However, they associate different symbols with Romani identity compared to the female members of previous generations. New identity-building traits are hardly identifiable for the majority of society, they are not as prominent as clothing, habits, or language. With the hidden dimensions of identity, they identify themselves as belonging to the group, and along these lines of identity, which they regard as highly prestigious, they would like to represent values that make them feel slightly more as Romani girls than girls in majority society.

Preserving the identity of the Gypsy minority is still subject to a number of internal and external tensions, especially when members of the majority society express strong prejudices against the traditional identity elements of minority society (clothing, language, roles). We have also experienced this in the Olah Gypsy community, where members of the third generation – in order to avoid conflicts and exclusion – have identified alternative dimensions of identity that are difficult to identify for the majority society. However, an ethnic group can only survive if they clearly state and represent their own values, identity elements, because if they do not know or dare to name their values anymore, if they are hesitant to represent identity dimensions for self-identification, then it is only a matter of time when they will bid farewell to their "ethnic identity".

Interview number	Generation	Number of children	Educational attainment	Marital status	Current employment	Previous employment
1st	3rd	0	university	single	student	student
2nd	2nd	3	primary school	married	worker	worked
3rd	1st	4	3 classes	married	worker	housewife
4th	3rd	0	university	single	student	student
5th	2nd	3	graduation + OKJ	divorced	worker	worked
6th	2nd	1	graduation + OKJ	divorced	worker	worked
7th	1st	2	4 classes	married	worker	housewife
8th	1st	3	graduation	married	worker	worked
9th	1st	0	university	single	student	student
10th	2nd	3	skilled worker	married	worker	worked
11th	1st	2	primary school	married	worker	housewife
12th	1st	3	primary school	married	worker	housewife

ANNEX 1 *Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewees referred to in the study*

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