

Romani Language, Linguistic Rights and «Antigypsyism»

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Annotation

The article analyses the forms of «antigypsyism» towards the use of Romani language, education of Roma children in their mother tongue and the linguistic human rights of Roma. After defining the «hate speech» and «antigypsyism», «antiziganism», «online hate» given by different authors, research with some Roma communities in Slovakia is presented. The «antigypsyism» is expressed directly or online towards Roma. The forms of personal/individual, institutionalized antigypsyism, institutionalized personal antigypsyism are discussed. Romani is in daily use mainly in the segregated Roma settlements. However, neither in the segregated nor in the special schools are the children offered lessons to build formal literacy in their mother tongue. The attitudes of the teachers towards the use of the Romani language at school are often not positive and they do not have any activities supporting the use and development of Romani. They do not recognize that such children have a right to acquire literacy in their home language. It is not viewed as an asset but precisely the opposite: the teachers think that they do not need their mother tongue and that the official school language is more important.

The official languages used by the children are also an object of hate speech in social media and society, because often they use a variety of the official language called «ethnolect», and not the official language. Applying the insights of Auduc (2006), I concluded that the discrimination against young Roma is even stronger when they are highly qualified. The antigypsyism is much greater towards educated Roma who are fighting for their language and identity rights. That is because in their countries of origin this category of human capital, e.g. educated Roma, cannot be integrated, and most of them emigrate to West European countries to find their professional realization.

Keywords: Roma, linguistic human rights, education, antigypsyism

Introduction

The collapse of communism in Central and East European countries in the 1990s led to new changes to all societies. Everyone experienced new forms of freedom, however the Roma

communities were the ones who benefited most from the democratic changes regarding their language, identity and cultural development.

In 1990, the IV Congress of the International Romani Union took place not far from Warsaw, Poland and that is well known among linguists and Roma activists connected with the development of the «Standard Romani Alphabet» devised by Marcel Courthiade. It was a new beginning for many Roma communities in Central and East European countries. However the alphabet of Courthiade did not garner much popular support. It is used only in France, where he was working at INALCO-Paris, Romania and Kosovo. In Bulgaria, Romania and Czechoslovakia in the first years after the fall of the Berlin wall, Romani language was introduced in schools and all the countries created their own alphabets for writing Romani. In all European countries the alphabet was with Latin orthography, but in Russia the Roma activist and scholars use the Cyrillic alphabet for writing Romani. In many countries the appellation «Gypsy» officially was replaced by the term «Roma» in public discourse. The first publications (textbooks, poetry books, novels, newspapers) in Romani language were introduced. In some countries the first Romani radio and TV programs were established.

In Bulgaria Romani language education was introduced in 1992, first in a few schools experimentally and later throughout the country from grade 1 till grade 8. A lot of schoolbooks and children's non-fiction books were published (Kyuchukov et al. 1993, Kjučukov, 1997)). After the first variety of Romani alphabet by Courthiade, a second variety was modified and nowadays has become the most popular alphabet for Romani in Europe: the one created in 2000 by Hristo Kyuchukov and Ian Hancock (both are linguists with a Romani background).

Table 1. The Romani alphabet was created by Hristo Kyuchukov and Jan Genkok in 2000.

Letters	Pronunciation
A, a	a
B, b	be
C, c	tse
Č, č	ch
Čh, čh	ch with aspiration
D, d	de
Dž, dž	dzh
E, e	e
F, f	ef
G, g	ge
H, h	ha
X, x	retroflexiv h
I, i	i

J, j	jot for palatalisation
K, k	Ka
Kh, kh	k with aspiration
L, l	el
M, m	em
N, n	en
O, o	o
P, p	pe
Ph, ph	p with aspiration
R, r	er
S, s	es
Š, š	sh
T, t	te
Th, th	t with aspiration
U, u	u

V, v	we
Y, y	central vowel ə

Z, z	ze
Ž, ž	zh

At the beginning of the democratic changes, all these activities were led by Roma activists. The euphoria among Roma and the belief that they are free to develop their future were very much supported by American and West European non-governmental organizations. In the 1990s, the Roma NGOs in all countries were developing and becoming an influential factor. With the support of West European NGOs, they gained power in helping to formulate governmental policies, strategic plans, actions. The Roma NGOs were in a position to initiate and shape forms of civil society among the Roma communities and to fight against different forms of racism and discrimination. However, this was just the first decade. After 2000 and particularly after 2005, when some of the Central and East European countries became members of the EU, the situation changed drastically toward the negative for Roma communities: nationalistic parties with views against Roma were established; skinhead attacks increased, the first neo-Nazi parties entered the national parliaments and the European Parliament, and some openly anti-Roma governments were elected. All these phenomena influenced the situation of Roma, their language use, and their human, linguistic and educational rights.

In this paper I endeavor to show how the «antigypsyism» gaining traction in East European countries has increased against the use of the Roma language and Roma identity, and how the educational and linguistic human rights of Roma in some European countries are being violated.

Roma and the Romani language in Europe

The total number of Roma in Europe is estimated at between 10-12 million inhabitants (European Commission, 2020). Approximately 6 million are citizens of EU countries. The Roma do not have their own country. They migrated to Europe 10 centuries ago from India. Over the centuries, they have spread to all corners of the world and today Roma live not only in Europe but also in the USA and Canada, Latin America, and Australia. The Roma speak Romani, which has historical roots in northern Indian languages. From an early age, Roma children learn to speak Romani and at the same time learn the official language of the country in which they live. They are bilingual and, in most cases even multilingual. Very often they speak another Roma dialect and another minority language. Unfortunately, the bilingualism/multilingualism of Roma is not seen as a positive thing, it is even considered that speaking Romani as a mother tongue, prevents Roma children from integrating into majority society (Rushton, Cvorovic, & Bonn, 2007; Bakalar, 2004). Visiting schools and kindergartens with Roma children in Germany I often witness comments by teachers or children of other ethnic communities towards Roma children, noting that they are not allowed to speak their mother tongue at school, «because here is Germany!»

Unfortunately, Roma children still do not get enough support to strengthen their Romani language and their Roma identity in many European countries. The forms of «antigypsyism» concerning Romani language and its use are increasing. There are now ever more cases when Romani is forbidden and all kinds of negative prejudicial comments towards Romani are taken as something normal. Jean-Louis Auduc (2006) writes that «schools must be places of understanding, of knowledge of other cultures, especially to bring their pupils to understand the part each culture

occupies in the whole». Further, Auduc notes that «it is important to understand that there are no «small» racist or anti-Semitic acts». Every racist act is a crime, and every statement is, and must be, punishable. And any generalization aiming at blaming an ethnic or religious group for the behavior and attitudes of few others in that group is racism. In French society, Auduc points out, discrimination against young immigrants is even stronger when they have some qualification. The first generation of qualified immigrants coming into the employment market has found that despite their efforts to achieve integration, discrimination towards them remains. The unemployment rate for these qualified young people is three times higher than the national average.

In many European countries, Roma children are taught in segregated or special schools. Segregated schools were established after World War II in Roma neighborhoods and were set up solely for Roma children (Kyuchukov, 2006). No other children are taught in them. Unfortunately, the quality of education in these schools is very low. Special schools were established in the 1960s-1970s. Children with mental and physical handicaps are mostly taught in them. However, in many countries it is mainly Roma children who are sent to special schools because they do not know the official language of the country well. In some European countries, Roma children are psychologically tested by psychologists in the official language of the country. And if the children do not understand the language and the tasks given to them, the children are considered to have mental problems, supposed ‘disabilities’ in learning and are referred to special schools. Lack of knowledge of the official language, making mistakes when speaking the official language of a country, is considered by psychologists who test Roma children with special tests as «mental retardation». In special schools, the quality of education is low and children graduating from those schools cannot study at secondary school or university. In most cases, segregated and special schools are 100% Roma-only and there are no Roma teachers in these schools and the children do not learn their mother tongue and culture there.

«Hate speech» and «Antigypsyism»

It is useful here to start by defining the notion «hate speech», invented in the era of the Third Reich in Germany and known as LTI (Lingua Tertii Imperii) – the Language of the Third Reich (Klemperer, 2007). «Hate speech» is a term for speech intended to degrade, intimidate, or incite violence or prejudicial action against a person or a group of people based on their race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language ability, ideology, social class, occupation, appearance (height, weight, hair color, etc.), mental capacity, and any other distinction that might be considered by some as a liability. One could also say that hate speech against Romani people is in fact a serious form of «antigypsyism» which prepares the ground for further prejudice and violence against Romani people.

Glassman (1999) analyzes expressions (words and phrases) in Hungarian which present the forms of hate speech towards Roma in a pejorative way such as *ciganisag* (Gypsy way of life), *cyganyputri* (hovel, shanty) *ciganikepű* (swarthy) *ciganyelet* (wandering life), *ciganykodik* (to flatter, to haggle, to beg) and *ciganyutra mert* (the food went down the wrong way). In Bulgaria the phrase *ciganska rabota* («Gypsy work») is very popular when something is not done well or when someone wants to show a negative attitude toward something. Another example is *ciganiya* (Gypsiness) when something is wrong or not well done, or it is deprecated as being sloppy, somehow inferior.

Hate speech against Roma is a form of «antigypsyism» and the integration efforts of Roma should be context-specific rather than pan-national (Kende et al., 2020). These authors stress:

«...anti-Gypsyism stems from the same psychological motivations as other forms of prejudice. Therefore, most studies acknowledge the importance of general tendencies towards prejudice in explaining anti-Gypsyism, such as authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and nationalism. Beyond the general tendencies, there is an agreement that anti-Gypsyism contains negative stereotypes about criminality and laziness and depicts the Roma as an incompetent and cold outgroup within the framework of the stereotype content model» (Kende et al., 2020:3).

The authors examine three hypotheses, among which is cultural differences, and in a study in six European countries they found that only in Spain does the majority not have negative attitudes towards the cultural differences attributed to Roma. In the other five countries in Eastern, Central and Western Europe examined in the study. the majority societies show negative attitudes towards Roma culture. The Romani language as part of the Roma culture is also regarded as something negative.

Together with the term «antigypsyism» in the scientific literature. the parallel term «antiziganism» is also used. According to Cambini and Fabeni (2017):

«antiziganism can be understood as a specific form of racism which underlies both the ideologies of racial superiority and the processes of de-humanization. It can also be seen in the forms of structural and institutional discrimination against Gypsy otherness. All these processes are based on stereotyping and prejudice, with their historical roots in Europe. It affects those who call themselves Roma and Sinti and other groups who are constructed locally as Gypsies.» (p. 100)

As can be seen, the authors above define the «antigypsyism»/«antiziganism» with reference to the same core characteristics: it is a racist act, there is a negative attitude towards the people, their language and their culture, it reflects xenophobic racial superiority.

In a study done during the pandemic crisis, Cortes (2021) analyses in some depth

«how antigypsyist hate speech operated as a symbolic mechanism of racial discrimination in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The Roma were portrayed as diverging from common norms and were presented as a social threat to public health.[...] The common denominator of antigypsyist hate speech was the presumption of fundamental moral differences between ‘them’ and ‘us’ (bad and good citizens); which symbolically (re)activated inherited group divisions among Roma and non-Roma: those who follow the rules and those who break the rules; those who deserve state protection and those who deserve being prosecuted by the state; those who deserve social solidarity and those who deserve social exclusion; those who deserve democratic justice and those who deserve popular justice. In the act of ‘othering’, the function of the analyzed discourses was to establish the ‘otherness’ of the Roma, labeled as ‘Gypsies’, to evoke a moral division on the basis of ethnicity» (p. 8).

Hate speech and «antigypsyism» are expressed everywhere in life: on the street, in public places, in social media. Pasta (2023), for example, studied hate speech on Twitter and he found that there is something called «online hate». And if one looks at the forms of «online hate», it can be established that a significant segment of such hate is against Roma, and the reason could be their lifestyle, their behavior, their language, and their culture. «Hate speech» is the first stage of «antigypsyism». Antigypsyism is a more complex form of racism towards Roma. It is not just a hate. And in contemporary societies, expressing hate towards the Roma verbally or online has become a kind of norm. In most cases such statements are deemed acceptable and almost everyone takes it as «but this is the truth, they (Roma) are like that». Such anti-Roma xenophobia is also fueled by how Roma are treated by the authorities in many European countries, including the police and justice systems, which impacts on public opinion, shaping pointedly negative narratives about Roma (Rorke 2022a; 2022b).

Methods

The main data collection part of the research was conducted between 2021 and 2022. All the subjects included in the research were informed about the goals and purposes of the study and they knew about my intention to publish the results in a scientific journal.

The research method used in the research was semi-structured interviews, specifically, semi-structured interviews with open questions. The total number of subjects involved in the study is 40 (between 20-60 years old). All of them live in the area of central Slovakia, most in Banska Bystrica County. According to database of Roma communities in the Slovak Republic, all of these families belong to so-called *Rumungri*, a Slovak Roma sub-ethnic group, constituting the most numerous Roma group in Slovakia. The data collection was done partly by the author of the paper and partly by a Ph.D. student, who was familiar with the community.

To analyze the data, the Qualitative Content Analysis and especially the Inductive category development was used, which consists of:

- a) the research question,
- b) the determination of category and levels of abstraction,
- c) the development of inductive categories from material,
- d) the revision of categories,
- e) the final working through text,
- f) the interpretation of results (Cho and Lee, 2014)

The research question I try to answer with this study is:

What are the forms of «antigypsyism» towards Roma in Slovak society?

Qualitative content analysis is frequently employed to answer questions such as what, why and how, and the common patterns in the data are searched for by using a consistent set of codes to organize text with similar content. Together with that, an ethnographic method for observations among Roma was used, as described by Silverman (2020).

Based on the content analysis of the conducted interviews, I was able to identify three categories of statements pointing to the subjective degree of marginalization of the respondents in all localities. They are:

1. Objective factors of marginalization: These are mainly factors of an economic and social nature. Here we primarily include the possibility of employment in the given region, village/city, or its immediate surroundings due to the level of education and professional competence of the respondents. Another of the factors within this category, which the respondents mentioned quite often, was the current setting of the state's social policy, or its impact on the respondents' quality of life.

2. Relationship with competent authorities: I define this category as the approach of competent authorities (primarily state and local government authorities) as well as other institutions to the main and long-term problems within the individual investigated marginalized Roma communities and their willingness to solve these problems or participate in their solution.

3. Relationship with the majority: This represents the level of relationships between members of individual marginalized Roma communities and members of the majority in a given locality. In this category, we include the respondents' statements regarding their perceived degree of acceptance or rejection by the majority, as well as the possibility of participating in cultural and social life in the given locality.

The results will be presented by groups, depending on the degree of segregation/integration:

Target Group 1 (City/Segregated).

Target Group 2 (Village/Segregated).

Target Group 3 (City/Integrated).

Target Group 4 (Village/Integrated).

Results

Presented here are the results based on the type of settlement of the target groups:

Target Group 1 (City/Segregated)

1. Objective factors of marginalization.

In their statements, the participants pointed to the acute lack of job opportunities in the given location, as well as within the entire region. At the same time, however, they expressed their willingness, or the desire to be employed, if such an opportunity were offered to them.

«There are no robots here, what can I tell you... of us who live here, let ten people work, even by agreement. And we, who are in the civil patrol, but otherwise nothing!»

The participants also repeatedly pointed out the high level of ethnic discrimination on the part of potential employers towards them.

«Don't believe that we don't want to do it, that's stupid! Everyone wants to do better, to be better... Look here, how it looks here... Nobody wants to live like this, believe me! But I will tell you that no one will hire a gypsy here, and we can go and ask as much as we want!»

However, a significant segment of the participants also expressed their disagreement with the current state social policy in this regard, which is very well illustrated by the following statement.

«... but even if I could get a job, it would most likely only be for the minimum wage. And with the fact that we will then lose all the benefits that we receive as a family in financial need. And when you calculate it, in the end we would have a lower monthly income than we have now, and I would still have to go to work every day. Would you do something like that to your children?!»

2. Relationship with competent authorities.

Within this category, the participants reported the highest level of perceived marginalization and discrimination. They most often pointed to the long-term reluctance of the relevant city authorities to solve their poor social situation, or participate in its solution.

«Not long ago, through the civic association, we submitted several projects from European funds to the city. For landscaping, road repair and the like. No one even addressed it! No one even came to ask us anything, no one consulted with us, nor did they bother to give us an explanation as to why they were rejected!»

The participants cited their long-term negative relationship with the local municipality as an extremely serious problem associated with the feeling of discrimination.

«You see, we heat here with wood. And we have to look for him everywhere - around here. And do you know why? Because when we come to the forester to issue us a permit to collect waste wood, ... waste wood, not lumber, but branches and pine needles, normally as it is, up to 8 cm in diameter! And we never wanted it for free, normally we would pay for it! ... so you know what happened to us several times already? That he normally told us that he would rather let the wood rot in the forest than sell it to us! So what are we supposed to do then, freeze?!»

3. Relationship with the majority.

In short, the findings indicate that the participants perceived the attitude of the majority in the given locality towards them as significantly negative, even hostile, which is partially indicated by the statements given in the previous two categories. However, most of them refused to express themselves in more detail directly in this area, and therefore the assessment of this category largely represents our personal impression, which we acquired based on the context of previous statements, as well as on the basis of several informal conversations conducted outside the scope of our research. However, as an example, we can cite at least one direct statement that well illustrates the state of affairs.

«You know, they don't like us here! For some, we are slowly not even human anymore!»

Target Group 2 (Village/Segregated)

1. Objective factors of marginalization.

The participants pointed to the lack of job opportunities in the village and its immediate surroundings as the only significant negative within this category, and the associated low income and insufficient quality of life, which also represents the most significant factor of subjectively perceived marginalization in their case. On the other hand, in most cases, they stated that this fact is one of two serious shortcomings regarding the quality of life in the village or settlement, and if the situation were to improve in this direction, their satisfaction with life in the village would visibly increase.

«I personally miss work because I cannot provide good living conditions for my family. I wish there were more opportunities for employment in the village».

«I would be happy if my husband could get a job right here in the village!».

«It's not like there's no work here at all! There are people who are normally employed, but it must be said that there are not many of them. Among them, there are also those who do it for a living and start a business, my friend for example, and he is really smart, he is doing quite well...»

But the truth is that most people here are unemployed. If they sometimes do something for a short time, it is occasional work».

2. Relationship with competent authorities.

It cannot be said that the addressed participants perceive the attitude of the local self-government/municipality bodies towards the solution of their most acute problems significantly negatively. Their statements falling into this category were rather in the form of wishes, or requirements, rather than clearly formulated reservations or complaints, and generally touched two areas. They are an increase in employment, or mediation of job opportunities and the requirement of construction of additional social apartments connected with the expansion of utility networks and the reconstruction of access communication, where the current state represents the second serious deficiency in terms of the quality of life in the given locality. As an example, we present the following statements.

«I would prefer if the municipality would provide us with work, because you can't make a living from that little. I am not currently employed, but last year I ran a business until September and now I am registered at the labor office. My income is roughly three hundred Euros, and that's not enough».

«No, I'm not satisfied because the municipality can't provide me with a job. I'm a master of masonry work, I have 25 years of experience!».

«I am not satisfied with my housing, as I said, we are two families in five rooms, and I would prefer the municipality to start building social apartments».

Several participants evaluated the establishment of a community center and the work of a social worker as positive facts. Most of them commented on this topic in the sense that although they positively perceive a certain effort of the municipality to participate in the solution of the most serious problem areas, especially in recent years, this effort is still not at the required level. However, from the survey, the findings of which I refer to in the description, it also follows that several residents of the settlement perceive the current situation in the area as unsatisfactory, but still relatively good, when compared to the surrounding municipalities, or settlements.

«Yes, I'm satisfied, because I know villages that are much worse than ours!».

3. Relationship with the majority.

Considering the relations with the majority, the participants in most cases expressed that there are usually no open conflicts between them, i.e. the residents of the Roma settlement, and the majority, non-Roma population. You could say that there is a certain mutual respect here. On the other hand, none of the interviewees described the current situation as positive or at least unproblematic. Based on their statements, we can define the current situation as a state of latent tension, which manifests itself in hidden forms of discrimination and rejection within «the limits of the law». As an example, I present the following statements.

«It's not like we hate each other outright... that we (Roma) are forbidden to enter the pub or anywhere else in the village. But then again, look around! Where do you see white people sitting at the same table with a Gypsy?! Yes, we say hello, and so on, ..., but that's it! Few people here are friends with us to the extent that they would consider us equals!».

«You know what, I don't feel like it's going to be really smooth for us! On the one hand, no one here dares anything big on us, no one insults or attacks us, no! But they make us feel that we are not

equal, that they simply do not accept us! Of course, there are exceptions, but they are really few... we are simply Gypsies for them! And even if they don't openly show it to us, you can simply see and feel it in everyday, common things! And I don't like it at all, because we don't do anything bad to anyone, ... we don't start fights in the village, we don't steal, or anything like that. We are decent people and we try to live decently. And yet I feel like they're letting us know that we're not one of them!».

Target Group 3 (City/Integrated)

1. Objective factors of marginalization.

In this case too, the objective factors of marginalization manifest themselves primarily in the level of high unemployment and lack of job opportunities. The district in which the city is located ranks among the regions with the long-term highest unemployment rate in Slovakia, which affects all its residents, including the Roma living in the district city. In terms of professional education and work experience, a large part of the local population was narrowly oriented to the needs of a specific industry, which for decades represented the main source of income and employment within the region and was its most important economic sector. After its liquidation in the past ten years, a large part of people ended up in the position of long-term unemployed persons, while this situation continues to this day. This primarily concerns former employees with lower professional qualifications, while this group is largely represented by local Roma. They are currently forced to look for employment outside the district, in many cases several tens of kilometers from their place of residence, which, however, is extremely time-consuming and especially financially demanding. Another alternative is work abroad, which is well-paid financially, given the local conditions, but is not very popular as a long-term solution. As a rule, it represents only a temporary way out of acute financial distress.

«Yes, I was also abroad for a year, in Ireland... It wasn't bad there, I earned quite decent money! But I had two children at home that my mother took care of, and I missed my family terribly. That's why I went back and didn't go there more than once, and I wouldn't go again. Because it's not worth the money! For me, my children and family are the most important! I told myself that we would rather live modestly, but we will be together!».

«My husband also works outside. I am at home, taking care of the children. Financially, it's pretty good, he sends home money, but I miss him, and so do the kids. Sometimes we don't see each other for half a year, and then he comes for two or three weeks, and then he goes away... and it's not like that either! I would like to have it at home, even for less money. But what will you do when there is no work at all?!».

2. Relationship with competent authorities.

In the statements regarding the relationship with the competent authorities, the addressed participants generally spoke positively or neutrally about the local self-government authorities. Several positively perceive the current activities of the city office aimed at improving the living standards of socially disadvantaged groups of citizens, and thus also a large part of the local Roma, such as the field social work program, the establishment of a maternity center, services related to social and legal counseling, etc. There is inaction, or the reluctance of the state to solve the current bad situation regarding employment in the region.

«It's nothing to do with the robot! The few hours of occasional work that the city can offer us is not a real job. Mainly because factories are decaying all around. The ovens were shut down not too long ago, so no one works there anymore. But before the elections, everyone talks a lot about how the state will invest in it, start production, employ people... And never anything! I don't even believe that anymore. And I doubt it will get any better anytime soon!».

3. Relationship with the majority.

All participants described their relationship with members of the majority population as problem-free, or positive. As they stated, they do not feel discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity in any way. Also on the basis of our observation, we can state that there are no visible barriers or manifestations of discrimination between the majority and the local Roma in everyday contact. On the other hand, they also mentioned several cases when they were the target of a verbal attack or a certain discrimination, but this never happened in their place of residence or its surroundings, but in neighboring villages, respectively. cities.

«... but otherwise it's quite possible here, except for the job. It's a peaceful life here, albeit rather boring. But we understand each other here. Everyone knows everyone, we don't have any conflicts with each other».

«Well, it happened to me, also last time, that a girl started digging into me at a party. But of course it wasn't here. There are decent people here, they know us, they know we are normal, and they treat us normally, as equals. We don't have such problems that the whites have problems with us, the Gypsies, or we with them. If something sometimes happens here, it is related to the fact that some junkies make a mess here».

Target Group 4 (Village/Integrated)

1. Objective factors of marginalization.

In terms of objective factors of marginalization, the participants mentioned, as in other cases, a high rate of unemployment and an insufficient number of job opportunities. Despite this, I can evaluate the situation in this locality within this category as the best among all those examined. Most of the employed residents of the village commute to work in the district town, 12 km away, many work as part of occasional work in the village, during the summer months they use the possibility of seasonal agricultural work in the village, or its immediate surroundings. This fact is also reflected in the quality of life of local residents, which in certain cases does not reach the standard level, but on the other hand, it cannot be said that it is on the border of poverty. In addition, several families have one or more family members working abroad, usually men, and in this way they can cover household expenses without serious problems. I can therefore state that as far as the objective factors of marginalization are concerned, they are not significantly present in the case of the participants from this village, at least in terms of comparison with the other investigated localities. The high rate of unemployment combined with low wages is a problem for the entire region, and not just for the local Roma.

«Well, I'll tell you, it's not a win, living this life... I've been out of work for a long time, I mean without permanent employment, and that's hard. Here and there, something can be done for a few days, or even a week or two, when, for example, in the summer wood is being cut in the mountains and they need a sawyer, that's when I go. But this way it's about nothing!».

«For God's sake, I have a job. But it's also such a life of uncertainty... when there are no orders, the boss threatens the entire company with layoffs. Other times they force you to work weekends, overtime, and try to refuse! And we don't always get paid the way we should! But then again, I can't complain, when I compare it to the guys in the village, I earn quite well. Although I have to commute to the city every day for work, it's only a few kilometers, and I've gotten used to it. There are guys who commute 30-40 km every day».

2. Relationship with competent authorities.

All the participants who were interviewed said that, apart from the aforementioned lack of job opportunities, life in the village is peaceful and problem-free. In the direction of the municipality and the municipal council, they did not express themselves almost at all, or only minimal, and these statements were only informative in nature, in most cases without any significant evaluation element. Since the participants do not perceive their life in the village as problematic, they do not even need to comment on the approach of the local authorities regarding cooperation on their solution. Simply put, they are able to solve almost all possible and occasional problems by themselves or in cooperation with other members of the neighborhood/municipal community. For illustration, we present the only two statements that represent this category within this research sample.

«... you see, this too! Unused communal area, only grass grows here, just that the neighbor occasionally grazes a horse on it, that's all! It could easily have been done here a long time ago, e.g. a children's playground, or a football field or something similar. And maybe the Eurofunds could be used for that! And we would invite it ourselves, but many of us make a living from it, and it wouldn't even cost much».

«... then again, I can't say anything bad about the mayor! And I don't think anyone here either. I think it does well that what can be handled, it will be handled. Even two years ago, when there were floods, he arranged some contributions from the state for the liquidation of the consequences. It wasn't much, but still, and I, for example, painted a picture of it!».

The only negative comments that I recorded within this category in two cases related to the approach of employees of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in the past, when it involved mediation, or job offer.

«... I came to the office, I gave them the whole stack of papers that I have, educational certificates, certificates, licenses and such, and do you know what they told me?! That they offer me auxiliary and excavation work for a fixed period! Like, no one should be mad at me, but I used to be a master of professional training, I was a master foreman in a company, I did technical revisions... nothing bad, but this is below my level. I didn't do all kinds of certifications and courses all my life to dig channels on my old knees! It's like when they see a Gypsy, they automatically give him a shovel?! Because they are convinced that a Gypsy is a fool! And you can also show them your university diploma...».

3. Relationship with the majority.

All respondents consider the relationship with the majority to be unproblematic, even accommodating. When asked about the positive aspects of life in the given village, several said that it is the level of relations with the non-Roma population that they greatly appreciate. In this respect,

they do not feel any degree of discrimination, and therefore I cannot even speak of any marginalization here. Since I have been visiting this location regularly for several years, I can confirm their statements based on my own experience. Members of the majority population of the village also express themselves in a similar spirit about living together with the local Roma.

«It's very good here, but you can see it yourself! There have never been any quarrels or quarrels over this. If people sometimes have fun here, it is always with Gypsies from the surrounding villages who come here to have fun. I can't complain! And what else could we shout at each other?! Here, everyone is a little Slovak, a little Hungarian and a little Gypsy».

«... that something like that would happen here at all! Our children normally go to school together and play together after school. It is also normal here for whites and Gypsies to marry or date each other. It doesn't happen often, but it doesn't seem strange to anyone here».

«...we all help each other here as much as possible. And there are also quite poor Gypsies, a few families, but they are all normal, clever people, and no one here judges them for that, in what conditions they live».

Based on the descriptions of the mentioned three categories within each target group, we compiled a simple overview matrix of the subjective degree of marginalization. For each of the categories, I determined three levels of evaluation. The dash – indicates a high subjective degree of marginalization. The 0 indicates the presence of a certain degree of marginalization, the effects of which, however, are not perceived by the respondents as particularly serious or threatening. The + sign indicates the absence of subjectively perceived marginalization in the given category. By summing up the values of all three categories, the resulting score was obtained, which represents an indicative indicator of the subjective degree of marginalization for each target group. This score ranges from -3 to +3, with the value -3 representing a high subjective degree of marginalization, its opposite, the value +3 representing the absence of a subjective degree of marginalization for the given target group. I note that the score assigned to each of the target groups does not, due to the method used for analysis of data obtained through interviews, have the character of quantitative but rather qualitative data.

Based on the established facts reflected in the structure of the matrix, I can therefore conclude that in the category «Objective factors of marginalization», a subjective degree of marginalization was recorded in the case of all four-target groups, and within this category, there are no significant differences between them. This fact is understandable and simply explained by the fact that, in the case of all target groups, these were localities located in regions with a high unemployment rate. Lack of jobs, or long-term unemployment was the most frequently cited form of marginalization by the participants. I find a similar state of identical results in the case of the «Relationship with competent authorities» category. The exception in this regard is represented by target group 1 (City/Segregated), where a high subjective degree of marginalization was recorded, compared to a lower subjective degree of marginalization in the case of the remaining three target groups. However, the most interesting in terms of differences are the results obtained within the third category «Relationship with the majority», where we identified significant differences. When interpreting these differences with respect to the basic data presented in the description, it is obvious that in localities that are defined as segregated in terms of settlement characteristics, I have noted a high subjective degree of marginalization in this regard. On the contrary, in localities defined as

integrated or scattered, participants did not report any form of discrimination or any negative evaluations, and in this respect, they do not feel marginalized at all. The same is the case with the resulting score of individual target groups, where a significantly higher subjective degree of marginalization was found in segregated localities than in localities with integrated/dispersed settlements.

However, as already mentioned above, the individual scores indicating the subjective degree of marginalization do not represent quantitative data and their main purpose is to provide simplified information about the state of affairs in relation to the investigated area within the three identified categories. On the basis of these results, we therefore do not want to state a definite conclusion that there is a connection between the structure of the settlement, or the degree of segregation/integration of Roma communities and the subjective degree of marginalization of their members. On the other hand, however, I can largely assume such a connection, both on the basis of the results of our partial research and on the basis of the knowledge of other experts in the given field. Together with the descriptive data on localities, which refer to individual target groups and point to objective elements of marginalization in their case I therefore interpret this assumption as an argument that the characteristics of the settlement in the sense of segregated vs. integrated/dispersed represents a justified variable from the point of view of measuring the values of marginalized Roma in Slovakia, and it is therefore appropriate to relate it to the goal of our research.

From all the interviews and conversation, observations with the subjects involved in the study, the following forms of «antigypsyism» were identified:

- personal/individual antigypsyism – when someone has negative or racist attitudes towards a Roma person;
- institutionalized antigypsyism – when an institution engages in open racist comments or takes actions which damage Roma;
- institutionalized personal antigypsyism – when a racist person has the position and the power in an institution and presents his/her racist feelings on behalf of the institution.

Personal/individual antigypsyism

Negative expressions for and comments towards Roma and Romani language in a public place can be defined as personal/individual antigypsyism. One such example I observed is from a school in Berlin with numerous Roma children who are migrant newcomers from Romania, as well as many children in the school from other ethnic groups. One day during the break in the schoolyard a Romanian Roma girl who was speaking Romani with other children was bullied and called «*schmutzige Zigeunerin*» («dirty Gypsy») by another student. The teacher out in the schoolyard as supervisor heard that but failed to react. The girl does react but does not have support from any of the other children. The Roma mediator who is on duty there intervenes, taking part in the conflict and tries to protect the Roma girl, although this is not her specific duty. It is obvious that the teachers with a passive behavior show the same attitude, although it is forbidden to tolerate any forms of racism and discrimination at the school. It seems they share the same feelings towards Roma children speaking their mother tongue if they do not take action to stop all forms of such racist comments and abuse.

Institutionalized antigypsyism

A perfect example of institutionalized antigypsyism worth noting has been observed in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The Ministry of Education of Slovakia has a testing process for all children entering primary school. However, the testing is done solely in the Slovak language. Most of the Roma children who do not attend kindergarten or preschool do not know Slovak and consequently they cannot pass the test in Slovak. Because of this the Roma children are very often labeled as «mentally retarded» and then placed in «special schools». Experts estimate that 70 percent of the Roma children in Slovakia are in such «special schools». At the same time the Ministry of Education and the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology in Bratislava refuse to do any testing in Romani language, because, as is formally asserted, «they do not have a real language and they speak different dialects». Instead of that the Institute of Child Psychology received financial support to develop a new test – only for Roma and with lower standards. In the opinion of the two key institutions involved, the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic and the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology, Romani is not a good language for testing Roma children.

Institutionalized personal antigypsyism

As already mentioned, institutionalized personal antigypsyism is when someone who is a racist has a position in an institution and misuses their position of authority to express his/her negative attitudes towards a person or a group of people.

We can under this rubric take two examples from large European cities, one in France and the other one in Slovakia, which have become well known among a broader public as notorious expressions of anti-Roma xenophobia. A French mayor visiting a Roma community in the surrounding of the town and having some argument with them is quoted as having stated the following: «Hitler did not finish his job» (Taz.de [20.07.2013]). The Slovak mayor wrote more or less the same in a Facebook posting that he authored, observing that it was good that so many Jewish people were killed in the WW II, but the same should happen to the Gypsies as well [!].

In 2022 there was another scandal much covered in the press involving the UK comedian Jimmy Carr, who in a Christmas show in Netflix said that the Roma Holocaust was something ‘positive’. Although there were many protests, he failed to apologize to the Roma communities in Europe which he had so horribly insulted. However, it is certain he would not dare to say the same thing about the Jewish Holocaust, jokingly making light of genocide (Walker and Waterson, 2022).

Another exemplum reflects the attitude of the Dean of a faculty at a university in Slovakia. That faculty includes a program for Romani language and culture, yet Roma students were not being accepted to study there, because according to the Dean: «The Gypsies always create problems! I do not want so many Gypsies here» (Kyuchukov, & Balvin, 2013: 203).

Similar examples exist in Bulgaria. The National Agency for Accreditation of University Programs closed down the only existing university program «Romani language and primary school education». The reason for closing the programs was that the Chair of the Pedagogy section declared that there is «no such a thing as a Romani language» and that the Roma children do not need mother tongue education (Kyuchukov and Balvin, 2013: 201).

By marked contrast, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education allows the study of Turkish, Armenian and Modern Hebrew in schools as part of curriculum, but not Romani.

Romani, education, antigypsyism

For a long time, Roma have been facing and grappling with mostly negative stereotypes and ethnic prejudices. All prejudices and stereotypes are in fact in some relationship with a concept of so-called typical or traditional Roma culture, which includes also a concept of traditional Roma values. This concept is mainly based on the knowledge of disciplines like ethnology, cultural anthropology, ethnomusicology etc. And even if these are able to describe some aspects of this issue, the biggest defect of such an approach is that its applicability in contemporary situations is at least highly questionable. Several authors (Davidová, 1995; Hirt, 2004; Budil 2005) claim that due to historical events of the last century, assimilation policies during the socialist era, significant socioeconomic changes during last twenty years and many other factors, it is no longer accurate and scientific to speak about traditional Roma culture and typical Roma values, not only in Slovakia but in all countries in Central Europe. Traditional Roma culture has almost disappeared or there are only some parts of it still being preserved, but even these in considerably modified versions and only in enclosed areas, mainly in segregated Roma communities in Eastern Slovakia. Constituting some exception in this regard, the Vlahike Roma retain elements of a traditional culture that still comprise essential parts of their lives and society. But in general, the concept of traditional Roma culture and typical Roma values is becoming a baseless argument for supposedly «explaining» and often in effect condoning anti-Roma hate speech in society.

One of the often-articulated public opinions is that education, and mainly institutional education, does not have a high priority and importance in the value structure of Roma families in general or when compared with the value structure of the majority. This point of view can be seen also particularly as an ethnic stereotype based on the concept mentioned. The stereotypes prevalent in many countries regarding education as a value among Roma are tapped and used speculatively for justifying and condoning hate speech or antigypsyist expressions and actions in the majority society. Children often learn these in their families from their parents.

Since the research I have developed was established on a qualitative level, I have not used any quantitative indicators for measuring the rate or importance of education as a value in the daily life of Roma families and Roma parents. I chose this qualitative approach to the topic because of some specific conditions and circumstances connected with the target group. In many instances, the reasons for higher school dropout rate of Roma children are pragmatic and do not refer to the fact that education as a value would have a low importance in the life of their families. As an example, I can mention incidents of families living in more or less segregated communities. For the children it is sometimes simply impossible to go to school, mostly in winter, their school is located in a village (5–6 km. away from the settlement) and the children have to go there on foot, a long walk by walking. This is one empirical example of the factors of school dropout among Roma children, however this does not mean that education is not a value in the life of the children.

In general, I can say that education as a value has great importance in the value system of Roma families. But of course, there are some differences between several types of Roma families, mainly in connection with the rate of integration/segregation and the type of environment where they live. Radicova (2002) claims that main factor determining the differentiation of Roma population is the degree of segregation and concentration of Roma and that this degree of segregation represents a significant factor of social stratification inside the Roma population. My

findings are in accordance with this claim. Comparing several types of Roma families based on criteria mentioned above, I wish to stress that education as a value has the highest position in Roma families who live integrated in the environment of the majority. One key reason for this is their higher degree of integration. Living in a largely non-Roma environment, these families are more assimilated regarding their life strategies, which are naturally firmly linked with values and value orientations. In addition, it is obvious that education is in modern society becoming an increasingly important value for the further development and career of an individual, particularly nowadays in our more technologized urbanized society. Almost all children coming from these families study in secondary school or they have already graduated from, some continue at university. A significant factor I have recognized in empirical work in the field among Roma is also the educational attainment of parents. Parents with a higher educational attainment rate the value of education higher than those with a lower one, and not only by Roma, but in general across society. It is statistically proven that the educational attainment of Roma families living integrated in towns and villages amongst the majority is significantly higher than those ones who live in more or less segregated Roma communities.

By contrast, education as a value has in the past, and likewise in some instances in the present, been of a lower degree of importance among Roma families living in segregated communities. But it would be at least naïve to interpret this fact as a characteristic mark of traditional Roma culture or a typical Roma value system and to claim that the culture of major society has in this way a «positive» impact on Roma who live integrated. I would argue that the understanding of this could be found again in life strategies of several types of Roma families. While Roma living integrated among the majoritarian society are forced to behave more individualistic, the situation of Roma living in segregated communities is quite different. A higher poverty rate, lack of social interaction, social exclusion, etc. naturally lead to stronger collective behavior by members of such communities. In these conditions and environments, the most important are values related to collective shared life strategies such as mutual assistance, support, collaboration in local neighborhoods, social cohesion, conformity, etc. It is not that education as such in very concrete ways does not represent any value in the life of Roma families living in a social ecology of segregated, more marginalized communities, as is often declared by some, it is only somewhat less important. Another reason for this fact is that many of these families are very pessimistic about education as a resource, which could significantly improve the life of their children and open up brighter perspectives and possibilities for them. All of these parents have repeated experiences with latent racism, and they simply do not believe that a Rom man or woman, even well-educated, could reach a significantly higher social status in the majoritarian society or be considered as a person equal in capacity, ability and basic rights to a non-Roma. Significant in this context is also the fact that many Roma families, mostly those in segregated and thus peripheralized communities, perceive the school and its institutional education system as another locus of discrimination; for that reason, in some instances education takes on a negative value for them. However, it is important to realize that such an attitude is not directed in principle towards education as a value itself, but against the way, this education is brought to their children, permeated at times with negative attitudes also on the part of teachers.

Romani is in daily often-regular use mainly in the segregated Roma settlements. However, neither in the segregated nor in the special schools is the children offered lessons to build formal literacy in their mother tongue. The attitudes of the teachers towards the use of the Romani language at school are often not positive and they do not have any activities supporting the use and

development of Romani. They do not recognize that such children have a right to acquire literacy in their home language. It is not viewed as an asset but precisely the opposite: the teachers think that they do not need their mother tongue and that the official school language is more important. However, the Slovak used by Roma children is often not the standard form of Slovak, but an ethnolect, a variety typically used by Roma. This linguistic fact also gives rise to and galvanizes negative attitudes toward them in society.

Conclusion

Even if this research is to date on a comparatively small scale, it sheds useful fresh light underpinned by participant observation in an ethnographic sense on various tendencies. First, antigypsyism is expressed directly or online towards Roma. Romani language and culture are also under anti-gypsyist attack in almost all European societies. Teaching Romani as a mother tongue at school is not perceived as something culturally and pedagogically positive. In most societies in Europe the teacher's opinion is that Roma children do not need to learn their mother tongue because it is not going to help them to be integrated in the broader dominant society. Even though, as research shows (Kyuchukov, 2018), Roma children (and all children more generally) who develop stronger literacy in their home language also tend to develop better literacy in the dominant school language that is not their home language. At the same time, the ways in which the official languages are used by the children, in some ways shaped by a Roma ethnolect of Slovak, for example, are also an object of hate speech and social media abuse in the society. The main human right of the Roma children to gain knowledge about their mother tongue as basic indigenous literacy, which should be a recognized human right, is violated, even though the governments involved have formally signed different international documents guaranteeing Roma minorities education in their mother tongue together with education in the official language of the country. All the attempts of the Roma NGOs, Roma activists and intellectuals have generally been met with no concrete success. Moreover, for educated young Roma it has become ever more difficult to find jobs and to become integrated in the majoritarian societies they live in, to their detriment and despair, despite their educational achievements. As Auduc (2006) stressed, it is exactly the same case with educated Roma, even university graduates in some fields. The discrimination against young Roma is in various instances even stronger precisely when they are qualified. Local employers, for example, may be reluctant to employ them. So, the discrimination towards educated Roma may in reality be even greater than against their lesser educated compatriots, and despite their efforts to be integrated and accepted as equals, the anti-gypsyism towards them remains intact and operative. The only pragmatic way to find some exits from this situation for many such educated Roma with a range of professional skills and capabilities is to emigrate to West European countries.

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Ромська мова, права людини та «антициганство»

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Анотація

У статті аналізуються форми «антициганства» щодо використання ромської мови, навчання ромських дітей рідною мовою та мовних прав людини ромів. Після визначення «мови ненависті» та «антициганізму», «онлайн-ненависті», наданого різними авторами, представлено якісне дослідження деяких ромських громад у Словаччині. «Антицигани» висловлюються безпосередньо або в Інтернеті щодо ромів. Обговорюються форми особистого/індивідуального, інституціоналізованого антициганізму, інституціоналізованого особистого антициганізму. Ромська мова використовується щодня переважно в сегрегованих ромських поселеннях. Однак ані в сегрегованих, ані в спеціальних школах дітям не пропонуються уроки для формування формальної грамотності рідною мовою. Ставлення вчителів до використання ромської мови в школі часто не є позитивним, і вони не проводять жодних заходів, які б підтримували використання та розвиток ромської мови. Вони не визнають, що такі діти мають право вчитися рідною мовою. Це не сприймається як надбання, а якраз навпаки: вчителі вважають, що їм не потрібна рідна мова і що державна мова школи важливіша.

Офіційні мови, якими користуються діти, також є об'єктом мови ворожнечі в соціальних мережах та суспільстві, оскільки часто вони використовують різновид

державної мови, яка називається «етнолектом», а не державною мовою. Застосовуючи роботу Аудис (2006), я дійшов висновку, що дискримінація молодих ромів є ще сильнішою, коли вони мають високу кваліфікацію. Антициганський настрій набагато вищий до освічених ромів, які борються за свою мову та права ідентичності. Оскільки освічені роми цього типу не можуть бути інтегровані в країнах свого походження, більшість із них емігрує до країн Західної Європи, щоб знайти свою професійну реалізацію.

Ключові слова: роми, права людини, ромська мова, освіта, антициганство.

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