CHAPTER II
Gypsies Under Surveillance

The development of Gypsy/Roma studies is intimately related to the intensification of the Roma issue in the European political context. This process was enhanced by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the transformation to a market economy in Central and Eastern European countries and their integration in the rest of Europe. With the access of these countries to the EU membership the Gypsy people came to constitute the largest minority.

Research on Gypsies has shown that they have faced discrimination and exclusionary practices in several ways. Whereas the holocaust in Europe may have been the most brutal phase in their recent history, many Gypsies still face violent attacks, murders and racism in several countries. Their lack of resources such as adequate

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62 In 2004, 8 CEE countries acquired EU membership: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia. Moreover, in 2007 with the EU Access of Bulgaria and Romania, the Roma population increased additionally.


housing, food and money along with their exclusion from education and employment make many of them suffer from poverty. Furthermore, their exclusion from society is visible in daily practices as well as in human rights’ violation cases and segregated neighborhoods. All of these factors make them one of the most vulnerable minorities in Europe. Their poverty is multidimensional in the sense that it depends not only on their low social position, characterized by the lack of education and unemployment, but also on the discriminatory attitudes against them.

Although there are several differences between individual and group identifications and subgroups among Gypsy people such as Sinti, Manouch, Kale, Romanichals, Kalderash, Lovara, Roma, Vlach-Roma, the term “Roma” is widely accepted as the general term for Gypsies especially in Europe at the 1971 World’s Romani Congress, in order to avoid the pejorative usages of the terms Gypsy, Cigani, Tsigane, Zingari, Zigeuner, Gitano, Çingene and others. The term “Roma” is also used to include Gypsies living in other parts of the world, such as the Dom people in the Middle East.

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66 Together with some other scholars in Turkey and in Europe, I prefer using the term “Gypsy” and its Turkish counterpart “Çingene,” although I respect others who avoid the term for its pejorative usages. In Turkey, some refer to themselves as Roman in the hope that this will rescue them from discrimination. By referring to others as Çingene they just repeat and reinforce existing prejudices and stereotypes about Çingenes. The term serves as an umbrella concept and covers many groups. In Europe, the term “Roma” is not accepted by some groups because it leads to misrepresentation. For Turkey, the term “Roman” has become popular in the process of incorporation to international Roma politics and it has the potential to exclude some others as well such as Doms or Loms in some cases. I believe that instead of avoiding the term, the pejorative meanings, stereotypes and prejudices along with the exclusionary practices, discourses and related inequalities should be problematized. Otherwise, it misses a broader recognition of the struggle for emancipation and instead reinforces the status quo and hierarchies within it. Thus, I only use “Roma” or “Roman” when I refer to those specific self-declared groups, for the ones who identify themselves as such and for the sake of clarification in reference to certain literature and international Roma politics.

67 I.e. The Gypsy Lore Society.
As some Gypsy people are reluctant to identify as Gypsy or Roma, it is impossible to come up with exact number of Gypsies without engaging in contested assumptions about who is a Gypsy. Another factor is Gypsies’ experiences of exclusion, which lead them to hide their identity. It is both due to the distinction between the stigma and self-definition, and the power of the stigma, which results in non-identifications or the inclination to distance themselves from the Gypsy label. Thus, one’s self-identification (subject definition) does not always overlap with the definition by others (object definition). Moreover, over time, a decrease in identifying in ethnic terms is also observed in studies that show how youngsters are more reluctant to identify themselves as Roma while they identify their parents as Roma. Despite these obstacles to grasp the exact number of Roma people, their approximate number is estimated between 10-12 million in Europe.

The definition of Gypsies changes due to different reasons such as features of the group, their relation to the non-Gypsy groups and different policies. Not only the non-Gypsies’ definition but also the identification of people who are recognized as Gypsy differs considerably. What should be realized is that the people who are associated with Gypsyness are not a homogenous group and that they often share many characteristics with other people. They are part of the societies in which they live in spite of their marginalization. Among Gypsies moreover, the divergences are so remarkable that many confusions in categorization and identification emerge. In his work on British

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69 Gillsater et al., Roma, p. 8. Whereas Romania has the largest number of Roma, estimated at between 1-2 million; Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Turkey, and Serbia and Montenegro follow with Roma populations between 400,000 and 1 million. See Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein and Erika Wilkens, Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2005), p. 2. Spain has the largest Gypsy population in Western Europe with an estimated number of 630,000; it is followed by France (310,000), Italy (130,000) and Germany (70,000) (Ibid.). Thus, although there are Gypsies in every European country, mainly the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, have the majority of Roma people as two thirds of them live in these countries. Also see Tubbax, Charlotte. (18 April 2005). “The largest Trans-European Minority.” The European Magazine, Available online: http://www.cafebabel.co.uk/article/13593/the-largest-trans-european-minority.html [14 January 2011].
Gypsies, Acton emphasizes the diversity among Gypsies as follows: “[…] The Gypsies are a most disunited and ill-defined people, possessing a continuity, rather than a community, of culture. Individuals sharing the ancestry and reputation of ‘the Gypsy’ may have almost nothing in common in their way of life and visible or linguistic culture.”

The stigma, ways and degrees of exclusion, politics of assimilation all influence the ways of identification. What it means to be a Gypsy depends largely on the specific geographical, historical and political context. The category of Gypsyness, however, can still appear as a fixed classification despite of the indications of fluidity, changeability, relationality and contextuality.

Gypsy identity, their origin, whether they constitute a nation or not are hotly debated in Gypsy studies and also partly in politics. In spite of the ongoing debates about the legitimacy of seeking for a geographical and ethnic origin among scholars, the common theory is that they come from northern India. The sociolinguistic scholar Ian Hancock argues that Gypsies themselves asserted this origin as some of them told it to the well-known German cartographer and cosmographer Sebastian Münster who first referred to it in 1550. However, most of the Gypsy people in Europe today do not emphasize the Indian origin and it does not seem to work in their ethnic identification.

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72 Their Indian origin is highly debated.


74 Barany, The East European Gypsies, p. 9. The date of their migration triggers ongoing debates as the starting time of the migration changes between the fifth and the eleventh century. For instance, according to Hancock, the Roma people first started to migrate with the effect of Gazneli Mahmut as he enslaved Indian soldiers between AD 1001 and AD 1026. Ian Hancock, The Heroic Present The Photographs of
However, as the Dutch historian Wim Willems\(^{75}\) asserts, the reluctance of Gypsy intellectuals and activists in correcting the focus in scholarly work on Gypsy history are confronted with political and pragmatic interests as will be further elaborated in this chapter.

According to the direction, the time of the migrations and linguistic ties, there are three major strands among Gypsies: 1) the Rom, mostly found in Europe, and the United States; 2) the Dom in Middle Eastern countries, mostly including Syria, Egypt, Turkey; and 3) the Lom in Armenia, Persia and Central Asia.\(^{76}\) However, these people do not constitute homogenous groups, but there are many religious, lingual and occupational differences within. There are three main languages called Romani, Domari and Lomavren, respectively; however, within these languages linguistic differences loom large due to multi-layered interactions with non-Roma. The Rom people and Romani language are the ones that have been object of research and the literature on them has developed parallel to the increasing importance of the Roma in the arena of transnational

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\(^{76}\) I.e. Fraser and Hancock.
(identity) politics. On the other hand, there has been very little research, for instance, on the Dom and Lom peoples and their languages.

What we are faced with is a complex and multi-layered Gypsy identity—or rather identities, as we are talking not of a single identity but several—and also a high degree of difference and confusion in the application of labels, images and boundaries. In short, there is a complete lack of agreement concerning where the boundaries should be drawn around the group, what they should be called and how they should be represented.

The debates and confusions about the category of Gypsiness by researchers, scholars, officials and ordinary people are very helpful to understand the categories and power relations. The labels, boundaries and subjects that are connected to the categories all change over time and space. Whether it is a race or an ethnic group is open to question; a classification that would fit into nationalized and ethnicized perceptions lacks consistency. The ideas on origin of the certain groups, belongingness and groupness all vary greatly. They produce not only ambiguous, but also contradictory images.

Attempts to Define the Gypsy and Different Identifications

Defining the Gypsy is connected to wider socio-political issues and developments in early modern and later modern European societies. In the European context, the main distinction is that between aliens and natives and secondly between

77 After the collapse of Soviet Union, the international institutions as the UNDP, the Council of Europe and the OSCE as well as national and international NGOs are engaged in Roma politics within the region and taking certain actions such as conducting research, conducting social projects and seeking social policy programs for Roma in Europe. The first step in European Roma policy is accepted to be in 1993 by the approval of the report “On Gypsies in Europe” that recognizes Roma as “real European minority” by the Council of Europe (Thelen, p. 37).


travellers and sedentary populations. The legislation regarding them was part of general policies from the end of the 15th century to control social order, the mobility of people and wage laborers. Much later, in the nineteenth century, to the idea of Gypsies as social misfits and vagabonds a racial definition was added, which was greatly stimulated by linguistic research on their alleged Indian roots. When ‘race’ was discredited after the War it was replaced by the concept of ethnicity, which did not fundamentally change the essentialist image and only led to a confusing differentiation in practice.

Travelling with one’s family has been seen as the most characteristic feature of Gypsies. The binary between sedentarism and nomadism has played a crucial role in their exclusion. In such a binary, the sedentary life is perceived “as a movement upwards towards civilization, security and modernity.” Instead of a clear-cut transition though,

For a deeper analysis of the representations of Gypsy image and groups, legislations and thus the construction of the Gypsy category with a focus on British context, see Mayall. Willems, *In Search of the True Gypsy.*

Many people do not even realize the difference between race and ethnicity. In Mayall’s differentiation that I find fruitful, race would refer to biological difference, objective states and immutable while ethnicity would stand for mutable, subjective, cultural and fluid (p. 277). The distinction between the two is not really conceivable in practice and the two terms are used as synonyms in many cases though.

Trubeta considers nomadism as part of the imagined Gypsyness, while other scholars still consider nomadism as the main features of Gypsy culture. Sevasti Trubeta, ‘Gypsyness,’ Racial Discourse and Persecution: Balkan Roma during the Second World War,” *Nationalities Papers* 31, no. 4 (December 2003), pp. 495-514, p. 499. Liegeois observes: “Gypsies had long been trapped the allure of a myth (handsome, artistic, unrestrained, but consigned to folklore) and the wretched stereotype of the nomad (dirty, a thief and always too close for comfort). So pervasive was the image that Gypsies had little choice but to let others see what they expected to see.” Jean Pierre Liegeois, *Gypsies: an Illustrated History* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1986), p. 163.

Robbie McVeigh, “Theorising Sedentarism: The Roots of Anti-Nomadism,” in *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity,* edited by Thomas Acton (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997), pp. 7-25, p. 10. Also see Shuinéar’s work that tries to disclose psychological and representational meaning of the hate against Irish ‘Travelers in her questioning Gypsies’ exclusion through the binary of sedentarism and nomadism. Sinéad ní Shuinéar, “Why Do Gaujos Hate Gypsies So Much, Anyway? A Case Study,” in *Gypsy politics and Traveller identity,* edited by Thomas Acton (Hatfield, Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997), pp. 26-53. According to Shuinéar, Gypsies’ otherization and demonization work as the personification of Gaujos’ own faults and fears. Moreover, they are important in the construction of the Irish, as they are the stage to show what/who the Irish is not. By selecting the other from the periphery of the society, they project their problems on this relatively powerless group. However, Gypsies are not passive receptors, but they play on Gaujo’s fears according to Shuinéar. Thus, she conceptualizes the otherization of the Gypsies through the need of Gaujos’ own existential standings of “us”. Moreover, this otherization has to be perpetuated for the sake of Gaujos and thus it seems something that would not be solved easily.
the transition from nomadic to sedentary life has not been absolute and irreversible.\textsuperscript{85} The formation of nation-states and modernism along with the emphasis on overall control, surveillance, order and discipline have influenced the perception of travelling people as threats to society. Thus, the history of Gypsies’ stigmatization has parallels with the history of vagabonds.\textsuperscript{86} It has not been just a socio-cultural issue, but it is closely linked to economic transformations in Europe’s past. In an articulated way, Lucassen puts this history in its context by relating it to the changing treatment of the poor and especially traveling groups in the socio-economic transformation in the history of West European countries since the end of the Middle Ages. Referring to Geremek, he presents this transformation originating in the fourteenth century through the economic and ideological shifts that shaped the policy towards labor migration.

The change from a feudal to a market oriented capitalist system with the shift from bound to free labor was crucial for this transformation.\textsuperscript{87} With a shortage of labor supply due to the bubonic plague epidemic in the mid fourteenth century, many people found it profitable to leave their former masters and seek for higher wages. The suspicion and stigmatization of mobile labor and self-employed people called vagabonds were part of a more general policy throughout Western Europe “to bind labour to capital

\textsuperscript{85} McVeigh gives New Travellers as an example of this case. He supports his argument with the existence of cases such as semi-nomadic people and communities as well as sedentary communities who returned to nomadic life. He also argues that the transition to sedentary life was quite problematic as it was not voluntary for all people but it terrorized nomad people. Furthermore, he formulates an imminent critique: “Despite the virulence of sedentarisation on the uncivilized nature of the nomad, there is evidence to suggest that sedentarisation was far from emancipatory for formerly nomadic groups.” Thus, he questions the promises and lacks of sedentarism in fulfilling those promises for relative emancipation of people. On the contrary, as he asserts, sedentarisation may be advantageous and emancipatory for the dominant classes, but not for the whole society.

\textsuperscript{86} McVeigh approaches sedentarism “not reducible to race or class [but…] structured by both” (p. 20). He argues that nomad people are against private property especially of land. Also see Lucassen et al.

and fix wages.”\textsuperscript{88} Apart from institutionalized ways, the migration of labor and traveling groups were stigmatized because of their life styles as well. Lucassen pointed at the co-occurrence of the “Egyptian” image in the same period that repressive policies against this category came about in the fifteenth century.

Through time, the label of vagabond and Gypsy was flexible and applied to different people depending on their visibility, lifestyle and their social and economic functionality. The sixteenth century offers a good example of this flexibility with the increasing demand for labor due to economic expansion in sixteenth century Europe. As seasonal labors and peddlers were needed, increasingly a distinction was made between good and bad mobility and thus legislation was developed to restrict and regulate migration.

Lucassen et al., who emphasize the role of stigmatization in Gypsies’ identifications, furthermore draw attention to the changes in categorization. The ethnic element was reinforced since the end of the eighteenth century with the rise of nationalist ideas while other categories such as criminal vagabonds and mixed social outsiders became part of a more overarching ethnic label.\textsuperscript{89} Their economic function was mostly denied in nationalistic articulations. Lucassen et al. stress the process of state formation and the ensuing control and regulating of the labor force. This had also repercussions for who could be included in the Gypsy category, which was largely limited to those migrants who took their families with them and who displayed a rather visible mobile way of life (using tents or caravans).\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{88} Lucassen, “External Vagrants?” p. 56.


\textsuperscript{90} Lucassen et al., pp. 11-12.
Similarly, tales about their alleged origin followed Orientalist ideas and sentiments. Most Gypsies, however, do not identify with the Indian origin and some do not even know about it. Most Gypsy activists though, regard the Indian origin as a tool to claim cultural rights, notwithstanding the fact that by doing so they fuel their image as exotic others. Instead of engaging in such identity politics, this study is primarily interested in the significance of Gypsiness in societies, and in the question how and why Gypsies are marginalized in specific historical contexts.\textsuperscript{91}

Okely, who – like Willems and Lucassen - rejects the Indian origin story, draws attention to different historical categories and representations. She shows how in Europe, Gypsies were first referred to as Egyptians and then in the nineteenth century they became Indians. She asserts that this Indian connection became deeply rooted as it linked language directly to ideas of race. She ironically illustrates this Indian origin story:

\textit{It is assumed that Gypsies existed in India many centuries back as a 'pure' group or separate society with language, customs and genetic structure hermetically sealed, until some 'mysterious event' caused their departure from their mythical homeland. [...] Thus any custom which seems strange to the Gorgio observer is explained not in terms of its contemporary meaning to the group, but according to some 'survival' from mythical ancient Indian days, or even the contemporary caste system.}\textsuperscript{92}

She instead explains the marginalization of Gypsies by the way societies handled travelling groups in general. She follows the idea of Marx on the origin of the modern proletariat and suggests that some groups may have joined the people who identified or were identified as Egyptians of the time. These groups consisted of former servants and workers, who chose to reject wage-labor rather than to be fully proletarianized, and became peddlers, showmen, wanderers and beggars instead. Okely recognizes that it was the choice for self-employment and the opposition to wage-labor that contributed to the

\textsuperscript{91} Willems similarly suggests a different approach for Gypsy history that would also enable positioning it in a wider articulation of social phenomena such as immigration. See Willems, pp. 308-309.

\textsuperscript{92} Okely, p. 10.
idea of Gypsies as opposing the system. She states that Gypsyness was symbolically seen as a subversive state of being.\(^93\) The image contributed to the marginalization of Gypsies, if not constructed it. Otherwise, their cultural similarity with the dominant groups with whom they lived was often quite remarkable: "[Although] some aspects of traveller culture and values serve to reinforce the division, for example nomadism, self-employment, dress, language and rituals of cleanliness. [...] None of these is sufficient."\(^94\)

Okely’s account of Gypsy marginality echoes the important work of Perlman in which she explores how the myth of marginality is rooted in the context of urban society in Rio de Janeiro. The group that she worked with identified with the dominant values although they had been identified as marginals and considered to have different value systems.

"[...] They have the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the perseverance of pioneers, and the values of patriots. What they do not have is the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations. [...] Exploited groups in such a situation are not marginal but very much integrated into the system, functioning as a vital part of it. In short, integration does not necessarily imply reciprocity.\(^95\)

It is not to say that the Gypsies do not have any specific life styles and traditions. However, they usually are not that isolated from the socio-economic values in the societies in which they live as most people assume. Although they may change due to integration or assimilation, as we will also see in the Turkish context, Gypsyness in a society is determined largely by the way the dominant society labels and stigmatizes them and how ‘Gypsies’ react to this image. Okely reveals the connection between the dominant imagery of the Gypsies and their self-representation: "[...] There is no clear fact-

\(^93\) Okely, p. 53.

\(^94\) Ibid., p. 67.

fiction distinction between Gypsies' and Gorgios' (= Gadjo = term by Gypsies for non Gypsies) categories. The Gypsies will present to the Gorgio categories which both confirm Gorgio prejudices and protect the particular Gypsy speaker.⁹⁶

Structural changes and general policies are highly influential in the prevalence of certain meanings and in the actual labeling and categorization of people. Ladanyi and Szelenyi display how the category of Gypsyness changed due to the socioeconomic transformation from a socialist to a market economy in the Hungarian town of Csenyete. Basically, the people who were considered Gypsies had occupied a low class position during the socialist era, while most of them belonged to the “underclass” [sic] in the market economy. Not only the economic conditions, but also the perceptions of Gypsies and Gypsyness changed through the transformation from a socialist to market economy. The changes in the perceptions and the redefinition of the content of the category show how flexible and context bound Gypsyness is.

Then what about the people who are brought under the label of ‘Gypsies’? Is it that some people are always Gypsies, but that the perceptions and the treatments change in society? Or is the group created in a much more interactive way, in which self-definitions and stigmatization are mixed? Lucassen’s approach based on the Dutch case is helpful to clarify the changes in labeling and self-definitions: “My assumption is that the most of the ‘Gypsies’ were labeled as such after 1890. That they define themselves nowadays as a separate group does not automatically mean that this was also the case a century ago.”⁹⁷

He pointed at changes in identifications and labeling as well as the usages of the category of Gypsyness through time. A Gypsy, like the Sinti for instance, did probably not identify themselves as such before the stigmatization and labeling became dominant

⁹⁶ Okely, p. 73.

from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, when the specialization of anti-Gypsy policy gathered speed in the Netherlands. Moreover, they would not have been treated in the same ways as other Gypsies.

Ladanyi and Szelenyi, on the other hand, stress that there had been “reclassification” that reflected changes in ethnic statuses of some families. They noticed that some poor families had been Gypsified while other wealthy families who were successfully assimilated were no longer viewed as Gypsy in the town they studied. Thus, ethnic classification could change over time. This shows the flexibility of categories, but also the relation between class and ethnicity that is of great significance in the case of Gypsyness.

Furthermore, in analyzing the Gadjo’s category on Gypsyness, Trubeta’s work on the Gypsy image in Nazi Germany is also important. It illustrates that racism itself is constituted through the hierarchical differences in cultural and social characteristics. In this hierarchization, Trubeta emphasizes the transmission of prejudices and ideological constructions regarding Gypsies’ persecution. The Nazis used the existing discourse on Gypsies while at the same time transforming it. In her analysis on Gypsies under Nazi

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99 Heuss explained how ideas around the Enlightenment that have been important in the articulation of work and idleness in Germany, and how it is related to anti-Gypsim. See Herbert Heuss, “Anti-Gypsim Research: The Creation of A New Field of Study,” in Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle: Commitment in Romani Studies, edited by Thomas Acton (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2000), pp. 52-69. The unwillingness of Gypsies to work is a widespread prejudice that was repeated by some Gadjos in my fieldwork as well. As Okely would argue, this may be related partly to the different conceptualization of work for some Gypsies. Being mostly occupied in the informal sector rather than getting formal jobs also contribute to this prejudice. This is due to the perception of formal jobs as “real work”, although most informal jobs may require more physical and mental efforts and less [in most cases even none] social benefits. The reluctance of Gypsies to get a formal job also is accepted in the society and indicated by some Gypsies as reported by Kolukırık. Suat Kolukırık, Dunden Bugune Cingeneler (Gypsies from yesterday to today) (Istanbul: Ozan Yayincilik, 2009). However, more important aspect of the prejudice is its contribution to Gypsies’ discrimination. During my research on flower sellers, some Gypsies told me that they would prefer a formal job but they would not be accepted. The difficulty in getting a formal job especially is due to the low rate of schooling, which is also influenced by their discrimination. Thus, the prejudice and discrimination become intermingled.

100 Another important parallel was constructed between Jews and Gypsies. Although Jews were considered powerful and Gypsies as powerless, both were considered to be strangers: "Gypsies like Jews
rule, Trubeta further clarifies how “Gypsy” appeared as a category that was separated from the subjects:

"Gypsy" as a comprehensive discriminatory category holds a quality that is standard for racist stereotypes: it can exist independently of the original subject of discrimination and therefore can be effectively used as an a priori pejorative and discriminating notion in various situations. Such a quality usually unifies further pejorative stereotypes built on chains of association: unsettled, unordered, non-conformist, dirty, communicators of illness, pathological and so on. The ascription of deficiencies such as the incapability of working is a diachronic racist stereotype that has appeared (even if in distinct variations) in any historical racism, from colonialism up to the present time. Basically it reflects the "civilization deficiencies" of "deviants" or, in other words, of "inferior strange groups". Similarly the linkage of "strangeness" and "criminality" is further commonplace of any historical racist discourse, including the recent migration debate. However, criminality is the aspect that completes a pathological image.  

In sum, the categories are not necessarily consistent and have a function in classifying, ordering, controlling, sometimes distancing, othering, criminalizing and demonizing certain people. They can be reformed, redefined and engaged in different combinations in spite of ambiguous contents, contradictions and inconsistencies.

Recent Debates in Romani Politics

In recent decades, the term “Roma” has been accepted as an umbrella term; however, there is still a debate on the usage of the term for diverse groups of people. It has been proven problematic in the literature and formal reports how to refer different Gypsy groups. The definitions vary from a non-territorial nation to a national minority and ethnoclass. Many scholars and activists have trouble fitting the Gypsies into a clear-cut category, whereas many Gypsy groups mostly do not feel that they belong to one Roma group.

have penetrated from outside into our cultural and living circle."(Trubeta, p. 499). I find transmissions of prejudices very significant also for this study as will be seen in the part on parallelization of attacks in Chapter Five.

101 Trubeta, p. 505.
According to organizations such as the International Romani Union and the Roma National Congress, Roma groups are all part of a nation because of their common ancestry, language and culture. The differences between groups are seen as the results of the assimilationists politics of different states. Beyond its political agenda of identity politics,\textsuperscript{102} this claim does not reflect reality as many Gypsy groups lack the feeling of commonality. It seems more like imitating nation-state ideology and ironically reveals again that the nation is an imagined category.\textsuperscript{103} Moreover it displays that the category of nationhood as an instrument is a phenomenon that can be negotiated, manipulated, and constructed, de- and re-constructed. In a world in which being part of a nation (or at least an ethnie) is a requirement, it politically makes sense to identify through a nation for some activists.

The debates on the minority rights of Gypsies create extra confusion with respect to the category of Gypsyness.\textsuperscript{104} According to this view, not so much a common language, religion, culture and inclusive feelings of nationhood are crucial in making people into Roma. However, due to discriminative practices and poverty, many Roma choose to stress their socio-economic position instead of a Roma identity. The force of assimilationist and integrationalist politics are seen as preventing the building of a unified minority. Whether different Gypsy groups can be regarded as ethnic or not; and what really makes them members of the same ethnic group, additionally fuels debates on the requirements to be considered as such. The debate however will never be solved because


there is not one clear agreed upon definition of what it takes to belong to an ethnic group. Not Gypsyness itself but being ethnic itself can be contradictory, confusing and complicated due to changing relations, and boundaries over time and space. Thus, while group formation is not necessarily ethnic as such, it may gather ethnic or related characteristics in time and vice versa.

Furthermore, the category of Gypsyness can be quite problematic for many people who are caught in it, due to the differences that they perceive between one another and the mismatch between the subject and object definition. The work of Blasco on Gitanos in Jarana is exemplary. She indicates that the Gitanos, although they had similar characteristics as Gitano-like people in other countries, they did not feel part of a wider Roma category. Blasco explains this by a lack of a political structure that could have mobilized them such as attributions of citizenship and nationality.

This point is relevant for the case that I explore in this dissertation, and not only refers to Gypsies, but to other communities or groups as it rises the more general question what constitutes an ethnic or national group. Why and on what grounds do we call certain people a group? Blasco overtly criticizes Roma politicians for using non-Gypsy categories to make “Roma” a legitimate political category in the non-Roma world. She argues that group-formation among Gypsies follow different logic and dynamics. Using the categories, such as the existence of a homeland and a common language, does not make much sense to many Gypsies.

The research on Gitanos in Jarana shows that they identify themselves with criteria that go beyond the classic ethnic definition. Moreover, they would consider the

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107 See Brubaker
term of Gypsy to define themselves, but reject ‘Roma’, which most of them had not even heard of at all.\textsuperscript{108} This shows that the term “Roma,” which is accepted as a general term, is highly contested and primarily serves an ethno-political goal that most Gitanos do not share.\textsuperscript{109}

The sense of identity and togetherness, however, is not anchored in any notion of community easily comparable to those of the non-Gypsies around them: territory, history and attachment to a state, and not merely social harmony, are absent from their self-conceptualisations. [...] The people of Jarana do not see themselves as belonging to a society in the traditional anthropological meaning of the term: they have no concept of a structure of statuses that individuals would occupy and vacate upon death, and also disregard any notion that parochial interests should or would work to sustain the group at large.\textsuperscript{110}

This is an important point that opens a space to question the classical sense of national identity and its construction. Whereas national identity is important in certain contexts, in their everyday lives, instead of emphasizing national ties, people rely on personal ties through daily interactions. These daily interactions are not exempt from structural hierarchies and influences such as ethnic ones. However, they still carry enough space to negotiate and enable agency and personal strategies. Thus, I do not think that it is only assimilation and integration politics, but also the significance of localities and personal experiences in the socio-historical context of a particular locality that highly influence Gypsies’ identification processes.

In addition, for the Gypsy groups who do not live isolated, it would be surprising to expect totally different types of identifications and socializations. Especially in the Turkish case, we come across many Gypsies who do not identify with overarching group labels such as Roma. In contrast to European representation, the Turkish Gypsies share

\textsuperscript{108} Blasco, pp. 174-175.

\textsuperscript{109} Whereas in Turkey “Roman” also came to be a more neutral term, some prefer the term “Gypsy,” because it covers other groups who do not really identify with Romaness such as Dom or Lom or Mitrip (some of these groups of course do not even accept the term Gypsy -such as Mitrip or they consider it as a form of discrimination. Some only accept local terms or specific group names depending on different criteria such as professions or family names).

\textsuperscript{110} Blasco, p 178.
many traditions and cultural commonalities with non-Gypsies, whereas they could be still considered different and not part of Turkishness as a national identity. However, beyond the effect of national identity, we also should consider the power of other dominant discourses that are internalized (consciously and/or subconsciously) even by the people who are marginalized in a society. Barth’s reflection reveals such internalization and practices:

[…]T]he sanctions producing adherence to group-specific values are not only exercised by those who share the identity. Again, other imperative statuses afford a parallel: just as both sexes ridicule the male who is feminine, and all classes punish the proletarian who puts on airs, so also can members of all ethnic groups in a poly-ethnic society act to maintain dichotomies and differences. Where social identities are organized and allocated by such principle, there will thus be a tendency towards canalization and standardization of interaction and the emergence of boundaries which maintain and generate ethnic diversity within larger, encompassing social systems.111

It may not be necessarily these group-specific values that are crucial, but much more the economic marginalization that is widespread among Gypsies. The debate on their poverty and Gypsies’ being an ethno-class builds on this concept of marginalization. Although it cannot be argued that all Gypsies are poor, it is a fact that Gypsyness is often associated with poverty and can be used to keep people in that position. Thus, the potential to fall into poverty is higher among Gypsies. Their poverty has become more visible since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite states in the Central and Eastern Europe. While most Gypsies were employed to some extent during the communist regime, in the harsh competition of the capitalist market economy it has been hard for them to find a place in the labor force due to their relatively low education level and the overt discrimination they face.112

111 Barth, p. 18.

112 See Barany, The East European Gypsies, pp. 195-200, for the increase of racist and anti-Gypsy movement in this period.
Moreover, they prefer jobs in the informal sector, such as petty trade and construction, which do not entitle them to formal social help, i.e. social security, health care, social insurance benefits and unemployment payments.\(^{113}\) The activists who consider minority rights as insufficient to overcome prejudices and stereotypes that also are connected to economic interests and inequalities therefore prefer the approach of ethno-class. It leads to political demands that focus on poverty instead of on ethnic status.\(^{114}\) Some, however, criticize this approach because of its neglect of historical processes and nationalist prejudices that have produced the marginalization of Gypsies in the first place.\(^{115}\)

In the post-socialist era, Ladanyi argues that Roma constitute an “underclass” which refers to “a new social group […] which is segregated from the rest of the society and discriminated against.”\(^{116}\) Underclass is a term first used by the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal (1962) with reference to “proletariat marginalized on the labor market due to an ethnic or racial stigma and technological upheavals in the production system.”\(^{117}\) However, the term has been used widely in the analysis of African Americans in the United States in the 1980s especially in urban studies on the “undeserving black poor”. Critical historians and sociologists have stressed that the use of the term

\(^{113}\) Ringold et al., p. 4.

\(^{114}\) Vermeersch, pp. 891-2.

\(^{115}\) I.e. Thelen, pp. 33-34.


‘underclass’ easily leads to neglect the process of exclusion and discrimination that has caused the marginalization of Blacks.\textsuperscript{118}

In the case of post-socialist states, Ladanyi points out that Gypsies had been ethnically discriminated during state socialism as well, but with the collapse of communism “poverty is becoming highly ethnicized”\textsuperscript{119} and the exclusion of Gypsies has become much more explicit. Due to the problematic associations and assumptions that are attached to the term underclass, which tends to blame the group as the deficit party, Stewart criticizes Ladanyi’s use of this term for the Gypsies. He instead proposes the term social exclusion which is an “ongoing process […and] focuses attention on the primarily political struggles that determine who is defined as ‘in’ and ‘out’, rather than on deviant behavior and criminality.”\textsuperscript{120} Here, Stewart emphasizes the dynamic side of exclusion.\textsuperscript{121}

In our case the particular dynamics of social exclusion, socio-historical specificities are crucial, as most Gypsies in Turkey also have the status of a lower social and economic class. Many are uneducated and unemployed, with poor living standards. Some live in very small houses, tents or sheds with few families together, sometimes without toilet or water supply. Some cannot even feed their children properly and eat whatever they can find during the day. When they find a job, mostly (almost always) in

\textsuperscript{118} Michael B. Katz, \textit{The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare} (New York: Pantheon, 1989).

\textsuperscript{119} Ladanyi, p. 68.


\textsuperscript{121} Ladanyi and Szelenyi developed their arguments in a later study, which displays changes in the ethnic construction of the Gypsy people although they hold on to the term underclass with all its problematic associations (Ladanyi and Szelenyi, p. 8). Although I am suspicious of any usages of the term underclass, I appreciate Ladanyi and Szelenyi’s approach for their emphasis on the process, their reluctance of labeling but rather understanding the term in its historical context and as “a historically specific form of social exclusion” (Ibid., p. 10). Thus, they lay out different types of exclusion in reference to Gypsies while revealing changes in the construction of the category.
the informal or illegal market, they face very harsh working conditions, which endanger their lives and make them vulnerable to police abuse.

Apart from their working lives, their daily lives are often characterized by humiliation, deprivation, and mistreatment by police forces, state authorities and other members of society. All these experiences are intermingled with poverty. This is not to say that they do not suffer from discrimination connected to their Gypsyness. As in their case class and ethnicity are intermingled, it is impossible to find out which one precedes the other. More strikingly, some Gypsies assert that they would become non-Gypsy if they were wealthy. Thus, their discrimination is both caused by their low class status and by their Gypsyness. Furthermore, the particular socio-economic history of the construction of the Gypsy category in Turkey along with other more general developments such as the construction of national identity, ethnicity, minority positions, class relations and poverty, is the background against which our story should be understood.

Gypsies in Turkey

The Turkish case illustrates the flexible, complicated, confusing, ambiguous and liminal characteristics of the Gypsy category. With all its particularities and similarities, it has the potential for a grounded understanding of the category of Gypsyness. The diversity in socio-economic conditions, historical constitution of national identity and minority position make Turkey an interesting “laboratory.”

122 I agree with Butler (1998) with her call for a broader understanding of discrimination within the intersection of cultural, socio-economic and political inequalities. Also fruitful is her focus on reciprocity between the recognition of identities and redistribution of sources for remedies against discrimination. Butler states that cultural recognition is attached to material oppression. It is not possible to separate them, but they are intertwined. In this context, the intermingling character of social exclusion through ethnicity and poverty as reflections of certain group identifications and/or labels facing low living standards in the line of class inequalities becomes clear.
Primarily, the diversity in Turkey enables us to track complexities and disparities within the category in contrast to the premises of any homogeneous category. As mentioned before, the European context that has been a powerful arena for Gypsy studies and politics already shows a great diversity among Gypsies between different countries and within countries. The cultural trends, traditions, language, group identification, definitions are all changeable. The changes may depend on different politics and socio-economic contexts, as well as on the strategies and reactions of different groups. In the Turkish context, the ambiguity of the category of Gypsyness stands out. Although there are socio-economic differences between individuals in particular communities, and to their degree of social integration with non-Gypsy society, we can distinguish roughly three main groups in Turkey: the Rom, who are concentrated in the western regions; the Lom in the north and northeast; and the Dom in the southeast and east. Apart from geographical distinctions this rough typology can also be used to distinguish linguistic and cultural variations among Gypsies. The major variations are Romani, Domari and Lomavren; however, their prevalence is questionable. Whereas the Romani language for instance is spoken in Rumeli, Üsküdar and Van, it is not very common especially among young people. Moreover, they change due to dialect differences and the effects of other dominant languages, especially Turkish, Kurdish and Persian.

The identifications and group formation do not necessarily follow this logic.

There are other differences and ties between people that give way to other

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123 Rom, Dom and Lom Gypsies are referred to as the main groups in Gypsy Studies. Their different cultures and civilizations, linguistic differences are also connected to differences in the timing of their alleged emigration from India. See Fraser.


identifications. Factors that influence such alternative identifications include geographical proximity and occupational specializations. Thus, there are Gypsies who are labeled on ground of their professions such as *sepetci* (basketweavers), *calgici* (musicians), and *demirci* (blacksmiths). The geographical proximity and sense of belonging, on the other hand, result in identifications with other local people instead of Gypsies in other places. For instance, Doms in Diyarbakir indicated that they consider themselves a tribe in the Kurdish community. This does not follow the assimilation politics of the state, but reflects the influence of a dominant culture in the region as well as the commonalities that it produces. The locational proximities can be so pervasive that neighborhoods may produce different groups. Some Gypsies in Kustepe neighborhood, Istanbul, do not have close relations to for instance the ones in the Haci Husrev neighborhood nearby.

The socioeconomic differences, on the other hand, also produce diversity, belongingness and identification. Although most Gypsies are poor, Gypsies are found in various class positions. There are statements by Gypsies such as “Gypsy people, *Roman* child is not only a Gypsy, but also poor”\(^{126}\) that reveal the significance of poverty in Gypsy’s lives. Whereas most of them experience poverty due to their inadequate educational background, the difficulty to be hired in high salary paid formal jobs\(^{127}\) and lack of social security, there are also wealthier Gypsies. However, as has been stressed by some researchers,\(^{128}\) when Gypsies manage to be included into society and gather relative

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\(^{127}\) For example, Erdilek, in my interview with her, indicated that although there is not a law that prohibits a Gypsy to become a state officer, they are not accepted for these positions. However, it is not clear how far this statement reflects the reality as Incirlioglu (p. 184) mentions Gypsy state officers among Trakya Gypsies in her article. Moreover, Kolukırık points at the high probability of Gypsies’ taking place in informal sector, not only because of exclusion but also their own choices. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that the choice of Gypsies is highly determined by exclusionary practices.

\(^{128}\) Marsh and Strand and the interview with Erdilek.
status among non-Gypsy people, they mostly hide their Gypsy identity. In this sense, some cross the boundary from Gypsyness to Turkishness\textsuperscript{129} and assimilate.

In addition, some researchers observe different degrees of Gypsyness that are intimately connected to occupational and class differences.\textsuperscript{130} Their professions vary from businessmen to garbage collectors. Moreover, their domination in particular sectors in industrial cities such as recycling and selling flowers\textsuperscript{131} can be observed while some are “traditional” professionals such as musicians and blacksmiths. Along with these differences, their religion differs. Although many Gypsies are Sunni-Muslims, there are also some Alevi particularly living in eastern cities and Istanbul,\textsuperscript{132} while Christianity among them is rare.

Furthermore, the self-identification of Gypsies depends on the specific context. The differences can emerge even through a simple conversation. Thus, a Gypsy can indicate that he or she is a Turk for a moment and emphasizes her or his Gypsyness in another. This should not be regarded as contradictory or extraordinary. Indeed, it is how identification works; through different positioning, representations and self-representations that are flexible and instrumental in accordance to the prevailing relations

\textsuperscript{129} Alba and Nee.

\textsuperscript{130} Incirlioglu observes three groups of Gypsies in Edirne: the ones who are assimilated, “good Gypsies,” and the poor ones (p. 184).

\textsuperscript{131} Mischek emphasizes their monopolistic character, but I do not agree with the usage of this term due to the harsh conditions under which they have to work, their limited profits and opportunity spaces which contrasts to the concept of monopoly which is based on power and exploitation. Udo Mischek, “The Professional Skills of Gypsies in Istanbul,” \textit{Journal of the Dom Research Center: Kuri.} 1, no 7, (Fall/Winter 2002). Available online: http://www.domresearchcenter.com/resources/links/mischek17.html [14 January 2011]. My own field research among Gypsy people in Turkey and specific among flower sellers in Istanbul did not find them occupying very advantageous positions as Mischek would argue. Although they are relatively better off compared to the waged jobs that might be offered to them, they face very harsh working conditions and in most of the cases they chose the job due to their limited choices. Thus, their direct or indirect exclusion from formal sectors, the limited degree of their assimilation and their consideration of life practices and work ethic limit their choices to enter formal jobs.

and contexts. Thus, we come across incidences in which some Gypsies in eastern Anatolia would emphasize their closeness to the Kurdish community while some in the other part of the country (or in the same place) identify themselves with Turkishness and stress their distance to Kurds. There are some Gypsies, moreover, who have attacked Kurdish people, showing their nationalist feelings and reliability to the Turkish state and national identity. As Marsh points out, the great diversity of Gypsy identities goes against the idea of a homogenous Roma identity that is propagated by the Romani movement in Europe.

This type of multiple and/or selective ways of identification is supported by the work of the Bulgarian scholars Marushiakova and Popov. They draw attention to different levels of identity construction as “level one is the intra-community identification, level two recognition of other communities, and level three refers to the nationhood hence describing oneself as a member of a certain nation state. In other words, a Gypsy from Tophane might define himself or herself as a member of Tophane community, as an Istanbul Gypsy, or as a Turk, in relation to different contexts.”

From this point, we can take a further step to consider another feature of the Turkish context that influences the construction of Gypsyness. It is the historical existence of Gypsies in the territorial space of the country. This will give us a background before dealing with the constitution of Turkishness as national identity, minority positions and Gypsyness in the country.

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134 Marsh, “Ethnicity”.

A Brief Look at Gypsies before the Republic

It should be noted that the available research on Gypsies’ history in Turkey is very limited. They are argued to have their origins in the groups of people who were called Atsinganoi or Athinganoi in Byzantine (East Roman) times. The original group of Atsinganoi was Phrygian and associated with magic. They were also called Egyptians and like other non-Christians, they were obliged to pay head-tax to the Byzantine emperor. When Mehmet the Conqueror took Constantinople in 1453, the Gypsy population in the Ottoman Empire increased with the addition of those in the Byzantine lands. During the period following the kanunnames (legislations) concerning Gypsies, a marginal status was attributed to them. The proof of their marginalization and otherization is reflected in the terminology that is used in the registers, ehl-i fesad [people of malice].

The territory under the sovereignty of Ottoman Empire included that of the Turkish Republic founded in 1923. The structure of the society in the empire gives some clues for the historical construction of Gypsyness in relation to other categories that would become influential during the republic. Generally, the Ottoman rule is highlighted for relative tolerance towards Gypsies under its sovereignty compared to the European

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138 Celik explored four kanunnames from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of the Ottoman Empire in her work. The first kanunname was issued in the time of Mehmet the Conqueror and the rest were from the followers. Faika Celik, “Exploring Marginality in the Ottoman Empire: Gypsies or People of Malice (Ehl-i Fesad) as Viewed by the Ottomans,” *European University Institute EUI Working Papers RSCAS*, no. 39 (2004).

139 Çelik, p 5.
context. Barany indicates that it was due to the difference in regime type. To explain the different treatment of Gypsies in Europe, Lucassen and Willems further emphasize the lack of poor relief system in the Ottoman Empire, which in the European context played a key role in the ongoing stigmatization of the Gypsies. In the Ottoman Empire, they were not considered as a major threat to the well-ordered society as in most European countries. The basis for the difference in the Ottoman society depended on the millet system within which religion was an essential criterion to draw lines between communities. The Gypsies in this society were in a somewhat better position compared to, for instance, those in the Habsburg Empire, but they still faced different treatments that exhibited discriminative practices.

At the administrative level, the most visible treatment of the Gypsies was their taxation. Although the millet system basically relied on religious differences, Muslim Gypsies were treated differently and segregated from other Muslim communities in the empire. The socio-cultural categories in the empire further allocated the rights and hierarchies between different subjects: “[…] the askeri, those who belonged to the military, administrative or religious elites, who were exempted from paying taxes, versus the reaya, Muslims and non-Muslims who were subject to taxation; other major dichotomies confronted Muslims versus non-Muslims, the free-born versus slaves and men versus women.”

Gypsies however “lived on a flexible border-the one that

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140 See Barany, *East European Gypsies*; and Lucassen and Willems, “The Weakness”.

141 Lucassen and Willems.

142 The scholars pointed at the recognized contribution of nomadic people in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, many Gypsies were settled in the Empire, where they were not the only nomads as there were other tribes such as Yoruks. Ginio, on the other hand, emphasizes the disapproval of Gypsies’ nomadic life in their stigmatization under the Ottoman rule. Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims nor Zimmis: The Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies* 5, 14, no. 2, (2004), pp. 117-144.

143 Some scholars argue that they were defined in ethnic terms. See Çelik.

144 Ginio, p. 119. Ginio's findings rely on the records of seriat court of the eighteenth century Thessaloniki.
distinguished Muslims from non-Muslims. Thus, although some were Muslims, all were obliged to pay the tax *cizye* that was collected from non-Muslims. This points at a liminal position for the Gypsies in the empire. Similarly in the tax and population records of the nineteenth century, they were categorized separately as well, unlike any other Muslim community.

However, there were also respected and wealthy Gypsies, as well as their guilds that could even afford to build a palace for the sultan for the sake of his patronage. Some Gypsies even had a special status as Gypsy *sancaks* (governing administrative district) in the Empire along with other professions such as musicians, blacksmiths and ironworkers. The law on Gypsies that was initiated by Süleyman the Magnificent reveals the rules regarding the taxation of Gypsies and the authority of the Gypsy *sancak*. In this law, the Gypsy *sancak* was entitled with the responsibility of taxation and implementation of certain punishments. Barany indicates that although their position was subordinate to other groups in the empire, the Gypsies were still relatively better off under Ottoman rule compared to other states where they faced slavery and harsh discrimination. However, as Barany also asserts, Muslim Roma were taxed heavier than

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145 Ibid., p. 119.
149 Kanunname-i Kibtiyan-i Vilayet-i Rumeli. The law aims to regulate tax collecting from Gypsies and holds the Gypsy community responsible for realizing this aim. This law displays that the taxation is higher for the nomadic and non-Muslim ones.
151 Barany gives the examples of the Romanian principalities of Moldovia and Wallacia for Gypsy slavery that dates back to 1348 (Barany, *The East European Gypsies*, p 85).
other Muslims, because they were not considered good practitioners of Islam. Moreover, they were seen as parasites by the dominant groups in the empire. In the seventeenth century, the attitudes against the Gypsies hardened by a state campaign that increased their taxes and accused them of widespread pimping and prostitution. The spread of Orientalist ideas from Europe on Gypsies was also effective. Gypsies were increasingly seen within a civilization-savage dichotomy in certain contexts in the late Ottoman period, especially after 1878 with Abdulhamid’s regime.

Equally important was the constitution of Turkishness as the foundation of the Republic. How Turkishness as a national identity and citizenship was founded, how minority positions were arranged and how Gypsyness and Gypsies interacted within these contexts will be evaluated for a better articulation of Gypsyness in the country.

The Multi-Dimensional Constitution of Turkishness

The multiple dimensional features of the national identity in Turkey has repercussions for the way “us” and “them” are perceived. Turkish citizenship is a mixture of French and German conceptions. The French basically entailed territorial belonging and includes the people born in the territory of the state (ius soli). The German citizenship, on the other hand, derives from the blood ties and deep historical

152 Ibid., pp. 84-85. Altinoz also mentioned the attacks against Gypsies by other groups such as Yoruks. Ismail Altinoz, “XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devlet Yönetimi İçerisinde Çingeler” (The Gypsies in the Ottoman State Administration in the Sixteenth Century), in Yeryüzünün Yabancıları Çingeler (Gypsies: Strangers of the Earth), edited by Suat Kolukırık (Istanbul: Simurg Publishing, 2008), pp. 13-33, p. 18.


154 Marsh, referring to Maksidi, p. 15.
roots of people who share a common culture and language (ius sanguinis).\textsuperscript{155} Ahiska et al.\textsuperscript{156} draw attention to the advantage of this mixture for inclusion of different parts of the society. However, it also illustrates the weakness that emerges from the lack of a common understanding and wholeness of a nation.

In the context of Turkishness, there are at least three different dimensions.\textsuperscript{157} One is territorial inclusion. It was supposed that all the people living in the country could be recognized as Turkish citizens. This included all ethnically and religiously different groups such as Kurds, Turks, Gypsies, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Laz. The second dimension of Turkishness, regards religious identification as followers of Islam. In this articulation, Muslim (Sunni sect) people were accepted as Turks while non-Muslims were not. These two dimensions were at the root of the population exchange at the beginning of the 1920s and the recognition of minorities in the country following the Lausanne Treaty.\textsuperscript{158} During the population exchange, Muslims who lived in the former Ottoman Empire and declared themselves to be Turk were accepted in the Turkish Republic and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{155} See Feyzi Baban, “Community, Citizenship and Identity in Turkey,” in \textit{Citizenship in a Global World: European Questions and Turkish Experiences}, edited by E. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet Icliugu (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 52-70. Also see Bora for his point on the two dimensions of nationalism in the country; one relying on territory, homeland and citizenship, the other relying on ethnic and essentialist identity. Tanıl Bora “Insa Döneminde Türk Milli Kimliği” (Turkish national identity in the period of constitution), \textit{Toplum ve Bilim} 71 (Winter 1996), pp. 168-195. For different nationalisms in the country, also see Umut Özkırımlı, “Türkiye’de Gayriresmi ve Populer Milliyetçilik” (Informal and popular nationalism in Turkey), in \textit{Milliyetçilik} (Nationalism), edited by Tanıl Bora and Murat Gultekingil (Istanbul: İletisim Yay, 2002) [3rd edition 2008], pp. 911-919. For the (re-) formation of Turkish nationalism in different contexts and commonalities through Turkishness, see Melek Göregenli, “Bir Ayrımcılık Ideolojisi Olarak Milliyetçilik” (Nationalism as an ideology of discrimination), in \textit{Milli Hallerimiz: Yurttaslık ve Milliyetçilik: Farkında Miyiz?} (Our national states: citizenship and nationalism: are we aware?), edited by Nil Mutluer and Esra Güclüer (İstanbul: Helsinki Yurttaslar Derneği, 2008), pp. 78-83.

\item \textsuperscript{156} Meltem Ahiska, Frat Gene and Ferhat Kentel, ”Milletin Bölünmez Bütünlüğü” (Undivisible unity of the nation) (Istanbul: Tesev Yayınları, 2007).

\item \textsuperscript{157} See Soner Cagaptay, “Türklüğe Geçiş: Modern Türkiye’de Göç ve Din” (Transition to Turkishness: migration and religion in Turkey), in \textit{Vatandaslık ve Etnik Çatışma} (Citizenship and Ethnic conflict), edited by Haldun Gülalp (İstanbul: Metis Yay, 2005), pp. 86-112.

\item \textsuperscript{158} For the minorities and nationalism, see Baskin Oran, \textit{Türkiye’de Azınlıklar} (Minorities in Turkey) (İstanbul: İletisim Yayınları, 2004), pp. 61-3. Tanıl Bora, “Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Azınlıklar” (Turkish Nationalism and Minorities), in \textit{Milliyetçilik} (Nationalism), edited by Tanıl Bora and Murat Gultekingil, pp. 706-718. Also see Murat Belge, “Türkiye’de Zenofobi ve Milliyetçilik” (Xenophobia and nationalism in Turkey), ibid., pp. 179-193.
\end{itemize}
offered citizenship with the recognition of Turkishness. According to the Lausanne Treaty, the minorities in the country were determined on the basis of religion, which meant that Greek Orthodox Christians, no matter how they defined themselves in cultural or political terms, were forced to move to Greece. The third dimension of Turkishness, furthermore centralizes the ethnic origin and prioritizes the ethnic Turks. Thus, to be recognized as a real citizen and to benefit from all the advantages of citizenship, one’s ethnic Turkishness has a crucial function in the perception of the citizenship in the country.

This multidimensional state of Turkishness allows an ambiguity around the recognition, entitlement and thus legitimacy of life spaces of the people within the borders of the Turkish state. While it may enable a flexible inclusion, in practice it can easily give rise to hierarchies between groups and to the exclusion of ethnically non-Turks. The three dimensions thus can be visualized as domains in which citizenship can be articulated. Thus, one can argue that one is a Turk by employing one dimension, while in other dimensions one may emphasize another identification. In the same way, one may be recognized as a Turk according to one dimension while one is discriminated for not being enough Turk due to one’s ethnic or religious difference in another context.

For instance, the Law of Public Employment that was mainly used against non-Muslim minorities embodied a discriminatory principle between formal citizens and ethnic Turks. According to the law, public employment was reserved for ethnic Turks rather than Turkish citizens.159 Only in 1965, in the revised version, all Turkish citizens were

Moreover, even being of Turkish descent can develop different meanings through time. In a recent work of Danis and Parla, a transformation of the politics towards Bulgarian and Iraqi immigrants of Turkish descent is clearly displayed along with a “hierarchy of eligibility”, depending on the origin of migration. Over time, the Iraqi immigrants started not being recognized as Turks while the ones from Bulgaria with Turkish descent were easily entitled as Turkish citizens. They rightfully stressed the flexibility of this hierarchy and the effects of domestic and foreign policy.\footnote{161}

Recognizing the dynamic relation between macro and micro levels in understanding nationalisms, Ahiska et al.\footnote{162} traced the personal experiences of different people in Turkey, in order to investigate nationalism in terms of theoretical and political aspects. Their definition of nationalism is also important for the perspective of this study:

Nationalism is an ideology that evolves through nourishment of common codes, myths and emotions that are shaped by the relationships between individuals along with cultural and historical links that particular society at the same time while it reflects hegemonic structure and dominant ideology in power relations between classes or the relations between state and society.\footnote{163}

This perspective illustrates the exchange between personal experiences, dominant discourses and cognitive states. To understand Turkish nationalism, Ahiska et al. underline the co-existence of different discourses in relation to different constructions of

\begin{thebibliography}{10}


\item 160 Republic of Turkey, 1926 Memurin Kanunu (1926 State Official Law), no. 788, Article 4, 1926; Republic of Turkey, 1965 Devlet Memurlari Kanunu (1965 State Official Law), no. 657, 1965. The law has the potential to have impact on our case as well although there is no clue how it effected relations in practice.

\item 161 Didem Danis and Ayse Parla, “Nafile Soydaslık: Irak ve Bulgaristan Türkleri Örneğinde Göçmen, Dernek ve Devlet”(Futile Descent: immigrant, association and state in the example of Iraqi and Bulgarian Turks), Toplum ve Bilim, no. 114 (2009), pp. 131-158. Danis and Parla further argues on the instrumentalization of Turkish descent in the case of immigrants. Although I agree on their perspective, I recognize Turkishness as an instrument itself and not as something that is only instrumentalized in particular times or contexts.

\item 162 Ahiska et al.

\item 163 Ibid., p. 16.

\end{thebibliography}
the nation and the citizenship. They also recognize an area of tension as different individuals in society imagine the nation in the same way that attempts to exclude others according to their own criteria. Similarly, Bora and Canefe map changes in Turkish nationalism along with populist discourses in the politics since the foundation of the Republic.

The stress on reliable Turks and proper Muslims gained different nuances and interpretations in these discourses through time. While populism in the country has been dominated by a rightist discourse since the beginning of the 1950s, it started cooperating with nationalists that emphasized “cultural racism” in the period between 1960 and 1980. After 1980, it gained conservative-liberal characteristics that corresponded to the values of the free market and it reinforced neoliberalism, supported by Islamic conservative liberals. Besides, the traditional discourses of nationalist populism survived by adapting and cooperating with new dynamics.

To sum up, Turkishness in its multidimensional articulation has allowed the inclusion of Gypsies as citizens and Turks. Gypsies especially emphasize their religious eligibility as Muslims although their religious background is often openly questioned. Seeking legitimate grounds to be recognized as Turks, however, can take various ways depending on the context and relationships. As the superiority of Turkishness is

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166 Another legitimization way is referring to the founder of the republic; Ataturk. See Kolukırık “Dunden Bugune”. For desired distance to Gypsiness, discontent for proximity with Gypsiness and identification of Abdals with Turkishness, see Suat Kolukırık, “Cingene Oldugu Dusunulen Gruplarda Kimlik: Teber(Abdal)” (Identity among the groups that are considered Gypsies: Teber(Abdal)). In Kimlikler Lütfen: Turkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Kulturel Kimlik Arayisi ve Temsili (Identities please: the seek and representation for cultural identity in the Turkish Republic), edited by Gonul Pultar (Ankara: ODTU Yayincilik, 2009),
recognized within the content of citizenship, many Gypsies also stress their reliability as Turks. On the other hand, they emphasize Gypsyness as a social economic status. Still their commonalities and references to Gypsyness can be observed. Moreover, their ways of identification along with the new dynamics and contexts are transforming, as we will see in the following sections. Below, I will first examine the ways of Gypsies' exclusion and then against this background we will explore the relationship between Turkishness and Gypsyness and thus will also try to find out how Gypsyness is constructed in relation to both Turkish national identity and their own minority status.

The Exclusion Of Gypsies

The most widely circulated number for the population of Gypsies living in Turkey is 500,000, deduced from the Ottoman population census in 1831,\textsuperscript{167} while some representatives\textsuperscript{168} claim higher numbers up to around two and half million. Marsh criticizes the inaccurate mainstream calculation as the 1831 census underrepresented the number of women, men under fifteen years old and over sixty years old, as well as Muslim and itinerant Gypsies.\textsuperscript{169} Most Gypsies, both sedentary and itinerants, live in Trakya and Marmara regions.\textsuperscript{170} They generally live in their own neighborhoods isolated

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[168] Due to my interview with Ana Oprisan, 20 October 2005, and Nese Erdilek, 05 January 2006, and Marsh and Strand.
\item[169] Marsh, “Ethnicity and Identity, pp. 21-22.
\item[170] See Oprisan, and Map 1 at Appendix C.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
from the rest of the society. Many inhabit Gypsy-only communities while there are also some who established personal and professional relationships with non-Gypsies.

Many Gypsies face direct and indirect discrimination both socially and legally. Their social exclusion goes along with their poverty as they generally occupy lower segments of the society.\textsuperscript{171} Although they are not seen as domestic enemies like Kurds in Turkey, they are not fully included within the borders of “us” either. According to Marsh and Strand, compared to other minorities in Turkey, they “suffer much higher levels of ill-health, have poorer housing, and higher incidences of discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity”\textsuperscript{172} along with their positions as under-educated and under-employed. However, this is a strong statement as the dynamics of exclusion through ethnicity for other minorities are not taken into account (i.e., Kurds are treated as domestic enemies in some cases, forced to migrate and also suffer in different ways).

The self and the other binary was constructed primarily through religion in Turkey according to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, although it has not been applied systematically. In the treaty, only non-Muslims were considered as minorities without any reference to ethnicity.\textsuperscript{173} Thus, ethnic Muslim minorities, including Gypsy people, have not been recognized officially as such. However, there was some recognition of Gypsies as an ethnically different group, albeit in a discriminative way, in the 1934 Law on Settlement. This law “explicitly lists ‘itinerant Gypsies’ among groups of persons to be

\textsuperscript{171} Also see project reports: Sosyal ve Kültürel Yaşam Geliştirme Derneği, \textit{Romanlar ve Sozial Dislanma Sorunu: Sosyal Politika, ama Nasıl?} (Romanlar and problem of social exclusion: social policy but how?), (Istanbul: 2007) as well as European Roma Rights Center; Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly and Edirne Roman Association, \textit{We Are Here! Discriminatory Exclusion and Struggle for Rights of Roma in Turkey}, edited by Ebru Uzpeder, Savelina Danova/Roussinova, Sevgi Özçelik and Sinan Gökçen (Istanbul: Mart Publishing, 2008).

\textsuperscript{172} Marsh and Strand, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{173} Baskan Oran, \textit{Türkiye’de Azınlıklar} (Minorities in Turkey) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), pp. 61-3.
subject to differential treatment." The discrimination against Gypsies in this law mainly transpires in prohibitions of movement, making life difficult for traveller Gypsy immigrants in Turkey. As exemplified in this law, their mobility and life styles served as a ground for discrimination, similar to many other countries. The Law was revised on September 19, 2006 as a success of persisting objections of human-rights and Gypsy activists, and the new law regarding settlement (No. 5543) abolished these discriminatory statements. Additionally, in Article 21 of the law on foreigners’ settlement and travelling in the country, Gypsies again are mentioned particularly as potential objects of evictions. Moreover, in the instruction manual for policemen, “Gypsies without well established businesses” are classified as suspicious.

With the recent effects of gentrification in squatter neighborhoods, Urban Transformation Project, that mainly targets the displacement of urban poor from the city centers, the multidimensionality of Gypsies’ exclusion becomes more visible. Gypsies face demolition of their houses and forced eviction in the implementation of the project illustrating a threat to their housing rights in several cities of Turkey. Eventually, the demolition of historical Gypsy neighborhood, Sulukule in Istanbul from 2006 to 2009, in spite of protests by several right-seeking organizations and independent activists, demonstrated not only a housing problem but also a threat to Gypsy culture and history.

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174 In the part “Areas of Settlement” the discriminatory parts are as followed: Article 1 states: "The settlement of immigrants, refugees, nomads and itinerant Gypsies within the country shall be arranged by the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Health and Social Assistance in accordance with the program to be made by the Council of Ministers with a view to ensuring their loyalty to Turkish culture and improving the establishment and distribution of the population." Article 4 states: "A. Those who are not attached to Turkish culture; B. Anarchists; C. Spies; Ç: Itinerant Gypsies; and D. Persons deported, shall not be accepted as immigrants into Turkey" (The Turkish Law of Settlement quoted in Tara Bedard, “Roma in Turkey”, ERRC, (7 February 2004), pp 1-2. Available online: http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1345 [14 January 2011]).

How Gypsies are treated as a different group and excluded through the specific features that are attributed to them is also observable in sayings and phrases in the Turkish language. The common knowledge about them mainly depends on some prejudices, stereotyping and mystifications even reproducing the ones existent since the Ottoman time. Demonization and romanticization are at stake here as Gypsies are usually either stigmatized through unwelcome attributes such as idleness, robbery and immorality or envied because of their supposedly joyful life. Moreover, these two reinforce one another in their exclusion.

The negative usages of the term çingene, which is the Turkish term, used for Gypsy reveals some exclusionary attitudes:

“[…]Çingene düğünü’ (‘Gypsy wedding’ – something which is not done as it is supposed to be done), ‘çingene kavgası’ (‘Gypsy fight’ – violent fight), ‘çingene borçu’ (‘Gypsy debt’ – when a debt is tripled by other debts), ‘çingene çalar, kürt oynar’ (‘the Gypsy sings, the wolf dances’ – wrong people to the wrong place or an unprepared person doing something he cannot actually do).”

In literary works, negative terms such as begging, ill-mannered, shameless, importunate, pimp, uncivilized, ignorant, untrustworthy, and godless are regularly used to refer to Gypsy people. Kolukırık asserts that language, dress style, music and professional occupations contribute to the formation of these negative images. Moreover, Gypsies are also called as “dark-skinned citizen” (esmer vatandas). Thus, primordial roots are referred in constructing these images. The non-Gypsy people with whom I talked about Gypsy people also use similar negative adjectives such as “thief,” “parasite,” and “lazy.”

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177 Suat Kolukırık, “Türk Toplumunda Çingene İmgesi ve Önyargısı” (Gypsy image and prejudice in the Turkish Society), *Sosyoloji Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 52-71.

178 For other examples of negative usages about Gypsy people in daily language see Kolukırık, “Türk Toplumunda”, p. 12: “Çingenenin Bismillahından kil çıkar [one should suspect Gypsies’ religious performances]; Bahçeye erik, kapıya çingen bastırma [Suspicion on Gypsies’ reliable work]
The prejudice regarding the religion and godlessness of Gypsies is additionally meaningful in the otherization process. Their religiosity is suspect and this is illustrated by a survey conducted by the government in 1945 indicating that there was a lack of religion among Gypsy people in Turkey. In Zonguldak, for instance, there was a common rumor that Gypsies ate their corpses. The rumor originates in the Gypsy people’s practice of performing a tradition ritual in which they keep bodies of their dead in their house and holding a funeral ceremony before burial.

Similarly, some superstitions reproduce primordial explanations for the negative features attributed to Gypsy people. An example is the claim that the origin of Gypsies goes back to incest between siblings Cin and Gane in the period of Hz. Ibrahim and it is seen as the basis of incest as a common phenomenon among Gypsies. This superstition contributes to the social exclusion of Gypsy people as others in the society of Turkey. Finally, they are accused of pursuing their own interests without even caring about God, and it is implied that marrying Gypsies is a sin.

In sum, despite some inclusive policies and practice towards individual Gypsies, they are constructed as the other in several ways, usually based on primordial assumptions, and this otherization reinforces their social exclusion. Although they are not recognized as a minority according to the Lausanne Treaty, in practice they sometimes are similarly perceived as non-Muslims. Thus, whereas the dominant national

[...] Çingene çit çit, arkası bit bit [regarding dirt associated with Gypsies].”


180 The belief on Gypsies’ cannibalism goes back to the late eighteenth century stereotype. See Willems, pp. 25-27.

181 From my interview with Özhan Önder, 27 April 2006, who conducted a research on Gypsy people in Zonguldak.

182 Kolukırık, “Türk Toplumunda”, p. 11.
identity attempts to include and to open a space for their assimilation, this instrumentalist effort does not exactly work in practice. The various ways of exclusion are meaningful to understand the Gypsies’ strategies and self-identifications in the country.

**Identifications of Gypsies in Turkey**

Some researchers find the identification of Gypsies in Turkey very different from the ones in European context. In the Turkish context, many Gypsies’ first identification would be with the national identity, being Turkishness. This is not only due to the stereotypes and discriminatory practices around Gypsyness but also to the relatively available open space for such a national inclusive identification. Many Gypsies can even find a place in rightwing movements and become Turkish nationalists notwithstanding widespread anti-Gypsism among right-wing communities in East European countries.

As mentioned above, the different levels of inclusion of Turkishness enabled (and explains) Gypsies’ loyalty to the Turkish state. Especially during the population exchange in the 1920s, many Gypsies were welcome in the country, as Muslim made them Turks. They were included in the very foundation of the Republic due to their

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183 For a further discussion, the work by Alba and Nee is fruitful for rethinking assimilation as a two-way phenomenon that not only influences the minority and/or immigrant group but also the majority. In some localities in the Turkish context, the effects of Gypsyness are highly visible for Gypsies’ cultural and behavioral traits. (i.e. Izmir, Canakkale, Trakya region). Marushiaikova and Popov draw attention to such an influence for the celebration of Hidrellez in the country that is mainly celebrated by the Gypsies, but also followed by non-Gypsies in many regions.

religious proximity. However, as the Settlement Law shows, in the 1930s some Gypsies were not considered as desirable citizens anymore.\footnote{In our case, muhacir Gypsies will be exemplary for the Gypsies that immigrated as a consequence of the population exchange in the early 1920s. Kolukırık also mentioned the emphasis on the Muslim and muhacir identity of some Gypsies in a similar position. See Suat Kolukırık, “Madun ve Hakim: Cingene/Roman Kimliginin Toplumsal Elestirisi” (Subaltern and Dominant: Social critique on Gypsy/Roman Identity). In \textit{Cingeneler [Gypsies]}, edited by Suat Kolukırık (Istanbul: Simurg Press, 2007), pp. 43-55.}

In spite of discriminatory discourses and practices against Gypsies in society, the Gypsies of Turkey mostly are reluctant to identify themselves as a separate ethnic group.\footnote{For the debates on displacement of Gypsies from the country mainly led by Nihal Atsiz in the same period, see Sinan Gokcen and Sezin Oney, “Turkiye’de Romanlar ve Milliyetçilik” (Romanlar and Nationalism in Turkey), in \textit{We Are Here! Discriminatory Exclusion and Struggle for Rights of Roma in Turkey}, edited by Ebru Uzpeder, Savelina Danova/Roussinova, Sevgi Özçelik and Sinan Gokcen (Istanbul: Mart Publishing, 2008), pp. 129-136.} Traditional perceptions of minorities have the potential to regard them as traitors through collaborating with enemies. Historical events related to xenophobia and discrimination against minorities in Turkey (especially the negative representations of Greeks and Armenians in national discourse)\footnote{Also consider the violent attacks on minority groups in the country such as those that occurred on September 6-7, 1955, pogroms against non-Muslim minorities particularly Greeks. Furthermore, I should mention the Wealth Tax on Property [Varlık Vergisi] hit non-Muslims in 1942 and the Trakya pogroms against Jews. See Dilek Guven, \textit{Cumbur Yet Donemni Azlinik Politikaları ve Stratejileri Baglaninda 6-7 Eylul Olayları} (September 6-7 events in the context of minority politics and strategies in the Republican era) (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2006); Ayhan Aktar, \textit{Varlık Vergisi ve Turkleştirme Politikaları} (Wealth on property and politics of Turkification) (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2000); Rifat Bali, \textit{1934 Trakya Olayları} (1934 Thracian Incidents) (Istanbul: Kitabevi Press, 2008). Additionally for violent attacks against Alevi in Kahramanmaras in 1978, see Burak Gurel, “Political Mobilization in Turkey in the 1970s: The Case of the Kahramanmaras Incidents” (MA thesis, Bogazici University, 2004).} and the recent position of other minorities that claim their own ethnic identity (i.e., Kurdish people) explain this reluctance of Gypsies. Moreover, the relative small size of their organized population in Turkey, organizational obstacles and their lack of resources are also important. Whereas recognition as an ethnic minority is considered as a means for social integration and access to equal sources in European context,\footnote{Also my interview with the Administrative Director of Bilgi University Centre for Migration Research; Nese Erdilek, 5 January 2006 and Marsh “Ethnicity and Identity, pp. 19-29.} Turkish Gypsies tend to overemphasize...
their Turkishness and loyalty to the state as experienced in different contexts. The Turkishness, however, may take several meanings and correspond with diverging strategies, depending on different discourses. For some, it may be Muslimness while for others it is being a modern hardworking citizen who serves his or her country.

A Gypsy man appearing with a big Turkish flag in his hand and Atatürk’s picture on his jacket collar at the Second International Roman Symposium in 2006 illustrates the identification of Gypsy people as Turks. He represented himself as a Turk, and complained about the social exclusion he faced. Incirlioglu, in her interviews with Gypsies experienced similar attitudes as they told that “we are not complaining about our state” and they emphasized their loyalty to the Turkish state, constitution, flag, Atatürk’s principles and reforms. An increasing tendency especially among young Gypsies to support the Turkish Nationalist Party (MHP) and their positioning against Kurdish people is another example of their identification with Turkishness. On the other hand, some Gypsies declare that Gypsies’ statements on being Turks are only a strategy to deal with their social exclusion. Thus, according to this imagination, being a Turk may be the only way to enjoy their citizenship rights in full.

Therefore, the Gypsies’ identification may both be connected to the strength of the dominant ethnic discourse and to a high degree of social exclusion of Gypsyness, as well as the position of other ethnicities in Turkey. According to Kolukırcı’s work on Gypsy identity in Tarlabası, Izmir, this identification is mostly observed for those “who


191 Incirlioglu 2005, p. 175.

192 My Gypsy colleague’s statements from a project on Gypsy people. In Tarlabası, Gypsy people beat Kurdish people as a sign of their loyalty to the state on 03/04/2006 (http://www.nethaber.com/?h=50452) Also see Strand 2006, p 101.

193 I.e. my Gypsy colleague from a project on Gypsy people.
feel the need for the integration with the Gadjo." It is not merely a rational and economic but a social and psychological strategy.

The unequal position in Turkish society explains their articulations. Some Gypsies ask, "Why do they call me Gypsy? I am a Turk, too. I am not different." Some also indicate that referring to them as a different group is itself discrimination. It is a claim for rights that is embedded in Turkishness rather than citizenship or humanness. This claim is formulated by particular individuals or communities, however, in itself it does not negate the inferior position of Gypsyness. In this articulation, they emphasize their sameness with the majority through cultural traits and moral values.

There are of course Gypsies who do not accept the identification with Turkishness, who choose to use it only as an umbrella term for citizenship, or who identify with it according to the context or the person that they encounter. They mostly feel at ease in their own group. The identification with Turkishness moreover does not necessarily violate the identification with Gypsyness. For many Gypsies as for many people in the country, multiple identifications are normal. This identification mainly emerges in their discourse on Gadjos, the Gypsy way of life and as another way of response to social exclusion. In the discourse on Gadjos, they mainly emphasize their alleged snobbish style, selfishness, being mean and stingy, and arrogant. On the other hand, Gypsyness is associated with the opposite of these features which they perceive positive: “A Gadjo always reminds you the favour he does for you, but a Gypsy never

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195 See Alba and Nee for different strategies for assimilating immigrants.

196 See other identifications as well depending on professions, kinships and localities in the part on Gypsies in Turkey.

197 The criteria to be accepted as Gypsies also can vary as one can be considered Roman in one group while s/he can fall into Gadjo category in another Gypsy group. See Zerrin Toprak Karaman, “Siyasi ve Idari Yonuyle Romanlar” (Roma through Political and Administrative Aspects), in Cingeneler (Gypsies), edited by Suat Kolukırık (Istanbul: Simurg Yayinlari, 2007), pp. 33-43.
A form of otherization that is similar to the one against a Gypsy now works the other way. Superstitions are also reversed as the one that symbolizes the inferiority of Gadjos and the superiority of Gypsies: After God created the earth he decided to create people. Then, he took the dough of life and shaped it in the form of human beings. When he put them in the oven of creation, a problem among his angels in heaven emerged, which he had to solve. However, when he came back, he found the human beings overcooked and this is how black people came to the earth. The second time, God got worried about the cooking time, so he took the human beings out of the oven before they were sufficiently cooked and this is how white people were created. The third time, God created a timer to take the human beings out at the perfect time and this is how the Gypsies were created.

This superstition as an example of Gadjo and Gypsy representation by Gypsies is interesting, as it uses the same essentialist strategy as we encounter in social exclusionary practices. Thus, in the discourse on the Gadjo, primordial ties dominate. Although it can be argued that such myths are a reaction to the dominant discourse, it is still important to see that they use primordial ties as their basis. In the discourse on the Gypsy way of life, similar images can be traced. When it is referred to by Gypsies, relatively more positive features are used such as wandering, easily adapting to different cultures, being talented musicians and dancers, being full of life and relaxed, closeness to nature, and wearing colorful clothes. Some Gypsies also create a mystification regarding the existence of matriarchy, referring to different gendered roles in Gypsy communities. However, this

198 Kolukırık, “Perceptions,” p. 137.

199 From Uzun Yol Roman Dance Documentary performed on June 06, 2006 at Bilgi University.

200 Gypsy colleagues from a project on Gypsy people in Turkey.
statement does not correspond to real life as Gypsy women also are suppressed in ways similar to those experienced by other women in most patriarchal societies.\textsuperscript{201}

Genetic ties are also emphasized in the discourse on the Gypsy way of life. The statement “It is in my blood” is used frequently as an excuse or to explain a talent. One of the Gypsy respondents in the fieldwork by Kolukırık, indicates, “We have a gene that likes freedom. We do not like working under the command of someone”\textsuperscript{202} while some others point to their intolerance of discipline and boredom.\textsuperscript{203} In my interviews, similar statements were uttered, but possibly more related to culture than to blood. A Gypsy flower seller in the streets of Istanbul asserted that “they [Gadjo] can not do [this profession] like us. You need to understand the language of flowers.”\textsuperscript{204}

As these examples show, primordial ties especially based on blood and fixed cultural features are emphasized. On the other hand, language for instance is not seen as a signifier as most of the Gypsies in Turkey do not speak the Gypsy languages known as Romani, Domari and Lomavren.\textsuperscript{205} Instead they speak the language that is most common in the region in which they live, such as Turkish or Kurdish. Thus, particular primordial ties are highlighted in identification with Gypsiness while some are almost neglected. In addition, identification with Gypsiness and being in the community make one feel more relaxed, empowered and accepted.\textsuperscript{206}

\textsuperscript{201} From my interviews and personal experiences.

\textsuperscript{202} Kolukırık, “Dunden,” p. 3.

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., p. 4.

\textsuperscript{204} Gül Özatesler, “Gypsies in the Economy of Turkey Through a Focus on Gypsy Flower Sellers on the Streets of Istanbul,” unpublished paper presented at Gypsy Lore Society Annual Meeting (Washington: Georgetown University, September 2008). Also see Selim Sesler’s comments on his music talent at Aslı Cakır, “Roman Kitaba Denir, Onun Aslı Cingene” (Book is called Roman, the real is Cingene), \textit{Milliyet}, (6 March 2006). Available online: http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/03/06/pazar/paz02.html [14 January 2011].

\textsuperscript{205} Marsh and Stand, pp. 29-30.

\textsuperscript{206} Alba and Nee underline possible socio-economic opportunities for ethnic entrepreneurs to dominate some niches in the market.
Noteworthy, in relation to the identification with Gypsyness, recently a new identification emerged as being Roman. It is related to the improving network between Roma institutions in Europe and Gypsy organizations in Turkey in the process of Turkey’s accession to the EU. It can be evaluated as an expression of instrumental ethnic identity, as it aims to stress a common basis between Turkish and European Gypsies and may help to improve their position. For this reason, the term Roman, which was already available but not widely known, is preferred to the term çingene because of its phonetic closeness to the term Roma used for European Gypsies. However, the reasons to choose the term Roman cannot be reduced to this connection.

Rather, with Roman they indicate that they want to fight social exclusion. However, this struggle usually works in the way to posit çingene in an inferior position by accepting the reliability of those negative and exclusionary statements. On the other hand, they protect themselves from that inferior position by their identification with Romaneness. Thus, they do not reject dominant prejudices, but just posit themselves to a better and “more respectful” position and leave çingenes as “the lowest of the low”.

Another instrumental position of this identification that works through the link with European Gypsies clarifies the change of some of the Gypsy’s associations’ titles. The Edirne Gypsy’s Culture Research Association (Edirne Çingene Kültürlü Araştırma Derneği), founded in 2004, later changed its name to the Edirne Roman’s Culture Research, Development, Assistance and Solidarity Association (Edirne Roman Kültürlüüzü Araştırma Geliştirme, Yardımlasma ve Dayanışma Derneği). Most of the associations that were founded recently also prefer the term “Roman” instead of “Çingene.” Some Gypsies

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207 Ibid., p. 136.


209 There are over 40 Gypsy association and 2 federations in the country.
also indicate that while they used to identify themselves as çingene before, they have recently started to use “Roman” instead.  

This link between European and Turkish Gypsies might be evaluated as based on primordial ties because of their supposedly common past, culture and blood. However, in practice they regard European Gypsies as stranger than a Turk due to their different religion and language. It is therefore not so easy to find a common basis with European Gypsies. This identification is therefore limited and seems more instrumental, hoping that it will improve their financial and socio-cultural position.

To understand the different levels of identifications, I also find local commonalities and interactions between Turkishness, locality and Gypsyness of great interest. Collectivities that share the same locality and culture are significant for many people’s identifications in the country. Mischek argued that the inherited social system of mahalle (neighborhood) from Ottoman time is important in this respect. In the mahalle system, beyond differences and inequalities, specific cultures connected to particular neighborhoods influence inhabitants’ belongingness and identifications. In certain contexts, they can be the most important identifications that people develop and thus they are more important than other identifications: “Relationships in this quarter create a shared identity, in opposition to the “outside” world.” For Gypsies, this shared identity also appears to be significant. While Gypsy mahalles are separate from the non-Gypsies’ in most cases all over the country; as will be seen in our case, there are also many mixed neighborhoods. Along with this, in small settlement areas such as towns, the shared identity can be more powerful due to spatial and personal proximities, as our case will show.

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210 Gypsy colleagues from a project on Gypsy people in Turkey.

211 Strand, p. 101.

To conclude, Gypsies’ identifications in Turkey can follow primordial and instrumental ties interrelated with the construction of dominant ways of identification in the country. Their interplay with Turkishness as the most dominant and national identity highly influenced their different strategies and belongingness. In addition, local commonalities and multiple identifications are noteworthy as well as the effects of domestic and foreign policies.