

# Gernot Haupt: Antigypsism and Migration

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## **SOCIETAS ETHICA ANNUAL CONFERENCE: Ethics and Migration University Lucian Blaga: Sibiu, Romania, Aug 23, 2012**

The topic of this paper is Antigypsism and Migration.<sup>1</sup> First I would like to make clear, who we talk about, when we talk about Roma, because the question of identity or identification will be present in my whole lecture. Then I would like to integrate the topic of migration of Roma in a wider context of historical and present antigypsistic discrimination and explain the term “Antigypsism” in order to be able to apply this concept to current problems of migration of Roma in Europe.

In France in the cities of Lille and Lyon Roma-camps have been erased by force during the last weeks although during his presidential campaign the new French president Hollande had promised to act differently than his predecessor Sarkozy.<sup>2</sup>

In Austria the Supreme Court has decided recently that bans on begging are conform with the existing constitution. These prohibitions were put up by some provincial governments after foreign beggars “with dark skin” had appeared.<sup>3</sup>

Who do we talk about? If the newspapers write about “Roma-Camps” everybody seems to know who lives there.<sup>4</sup> If the European Commission looks for Strategies of Roma-Integration, it seems to be clear, who is concerned.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> cf.: Gernot Haupt, *Antiziganismus und Sozialarbeit. Elemente einer wissenschaftlichen Grundlegung, gezeigt an Beispielen aus Europa mit dem Schwerpunkt Rumänien*, Berlin 2006;

Gernot Haupt, *Antiziganismus und Religion. Elemente für eine Theologie der Roma-Befreiung, dargestellt anhand einer empirischen Untersuchung eines Roma-Viertels in Rumänien*, Münster 2009.

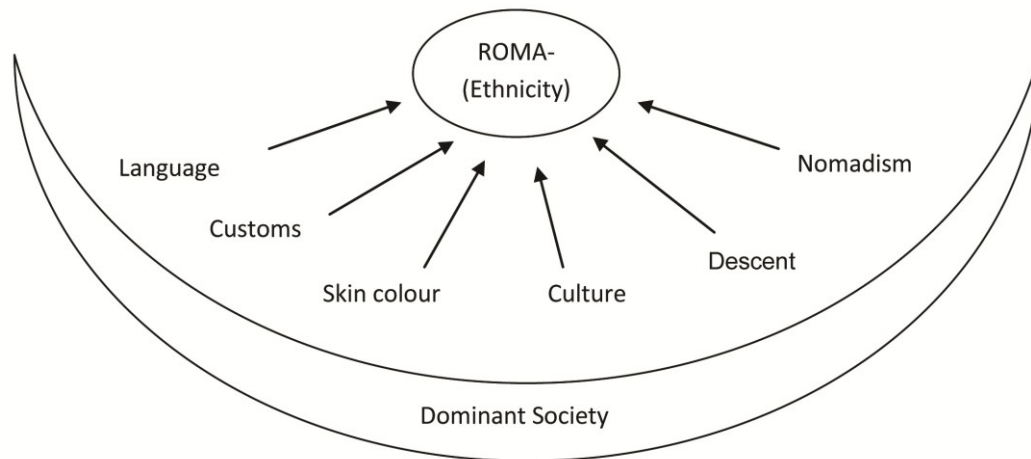
<sup>2</sup> cf. Richard Schittly, „A Lyon: « Pas d'expulsion sans solution ? Il faut nous dire lesquelles !“ in: *Le Monde* 15. 08. 2012; Elise Vincent, „Après la polémique, les minces propositions de Hollande sur les Roms.“ in: *Le Monde* 17.02.2012

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.verfassungsgerichtshof.at/> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>4</sup> cf. Hans-Hagen BREMER: „Frankreich: Auch Sozialisten räumen Roma-Lager.“ in: *Die Presse* 10.08.2012

<sup>5</sup> cf.:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/400&format=HTML&aged=0&language=DE&guiLanguage=en> viewed on 20. 08. 2012



As members of the majority – I would prefer to use the term dominant society to include the factor of power in the relationship – we normally assume that we can know and fix up the ethnicity of Roma along their attributes of language, customs, skin-color, their descent or along certain, allegedly ethnical inherent behaviors such as nomadism. In this context it has to be mentioned that the term ethnicity is often used as a synonym for the political incorrect term race.

This traditional and not questioned “knowledge” about Roma is not at all constricted to rightwing groups. I will show this with the help of an example of Roman Catholic documents about Roma. A speech by Pope Paul VI in front of an assembly of Roma in Pomezia 1965 is the first really relevant statement of the recent history. One famous sentence is quoted almost in every document of the Vatican concerning Roma until today. I will quote the first part as a whole.

“Dear Gypsies, dear nomads, dear Gitanos, coming from all over Europe, to you our greetings. To you our greeting, you eternal pilgrims, to you, you voluntary fugitives, to you, who are always on flight, to you, who are restless on the way. To you without a house on your own, without fixed abode without a friendly homeland, without public society. You who lack qualified work, who lack social contacts, who lack sufficient means.

Greetings to you, who have chosen your little tribe, your caravan as your segregated and secret world. To you, who regard the world with distrust and who are regarded with distrust by all, you, who always and everywhere wanted to be foreigners, isolated, strange, excluded from all social circles, you, who have been on the march for centuries and do not know where to arrive and where to stay.

You are not at the margins of the church, in a certain sense you are in the centre, you are at the heart. You are at the heart of the church, because you are alone: nobody is alone in the church; you are in the heart of the church, because you are poor and need assistance,

instruction, help. The church loves the poor and the suffering, the small ones, the dispossessed, the abandoned.”<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning the Roma are addressed not only as pilgrims, that is this term which was used by themselves or which was ascribed to them when they appeared in Europe and that led to a friendly welcome and a benevolent support, but as eternal pilgrims. This notion follows the widespread myth, the gypsies would have refused to help the Holy Family during their flight to Egypt and therefore have to pilgrim eternally around the world as punishment.<sup>7</sup> In the following list all the common images and perceptions are projected onto the gypsies which even partially blame them for their situation. Gypsies are voluntarily exiled, are restless and unsteady, don't have their own house and don't have a profession. That they are looked at with distrust, is obviously caused by their distrust towards the world, that is mentioned earlier. That they are isolated, strange and excluded from every social circle is obviously the result of their own wish to be a foreigner always and everywhere (“voi que avete voluto essere forestieri sempre e dappertutto”). At last they are on their way without a goal, so they need instruction by the church.

As a consequence the pastoral care of the gypsies is assigned to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, where besides socio-economic nomads, these are members of the civil aviation (pilots of military aircraft resort to the military chaplaincy) international students, circus and carnival people, people of the sea also ethnic nomads such as Roma and Sinti are covered.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence Tuareg from the Sahara, Maasai from Tanzania and Kenya and Pygmies from Central Africa have been invited to conferences of this Pontifical Council.<sup>9</sup>

These are the strange outcomes of a concept or identity, which assumes, that it would be possible to define Roma along behaviors and customs such as nomadism, alleged criminality, begging and so on, that are attributed to them as being typical. But that is wrong.

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<sup>6</sup> POPE PAUL VI (1965) “Cari Zingari, cari Nomadi, cari Gitani, venuti da ogni parte d'Europa, a voi il Nostro saluto. 1. Il Nostro saluto a voi, pellegrini perpetui; a voi, esuli volontari; a voi, profughi sempre in cammino; a voi, viandanti senza riposo! A voi, senza casa propria, senza dimora fissa, senza patria amica, senza società pubblica! A voi, che mancate di lavoro qualificato, mancate di contatti sociali, mancate di mezzi sufficienti! Saluto a voi, che avete scelto la vostra piccola tribù, la vostra carovana, come vostro mondo separato e segreto; a voi, che guardate il mondo con diffidenza, e con diffidenza siete da tutti guardati; a voi, che avete voluto essere forestieri sempre e dappertutto, isolati, estranei, sospinti fuori di ogni cerchio sociale; a voi, che da secoli siete in marcia, e ancora non avete fissato dove arrivare, dove rimanere! Voi nella Chiesa non siete ai margini, ma, sotto certi aspetti, voi siete al cento, voi siete nel cuore. Voi siete nel cuore della Chiesa, perché siete soli: nessuno è solo nella Chiesa; siete nel cuore della Chiesa, perché siete poveri e bisognosi di assistenza, di istruzione, di aiuto; la Chiesa ama i poveri, i sofferenti, i piccoli, i diseredati, gli abbandonati.”

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/migrants/documents/hf\\_nomads/hf\\_p-vi\\_hom\\_19650926\\_intmeeting-nomads\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/hf_nomads/hf_p-vi_hom_19650926_intmeeting-nomads_it.html) viewed on 20. 08.2012

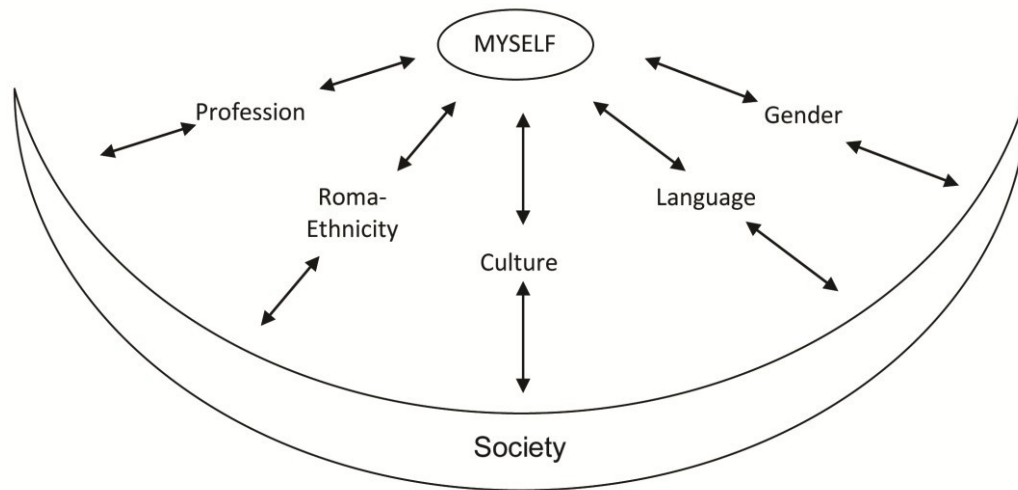
<sup>7</sup> cf. Anneke WINCKEL, *Antiziganismus. Rassismus gegen Roma und Sinti im vereinigten Deutschland*, Münster 2002, p. 21; Ines KÖHLER-ZÜLCH, „Die verweigerte Herberge. Die Heilige Familie in Ägypten und andere Geschichten von „Zigeunern“ – Selbstäußerungen oder Außenbilder?“, in: Jacqueline GIERE, *Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion des Zigeuners. Zur Genese eines Vorurteils*, Frankfurt 1996, p. 46

<sup>8</sup> cf. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/migrants/index\\_ge.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/index_ge.htm) viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>9</sup> cf. Leo CORNELIO, „Kirche und Zigeuner: Für „eine Spiritualität der Gemeinschaft“. 5. Weltkongress der Zigeunerseelsorge in Budapest.“

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/migrants/documents/rc\\_pc\\_migrants\\_doc\\_2003119\\_Nomads\\_Budapest\\_documents\\_ind\\_ge.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/rc_pc_migrants_doc_2003119_Nomads_Budapest_documents_ind_ge.html) viewed on 20. 08. 2012

Following the theory of the symbolic interactionism represented by George Herbert MEAD<sup>10</sup>, Erving GOFFMAN<sup>11</sup>, Lothar KRAPPMANN<sup>12</sup> and others I would suggest to understand ethnicity not as an inherited marker, but as a result of a social interaction.



Ethnicity is therefore only one facet of my identity, which is one time more and one time less important depending on the circumstances and which can be one time more and one time less in the main focus of my self-image besides other traits of my identity like profession, gender, language and so on. Anyhow ethnicity is always the result of an interactive process. The outcome may be a total acceptance of the labeling by members of the dominant society or the total denial or something in between these two extremes. This process is always a question of power to define someone or to define yourself.

In all of the European countries there is a big difference concerning the figures of members of this minority between the statistics of the official census and the estimates of experts. The reason is obviously that Roma don't want to be recognized and defined as Roma. In Romania for example in the census of 2002 there were 535.140 persons who declared to be Roma,<sup>13</sup> the official national report of Romania to the EU in 2012 gives a number of 1,850,000 people<sup>14</sup>. In Austria only 10% of the estimated 30.000 – 40.000 Roma declared to be Roma at the last census.<sup>15</sup> So this is not only a phenomenon of the eastern European countries.

<sup>10</sup> George Herbert MEAD, *Geist, Identität und Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt/Main 1968

<sup>11</sup> Erving GOFFMAN, *Stigma. Über Techniken der Bewältigung beschädigter Identitäten*, Frankfurt/Main 1975

<sup>12</sup> Lothar KRAPPMANN, *Soziologische Dimensionen der Identität. Strukturelle Bedingungen für die Teilnahme an Interaktionsprozessen*, Stuttgart 1972

<sup>13</sup> Institutul Național de Statistică: „Populația după etnie”, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/rpl2002rezgen1/14.pdf>. viewed on 20. 08. 2012. Relating to the preliminary results of the census of 2011, which will be published in 2013, there are actually and officially 619.007 Roma in Romania. Institutul Național de Statistică, „Comunicat de presă privind rezultatele provizorii ale Recensământului Populației și Locuințelor – 2011”, [http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Comunicat\\_DATE\\_PROVIZORII\\_RPL\\_2011.pdf](http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Comunicat_DATE_PROVIZORII_RPL_2011.pdf) viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>14</sup> Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority for the Period 2012 - 2020, p. 6

<sup>15</sup> Bevölkerung 2001 nach Umgangssprache, Staatsangehörigkeit und Geburtsland.

[http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen\\_registerzaehlungen/bevoelkerung\\_nach\\_demographischen\\_merkmalen/022896.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen_registerzaehlungen/bevoelkerung_nach_demographischen_merkmalen/022896.html) viewed on 20.08.2012



without trial, because they led a wandering life.<sup>20</sup> It is difficult to fix exactly how many Roma were systematically killed during the Nazi-regime but the figures reach several hundred-thousand. Over 90% of the Austrian Roma were murdered in Lodz, Auschwitz and other concentration-camps<sup>21</sup>, in Romania approximately 11.000 Roma starved to death in Transnistria due to the fascist general Antonescu, that's almost the figure of the Roma who were suffocated by gas in Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>22</sup> And there is no commemoration of these crimes! Antonescu today is celebrated as a hero in the fight against the communists<sup>23</sup>, in Austria commemoration-plates in the former communities of the victims have been prevented by decisions of local councils over years.<sup>24</sup> Murder, physical annihilation happens even today: Right-extreme, paramilitary groups in Hungary throw Molotov-cocktails on Roma-dwellings and shoot families including children when they run out.<sup>25</sup>

EXPULSION of Roma motivated through racism exists today as it existed hundreds of years ago: In 1417 Roma were mentioned for the first time in Germany, in 1498 they were already banned from all German lands and the above mentioned Archbishop of Mainz ordered in 1714 to punish the wives and the older children with beatings, branding and ban. At the borders of the countries so called gypsy gallows were erected to warn and frighten the Roma from entering.<sup>26</sup>

And today the chasing is euphemistically called "repatriation" and this is put into practice on Romanian Roma in Italy for example. Their settlements in Rome were cleared by bulldozers although the UNHCR protested vigorously<sup>27</sup>. In Romania where they were deported to, the minister for external affairs considered in a tv-interview publicly whether they should be reshipped immediately to camps in the Egypt desert. He didn't have to resign.<sup>28</sup> I will soon come back to this form of Antigypsism which is very important for the topic of migration.

REPRESSION motivated by racism is so diverse and is to be found in all functional systems of society, that a summarized presentation here is impossible. Let me therefore only mention one fact, which is nevertheless rather important to understand migration. Only few people in Europe know, that Roma were enslaved immediately after their arrival in Romania<sup>29</sup> in 14<sup>th</sup> century. They were slaves of the so called boyars, of the princes and of the monasteries, up to

<sup>20</sup> cf. Guenter LEWY, „Rückkehr nicht erwünscht“. *Die Verfolgung der Zigeuner im Dritten Reich*, München 2001, p. 16

<sup>21</sup> cf. Gerhard BAUMGARTNER, Florian FREUND, „Daten zur Bevölkerungsgruppe der burgenländischen Roma und Sinti 1945-2001“, in: *Zeitgeschichte*, 30. Jg (März/April 2003), Heft 2, p. 91-105

<sup>22</sup> cf. Mariana HAUSLEITNER, Brigitte MIHOK, Juliane WETZEL (Ed.), *Rumänien und der Holocaust. Zu den Massenverbrechen in Transnistrien 1941 – 1944*, Berlin 2001

<sup>23</sup> cf. Mariana HAUSLEITNER, „Das Ende des Antonescu-Kultes? Zum Verhältnis von Geschichte und Politik in Rumänien nach 1990“, in: *Südosteuropa*, 51. Jg., H. 7-9/2002, p. 412 – 430

<sup>24</sup> cf. Dieter MÜHL, *Die Roma von Kemet*, Oberwart 2003

<sup>25</sup> cf. Pester Lloyd 31/2010, 10. 08. 2010, [http://www.pesterlooyd.net/2010\\_32/32romamorde/32romamorde.html](http://www.pesterlooyd.net/2010_32/32romamorde/32romamorde.html) viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>26</sup> cf. G. LEWY, *Rückkehr...*, 14; 16

<sup>27</sup> Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Memorandum following his visit to Italy on 19-20 June 2008, CommDH (2008) 18, 28 July 2008, para. 38

<sup>28</sup> Cioroianu told Antena 3 TV on Saturday that Romanians who steal and commit other crimes in other countries should be sent to do hard labor in disciplinary battalions. „I was thinking if we could buy a plot of land in the Egyptian desert where we could send the people who put us to shame“, Cioroianu said. "Roma Virtual Network" Wed Nov 7, 2007

<sup>29</sup> south of the Carpathian mountains



1855 in Moldovian and 1856 in the Wallachian principality.<sup>30</sup> This was only 150 years ago. The consequences of this forced labor for the actual social and economic situation of Roma can hardly be overestimated.

There also were times, when Roma enjoyed periods of relative INTEGRATION, that's true. The roman-german Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg granted them a security decree,<sup>31</sup> being skilled blacksmiths they were appreciated by the Ottoman Empire, many Roma from Eastern Europe regret to be no longer under communist regime, because at that time they had at least a regular work and income, in the western states they were accepted as traders and craftsmen in economic niches until recent time.

But as mentioned already earlier, the situation can change abruptly depending on the needs and on the function of the dominant society. Following a relatively tolerant attitude under the regime of Ceausescu in Romania suddenly after the fall of communism in 1990/91 pogroms and murders on Roma occurred.<sup>32</sup> Evidently Antigypsism has nothing to do with the real Roma, but depends on the political, social and economic needs of the dominant society.

Let us focus on the antigypsistic practice of EXPULSION. Roma have been expelled during their whole history and all over Europe. Unlike the extermination, which ends with the death of those concerned, this method has the same outcome for the majority population and for those in power, that is to get rid of them, not to see them any longer, not to have to deal with them any longer, at best to use them as discouraging example.

Some facts: in 1505 the Roma were mentioned in Great Britain for the first time, in 1530 the first law was made to expel them from Great Britain partly as far as America and Australia.<sup>33</sup> The Earl of Hessen-Darmstadt in Germany, Ernst Ludwig, declared in 1734, 'gypsies' had to leave his country within a month, otherwise they would lose their property and life. For capture and homicide of 'gypsies' a prize-money was promised.<sup>34</sup>

About the year 1600 Roma from Portugal were deported to Angola and to some African islands. Roma from Spain, who were supposed to be heretics and magicians, were deported to Brazil. In 1665 Scottish Roma were banned and shipped to Jamaica and Barbados, Polish Roma were deported to Siberia. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Basque Roma were expatriated to Louisiana. Similar procedures happened in the Netherlands and other Western European countries.<sup>35</sup>

In Eastern European countries the situation was the same. In 1615 the city of Tallin (Estland) enacted, that gypsies found on the marketplace of the city had to be arrested and publicly whipped at the pillory. In 1747 the general governor of Riga ordered that beggars, 'gypsies' and bear trainers should be expelled over the frontiers of the country, wherever they might be

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<sup>30</sup> cf. Viorel ACHIM, *The Roma in Romanian History*, Budapest - New York 2004, p. 7-26.

<sup>31</sup> cf. ibidem

<sup>32</sup> cf. Isabel FONSECA, *Bury me standing. The Gypsies and Their Journey*, New York 1995, p. 140-197

<sup>33</sup> cf. Thomas ACTON, David GALLANT, *Romanichal Gypsies*. Hove 2000, p. 44f; p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> cf. G. LEWY, *Rückkehr...*, p. 16

<sup>35</sup> cf. Rajko DJURIC, Jörg BECKEN, Bertolt BENGSCHE, *Ohne Heim – Ohne Grab. Die Geschichte der Roma und Sinti*, Berlin 1996, p. 83

seen. In 1759 Tzaritza Elisabeth of Russia ordered not to allow ‘gypsies’ to enter the city of St. Petersburg and the surrounding area.<sup>36</sup>

And here one more historic example for the ban on beggars:

After the death of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II and the failure of his policy of the assimilation of Roma, which was inspired by the age of Enlightenment, the expulsion of Roma started again. A decree from 1811 goes like this:

“Gypsies, who enter the country, are to be repelled. Some gypsies sneaked into the country in spite of this interdiction and spread throughout the land pretending to beg in the streets. They are a risk for the public security. The wandering of gypsies is prohibited in Austria. For street collection only natives with good reputation are accepted. Gypsies have to be returned to their home country and the entry to our country has to be banned at the border.”<sup>37</sup>



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It is not necessary to stress the topicality of these historical experiences in the light of today’s ban on begging in Austria and other European countries.

I sum up these historical examples so extensively to demonstrate, that expulsion, that means forced migration if you want to call it this way, is not a local phenomenon, not a national phenomenon, not a new phenomenon. These countries, where Roma are deported from today,

<sup>36</sup> cf. Ljalja KUZNETSOVA, Reimar GILSENBAACH, *Russlands Zigeuner. Ihre Gegenwart und Geschichte*. Berlin 1994, p. 101

<sup>37</sup> Conscriptio Zingarorum, Komitatsarchiv Moson, cit. in Claudia MAYRHOFER, *Dorfzigeuner. Kultur und Geschichte der Burgenland-Roma von der Ersten Republik bis zur Gegenwart*, Wien 1987, p. 33

<sup>38</sup> Warning signs for gypsies at the entry of the castle of Harburg bei Nördlingen 18<sup>th</sup> century, <http://lallarutschawo.npage.de/verfolgung.html> viewed on 20. 08. 2012



can look back on an experience for centuries. Neutrally expulsions can be called push-factors of migration, the victims of such push-factors are called refugees.

Indeed, sometimes Roma have been treated as refugees. Roma from Serbia and Kosovo and Albania were accepted as refugees in Austria and Germany during the Balkan wars.<sup>39</sup> Roma who fled from the Pogroms in Romania to Germany in the early 1990s were condoned there.<sup>40</sup> In 2009 some Czech Roma as the well known journalist Anna Poláková applied successfully for asylum in Canada, 2011 the Hungarian sociologist and advisor of the Hungarian government for Roma-topics, István Kamarás fled to Canada<sup>41</sup> until, yes until Canada reinstated the visas for Czech and Hungarian citizens,<sup>42</sup> until Germany signed a repatriation-treaty with Romania<sup>43</sup>, until Austria and Germany pushed the tolerated de-facto-refugees back to Kosovo or Albania, where they had almost no chance to rebound.<sup>44</sup>

And the pull-factors? The fear of the nomadic, mobile Roma-masses, that migrate to the west and endanger our wealth and security is often heard in political debates. However the equation of Roma with mobile nomads is factually wrong. According to similar estimates of Roma-NGOs and scientists over 90% of people denominated as Roma are sedentary, in some regions even 100%.<sup>45</sup> In the village where my institute has cared for a Roma-project now for more than 20 years it is necessary to support the people by financing and organizing the transport to the next district capital to get an ID-card or a birth-certificate, so that they can apply for the legitimate claims on the social security system in Romania.

There are no reliable figures about new Roma-migrants to Western Europe, because a selection along ethnic affiliation is no longer permitted, although it is practiced from time to time even now. The report of the Commissioner of Human Rights and the OSCE on “Recent Migration of Roma in Europe”<sup>46</sup> points out that the masses of Roma-migrants appearing in the yellow press are excessively exaggerated. In reality it is a matter of several hundreds, in Great Britain may be 5.000 – 6.000 persons. Some case-studies may show it more clearly: In Klagenfurt, the city I come from with about 100.000 inhabitants 10 – 15 beggars according to the local chief-inspector of the police have been enough to cause a law against begging in the whole province of Carinthia.<sup>47</sup> A family of Romanian Roma with 20 persons who looked for shelter under a motorway-bridge, was on the title-pages of the local press for weeks,<sup>48</sup> in Barcelona, a city with 1.6 million inhabitants, according to a recently published profound

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<sup>39</sup> cf. Brigitte MIHÓK, *Zurück nach Nirgendwo. Bosnische Roma-Flüchtlinge in Berlin*, Berlin 2001.

<sup>40</sup> cf. Zoltan BARANY, *The East European Gypsies. Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics*, Cambridge 2002, p. 253

<sup>41</sup> cf. <http://www.roma-service.at/dromablog/?p=17228> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>42</sup> ibidem

<sup>43</sup> cf. Äneke WINCKEL, *Antiziganismus. Rassismus gegen Roma und Sinti im vereinigten Deutschland*, Münster 2002

<sup>44</sup> cf. Thomas HAMMARBERG, „Europäische Migrationspolitik diskriminiert Roma“, <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1587209&Site=COE> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>45</sup> cf. Jean-Pierre LIÉGEOIS, *Roma, Sinti, Fahrende*, Berlin 2002

<sup>46</sup> Claude CAHN, Elspeth GUILD, „Recent Migration of Roma in Europe. Commissioner of Human Rights / Council of Europe 2010“, <http://www.osce.org/hcnm/78034> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>47</sup> cf. Stenographisches Protokoll der 37. Sitzung des Kärntner Landtages – 29. Gesetzgebungsperiode, Donnerstag, 1. Februar 2007

<sup>48</sup> cf. <http://www.tt.com/Überblick/4645766-6/rumänen-müssen-zeltlager-in-terfens-räumen.csp> viewed on 20.08.2012

study there are about 600 – 700 Roma who immigrated from Eastern Europe, between 5.900 and 7.100 live along the Mediterranean coast of Spain.<sup>49</sup> The actual evictions of so called Roma-camps in Lille and Lyon concerned in each case about 150 - 200 people.<sup>50</sup> That the new French president Hollande takes it into account to break his promises uttered during his presidential campaign makes it clear, that these actions are symbolic acts, that these expulsions have the quality of an “event” as Michael Stewart describes it in his new book “The Gypsy ‘Menace’. Populism and the New Anti-Gypsy Politics”.<sup>51</sup> These are artificially staged singular cases to which a symbolic meaning as a topos is allocated that is ostentatiously erected as a warning sign at the frontiers just like the medieval gallows. Michael Stewart says, that stressing the difference and the otherness of the Roma functions like a catalyst because the economically and socially unsettled Europeans need the Antigypsism as a background for the common feeling of unity.<sup>52</sup> It is astonishing, that this populism is practiced not only by political right-wing movements as Jobbik in Hungary, but now also by the socialist French president Holland. If you see, that even in allegedly open societies as Norway fierce antigypsistic currents appear nowadays, this theory seem to be confirmed.

Let’s put the famous question of Immanuel Kant on ethics: What shall we do?

The European Commission has urged the member-states to present national strategies for Roma-integration. To read them properly, you must have some experiences of interpreting fictional texts. In addition to that, some of these papers only repeat recommendations that already didn’t work during the last years. Of course, it sounds reasonable to make the migration of marginalized Roma to Western Europe unnecessary by improving their social and economic situation in their countries of origin. But the main fault in my opinion is the focus on changes on the side of Roma and not on efforts to change the attitude of the dominant society, to fight Antigypsism. The main fault is the opinion, “they” must change, not we.

I will explain this with two small examples:

Without any doubt there are many Roma who are not integrated in the ordinary labor-market. That is why in Slovakia, in Hungary and other countries neoliberal methods of labor-market-politics were introduced by linking the social allowance to the obligation of public work in order to motivate allegedly work-shy Roma to start regular work. Therefore special activation programs were installed with help of the European Social Fund, the World-Bank and so on. The expenses for social allowance for the state of Slovakia could be diminished by 50% through this international funding. But many employers dismissed their workers and replaced them by workers of theses activation-programs who earned only 60% of the minimum-wage.

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<sup>49</sup> Teresa SORDÉ MARTI et al., „Immigrant and Native Romani Women in Spain: Building Alliances and Developing Shared Strategies”, in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 38, Nr. 8, Sept. 2012, p. 1233-1249

<sup>50</sup> cf. Deux campements de Roms évacués dans la région lilloise, in: *Le Monde* 09.08.2010 [http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/video/2012/08/09/deux-campements-de-roms-evacues-dans-la-region-lilloise\\_1744621\\_3224.html?xtmc=roms\\_lille&xtcr=5](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/video/2012/08/09/deux-campements-de-roms-evacues-dans-la-region-lilloise_1744621_3224.html?xtmc=roms_lille&xtcr=5) viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>51</sup> Michael STEWART, *The Gypsy „Menace“*. *Populism and the new Anti-Gypsy Politics*, London 2012.

<sup>52</sup> M. STEWART, *The Gypsy „Menace...“*, p. 10

A research of the UNDP showed, that 60% of the participants of these activation-programs did the same work as before. Some scientists call this modern slavery.<sup>53</sup>

Second example - education.

Without any doubt a low education-level is a handicap for the integration into the labor-market. Times are over when analphabets could survive as day-laborers in agricultural collective farms. But it is very often and willingly forgotten that the majority often deprived Roma of education. In Austria and Germany the Nazi-regime prohibited the school-attendance of Roma-children. The effects on the second and third generation are still measurable. And in many countries Roma were and are displaced to so called special schools for persons with special needs, where an adequate education can hardly be achieved.<sup>54</sup> Now education-programs propose models like “the second chance” in Romania, so that adult Roma get a second chance to achieve a graduation. In our Roma-Quarter in Romania we looked for people wishing to take part in this program, and got the permission, but the project failed, because the headmaster of the school allegedly did not have a classroom available for the Roma.

This is the reason for my *ceterum censeo*: For every Euro that is invested in a Roma-project, another Euro or better two must be invested to fight Antigypsism. Pure pleas to humanism, even schooling against xenophobia and racism will be insufficient. Many publications of intercultural pedagogics and my own experiences prove, that the best way to overcome the fear of diversity and difference is primarily successful through contact, encounter, meeting someone in person.

Being a catholic theologian too let me look for some inspiration from the bible.

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<sup>53</sup> cf. Huub VAN BAAR, „Socio-Economic Mobility and Neo-Liberal Governmentality in Post-Socialist Europe: Activation and the Dehumanisation of the Roma”, in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 38, Nr. 8, Sept. 2012, p. 1289-1304.

<sup>54</sup> cf. ERRC Opposes Ethnic Boarding Schools in Slovakia <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=3580> viewed on 20. 08. 2012



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In many ways Roma are similar to the lepers of biblical times. They have to stay away from the villages, looking for shelter under motorway-bridges, besides garbage dumps, in places, which good bourgeois never enter. In some regions there is a concrete wall between the Roma-quarters and the quarters of the dominant society, in most regions there is a wall made of invisible glass. In biblical times leprosy was more than a medical diagnosis, it was a social category. In the pericope of the healing of the leper (Mark 1,40-45 par) Jesus overcomes this gap by touching him and thus healing him. Touch, the most intimate form of contact, is a healing from exclusion.

Many initiatives of members of the majority for Roma started with such an intense contact: One of the oldest Roma-NGOs in Austria was founded by a journalist who worked on a report about Romanian Roma<sup>56</sup>, the beggars-lobby struggling today to lift the ban on begging in Austria, was founded by an Austrian film-maker, who accompanied a Romanian Roma-beggar to her home to know her environment there,<sup>57</sup> my own commitment starts with the adoption of a Roma-girl as youngest of our four children.

So we should do the contrary of the common practice, no scaring, no evicting, no deporting, but creating institutionalized fields of encounter, of welcome, of admittance, where strangeness can be overcome and familiarity can evolve. Sometimes I dream that churches could perform this task, although the Antigypsism of the society is widely reproduced in religious communities.<sup>58</sup>

There are already some examples of best practice, not too many, but there are some groups and NGOs doing this work. In the city of Graz a catholic priest was shocked when he discovered Slovakian beggars had to spend the night in public toilets in winter time. He built a shelter, became their advocate, founded a noodle-production in their home village and has a

<sup>55</sup> Illumination from Codex Echternach (about 1040)

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.romano-centro.org> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.bettelobby.at/> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>58</sup> cf. G. HAUPT, *Antiziganismus und Religion*, p. 139 ff.

big influence on public discourse.<sup>59</sup> A Sinti-NGO in Upper-Austria takes over the role of a mediator when there are tensions with incoming Roma and they succeeded in building an adequate campsite for travelling Roma.<sup>60</sup> In Munich a Roma-NGO supplies special social services for Roma and is financed by the city-council.<sup>61</sup> For a long time I have demanded contact-points for Roma in every county where people with intercultural knowledge, language-skills, may be with a Roma-background are employed by the community to do information-work on both sides.

I don't think that mass-immigration of Roma to Western Europe is a real danger. The flooding of the labor-markets in Western Europe by East-European workers after the end of restrictions on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011 did not happen, as skeptics predicted. Such horror-scenarios did neither come true when the at that time poorest accession-candidates Portugal, Spain and Greece joined the EU. I think that the danger to ruin the fundamental pillars of the European Constitution, the free mobility and the free choice of working-place, is much bigger.

A friendly welcome of Roma in Western states could lead to a change of mind in their countries of origin. Romania wouldn't need to feel embarrassed any longer about its Roma population and the chance to do more for the equality of the Roma-minority within Romania could rise.

Not all problems would be solved by such a new attitude, but new and creative possibilities could appear:

In a process of dialogue the majority could find a more balanced concept of manifold identities of Roma, where Roma can take part in decision-making. Roma could be recognized with more facets of their identity, for instance as mothers who want to feed their children and prepare them for a better future, Roma could be appreciated with their talents in language-skills and arts and so on. Roma would have the chance to understand their ethnicity as only one trait of their hybrid identity and not to be reduced permanently to negative prejudices. A permanent discriminating rating of Roma-ethnicity by the dominant society can lead to a Re-ethnification, that BUKOW<sup>62</sup> and others found in their research about Turkish youngsters in Germany. The children of these Turkish immigrants who were not allowed or could not reach integration into the German society, reaffirmed defiantly their old Turkish ethnicity, reinforced it to a now positively connoted "differentia specifica" to the surrounding society. There is a rather big danger in overemphasizing the ethnicity in comparison with other traits of identity and personality. We could see this harmfully in the Balkan wars. Therefore I am rather skeptical – in contrast to my friend Tomas ACTON – that ethnical pure religious communities as some Roma-Pentecostal communities are really a good path to a better future, because they don't overcome the source of the problem, the exclusion and the gap to the majority, but underline und reinforce it ideologically.

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<sup>59</sup> <http://www.vinzi.at> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.sinti-roma.at/> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>61</sup> <http://madhouse-munich.com/> viewed on 20. 08. 2012

<sup>62</sup> Wolf-Dieter BUKOW, Robert LLARYORA, *Mitbürger aus der Fremde. Soziogenese ethnischer Minderheiten*, Opladen 1988; Wolf-Dieter BUKOW, *Feindbild: Minderheit. Ethnisierung und ihre Ziele*, Opladen 1996



In a democratic process of dialogue and encounter the self-representation of Roma could surely be improved, be it through NGOs, through political parties or through personalities. Without any doubt it is pleasing to have an increasing number of Roma-NGOs. A political self-organization of Roma, which was shattered and de facto inefficient of many years, is indispensable in a democratic society to support ones interests on national as well as on European level. But one has to be careful because the definition of Roma as transnational minority, the so called europeanization of the Roma-question is used by some national politicians. They argue in front of their voters that national changes were unnecessary because Roma are not members of the respective nationality but a supranational entity for which the EU has to take the responsibility. This danger is pointed out by VERMEERSCH in a just published article.<sup>63</sup>

Finally a structured dialogic conflict-management could minimize the importance of political concepts of Roma as enemies, that obviously never withstand a comparison with the reality.

Roma have been in Europe for over 600 years. They have survived discrimination, slavery, the systematic annihilation during the Nazi-regime in the so-called Porrajmos. If we as members of the dominant society take over our duties and try to recompense even financially some of the crimes we did on the Roma over centuries, if we devote ourselves to fight Antigypsism, if we deny the temptation to use our position of power to fix up a Roma-identity through ethnic ascriptions, if we take over the risk of an encounter at eye level and experience the enrichment by doing so, I am sure, that migration of Roma will be the least problem to solve.

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<sup>63</sup> Peter VERMEERSCH, „Reframing the Roma: EU Initiatives and the Politics of Reinterpretation”, in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 38, Nr. 8, Sept. 2012, p. 1195-1212

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Title: Antigypsism and Migration

Keywords: Antigypsism, Migration, Roma, Intercultural Learning, Xenophobia, Identity

Abstract: In this paper the author argues that the traditional concept of Roma-ethnicity marked by the attribution of certain attitudes or so called cultural peculiarities on “Roma” should be replaced by a concept of interactive creation of identity. This would help to avoid Antigypsism which is put into practice in the forms of extermination, expulsion, repression and also in certain forms of integration. Migration of Roma is no result of their cultural heritage but very often consequence of expulsion. To overcome the negative consequences of recent migration to Western Europe there should be institutionalized possibilities of contact and encounter instead of eviction and deportation.