

## **Ethnographic and anthropological research on Roma**

Roma in Hungary cannot be referred to as a uniform ethnic group. The impression of uniformity tends to be subscribed to by politicians, civil servants and the media, and it is the one commonly believed by ordinary members of the public. In reality, however, people who call themselves Roma tend to differentiate between at least three ethnic groups. Differences in native language define the three groups. Any ethnographic description of Roma has to take into consideration this fact. But differences between Roma groups based on occupations or livelihoods – as well as the associated differences in economic and social status – give rise to even greater complexity. Thus, ethnographers would be foolish to claim that “this is what Roma eat” or “this is what they wear”. They will be more accurate if they state: “the food and clothing of some successful Vlach Roma looks like this” or “the food and clothing of Hungarian Roma living in unemployment and poverty looks like that”. In this way, groups may be formed of local Roma communities on the basis of shared features or similar features. Under ideal conditions, the first step towards compiling an ethnographic description is to determine – within the given communities – the cultural norms and rules that characterise the community as a whole and then to describe the ideal forms of the given phenomena as professed to and practised by the group. Phenomena differing from the average are adjusted to the mean. In the second step, the cultural norms of the various different groups are brought together. This creates group versions of the system of clothing and nutrition. Only by placing the group versions alongside one another is it possible to describe the clothing and nutritional characteristics of Roma.

It is extremely important to understand that a dual system of these phenomena exists. On the one hand, ethnography and anthropology establish and develop systems that are derived from making observations of Roma. On the other hand, the Roma communities themselves also formulate systems of rules as part of their social functioning. A further question is the extent to which these cultural sub-systems – such as clothing and nutrition, but also weddings, burials and, more generally, the whole system of customs relating to individuals within the community or to the community as a whole – are explained, at the ideological level, by ethnic factors and the extent to which they are bound to the framework deemed characteristic of the community. In other words, what we are asking is whether “the inhabitants of Tyukod” do something in such and such a way or “the Roma inhabitants of Tyukod” do this or that, thereby distinguishing themselves from the peasants farmers of Tyukod, or whether as Roma they do something in such a manner, thereby distinguishing themselves from the *gadzo*.

The classification of Roma that enjoys wide acceptance even today was first proposed by Kamill Erdős in 1958. There were, however, attempts prior to this – attempts that have also served to influence political and administrative practices over the years. The census of 1893 considered migration and settlement to be the yardstick of development. It therefore distinguished between wandering Roma, Roma who were temporary residents somewhere, and permanently settled Roma. The idea of two extreme types of Roma stuck. For instance, two decades later, in a work entitled *Cigány a magyar irodalomban* [Roma in Hungarian literature], Gyula Fleischmann mentioned, in the introduction to his work, the following two categories:

*“We should distinguish between two types of Roma: 1. Wandering Roma 2. Settled Roma. There are important differences between the two groups. The real ancient Roma traits comprising the essential features of the race, are found in wandering Roma. Pride, melancholy reminiscent of the Indus race, reticence with regard to strangers, an attraction to the vagrant life, and a love of nature – all of these characteristics are now to be found only in wandering Roma. Owing to their self-reliant lifestyles, they have been able to preserve a greater number of the racial traits than have sedentarised Roma living in servitude. Wandering Roma look down upon their degenerate and debased brothers, the sedentarised Roma, seeing in them mere pariahs who have fallen into slavery and who are unworthy of the name of the great Roma nation.”*

In this context, however, it is the ethnographic and culturological observation (rather than the political) that is dominant, even if it is tangibly a somewhat romantic attitude. The emphasis laid on wandering Roma is a continuation of Mihály Zámolyi Varga’s romantic ethnography of tent-dwelling Roma. The work of the researchers who become known as the “Romologist triad” – Henrik Wlislocki, Archduke Joseph of Austria, and Antal Hermann – was not free of romantic attitudes. Although the three researchers “employed” the participant observation method, in the course of which they characterised Roma as people who disliked social ties, who were reluctant to join with the rest of society, and who were nature’s children and not entirely honest. Their academic interest in Roma was driven by a kind of enlightened absolutism: they “devoted their efforts” to the sedentarisation of wandering Roma. Archduke Joseph wanted to settle a group of wandering Roma on his estate in the village of Alcsut, while Antal Hermann sought, as chief counsel at the Ministry of Interior, to prepare for and co-ordinate the ministerial decree of 1916. These men apparently had little understanding of the culture of the wandering Roma. They acknowledged neither the economic necessity of nomadism nor the distrust and suspicion encountered by Roma. The long appendix in the *Pallas Nagylexikon* entitled “*zigány*” may be regarded as a summary of the work of the three authors.

An article by Antal Heiczinger published in 1939 was one of the first to describe the three groups of Roma in Hungary, giving equal recognition to trough-making Roma. In a work entitled “Data relating to the Roma question in the village”, the language, migration, occupation and livelihood, lifestyle and relations towards the village and towards peasant farmers are employed as observation criteria. In a series of essays entitled “Roma of Békés county – Roma dialects in Hungary” and “Roma in Hungary – tribes and clans,” Kamill Erdős attempted a classification of groups in Hungary that were referred to as Roma. Even today his classification is the most detailed available. It has also served to codify areas of academic study concerned with Roma, providing the terms of expressions for ethnographic and anthropological inquiry. Moreover, in its fundamental categories, it has served to influence subsequent sociological research.

*“Two types of Roma may be distinguished in Hungary:*

*A) Romani-speaking Roma*

*B) Non-Romani-speaking Roma*

*The first group may be divided into two very distinct groups:*

*A1) Speakers of the so-called Carpathian dialect of Romani*

*A2) Speakers of the so-called Vlach (Vlax) dialect of Romani*

*The A1) group may be divided into three sub-groups:*

*a) Nógrád county*

*b) Budapest region (Páty, Csobánka, Pomáz, Zsámbék, Pilisvörösvár, Bia, Pesthidegkút, Budakalász) and the Transdanubian region (Pécs, Mohács, Versend, Dunaszekcső)*

*c) Knife-grinder and carousel Roma (migrating throughout the country and calling themselves “German” or “Vend” – i.e. Slovenian – Roma)*

*The dialect spoken by Vlach Roma living in Nógrád county is different from that spoken by other Vlach Roma in Hungary.*

*Carpathian Roma and Vlach Roma are unable to communicate with each other in Romani, because of the great difference between their respective dialects.*

*Vlach Roma (A2) are divided into several tribes (types), and within these tribes there are numerous clans. Their tribal names indicate their occupations, while their clan-names stem from the names of their forefathers or some esteemed predecessor (sometimes even a nickname) or from the name of the place where the clan first settled down (toponym). The names of tribes and clans sometimes go back centuries, but sometimes they are only a few decades old.*

*The types of Vlach (Vlax) Roma are as follows: a) Lovari (horse-traders; horse-dealers); b) Posot’ari (pick-pockets); c) Kherari (casual labourers, house-owners); d) Colari (carpet dealers); e) Kelderari (copper-smiths, kettle-menders); f) Cerhari (“tent-dwellers”); g) Mašari (“fishermen”); h) Bugari (“randies”); i) Čurari*

(“knife-grinders”); j) *Drizar* (“robbers”); k) *Gurvar* (*fodozovo*) (*dish-makers, cutlery-menders*).

The main *Vlach* (*Vlax*) Roma clans are as follows: *Hercegešt’e* (from the village of *Hercegszölös*), *Čokešt’e*, *Kodešt’e*, *Ducešt’e*, *Dudmešt’e*, *Pirancešt’e*, *Migurešt’e*, *Sosoješt’e*, *Čiriklái* (meaning: *bird*), *Ruva* (meaning: *wolf*), *Markulešt’e*, *Notari*, *Nemeka* (forefather: from the name *Voivode Nemeka*), *Buzešt’e*, *Trandešt’e*, *Čampašošt’e* (from a nickname), *Kozak*, *Kolompar*, *Stojka*, *Rafael*, etc.

The second main group of Roma comprises the non-Romani native speakers. They are divided into two sub-groups:

B1 group comprises Hungarian native speakers;

B2 group comprises Romanian native speakers.

The B1 group (*Romungro*, “*Rumungro*”) are the descendants of Carpathian and *Vlach* (*Vlax*) Roma whose ancestors did not teach their children Romani – probably hoping that this would facilitate their assimilation into Hungarian society. It is now almost impossible to distinguish between the Carpathian and *Vlach* elements.

They are sub-divided into two sub-groups:

a) *musicians* (“*gentlemen*” group)

b) *adobe-makers, basket-weavers, casual labourers, etc.* (poorer group)

The B2 group is also divided into two sub-groups:

1) *Romanian Roma* (e.g. in the communities of *Elek* and *Méhkerék* in *Békés* county)

2) *Trough-making Roma*.

The Romanian Roma have no sub-groups. Three types of trough-making Roma live in Hungary:

a) “*Roma from the region behind the Tisza*” [*tiszaháti cigányok*]: mainly in the *Nyírség* region; they have neglected their native language and tend increasingly to speak Hungarian;

b) “*Smoky Roma*” [*füstös cigányok*]: constitute the transition; live in *Füzesabony*, *Békéscsaba* and *Tiszafüred*;

c) “*Danube Roma*” [*dunás cigányok*]: live in *Transdanubia*; many of the men have shoulder-length hair, while the women wear necklaces of tiny seashells and pearls.”

The classification system now used by analysts is far simpler than the extraordinarily complex system proposed by Kamill Erdős. Today, the following groups tend to be mentioned: A2 (*Vlach Roma*), B1 (*Hungarian native speakers*), B2.1 (*Romanian native speakers*), and sometimes A1.c (*Slovenian Roma*). Kamill Erdős was careful to differentiate between the various groups. When making descriptions, he always referred to just one of the groups and never claimed that his findings would be valid for other groups.

Having overcome the difficulties of classifying the various Roma groups, ethnographers showed varying amounts of interest in compiling descriptions of Roma. In terms of attitudes and issues, research undertaken in the 1950s represented a continuation of the efforts of the 1930s. The interest was manifest in two areas. On the one hand, researchers were inquisitive about traditional crafts; on the other, they wished to understand folkloristic elements. Their positivist descriptions of traditional or ancient crafts, the collection of objects in museums, and photographic documentation, have enriched our knowledge of Roma (descriptions of Roma trough-makers were made by Béla Gunda, Margit Békeffy, Tivadar Petercsák and János Bencsik, and descriptions of iron-workers by Ferenc Bakó, Kamill Erdős, Ferenc Bodgál, Ilona Ladvenicza and Zsuzsa Bódi; moreover, the analyses also included adobe-making, brick-baking, rag-weaving, basket-weaving). However, such works are limited to learning about crafts; they are not embedded in the history of the community as a whole or in the community's real framework of relationships. Thus, rather than record real social historical processes, the descriptions tend to relate to the history of technology.

Folkloristic research efforts were initially motivated by the fact that Roma had adopted elements of Hungarian folk culture and continued to exhibit them. The researchers assumed that Roma did not possess their own ethnic culture but, as archaic communities, had preserved numerous cultural elements adopted from Hungarian dance folklore and folktales. Thus, the purpose of research was not to describe Roma culture, but to gain insights into archaic systems of Hungarian folk culture. Emphasis on the co-existence of Roma with non-Roma gave legitimacy to the idea that the Roma culture was exclusively the result of the adoption of elements from Hungarian culture. There is no denying that folklore knowledge is to be considered dependent upon social class or status, but one should not ignore the ethnic knowledge that arises during the formulation of group identity. Folklore researchers concentrated on collecting folktales, so that the articles published by the Romology Section of the Ethnographic Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences contained collections of folktales, but mention should also be made of the work of Olga Nagy and József Vekerdi.

A very different approach was employed by Katalin Kovalcsik, who, in the course of folklore research, concentrated on a given community rather than on the surviving elements of a specific genre. Her research thus sought to describe the folklore system of specific communities. In contrast to the two other schools of thought, Károly Bari formulated, in his summary work, an attempt to construct the formerly homogenous Roma folklore knowledge by means of the folklore artefacts surrounding Roma.

In recent decades, folkloristic interest has spread to the traditional beliefs of Roma and to several elements of traditional customs such as the subsystems relating to

birth, death and mourning, and to describing curses and oaths. The studies of Kamill Erdős represent an example of such interest. As far as the specificity of the description, we should distinguish between the works of Melinda Rézműves, Gusztáv Balázs and Juliann László Kalányosné on the one hand, who relate specific findings in the field to specific communities, and the works of György Rostás-Farkas, Ervin Karsai and Pál Farkas on the other, who tend to take their own experiences of Vlach Roma communities and generalise them for Roma as a whole. They are also the ones who attempted to compile a Roma ethnography in their synthesising work. The scholarly value of their attempt is diminished by their failure to include references and their rather romantic portrayal of Roma.

The “second triad” of scholars comprises Kamill Erdős, József Vekerdi and András Hajdú. From our point of view, the first two of these researchers had the greatest influence on subsequent ethnographic research. The similarity of their approaches is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that both of them believed that Roma could be persuaded to abandon “their outdated lifestyle”. Researchers continue to cite the works of Kamill Erdős, but József Vekerdi is now a discredited figure. In his latter works – as a philosophical comment on cultural theory – Vekerdi even stated that an independent Roma culture did not exist, as its development had been prevented by a lack of traditions, and that Roma “were characterised by material and spiritual simplicity”.

The first major synthetic work of recent decades was edited by László Szegő and published in 1983 as *Cigányok, honnét jöttek – merre tartanak* [Roma, where did you come from and where are you going?]. The book includes a variety of texts with differing approaches, including scholarly analyses as well as other texts urging the integration and upward mobility of Roma. In recent decades, several researchers have attempted to publish monographs or collected essays on Roma customs (e.g. Zsuzsa Bódi, Tibor Tuza, Elemér Várnagy and Katalin Kovalcsik and Anna Csongor). Another possible name on the list is Géza Csemer, who argues in his book *Habiszti* against over-politicising Roma culture.

In summary, we may state that in recent decades ethnographic and folkloristic researchers have tended to concentrate on Vlach Roma – who are considered to be traditional Roma – and have been limited to describing an archaic phenomenon. They have tended not to regard the community or group as the point of departure and have usually ignored modern-day processes. Thus, it is no accident that the ethnographic notes in manuals and other educational material are often archaic and usually describe the cultural phenomena of Vlach Roma as if they were typical of Roma culture in general.

Perhaps the most accurate descriptions and analyses of the cultural systems of the various Roma groups are to be found in social anthropological works. Under this approach, researchers investigate the culture of Roma groups as an existing culture

whose principal purpose is to organise community life and to promote the existence of the group. It is not possible to describe the culture in itself, but only in its relationship with majority society. Of such anthropological researchers, Michael Stewart, a British researcher, has produced the most significant work.

The fieldwork undertaken by Michael Stewart among Roma in Hungary in the 1980s as well as his published findings opened up new horizons in our knowledge of Roma, because Stewart used methods that were quite different from the ethnographic approach. Stewart intentionally selected a Vlach Roma group, because he supposed that they would have preserved a greater number of independent elements in their cultural system and would have tried harder to preserve traditional values and lifestyle. While compiling the description of Vlach Roma, Stewart also examined their relationships with peasants and other Roma groups. In this way, he was able to unravel something that scholarly research and governments had muddled over for years. Stewart also succeeded in revealing something that public opinion often passes judgement upon without understanding the situation. Stewart drew a line between Vlach Roma with traditional lifestyles and aspirations that differed from mainstream society and from its value-system on the one hand, and Hungarian Roma with lifestyles and aspirations that attempted to accommodate the values of society.

Research of an anthropological nature was subsequently carried out by Gábor Fleck and Tünde Virágh in Beás communities and by Viktória Burka in Hungarian Roma communities.

One should mention two further cultural historical works that may assist readers in acquiring further knowledge. A work entitled *A magyarországi cigánykutatások története* [History of research on Roma in Hungary] by József Vekerdi covers many different areas of scholarly study, while Csaba Prónai's work entitled *Cigánykutatás és kulturális antropológia* [Roma research and cultural anthropology] evaluates, primarily in terms of cultural anthropology, international and Hungarian research projects of the past and present.

### **The self-definitions of Roma ethnic groups and their perceptions of other Roma groups**

Here we have reached the point where, approaching from the folk culture of the groups in Hungary that are referred to as Roma, we may examine the classification of the groups and their relationship with one another, including their opinions of other Roma groups. We have already noted that it is possible to register, as a general trend among the groups, a desire to be separate and distinctive. Indeed, almost all the groups referred to as Roma seek to clearly distinguish themselves

from other groups referred to as Roma, often rejecting any comparison with the other groups.

People in Hungary who are referred to in the scholarly literature as Vlach Roma [*olah cigányok*] tend to call themselves *Rom* or *Roma*. The so-called Hungarian Roma [*magyar cigányok*] tend to call themselves “musicians” [*muzsikusok*], while the Romanian Roma [*román cigányok*] usually call themselves *Beás* [*beások*]. Of course, one should not assume these three groups must always constitute the basis for any classification, but there is no denying that the various groups do usually place themselves in one of these three main groups. At the same time, Roma placing themselves in one of the main groups do not necessarily accept all other Roma placing themselves in the same main group. In other words, some Roma who declare membership of a group are not regarded as belonging to the group by others in the same group.

In the late 1980s, Hungarian intellectuals who were favourably disposed towards Roma began using the word *roma* instead of *cigány* when referring to anybody who was considered to be Roma, because they felt that *cigány* and other related words were pejorative or insulting. However, the “musicians” [*muzsikusok*] protested against the use of the term *roma*, claiming that they were not Roma but Musician Roma [*muzsikus cigányok*]. Nevertheless, most Hungarian-speaking Roma politicians were willing to use the term Roma when referring to the civil society and political organisations of Roma people, such as the Roma Parliament [*Roma Parlament*], Roma Civil Rights Foundation [*Roma Polgárjogi Alapítvány*], Roma Press Centre [*Roma Sajtóközpont*], Roma Veritas [*Roma Veritas*], while other bodies received names in the Romani language: *Phralipe*, *Amaro Drom*, *Lungo Drom*, and *Romano Kher*. These facts indicate that at the level of “Roma politics” the various groups’ unity and cultural and social integration has been established – although this does not mean that such unity is universally recognised at the level of everyday culture. Even in today’s “journalese”, the term Roma has won legitimacy, although it can be a euphemism or an accommodation with the spoken language. Often interpretations about Roma merely devalue the term.

A crucial sociological fact is that there exists between the three main groups a firm boundary in terms of marriage. The groups are endogamous, and even within the three main groups there are endogamous subgroups. This means that individuals belonging to a certain group can only marry within the group. Within groups calling themselves Musicians or Rom, there are firm boundary lines. These subgroups can be based on occupations, lifestyle, material wealth or geography, but they may also derive from the clan or kinship systems. Another trenchant expression of social segregation is residential segregation, when people belonging to two or three of the main groups reside in different parts of the village and do not “mix” or where in a given village there is a Roma settlement, within such a

settlement one can observe a dividing line, an imaginary boundary. Segregation of the main groups can also be seen in the field of employment. In earlier decades, people belonging to different groups formed separate work-brigades, and they tended to ask for separate quarters at workers' hostels. The same could be observed in respect of general social relations (such as friendship, "bonding" within the same age group). All this serves to demonstrate that whereas society at large classifies anybody referred to as Roma in one uniform group, Roma themselves express their differences and their belonging to one of the groups through symbolic means.

We can observe such efforts in the linguistic separation of the groups referred to as Roma. The terminology of the groups referred to as Vlach Roma classifies people or groups as follows. Members of our group are Roma. People opposed to our group are "gadzo", which can be further divided into peasants and nobles (generally speaking, those opposed to the group with hostile sentiments are called peasants, while those who show solidarity with the group are called nobles). The category inbetween are called Romungro, a term that implies that they are neither Roma nor Hungarian. Hungarian Roma divide the world up in a similar manner, calling their own group "musicians, and calling Vlach Roma those people defined as Vlach Roma in the scholarly literature. Like the Vlach Roma, Hungarian Roma call non-Roma "gadzo" – a word derived from Romani.

If we take some local groups or communities as our point of departure, we see that the classification of Roma is unclear and contradictory. In a work entitled *A magyarországi cigányok helyzetéről* [On the situation of Roma in Hungary], György Pogány and Géza Bán cite a categorisation given by a Roma person living in Salgótarján:

*"Roma living in Hungary comprise six groups: a) tent-dwelling itinerant Vlach Roma; b) trough-making Roma; c) carpet-makers and trading Roma; d) rural casual workers who are also basic musicians; e) provincial urban and Budapest urban dwellers, working in industry but with a casual attitude and nature; f) musicians living in provincial urban and Budapest urban areas, who are more greatly esteemed as musicians. It is important that we consider within the various groups and categories the greatest level of development."*

This classification evidently makes simultaneous use of ethnic, occupational and settlement factors. Members of a Romani-speaking group in Szalkaszentmárton think that Roma can be divided into Romungro ("musicians"), Vlach Roma, tent-dwelling Roma, hovel-dwelling Roma, knife-grinders, and trough-makers. They then divide the Vlach Roma into further subgroups – Lovari, Pantestyu, Kudestyi, Sosoyi, and Hodestyu; in other words, they mix up and regard as identical groups defined in Kamill Erdős's terminology as tribes and clans. When asked to define themselves, they state definitively that they are Lovari, irrespective of which tribes or clans their ancestors belonged to. Hungarian-speaking Roma in Nagycserkesz

note the existence of the following groups: Vlach Roma, tent-dwelling Roma, trough-makers, “musicians”, and Hungarian Roma. Hungarian-speaking Roma in Tarnalelesz mention the following: “musicians”, adobe-makers, Vlach Roma, Lovari, and trough-makers. Romani-speaking Roma in Ároktő distinguish between Vlach Roma, Gurvari, tent-dwelling Roma, Romungro, and trough-makers. Romani-speaking Roma in Kétegyház call all Hungarian-speaking Roma Romungro; they then distinguish between Beás and Vlach Roma, including groups such as Mashari, Lovari, Kelderash and Churari. Romanian-speaking Roma in Véménd use the names Kolompár or Lakatár for Vlach Roma; they also distinguish Hungarian Roma, and divide the Romanian-speaking Roma into three distinct groups: Beás (or *árgyelán*), *tincsán* and *muncsán*. Lakatari are then subdivided into the following groups based on employment: *kisiris* (knife-grinders), *abrosár* (peddlers of textiles), *bokráncsos* (cutlers) and *kupec*. Other *muncsán* groups call themselves *cigán* and refer to Beás as *árgyelán*. The Beás themselves recognise just two distinct groups: *árgyelán* and *muncsán*.

Among Romani-speaking groups, one may observe a process of increasing unity. Lovari has gradually become the self-designation of groups whose ancestors belonged to other tribes or clans. The former tribal and occupational designations have practically disappeared, because the traditional forms of employment no longer exist and there is increasing uniformity in terms of livelihoods. Special Roma occupations such as horse-trading and other forms of business have become popular among increasing numbers of Romani-speaking groups, who were not necessarily active in such fields previously. In earlier periods, Lovari (i.e. “those with money”) were considered to be at the top end of the Romani-speaking Roma hierarchy, so that other Roma who became involved in similar work chose to be called Lovari too. The “original Lovari” also use this self-designation, but they try to exclude other Romani-speaking groups that are poor, live in segregated Roma settlements, or are not involved in business. Thus, the term Lovari has come to mean indirectly “real Roma” – Roma who are merchants and businessmen or who trade in horses, automobiles or non-ferrous metals.

Among Romani-speaking groups, the determining factors are social status and social function. A real Rom is not dependent upon the hierarchical system of the social division of labour; he seeks to be his own boss. This is true despite the fact that his activities are dependent upon his connections with peasants and the rest of society. That is to say, real Roma make a living by purchasing goods from peasants and other producers and then by selling them. In this regard, beneficial and successful business deals constitute the supreme value, because they will ensure independence from the majority and from the institutions of the majority. At the same time, the visible expression of a person’s wealth serves as a symbol of the real Rom. Thus, he will accumulate and show visible items of wealth and live “the good

life". Romani-speaking Roma communities that are unable to fulfil such expectations are not regarded as real Rom, even though "they speak the language" and see the purpose in life in entertainment, in mutual self-respect, and in nurturing relationships with family and friends. One of the status groups manages to accomplish all these expectations, while the other is capable of realising just one element of the system.

We observe a similar phenomenon among the Hungarian-speaking Roma ethnic group. Almost without exception, Hungarian Roma define themselves as "musicians", irrespective of whether they or their immediate ancestors made a living from music. Consequently, "musician" [muzsikus] is the self-designation used by people whose forebears were adobe-makers, day labourers or – more recently – agricultural or industrial workers. However, in their view, "musician" denotes their original ancestry, because the common mythical ancestor was a musician. Moreover, it is a group name that can be applied to all Hungarian-speaking Roma, thereby distinguishing them from Vlach Roma or trough-making Roma. Those Roma who consider themselves to be real musicians naturally reject this usage and try to limit the meaning by emphasising the principle that "all musicians [*muzsikusok*] are Hungarian Roma [*magyar cigányok*], but not all Hungarian Roma are musicians". Real musician Roma consider the "good life" to be something like that of the "genuine artist" or, nurtured by an earlier idea, close to the "gentry ideal". Thus, the real musician is respectful of others, generous, hospitable and charitable, thereby achieving symbolic superiority. Although the musician is dependent for his livelihood upon peasants and guests, his values are not identical to theirs. He seeks to express the good life by means of the material world, but he tends to consume rather than accumulate goods. Since his livelihood is based on making music (that is, providing a service), he does not attempt to achieve "enhanced reproduction" as do Roma merchants and businessmen.

For groups of Hungarian Roma defining themselves as "musicians" but not making a livelihood from music, peasant and lower middle-class values have been the desired norm in recent decades, despite the attraction of the (unattainable) status of the real Roma musicians. Security – employment, the family, and the security of the family – has become the purpose of life. The perceived objective was the partial or limited independence of the peasant or worker lifestyle. In previous decades, industrial work or even full-time work in agriculture provided the basic livelihood. A general aim for members of this group was to define themselves first and foremost as Hungarian citizens rather than refer to their "Roma descent". Roma living in isolated and segregated settlements wished to move to villages and towns and live among non-Roma, and they were offended when others called them Roma [*cigány*]. Despite all their efforts, they did not succeed in moving to prosperous villages to live among the non-Roma. Everywhere they were forced to face the

social consequences of their ethnic background. Nevertheless, there was general acceptance of the government and administrative policies of assimilation. Moreover, members of these groups blamed Vlach Roma for the prejudices they faced.

We know now that the assimilation attempts of Hungarian-speaking Roma were only partially successful. From the latter half of the 1980s, many Roma – above all unskilled workers and labourers – became unemployed and lost their stable and secure livelihoods. Many Roma who had already attained a lower middle-class quality of life, were forced once again into casual work and insecure livelihoods. Cultural forms typical of the culture of poverty arose. During this period, business and enterprise offered the securest form of livelihood – as the many examples of Vlach Roma livelihood strategies demonstrate. Even in communities where the men used to work in industry or in agriculture, buying and selling and street-vending became possible livelihood solutions. In recent years, there has been a fusion between the two groups, based on the cultural system of the commercial “business” occupations. The category of adapters has been pushed into the background, despite the fact that, in comparison with previous decades, a greater number of groups have realised the consolidated peasant farmer/middle-class way of life required by the state, such as, for instance, rural Roma employing peasant practices in agricultural production.

The various Roma ethno-linguistic groups – although the various sub-groups almost amount to “life-style groups” or even “academic concepts” – continue to maintain inter-group rivalry and attempt to assign a place to the various ethnic groups within the Roma hierarchical system. A hierarchy accepted by all does not exist. A possible universal observation is that the Romanian-speaking Beás sub-groups feel that both the Hungarian Roma and the Vlach Roma look down upon them, isolating them to the point of exclusion. Yet at the same time, Beás also believe that they possess the greatest intellectual abilities: for instance, they have established a grammar school in Pécs – the Gandhi Grammar School. The Vlach Roma – especially those who have become self-reliant economically and consider themselves to be rich – place themselves at the top of the hierarchy. They are rather contemptuous of what they call the Romungro, including “musicians” – whom they refer to as “five hundred forints people”, who earn just enough money from music to live from day to day. They consider Roma with permanent jobs or making a living as peasant farmers to be slave-like people working in drudgery. They do not regard such people as real Roma. This is not because they don’t speak Romani, but because they don’t live the Roma life and tend to copy the lifestyle of the *gadzo*. Nevertheless, some of the poorer, more destitute Romani-speaking groups think that the most distinguished Roma are the “gentleman” Roma, the musicians – but only those who really are musicians.

The musicians – the real musicians – place themselves at the top of the hierarchy. They are proud that they are able to popularise Hungarian music (which in their view is really Roma music), thereby enhancing the reputation of the country. Defining themselves as Hungarian citizens and as being placed high up on Hungary's social hierarchy, they consider themselves to be “esteemed members of society” because they conform to the values of society. They blame the Vlach Roma for anti-Roma prejudice, arguing that the rich ones have doubtless acquired their wealth by criminal and dishonest means. The prejudice against them is thus justified. Meanwhile, the poor ones – who are themselves to blame for their poverty – live outdated lifestyles, thereby discrediting the musicians, because society tends to generalise about Roma. People's judgements of Vlach Roma may be transposed on to them, thereby preventing their integration into society.

The Romani-speaking groups distinguish themselves from the Hungarian-speaking groups because they think that the latter have abandoned their ancient Roma culture, seek to adapt to the cultural norms of the majority, and are determined to assimilate into society. They fear that they will be identified with an ethnic group whose group identity they do not profess, because for them one of the most important elements of a purposeful life is to live as a Roma and to maintain the Roma characteristics of their culture. This difference in view gave rise to the debate concerning which Roma group has an authentic cultural system. As far as anthropology is concerned, the question is clearly a pointless one, because a cultural system is always a changing and developing structure. Our description of the cultural system of the Hungarian-speaking groups cannot be so profound as our description of the cultural system of the Romani-speaking groups, because previous researchers have tended to assume the greater originality of the culture of the Romani-speaking communities and have thus spent less time on describing the culture of the Hungarian-speaking groups. (In other words, descriptions such as those of Kamill Erdős and Michael Stewart are not available for the Hungarian-speaking groups.) In our experience, however, Hungarian-speaking Roma communities do consider their own cultural system to be a part of Roma culture.

Perhaps it is not simply a phantasmagoria to hypothesise that the conflicts between the various groups could be resolved if researchers would consider the cultural systems of the Roma ethnic groups to be equivalent and if the findings of research would be better applied, enhancing knowledge of Roma both among politicians and members of the general public. If the classification and internal value systems of Roma groups were better known, then they might face less ignorance and prejudice in everyday life. They would prevent the boundaries between the various groups from becoming more rigid, and this would increase the degree of solidarity within the community. Although the intellectual representatives of Hungary's Roma ethnic

groups are working to achieve their cultural integration, nevertheless at the level of popular culture one may perceive “trench warfare” between the various groups.