

Summaries

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How Europe invented its gypsies. On the dark side of modernity

K.M. Bogdal

Europe is commonly depicted as the cradle of modernity. But this image usually has a blind eye for marginal communities and cultures existing seemingly apart of the big developments. An example of this is the neglect of the Roma people who settled here early, on the threshold of the Middle Ages and the modern era. The attitude of the European people towards this mobile ethnic group can be described as moving between contempt and fascination. Referring to images of gypsies in literature and other cultural expressions the author shows how during the Romantic era the gypsies were serving as a projection object for desires and fantasies about socially deviant lifestyles. The subsequent process of 'de-Europeanization' together with the creation of exotic images through ethnology is described as well as the racial theories and their political consequences for the Roma people in the twentieth century. Instead of contributing to the creation of borderlines and fuelling destruction fantasies, art and sciences should give more attention to the undividedness of humankind and to human dignity.

Germany and the gypsies: from exclusion to *Endlösung der Zigeunerfrage*, 1407–1945

M.T. Croes

This article gives an overview of the persecution of the gypsies in Europe from their arrival in Central and Western Europe in 1407 till the *Baro Porrajmos* ('great devouring' in some Romani dialects) as the mass killing of gypsies during the Second World War is called. The focus in this article is on Germany.

The language of the Roma and Sinti

P. Bakker

The Roma and Sinti (formerly called gypsies) have a language of their own called Romani or Romanes. The language has been present in the Netherlands since 1420, and the first documentation from our country dates from the 1500s. Linguists have established that the language is a continuation of Indian languages. The dialects of Romani from all corners of Europe also show the clear unity of the language. It is not – as sometimes supposed – a secret jargon. After centuries of neglect or downright oppression of the people and their language, Romani is now recognized at the national and European levels. This also led to an increasing use of a written language, used for all genres, from literature to cookbooks and political texts. Despite having been spoken beside other languages for over a millennium, its vitality is higher than for all of the more recent immigrant languages in the Netherlands.

An underprivileged minority in the margin? The socio-economic and political situation of the Roma in Europe

P. Vermeersch

This article provides an overview of the current socio-economic and political situation of the Roma in Europe, the continent's largest and most marginalized minority. While a host of new regulations and initiatives on different levels of government have been issued in order to foster the social inclusion of the Roma in various areas of life, the situation on the ground remains far from hopeful. Poverty and discrimination continue to be huge problems in most of the countries where Roma live. New avenues for political and social mobilization have become available to Roma activists and politicians. Yet also in this area important challenges remain. The recent popularity of extreme right-wing populist responses to Roma mobilization and migration has created important obstacles to the full participation and equal citizenship of Roma in our contemporary societies.

Between authenticity and adjustment. On the culture and integration of Dutch Roma and Sinti

P. Jorna

This article focuses on 'culture' as a concept currently dominating the approach towards Roma and Sinti, in policies and public opinion in the Netherlands and probably in Europe too. The author argues that a

culture-sensitive approach is useful indeed, but a fixation on culture leads into a dead end street – especially in the static way in which it is (implicitly) conceptualised. Explaining some traditional Roma habits and values, the author describes examples of everyday life in Roman communities, as well as some lively debates among Roma and Sinti insiders. It is important that the complexity and dynamics of Roma culture are recognised and that outsiders stop defining what Roma culture ‘is’. Instead, recognising the differences between communities as well as the reality of changing norms and values will provide a breeding ground for finding a healthy balance between authenticity and adjustment.

**Participation, security and representation of Roma minority groups.
A critical reflection on Dutch policies**

H. van Baar

This article critically evaluates the recent developments in Dutch policy formation regarding Roma minorities from the perspective of the increased attention paid to their position at European level. First, the author discusses the so-called ‘Europeanization of Roma representation’, that is the post-1989 representation of the Roma as a European minority and the simultaneous large-scale, Europe-wide devising of development, inclusion, and empowerment programs meant for them. Thereafter, the author argues that some of the risks of the Roma’s Europeanization – such as the isolation and culturalization of policy formation and the diminishing of democratic accountability – have also and ambiguously affected Dutch policies meant for Roma, Sinti and caravan dwellers. By means of a brief analysis of recent policy developments, the author demonstrates that the Dutch shift towards a policy that, at least in name, encourages social participation, has actually tended to result into a one-sided focus on the Roma as a ‘problem group’ and ‘security threat’.