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# **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ETHNIC ASSESSMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE<sup>1</sup>**

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# INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ETHNIC ASSESSMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

## Abstract

This paper examines how internal processes of ethnic identification influence external processes of ethnic classification. To do so, it uses survey data from Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia, which contain information for ethnic majorities and selected ethnic minorities (Roma (Gypsies) in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania; Hungarians in Romania; and Ukrainians in Russia). Respondents' self-identification of ethnicity exemplifies internal identification, while interviewers' assessments of ethnicity are used as examples of external classification. Logistic regressions, with interviewers' classifications of ethnicity as the dependent variable, show how these classifiers use respondents' self-identification of ethnicity, as well as other social markers (parents' ethnicity, language, geographical concentration, economic status, household size, and education), to assess ethnicity. The results show that although interviewers are strongly influenced by respondents' self-identification, they also override it. Interviewers use negative social characteristics (e.g. poverty, low education) to classify respondents as Roma who did not self-identify as such. For the ethnic majority groups in each country, as well as Hungarians in Romania, and Ukrainians in Russia, these variables had the opposite effect or had little influence, though ancestry and language had a strong effect for all groups. Interviewers more often classified respondents as ethnic majorities when the latter claimed to be non-Roma ethnic minorities. The results illustrate how ethnic classification processes differ fundamentally for a racialized group, the Roma, for whom classifications are external and exclusionary, as opposed to other ethnic groups, for whom social classifications are optional and generally inclusive.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ETHNIC ASSESSMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

It has become common, perhaps, to argue that social characteristics such as race and ethnicity are not fixed, essential attributes, but are constructed by actors. Yet, claiming that such characteristics are socially constructed is considerably easier than showing how they are constructed (cf. Glassner 2000:590). Here, we investigate the process of social classification among ethnic majorities and minorities in four countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia). The heightened salience of ethnicity in post-socialist Eastern Europe during the market transition provides a strategic research site to examine social classification. We examine two dimensions of classification: 1) who makes ethnic assessments (insiders or outsiders) and 2) what social markers are used to make these classifications.

### **Constructed Classifications**

From an essentialist perspective, social classification is unproblematic; since categories are given and fixed, there should be widespread agreement about them. Persons can easily be grouped into races or ethnicities<sup>2</sup> that have an “essence,” that is, natural, fundamental, and biological characteristics that members share only with each other. (For reviews of this definition see Appiah 1990:276; Calhoun 1997:18; Gil-White 2001:515-516; Haslam, Rothschild, Ernst 2000:114; Hirschfield 1966:42-58; and Smedley 1993:22-25. For uses of this definition see Fichte [1896] 1922:52-55 and Stone 1908:679). Some governments institutionalized essentialism

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<sup>2</sup>Race sometimes refers to social actors' cultural distinctions based on presumed biological differences and ethnicity to their cultural distinctions based on presumed social differences (cf. Bailey 2001:684; Cashmore 1984:85; Cornell and Hartmann 1998:35; Van den Berghe 1984:217).

in official categories. The United States' "one drop rule," stipulating that anybody with African ancestry was black, exemplifies this tendency (Davis [1991] 2000:4-6).

The social constructionist perspective, however, opens up the possibility (though not the necessity) that classifications vary (Alba and Chamlin 1983:246; Okamura 1981; Stephan and Stephan 2000:543-544; Yancey et al. 1976:391; cf. Cornell and Hartmann 1998:72, who define constructivism in contrast to primordialism and circumstantialism). For example, temporal variations in classifications are possible. Ignatiev (1995:2) argued that Irish immigrants and their descendants achieved white status and its concomitant political and economic benefits. In contrast, Mexicans in California, who had been legally defined as white in the nineteenth century, became a racialized group during the twentieth century when Mexican immigration and White unemployment increased, leading to a "metaphorical 'darkening'" of Mexicans (Almaguer 1994:72). Furthermore, different criteria may produce different identifications. Tienda and Ortiz (1986:16) showed that most of the different ethnic identifiers of Spanish origin in the 1980 U.S. census yielded the same population. However, there was some tendency for respondents with higher socio-economic status to give inconsistent answers, perhaps because of ethnic suppression or assimilation. Finally, contextual or situational factors affect identification. Harris and Sim (2002:624-625) highlighted the fluidity of racial identification among American adolescents, by showing how racial self-identification varied depending on where the race question was asked and who was present. Jaret and Reitzes (1999:731) showed that racial identification for American Blacks and Whites was more salient at work than at home.

### **Internal and External Classifications of Ethnicity**

Different classifiers can make different assessments, and in particular, insiders identifying themselves can make different assessments than outsiders who are classifying others. Guillaumin (1995:50-52) made the important distinction between altero-referential social

classifications, in which some group of “others” are perceived as different by the dominant group, and auto-referential social classifications, in which group members declare themselves to be different. Similarly, Harris and Sim (2002:615) noted that racial identities can be internal or external, while Calhoun (1997:40-41) pointed to internal and external dimensions of ethnicity.

Sometimes, however, racial and ethnic groups are distinguished upon this basis: race can involve external classifications imposed on others, while ethnicity can be an internal, self-declared affinity (Banton 1998:199; Guillaumin 1995:51; Sniderman et al. 2000:128; cf. Cornell and Hartmann 1998:35). For example, Waters (1990:7) showed how American White ethnics can choose to invoke ethnic categories. Their internal ethnic affiliations are optional and dynamic, changing situationally and over the life course (Waters 1990:15, 51; see also Lieberman and Waters 1993:446-448). In contrast, U.S. Blacks are constrained by social expectations about race and consequently have fewer options (Waters 1990:18-19). In particular, the historical legacy of the one drop rule and its wide acceptance by all racial groups in the U.S. constrains individuals with any Black ancestry to identify as only Black, regardless of upbringing and appearance (Daniel 2002:49; Davis [1991] 2000:8-11, 132-135, 138; Waters 1990:18). Xie and Goyette (1997:564) argued that ethnic identification for biracial Asians is also largely optional. For most Asian Americans, however, Song (2003:27) argued that ethnic flexibility extends only to their personal lives and not their public interactions with non-Asians. External and internal classifications can have different social consequences: racialization facilitates a one-sided politicized relationship between the dominant group and the group designated as a race, while self-declared ethnic identification can be politically empowering (Guillaumin 1995:51; Telles 2002:436).

Externally imposed labeling can be at odds with individuals’ self-identifications in several ways. First, external labeling can homogenize differences between groups that outsiders

do not recognize, but that insiders wish to maintain. For example, members of Black immigrant groups to the U.S., such as those from African or West Indian countries, are often classified simply as Black by Americans, who disregard the differences among different immigrant groups and native born African-Americans (Bonilla-Silva 2001:41; Waters 1994:796, 1999:119-120; see Song 2003:27 for Asian American and South-Asian British examples). Similarly, though Americans of African descent may make distinctions based on ethnicity, ancestry, and skin color, such differences are often ignored in the context of the U.S. racial system based primarily on the Black/White dichotomy (Nagel 1994:156). Some individuals attempt to retain and deploy ethnic markers to differentiate themselves from the negative stereotypes associated with American Blacks (Bailey 2001:691-694; Domínguez 1986:263, 276; Gibau 2005:409, 424-425; Waters 1994:816, 1999:12).

Second, insiders can homogenize differences among themselves through the use of panethnic labels (such as Latino or Asian American (Espiritu 1992:1-2) or Native American/American Indian (Nagel 1995:950; 1996:12)). While outsiders may not see the differences among such groups as insiders do, through the use of panethnic labels, insiders deliberately use a homogenizing term as a source of pride or to promote their collective interests. In contrast, outsiders may use homogenizing terms out of ignorance or scorn. The difference between the terms, “Oriental,” now generally considered to be an inappropriate label and “Asian American,” is an example of outsiders’ and insiders’ panethnic labels (Espiritu 1992:162). In this way, a classification that originated from outsiders can be turned into a political resource for insiders (Espiritu 1992:7; Song 2003:85-87; cf. Nagel 1996:7). Similarly, minority movements (eg. Black, Brown, Red and Yellow Power, Espiritu 1992:3; Omi and Winant 1986:95-99; Nagel 1996:140, 158-178, 234) often tried to unite diverse groups to promote ethnic and racial pride.

Third, outsiders can mark differences that insiders wish to eliminate. The phenomenon of

“passing as White” by individuals of mixed Black and White ancestry in the U.S. is a striking example (and can be considered to be a consequence of the one-drop rule (Omi and Winant 1986:61)). Such individuals wish to be classified as White, and thus, blend in with the majority group, though many others would consider them to be Black if their ancestry were known (Daniel 2002:49-55; Davis [1991] 2000:10, 13-15, 56-57, 78, 143; Song 2003:66-70). Some racially mixed groups, such as the American Mestizos, have collectively resisted being labeled as Black (Daniel 2002:68-72; Davis [1991] 2000:136-137). Another example is the growing tendency for individuals of mixed race and ethnicity to identify as such, exemplified in the recent adoption of a multiracial census category (cf. Daniel 2002:93-106, 125; Song 2003:66-67, 77). In some sense, such individuals are claiming that they are not different from other Americans, who have many different ancestors. Such claims may not be accepted, however, for individuals with Black ancestry (Song 2003:70; cf. example in Davis [1991] 2000:133-134).

Finally, external classification can also create or exaggerate differences within groups. Though the dichotomous Black/White racial classificatory system in the U.S. homogenizes differences between those of African descent, it often created sharp racial differences among immigrant Puerto Ricans, who had been part of a more flexible black/white continuum before migration and had seen themselves as part of a coherent Puerto Rican culture (Domínguez 1986:276; Duany 2002:238-239; Rodríguez 1989:53-56; cf. Davis [1991] 2000:12; Gibau 2005:420-421). Differences in classificatory schemes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. meant that externally and internally defined identities, as well as self-identification and interviewer classifications, were often different for Puerto Ricans (Rodríguez 1990:7-8).

Research methodologies may reflect internal or external classifications, with varying consequences. For example, in 1960, the Census Bureau’s method for identifying race or ethnicity changed from ascription by field enumerators (external classification) to mail-in self-

reports (internal identification) (U.S. Census Bureau 1975:3). In the 1960 census, there was a dramatic increase in respondents identifying as Native American in the U.S. census that cannot be attributed to increased birth and decreased mortality rates (Nagel 1995; cf. Eschbach 1993). Instead, the reduced stigma and increased symbolic value of claiming Native American ancestry propelled more people to self-identify as Native American. Similarly, Mexican-Americans resisted the U.S. government's attempts to classify them under the category "other races" in the 1930 census (Petersen 1987:223). Consequently, Mexican-Americans were classified in later censuses as non-English speaking whites or in accordance with Spanish surname.

### **Social Markers of Ethnic Classification**

The constructionist perspective implies that social markers should also influence classification. Social markers include cultural differences, such as normative behavior and symbolic representations (Williams 1989:403), cultural repertoires (Lamont 2000:604), putative shared histories and collective memories (Calhoun 1997:55-60; Smith 1986:25, 212-13), religion, custom (Geertz 1973:259), and language (Bailey 2001:681; Geertz 1973:259; de Saussure 1985:29). Bourdieu (1984:169-170), for example, argued that patterns of behavior, appearance, dress, and artistic consumption correspond to different social groups that social actors can identify. While he focused on class differences, these cultural differences can also mark race and ethnicity. For example, Lamont (1999:127) noted that U.S. Black and White working-class men have different conceptions of the relationship between social status and worth. Similarly, Rapaport (1997:17, 60; drawing on Durkheim and Mauss (1963) and Bourdieu (1984)) argued that Jews actively and consciously maintain boundaries between themselves and Germans in post-Holocaust Germany through cultural typifications of Germans that signify a certain type of mentality: precise, punctual, emotionless, and obsessively bureaucratic. Weber (1978: 388-390) viewed ethnicity as a process of social closure, by which groups demarcate

themselves using social markers vis-à-vis other groups out of economic and/or other interests. From these perspectives, ethnicity is an ascriptive category constructed by social actors that creates and perpetuates social boundaries (Barth 1969:9-10; Bourdieu 1991:220-221; Jenkins 1994:197; McAll 1990:66-67). In extreme cases, these boundaries produce highly stigmatized ethnic groups, such as the Roma (Gypsies) (Barth 1969:30-32; cf. Laitin 1995a). Social markers can be used to distinguish insiders from outsiders in the process of boundary construction.

Some social markers of ethnicity are relatively easy to measure in quantitative studies. For example, geographical concentration increases ethnic salience and identification with the most populous group (Eschbach 1995:96; Harris and Sim 2002:623; Telles 2002:432; Xie and Goyette 1997:565; Yancey, Ericksen, and Juliani 1976:399). Knowledge of an ethnic language increases identification with that ethnicity (Portes and MacLeod 1996:536; Stevens 1985:74). High levels of education increase the likelihood that parents classify their third-generation biracial children as Asian in the U.S. (Xie and Goyette 1997:564). High education also increases ethnic identification among Native Americans (Eschbach, Supple, and Snipp 1998:41) and White ethnics (Lieberson 1985:177; Waters 1990:58-60). High socioeconomic status decreases the consistency of respondents' identification as "Hispanic" in the U.S. census (Tienda and Ortiz 1986:16; cf. Song 2003:28-29). Portes and MacLeod (1996:536) also found that respondents with more highly educated fathers were less likely to identify as "Hispanic." Similarly, in Brazil, high education has a "whitening" effect, especially in non-white regions (Telles 2002:415-441). In Europe, large households are a common marker of Roma ethnicity (Creed 1998:135; Liégeois 1994:83).

### **Towards a Interactive View of Classification**

As the preceding review shows, social markers and social position (insider/outsider status) influence racial and ethnic assessments. Furthermore, while external and internal

assessments can be analytically distinguished, and sometimes linked to race and ethnicity respectively, it is also clear that they are simultaneously invoked (Jenkins 1994:199, 201). Similarly, Nagel (1994:154) noted that ethnicity is a dialectical outcome of external and internal assessments. Jenkins (1997:57) noted several ways in which external and internal dialectics of assessment operate. First, external definitions entail internal ones; that is, the act of defining an “us” requires that a “they” exists. Second, external definitions influence internal ones. Finally, pre-existing internal definitions may provide a defense against externally imposed definitions, giving individuals the means by which to resist such definitions or to react to them. Here, we explore this dialectical process of external and internal assessment. While Jenkins suggested that external definitions influence internal ones, we explore the reverse direction, the way in which internal definitions influence external ones.

To examine how internal identifications compare to external classifications, we use survey data that includes self and interviewer assessments of ethnicity. In examining differences in self and interviewer assessments in Brazil, Telles and Lim (1998:473; cf. Telles 2002:436) argued that interviewer classification is a more appropriate method for analyses of racial inequality because perceptions of others are more influential in the labor market than self-identification.<sup>3</sup> In the data they analyzed, interviewers classified respondents’ race before conducting the survey (Telles 2002:423), and therefore, interviewers had little information (i.e. they did not have respondents’ income, age, education, or self-identification) upon which to base their judgment other than the respondent’s appearance. In contrast, in the data we analyze below, we asked the interviewers to assess ethnicity after the respondent had answered multiple survey questions about socio-economic status and ethnic self-identification. Thus, we can assess the

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<sup>3</sup>Telles (2002:436) noted that self-identification may be better for understanding successful attempts at racial or ethnic mobilization.

influence of other variables on the interviewer's assessment of ethnicity. As a consequence, we use interviewer classification of ethnicity as the dependent variable to explore one aspect of the interaction between internal and external assessment, that is, how outsiders use insider's assessments of ethnicity and other social markers (ancestry, language, economic status, education, household size, and geographical concentration) to impute ethnic status.

We are not suggesting that our post-survey interviewer classification of ethnicity is better than a pre-survey one, or that there is a correct measurement of ethnicity. Telles and Lim's measure approximates well some social settings, namely those in which participants have few social markers other than appearance (e.g. the police stopping a speeding car, a bouncer admitting would-be club entrants, job interviews when little pre-screening has been conducted). In other contexts, participants will have extensive knowledge of each other (e.g. neighbors, job interviews after initial screenings have been conducted) and our measure will better approximate those social settings. Furthermore, survey data has strengths and advantages vis-à-vis other methodologies. We cannot explore the interactive process of insiders and outsiders negotiating ethnic assessment with survey data, as we might be able to do with data from participant observation. However, survey data give a large number of cases so that we can examine aggregate trends and compare different groups across countries, which would be impossible with a small-N study.

### **Roma, Hungarian, and Ukrainian Ethnicity in Eastern Europe**

In Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia, we examine the classification of the majority groups, as well as Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, ethnic Hungarians in Romania, and ethnic Ukrainians in Russia. We use the term "ethnicity," although it is problematic. Ethnicity is not a commonly used term in these countries; for example, the distinction between ethnic Hungarians and ethnic Romanian citizens of Romania is often perceived in national terms (Fox

2006:218). “Nationality,” however, seems less appropriate as our analytic term because we focus on minorities within nation states. Furthermore, Roma classification has features of racial, not ethnic classification (which we discuss below in more detail).

We analyze ethnic classification within the context of the “market transition,” the term often used to describe a general shift from an economy based on socialist redistribution to one based on capitalist markets occurring in these countries since 1989. The social consequences of this transformation have been equally dramatic; in particular, ethnic differences are perceived to be increasingly salient during post-socialism. Because of this region’s historically shifting political boundaries, many states have had heterogeneous ethnic populations, as well as minority groups that were ethnically affiliated with neighboring states. During socialism, national unity campaigns had attempted, sometimes forcibly, to reduce social inequality and to assimilate ethnic minorities (Juska 1999:525; McIntosh et al. 1995:942-3); though, ironically, they sometimes institutionalized these ethnic differences, particularly in the Soviet Union (Slezkine 1996:224). After socialism, ethnic identity became increasingly politicized in the absence of these policies (Fox 2006:217; McIntosh 1995:939-940; Schöpflin 1995:53; Todorova 1993:149). Ethnic politicization intersected with nation-state boundaries in various ways. In some cases, ethnic affiliations and tensions arose in the absence of any change in nation-state boundaries. Elsewhere, boundaries changed with various effects (sometime creating conflict, sometimes alleviating conflict; sometimes creating relatively homogeneous ethnic states, sometimes creating ethnically mixed states). Two of our cases (Hungarians in Romania and Ukrainians in Russia) involve ethnic minorities within nation-states that are bordered by the homeland states of those minorities. Ethnic majorities – here, Romanians and Russians – may be intolerant of these ethnic minorities – here, Hungarians and Ukrainians – if they perceive their ties with neighboring states to be threatening (McIntosh et al. 1995:940, 949).

Hungarians are ethnic minorities in Romania today largely because of a historical shift in nation-state boundaries. Transylvania, the northern region of Romania, became part of that country in 1918 (it was previously under Hungarian control; Verdery 1983:266). Both Romania and Hungary have claimed sovereignty over the region and there are some ethnic tensions stemming from these political changes (McIntosh et al. 1995:942; Schöpflin 1995:51; Verdery 1983:19, 345-351, 364-367). The collapse of socialism there in 1989 heightened ethnic and national awareness, with some Hungarians calling for increased autonomy and some Romanians calling for a stronger, unified Romanian nation state (Fox 2006:218). There are also strong linguistic and cultural differences between these two groups; Romanians and Hungarians have different languages, religions, and histories. Such differences, along with recent tensions, may heighten ethnic affiliation.

In contrast, Ukrainian minorities in Russia were recently re-created by a border change during post-socialism. The Ukraine was independent from Russia from 1917-1920, then part of the Soviet Union until 1991 (Liber 1992:11-27; Service 1997:107-120, 506-507). There were some tensions between the Ukraine and the Soviet leadership during socialism, coupled with a rise in the use of the Ukrainian language and emphasis on Ukrainian culture during the early years of the Soviet Union later followed by some restrictions on it (Hirsch 1998:96; Laitin 1995b:36; Liber 1992:3-8,176-183; Service 1997:368), helping to solidify a post-socialist “Ukrainization of culture” (Laitin 1995b:36). The Ukraine is now a sovereign nation, creating a borderland situation for Ukrainians in Russia. Though there has been little violence, there have been ethnic tensions and nationalist movements among Russians and Ukrainians (Laitin 1995b:28-30), despite the strong similarities between their histories, cultures, and languages and the fluid boundaries between the two groups (Juska 1999:530,543-545; Kolstoe 1995:170-199; Pirie 1996:1079; for a view of Russian and Ukrainian cultural differences that could form the

basis of Ukrainian nationalism, see Shulman 1999:1017.). Kolstø (1996:628) suggests that Ukrainian ethnic affiliation will increase, despite the fact that many Russians downplay ethnic differences between themselves and Ukrainians (Golovakha et al. 1994:59).

Other minority groups, such as the Roma, have no claims to other states but have been historically stigmatized (Crowe 1991a:69). While other poor and marginalized ethnic groups exist,<sup>4</sup> the Roma comprise the largest cross-national group in this region that is concentrated in extreme poverty and has faced widespread discrimination in the past and the present (Barany 1994:323; Crowe 1991c:151; Emigh and Szelényi 2001; Liégeois 1994:26; Stewart 1997:3; UNDP 2002:3). The Habsburgs, in the eighteenth century, attempted to eliminate the Roma through state-imposed assimilation (Crowe 1991b:117-118). Mixed marriages were encouraged and children were forcibly removed from Roma parents. Though these policies were only partially successful because of strong Roma resistance, the Habsburgs were able to erase many markers of Roma identity. Thus, the Roma are more assimilated in regions of the former Habsburg Empire, though they remain highly stigmatized. Many Roma in Hungary speak Hungarian and are settled; in contrast, Romanian and Bulgarian Roma more often speak forms of Roma languages and travel (though the majority are settled) (Barany 1994:324-325; Stewart 1997:10). Historically, however, conditions were perhaps worst for Roma in Romania, where they were slaves for about five hundred years (Crowe 1991a:61-62). Roma were sent to Nazi death camps in the 1940s (Fraser 1992:257-270; Hancock 1991a:7; Stewart 1997:5). Another strong wave of assimilationist policies occurred during socialism (Crowe 1991a:71-72, 1991b:119-122; Fraser 1992:281; Stewart 1997:1, 7). Housing policies eliminated Roma settlements and education programs were initiated (Crowe 1991b:122; Fraser 1992:281). The

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<sup>4</sup>A few current and historical examples include Jews throughout Eastern Europe, Turks in Bulgaria, and Georgians in Russia.

policies again had mixed effects; though the material conditions of some Roma improved somewhat in absolute terms, they still faced discrimination and relative disadvantage (Crowe 1991b:121). During post-socialism, there has been a sharp increase in discrimination and hate crimes against Roma (Barany 1994:329-332; Stewart 1997:2-4, 232).<sup>5</sup> Much discrimination is overt; ethnic majorities can be heard to use virulently racist terms when discussing Roma publicly.<sup>6</sup>

Despite large scale impoverishment and discrimination, there is considerable debate over how to understand the Roma. On the one hand, there is a widespread tendency among Roma, non-Roma, and scholars to emphasize sharp boundaries between Roma and non-Roma. Ethnic majorities, as well as some scholars, often claim they can distinguish Romas' dark skin and eye color or facial features, dress, and social customs, and assume them to be descendants of a biologically inferior, non-European Eastern people (Crowe 1991c:151; Fraser 1992:2, 249; Hancock 1991b:134-135; Stewart 1997:28). Some scholars trace the Roma to India and claim that their language is related to Hindi (Barany 1994:324; Fraser 1992:2, 15-22; Hancock 1991b:134-135; Salo 1979:75). Roma, in a wide variety of countries, contribute to this perception of difference. For most of them, a primary social distinction is between Roma and non-Roma (the pejorative term for the latter, in various languages includes *gadjo*, *gadžo*, *gažo*, and *gorgio*) (Fraser 1992:8; Hancock 1991a:6, 8; 1991b:137; Salo 1979:81; Stewart 1997:114-115).

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<sup>5</sup>Some of this increase in discrimination may also be part of the “new racism” in Europe more generally (see Semyonov and Raijman 2006; Song 2003:138; and Winant 2001:249-288).

<sup>6</sup>Thus, discrimination against the Roma is different from the “color-blind racism” that Bonilla-Silva (2001:48, 69) and Winant (2001:1-2, 273), where overly racist language is avoided.

At the same time, others argue that Roma do not form a coherent group and that they share few biological or ancestral traits. Stewart (1997:28) argues that Roma do not have an ethnic identity rooted in past experience or tradition. Though some Roma groups may have originated in the Indian subcontinent many centuries ago, they widely dispersed and intermarried with other groups in different regions (Liégeois 1994:18-24; Stewart 1997:236), so there is little basis for common Roma ancestry with respect to physical or biological traits (cf. Fraser 1992:22-25). Thus, Roma may be distinguished from others only because their way of life is different (Crowe 1991a:73; Fraser 1992:3; Hancock 1991b:135). The Roma are highly heterogeneous, viewed as a singular group, as “Gypsies,” only by outsiders (Fraser 1992: 1; Salo 1979:81; Stewart 1997:10). Roma are comprised of multiple groups (e.g. Lovari, Kalderash, Boyash), with different languages, religions, and cultural heritages. The differences among these groups are often larger than between Roma and non-Roma (Barany 1994:324; Mitev et al. 2001:44-45). Some Roma are more likely to identify with these groups than with the label Roma (Barany 1994:325). Thus, in many ways, the Roma are a racialized ethnic group because a perceived social and cultural difference is often perceived in biological or physical terms (cf. Cornell and Hartmann 1998:33-35; Mac Laughlin 1999:129; Omi and Winant 1986:64).

There is also considerable debate about “who is Roma” and estimates of the Roma population vary (Ladányi and Szelényi 1997; Emigh and Szelényi 2001:7). Although Roma are thought to be insular and to dislike outsiders, it is also apparent that the intermarriage rate is high and the ethnic boundaries fluid. Historic pressures to assimilate have been strong; some Roma are distinguished from the majority only by their abject poverty. Thus, there is often considerable disagreement about whether any given individual is, or is not, Roma. Inadvertently, social science research compounds the identification problem. What is known about Roma often stems from communities selected because they are poor and stigmatized and therefore easily

identifiable as Roma. But it is not clear whether these communities are representative of other Roma populations. Even a recent UNDP study, one of the few large-scale datasets about Roma, used convenience sampling to target communities pre-determined to be Roma and employed few comparisons to other populations (UNDP 2002:86).

In contrast to these studies, this article problematizes the category “Roma” itself, as well as other ethnic categories, by analyzing how internal ethnic identifications may differ from external ones, and how social markers are used to impute ethnic classifications. As noted before, our survey methodology cannot examine the interpersonal process of negotiating identity or how the term Roma gets deployed in everyday life. However, our methodology does have an advantage, especially in avoiding studying only those individuals identified as Roma because they have stereotypical characteristics. Our large N survey can examine a broad range of individuals, who might potentially be called Roma, who do not necessarily live in pre-identified Roma communities. Such individuals would be difficult to locate and include in small N studies of Roma identity.

Thus, instead of trying to answer the question, “who is Roma,” we try to answer the question, “why are some individuals called Roma.” By understanding how and why social classifications of individuals differ, it may be easier to understand why seemingly opposite views of Roma coexist (i.e. “they are insular” vis-à-vis “they are poor, but ethnically indistinguishable”). Ladányi and Szelényi (2003:75) and Csepeli and Simon (2004:138) , using data from the same survey we analyze below and univariate analyses, argued that Roma ethnicity is more fluid in Hungary and Romania than in Bulgaria. Here, we examine some predictors of ethnicity in multivariate analyses to compare Roma ethnicity to other East European ethnicities. First, we consider whether there is agreement between interviewers’ and respondents’ reports of ethnicity. Second, we consider whether the difference between the interviewer and respondent

corresponds to an external classification by the interviewer or an internal one by the respondent. Third, we note which respondents' characteristics, net of self-identification, influence interviewers' classifications.

## **Methods**

We use survey data collected in 1999-2000 in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia (Szélenyi and Emigh 1998). We fielded individual and household questionnaires in three sub-waves (approximately November 1999, March 2000, and June 2000), to assure that variables with annual variation (such as income) were measured at several points in time. The household questions provide the context for the individual interviews and provide data for variables defined only for the household (e.g. household income and number of household members). Household interviews were conducted with the household member who was most knowledgeable about the household expenses, not necessarily with the individual respondent.

The survey has three subsamples, a nationally representative general sample, an oversample of Roma, and an oversample of the poor. In all of the countries except Russia, the target sample size for the general sample was 1,000 interviews at the household and individual level. Given the size of Russia and the problem of coverage, we increased the target size to 2,500 interviews. The final sizes of the general samples were 1,078 in Bulgaria, 999 in Hungary, 1,050 in Romania, and 2,496 in Russia.<sup>7</sup>

In Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, we oversampled the Roma and poor to obtain a large enough sample size for statistical analyses. Because the proportion of the Roma in the Russian population is miniscule, we did not attempt to study them there. In addition, the level of poverty is quite high in Russia and the target size of the general sample is larger than in the other

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<sup>7</sup>The number of cases in the tables below varies because we used listwise deletion for the missing values. Substituting the mean for the missing cases did not affect the results.

countries, so we attained enough poor in the general sample without oversampling. The oversamples were collected beginning in May 1999 on the basis of a screening question inserted into omnibus surveys. The Roma oversample was selected on the basis of interviewer classification of ethnicity because we expected the self-identified Roma to be the smallest and least diverse category of respondents (Emigh and Szelenyi 2001:7). Interviewer classification therefore assured a more heterogeneous oversample. We also selected the poor oversample on the basis of interviewers' assessments of poverty in the screeners to assure consistency in the oversampling methods. The final oversamples include 523 Roma in Bulgaria, 480 in Hungary, and 368 in Romania. It also includes 517 poor in Bulgaria, 447 poor in Hungary, and 505 poor in Romania.

A unique aspect of our data is that we have some information about the interviewers (in contrast to Telles 2002:423). The vast majority (97%) of the interviewers identified themselves as members of the majority ethnicity of each country. Our results did not change when we excluded the respondents who were interviewed by non-majority interviewers, so we include these cases below. Compared to our general sample, interviewers tended to be younger, more often female, and most distinctly, more educated. Because interviewer characteristics can influence interviews (Davis 1997:203-205), we added these characteristics (interviewers' sex, education, age, fathers' education, and ethnicity) as independent variables to the models in Table 3. Their inclusion did not substantially change any of the coefficients or the significance levels of the other variables or alter any of our substantive conclusions.<sup>8</sup> Thus, we use interviewers' assessments of to approximate external ethnic classification.

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<sup>8</sup>In analyses not presented here, we included the variables for interviewers' characteristics in the equations in Table 3 and estimated the models in Stata in two ways: 1) with the svy commands, accounting for the sampling weights, strata, and psu's and 2) with the robust correction for

Although we explicitly oversampled only for Roma, we also examine Hungarians in Romania and Ukrainians in Russia. Based on interviewer classification, there were 129 ethnic Hungarians in Romania and 84 ethnic Ukrainians in Russia. Though the number of cases is small, we obtained consistent and statistically significant results for the variables based on these cases. These ethnicities provide valuable group and country comparisons to the Roma that no

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clustering at the interviewer level, accounting for the sampling weights. It is unfortunately impossible to account for clustering due to the strata, psu's, and interviewers at the same time in Stata given our sampling design. The following three relationships were statistically significant at the .05 level in both sets of estimations: 1) Roma interviewers in Romania were more likely to classify respondents as Roma who did not self-identify as such. 2) Older interviewers were less likely to classify respondents as Roma who did not self-identify as such in Hungary. 3) In Russia, Ukrainian and highly-educated interviewers were more likely to classify respondents as Ukrainian. (Similarly, majority interviewers were less likely to classify respondents as Ukrainian.) 4) Highly educated interviewers were less likely to classify respondents as the majority ethnicity in Bulgaria. Father's education was insignificant in all the models. In the model for Bulgaria with interviewer's classification as Roma as the dependent variable (for those who did not self-identify as Roma), female interviewers were significantly (p-value < .05) less likely to classify respondents as Roma in the svy estimation procedure. The odds ratio was borderline significant with the clustering procedure (p-value = .052). These, and other interviewers' effects, could be explored in a multilevel model that could account for the sampling procedures as well as interviewer clustering, but such an investigation is beyond the scope of this paper. Csepeli and Simon (2004:145-149) argued that the interviewers were less prejudiced against Roma than was the general population, but they did not include such effects in their analyses, so it is impossible to judge whether interviewers' attitudes affected their results.

other data sets offer. Nevertheless, these results should be interpreted with caution because the dependent variable for these logistic regressions, especially for Russia, has a high proportion of cases coded 0.

Table 1 shows the weighted<sup>9</sup> means and standard deviations of the variables in our analyses.<sup>10</sup> We measured ethnicity in several ways during the survey. First, we asked about respondents' self-identification. We were particularly concerned that ethnicity might be a difficult or sensitive issue and we wanted to impose as few assumptions and restraints on respondents as possible given the constraints of the survey methodology. Thus, the self-identification question was included mid-way in the questionnaire after some questions about occupational status, so as not to highlight its overall significance in our survey to respondents. Furthermore, the question was asked in a relatively open ended way. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they identified themselves with any ethnicity or nationality, by choosing

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<sup>9</sup>The probability weights were calculated as follows: For the analyses with Russia only, we used the base weight only (a post-stratification weight calculated for each country to match selected characteristics of their census data). For the analyses of the other individual countries, we calculated, on top of the base weight, a weight to account for the oversamples so that the weighted proportion of Roma and poor in the sample is the same as the proportion of each in the population of each country. We determined the incidence rates of Roma and poor in each country from the screener, by calculating, based on interviewer assessment, the percentage of Roma and poor weighted by the screener weight. For the analyses with all of the countries combined, we adjusted these weights to give equal weight to each country, so that each country has an equal influence on the estimates.

<sup>10</sup>We conducted the analyses with and without the poor oversample. Because the results were substantively similar, we retained the poor oversample to increase the sample size.

from a list of ethnic and national groups in their country. They could pick as many groups as they wished. They could also indicate that they belonged to other groups not given on our lists. Thus, for example, in Romania, an individual could identify him/herself as majority, Hungarian, and Roma. We were also aware that some Roma might identify as a member of some particular group (e.g. Lovari, Kalderash, Boyash) and asked all individuals who self-identified as Roma whether they belonged to some specific group. However, only about 15% (121/811) of these self-identified Roma identified with one of these specific groups. Thus, at least in our sample, fewer individuals identified with these specific groups than with the more general category, Roma.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Of course, a different survey design could have produced different results. It is possible that if we had asked all respondents – not just the self-identified Roma – whether they belonged to some particular Roma group, more might have identified with it. However, we suspect that this was not the case. To consider this possibility, we examined the respondents who indicated that they spoke a Roma language growing up. These respondents could be the ones most likely to identify with a specific group because many of them maintain their identity through language use (though of course this is not universally true) and they are often the least assimilated into the majority societies. Of the 648 respondents who spoke Roma as a child, most (598) self-identified as Roma. However, 50 of them did not. It is possible that this group of individuals might have identified with some specific group instead of the general category, Roma. However, even if all these 50 respondents are added to the 121 respondents who self-identified as Roma and who indicated that they belonged to a specific group, the total percent of individuals self-identifying with a specific group (171) would still be smaller than those self-identifying as Roma (811). The same exercise can be repeated with even less restrictive categories of respondents who might potentially identify as members of specific Roma groups instead of with the general category

Second, interviewers asked respondents about the ethnic or national origins of their parents. We coded the ethnic minority ancestry variables (Roma, Hungarian, and Ukrainian) as 1 if the respondents indicated that either their mother or their father was a member of a minority group in that country and 0 otherwise. We coded the ethnic majority ancestry variables as 1 if respondents indicated that both their parents were ethnic majorities in that country and 0 otherwise. Third, interviewers asked respondents about language use. For the minority language variables, we coded the respondents as 1 if they said that they spoke that particular language (Roma languages, Hungarian, or Ukrainian) as a child; and 0 if they did not. For the majority language, we coded the respondents as 1 if they spoke only the majority language as a child, and 0 if they spoke one or more other languages as a child. Fourth, we coded respondents as 1 if the interviewer reported that they lived in a Roma settlement or in a location where the majority of the population was Roma and 0 otherwise. (Unfortunately, we do not have analogous variables for Hungarian or Ukrainian neighborhoods in Romania or Russia.)

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Roma (such as respondents who indicated they had Roma parents or those whom interviewers classified as Roma), but the results would be the same: more individuals would self-identify with the general label Roma than with some specific group.

It is also possible that by not including these specific Roma groups on our lists of ethnicities and nationalities, we discouraged individuals from identifying with them. Again, however, we suspect, however, that this was not a major issue. No respondent gave the name of a specific Roma group in response to the question about self-identification in the “other” category. Of course, more generally, our study was not specifically designed to examine identification with these specific Roma groups, which would have required oversampling for them. Studies that focused on any specific group might find that more individuals identified with that group than with the more general Roma label.

Finally, near the end of the survey, after the respondents had self-identified themselves, the ancestry of their parents, and their language use, the interviewer was asked to indicate the respondents' ethnicity. The interviewers were asked, "What is your best guess of the ethnic or national origins of the person with whom you just talked?" Interviewers were instructed to "give more than one response if appropriate."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>One concern was whether interviewers automatically labeled respondents as Roma because they were in the subsample or because they had been previously identified as Roma during the screening. Although interviewers were only told whether respondents belonged to subsample 1 or 2, some may have thought that this was a Roma survey. This may be confounded by the fact that some of the interviewers for the screener and the survey were the same. For example, in the poor and Roma oversamples in Hungary, almost 33% of the respondents had the same interviewer for both the screener and the survey. In Romania, however, none of the interviewers were the same. (Unfortunately, the interviewer identification information is unavailable for the Bulgarian screener.) However, we suspect that this was not a major problem. The data show considerable variability in interviewer classification, suggesting that the sample design does not predetermine the results. The data show that about 20% of households classified as Roma at the time of the screener were not re-classified as such by the interviewers in the later survey. The large number of interviewers used in each country also assured variability (228 in Bulgaria, 234 in Hungary, 334 in Romania, and 279 in Russia). Furthermore, we obtain the same substantive results concerning the effects of poverty, household size, and education on interviewer classification as Roma with the screening data as we do with the other samples (results available upon request) suggesting that our results are robust. For further analysis of the screening data, as well as comparisons between the screening and survey data, see also Csepeli and Simon (2004:139-145). Csepeli and Simon's results are substantively similar to the ones we obtain

We also examine some economic and demographic variables that interviewers might have used as markers of ethnicity. Poverty is coded as a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if the respondent's median per capita household income was at least 50% below the distribution in their country and 0 otherwise. Income is based upon a summary measure of nine survey questions about household income from different sources (wages/earnings, state transfers, sale of production, interest, borrowed money, sale of personal things, gifts from relatives/friends, gifts from other people/institutions, and other income).<sup>13</sup> The number of people in the household is determined from household rosters included in the survey. Education is coded as a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if the respondent reported having only an elementary school education or less in the Eastern European system of education, coded 0 if they reported having more education.<sup>14</sup>

## **Results**

### ***Internal vs. External Classifications of Ethnicity***

Table 1 indicates that ethnicity is not a fixed entity, since the means of the dependent variables, interviewer classifications of ethnicity, are not the same as the means for the self-identifications of ethnicity. For example, the proportion identified as Roma by interviewers is higher than the proportion identifying themselves as Roma in all countries. In Bulgaria, for

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below for the Roma, but are not strictly comparable to ours because they analyzed subsets of the data based on the responses in the screening data and because they used different methods and variables.

<sup>13</sup>In addition to this measure of poverty based on income, we tried using other poverty measures (such as interviewer assessment of poverty or respondents' subjective assessment of material conditions). While this resulted in fewer missing cases, these variables did not change the substantive results.

<sup>14</sup>Sex is not included in the analyses because it did not have significant effects.

example, about 8% of the population is classified as Roma by the interviewers, whereas about 6% identify themselves as Roma. As a percentage of the total population, disagreement in classification is small, partially because we are examining relatively small ethnic minorities in each country, but from the perspective of the individuals labeled by others as Roma, discrepancies in classification are large and salient. For example, when interviewer classification is cross tabulated by self-identification for the Roma oversample only, about 62% of those who did not identify as Roma are classified as such by the interviewer (results not shown, available from the authors). Even among the self-identified Roma, over 16% indicated that they had been misidentified with respect to their ethnicity.

Table 2 shows how interviewer classification of ethnicity varies by self-identification of ethnicity for Roma, Hungarians, Ukrainians, and the majority group in each country using weighted percentages. If ethnicity were an immutable trait, the diagonals of all the tables would be 100%. Not surprisingly, self-identification is a strong predictor of interviewer's classification, since interviewers knew how the respondents answered the ethnic identity question before giving their own responses. However, though there is considerable overlap between the respondent's and interviewer's assessment of the respondent's ethnicity, we do not find perfect agreement between them. Roma classification in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania (the first column of two by two tables in Table 2) illustrates the process of ethnic classification for this stigmatized minority group. The most striking finding is that nearly 100% of the time, when the respondent self-identifies as Roma, the interviewer accepts that classification. In other words, the interviewers almost never report that the respondent is not Roma if the respondent claims to be Roma. While at first glance it seems that interviewers merely always agree with the respondents, this is not always the case for other ethnic identities, such as Hungarian and Ukrainian (the second column of two-by-two tables in Table 2), or the majority group (the last column of two-

by two tables in Table 2). In Romania, interviewers report that about 6% of respondents who claim to be Hungarian are not Hungarian. Most strikingly, about 56% of respondents in Russia who self-identify as Ukrainian are not classified as Ukrainian by interviewers. In both these cases, interviewers are contradicting respondents' self-identity to include them as members of the majority group. This almost never happens in the Roma case, perhaps suggesting that interviewers perceive Roma to be such a socially stigmatized group that no one would claim to be Roma if they were not.

In all countries except Russia, about three percent of the respondents who self-identify as members of the majority group are not classified as such by interviewers. In Bulgaria, in about 80% of the cases (results not shown – available upon request), interviewers classify these respondents as Roma. The corresponding figures for Hungary and Romania are 91% and 94% respectively. These findings further support the idea that outsiders assume some individuals are denying their "true" Roma ancestry, by claiming to be members of the majority group. These findings also illustrate the processes of exclusion that Roma categorizations entail: some individuals who self-identify as the majority group are rejected as such by majority group members (the interviewers) and labeled as (only) Roma.

Correspondingly, to a greater degree than for other ethnicities, interviewers classify respondents as Roma who do not self-identify as such. For example, Table 2 shows that approximately about two to three percent of respondents who do not self-identify as Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania are classified as such by interviewers. In contrast, less than 1% of respondents in Romania are classified as Hungarian if they do not self-identify as such, and

only 1.65% of Russian respondents who do not self-identify as Ukrainian are classified as Ukrainian by interviewers.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the Roma, interviewers tend to reclassify another group. A substantial number of those who do not self-identify as members of the majority group are classified as such by interviewers. However, a different dynamic is occurring here than in the Roma case because the interviewer's classification serves to include rather than exclude. In the most striking instance, in Russia, about 28% of those who do not self-identify as members of the majority group in Russia are nevertheless classified as such by interviewers. The vast majority of these people identify themselves as Ukrainian. Thus, this finding represents interviewers' inclinations to diminish boundaries between Ukrainians and the majority ethnic group, the Russians. This tendency is also suggested by the finding that about 56% of those who self-identify as Ukrainian are not classified as such by interviewers. The vast majority (almost 97%) of these cases are instead classified as members of the majority group (results available on request).

These findings show how the classification of Roma ethnicity differs from other ethnicities. On the one hand, their stigmatization is such that classifiers (here, interviewers) seem to assume that no one would ever claim to "be" Roma if he or she were "not." Thus, if a respondent self-identifies as Roma, an interviewer (almost) never disagrees with that assessment. This classification process differs fundamentally from other ethnic groups because interviewers often contradict the respondents' self-identification as other ethnicities (Hungarian, Ukrainian) to

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<sup>15</sup>All of the differences between these proportions are statistically significant at p-value of .05 or less except for the difference between the Roma in Bulgaria and Ukrainians in Russia (1.80% and 1.65% respectively) which was statistically insignificant, and the difference between the Roma in Romania and the Ukrainians in Russia (2.35% and 1.65% respectively), which was borderline significant at the .05 level (p-value was .055).

include them as members of the majority group. On the other hand, there are some people whom interviewers classify as Roma even though they themselves do not claim to be Roma. This suggests that there are factors that affect outsiders' perceptions of ethnicity, apart from a person's self-identity, and that these factors are most important for groups such as the Roma, who are so stigmatized that it is assumed that some individuals might deny their heritage.

### ***Predictors of Interviewer Classifications of Ethnicity***

To further explore the classification process, and in particular, to examine the factors that influence interviewers' assessments net of respondents' self-identification, we conducted logistic regressions with interviewer's classification of ethnicity as the dependent variable. These regressions are presented separately by ethnicity (Roma, other ethnic minorities (Hungarian and Ukrainian), and ethnic majorities) and country (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Russia) in each column of Table 3. This table gives the odds ratios<sup>16</sup> for variables representing ethnic, economic, and demographic markers that may influence interviewers' classifications. Although the models in the different columns are neither identical nor strictly comparable because the independent variables must be defined and deployed in somewhat different ways for the different ethnic groups, they are analogous. Thus, we can look at the significance level of the independent variables to help assess the differences and similarities between different ethnic classifications.

The dependent variable for first three columns of Table 3 is whether the interviewer classified the respondent as Roma in Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. Table 2 shows that when respondents self-identify as Roma, interviewers classify them as such virtually all of time. This

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<sup>16</sup>For all the regression analyses, we used survey logistic regression (using the svy commands in Stata 9), to account for the complex sample design. We included the probability weights to obtain more accurate point estimates and we adjusted for stratification and cluster sampling, which produced more robust standard errors.

creates estimation problems for these regression analyses, since self-identification as Roma is a near-perfect predictor of interviewer's classification. It is impossible to estimate regression models that include self-identification as Roma as an independent variable separately by country in Hungary and Romania. A model including self-identification as Roma could be estimated for Bulgaria, but we do not do so because of the very small number of cases for which interviewers do not classify respondents as Roma who self-identified as such. However, as Table 2 shows, interviewers also classify individuals as Roma who do not self-identify as that ethnicity. Thus, we want to examine the factors that lead interviewers to override self-identification in this particular direction. To do so, we select on individuals who do not self-identify as Roma for the first three regressions presented in Table 3. Thus, like the other models in Table 3 that include self-identification as an independent variable, the effect of the other independent variables in the first three models can be examined net of the effect of self-identification of ethnicity.

For Roma ethnicity, Table 3 shows that interviewer's classification is significantly affected by other social markers for respondents who do not self-identify as Roma. If the respondents have at least one Roma parent, the interviewers are about 66 times more likely to classify them as Roma. Language also has a strong effect; respondents who spoke a Roma language as a child are about 73 times as likely to be categorized as Roma. If the interviewer perceives the respondent to be living in a predominantly Roma neighborhood, the respondent is more than 16 times as likely to be categorized as Roma.

In addition to respondents' ethnic markers, economic and demographic markers affect interviewers' classification of respondents' ethnicity for respondents not self-identifying as Roma. In Bulgaria, poor respondents are over 2.6 times as likely to be classified as Roma, net of the other variables, relative to those with higher incomes. Each additional person in the household increases the likelihood of being classified as Roma about one and one-third times.

Education also has a strong net effect: those with only an elementary school education or less are almost three times as likely to be classified as Roma compared to those with more schooling. The results for Roma ethnicity in Romania (column 2) and Hungary (column 3) are similar. Ancestry, language, and residential concentration are important influences on interviewers' classifications of Roma ethnicity, as well as poverty, large households, and low educational status for respondents who do not self-identify as Roma.

The next section of Table 3 (columns 4 and 5) present the results for interviewers' classifications of respondents as other ethnic minorities, Hungarian in Romania and Ukrainian in Russia. For these ethnicities, as for Roma ethnicity, self-identification, parents' ethnicities, and language use are strong predictors of interviewers' classifications. However, the economic and demographic factors are less important for interviewers' classifications of these non-Roma minorities. None of these variables (poverty, household size, or education) are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Finally, columns 6 to 9 in Table 3 give the odds ratios for ethnic majorities in all four countries. As for all the other ethnicities, self-identification, parents' ethnicities, and language use are strong influences on interviewers' classifications of respondents as ethnic majorities. However, the economic and demographic variables follow a different pattern than for the ethnic minorities. Unlike the non-Roma ethnic minorities, and like Roma ethnicity, some of these variables have statistically significant effects for the majority ethnicities, especially in Romania and Hungary. Where significant, however, these variables have the opposite effect for the majority ethnicities as for Roma ethnicity: poverty, large household size, and low educational status reduce the odds of interviewers' classifying respondents as ethnic majorities, net of the other variables. In Romania and Hungary, respondents who are poor, live in large households, and have low education are less likely to be classified as ethnic majorities, net of the other

variables. The pattern of the odds ratios is the same in Bulgaria, though only the effect of low education is statistically significant. It is possible that the odds ratio for household size is insignificant because there are more extended households in Bulgaria than in the other countries (see Ahmed and Emigh 2005) and, as a consequence, household size is not viewed as a characteristic of some particular social group. None of these odds ratios are statistically significant in Russia. Though there are ethnic minorities in Russia, there is no single stigmatized racial group in Russia that is present in numbers comparable to Roma in the other countries. Perhaps for this reason, and because of a tendency to include as many people as possible as members of the majority group, social and economic factors are not markers of ethnic status in Russia.

The regression findings lend further support to the interpretation that, as a stigmatized racial group, Roma status is often ascribed externally by others. Outsiders label individuals as Roma based not just on their own self-identification, but on external characteristics such as whether they are poor or uneducated. Such factors are not significant predictors of interviewers' classifications of other ethnic minorities, suggesting that these other groups' ethnic boundaries are not similarly marked by such characteristics. The Roma's stigmatized status is manifest in the interviewers' tendency to label the poor, those in large families, and the uneducated as Roma, even if the respondent does not identify him/herself that way. This suggests the classificatory process for the Roma differs from the ones used to create other ethnic boundaries.

We also explored country differences by testing interaction terms (at the .05 level) in models that combined country data where the dependent variables were identical. Thus, to examine whether there were country differences for Roma ethnicity, we combined the data for columns 1 to 3 in Table 3 in a single model and tested the interactions terms between country and the six independent variables. Our results (not shown—available upon request) show that

living in a Roma settlement has a statistically stronger influence in Romania than in Hungary and that language has a statistically stronger effect in Bulgaria and Hungary than in Romania. Other interactions were statistically insignificant. Similarly, we tested for significant interactions among the variables in the equations with the dependent variable, interviewer classification as ethnic majority. To do so, we combined the data for Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, and Hungary (from columns 6 to 9 in Table 3) and again examined the interactions between country and the six independent variables. Self-identification as an ethnic majority had a statistically stronger effect in Romania than in Russia. Parents' ethnicity has a statistically stronger effect in Bulgaria than in either Hungary or Russia. Majority language use has a statistically stronger effect in Bulgaria than in Romania, Russia, or Hungary. Finally, smaller households were more strongly associated with interviewer classification as ethnic majority in Romania and Hungary than in Russia. All other interactions were statistically insignificant.<sup>17</sup>

## **Discussion**

Jenkins (1994:199, 201) and Nagel (1994:154) suggested that ethnic identity is a dialectical outcome of external and internal assessment. We explore one aspect of this

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<sup>17</sup>These interaction results should be interpreted with caution. The large absolute size of some of the odds ratios, and thus the absolute differences among the odds ratios in the columns of Table 3, stem from the relatively small number of cases on the off diagonal cell of a two by two table of the respective independent and dependent variables. This is partially because the relationships between the independent and dependent variables are so strong and partially because of the difficulty of gathering a large enough number of cases for different subgroups of ethnic minorities. Thus, though some of the differences among the odds ratios across the columns of Table 3 are large, some interactions terms are not statistically significant because of the relatively small number of cases.

relationship: how interviewers use respondents' self-identifications of ethnicity, in combination with other social markers (ancestry, language, geographical concentration, poverty, household size, and education), to classify respondents. Our results show that outsiders draw heavily upon insiders' assessments: self-identification is a very strong predictor of interviewers' classifications. However, as Tables 1 and 2 show, interviewers also sometimes disregard respondents' self-identification. Our data suggests that outsiders generally agree with insiders' self-identification as a stigmatized ethnicity, Roma, but contradict them in other cases. For Roma ethnicity, interviewers contradict respondents' reports of self-identification to exclude them from the majority ethnicity group to include them as Roma. In our data, in fact, interviewers virtually never override respondents' self-identification as Roma, presumably because they assume that no one would claim to be Roma if it were not "true." Interviewers do, however, classify individuals as Roma who do not self-identify as such, on the basis of negative social characteristics (poverty, low education). Roma ethnicity is, in many ways, an example of a "racialized" ethnicity. By some criteria, Roma would be considered to be highly assimilated; many speak only the language of the majority population and have intermarried with the majority population. Nevertheless, ethnic majorities often claim that Roma are physically distinguishable from the majority population. They suffer from a high degree of discrimination and stigmatization.

From the point of view of the population statistics, there appears to be widespread agreement about "who is Roma." Because they are an ethnic minority, they form a small percentage of these countries' populations, and therefore, the absolute differences between interviewer and self-identification are also small (Table 1). In addition, the population figures for the agreement between interviewers and respondents (Table 2, on-diagonal cells) are generally higher for Roma ethnicity than for the other minorities (Hungarians in Romania, Ukrainians in Russia) or ethnic majorities. Because we are primarily interested in comparing Roma ethnicity to

other ethnic minorities and majorities in four countries, Tables 1 and 2 present weighted data to reflect population figures (i.e. that weight down the size of the Roma and poor oversamples to match the population percentages). The population figures do not directly illustrate the size of the discrepant classifications of ethnicity from the point of view of those classified as Roma, which is easier to analyze using the Roma subsample (cf. Ladányi and Szelényi 2003:71). Thus, not surprisingly, the first three columns of Table 3 show that the direction and level of significance of the independent variables are similar in the three countries with large numbers of Roma (though the tests of the interaction terms shows that the effects of some variables may be stronger in some countries than in others). Along with Table 2, Table 3 illustrates, therefore, that the process of Roma classification works in similar ways in the three countries. Most notably, interviewers will confirm respondents' self-identification as Roma, and it will appear that there is widespread agreement about "who is Roma." Similarly, if social science researchers go to regions pre-selected for large number of self-identified Roma, external classifications are likely to confirm internal identification, since interviewers are not likely to override such classifications.

However, from the point of view of those externally classified as Roma, a large number of individuals experience discrepancies in classification (results from the Roma subsample suggests 62%). Furthermore, these discrepancies are generally in the direction of an outsider using a negative social characteristic to classify someone as Roma who does not self-identify as such. Thus, such classifications may be unwanted or unwarranted, especially since they exclude persons from the majority group; that is, according to some external classifiers, to "be" Roma, is definitely antithetical to membership in the majority group, even if that is the individual's self-proclaimed identity. Though Roma organizations are becoming more influential in Europe (Barany 1994:333; Fraser 1992:315-318; Hancock 1991b:145-149; UNDP 2002:73-78), there is

no strong and widespread “ethnic pride” movement (cf. in the U.S., Black, Brown, Red and Yellow Power, Espiritu 1992:3; Omi and Winant 1986:95-99; Nagel 1995:956; 1996:140, 158-178, 234) that could make Roma self-identification a more costless identity (cf. U.S. White ethnics; Waters 1990:167) or a political resource (Espiritu 1992:7; Song 2003:85-87; cf. Nagel 1996:7). These results help explain why there is so much debate about “who is Roma:” there can be apparent widespread agreement among the general population about the classification of ethnic minorities, at the same time that such classifications can be so fluid that many members of the group experience discrepant classifications.

A different pattern of interviewer and respondent’s disagreement characterizes the classification of other ethnic minorities (Ukrainians in Russia and Hungarians in Romania). In these cases, interviewers’ classifications tend to include – not exclude – minorities in the majority ethnicity. For these ethnic minorities – especially Ukrainians – few interviewers identify these respondents as ethnic minorities if the respondents do not self-identify as such, but interviewers do classify them as majorities even when they self-identify as minorities. Correspondingly, interviewers rarely state that respondents are not members of the majority population when they self-identify as such (unless to label them as Roma), but interviewers will classify respondents as members of the majority even if respondents say they are Ukrainian or Hungarian. Few social markers, other than ethnic markers of ancestry, language, and self-identification, are associated with interviewer classification as Hungarian or Ukrainian. While we cannot definitively interpret the results without in-depth interview data, the results suggest that Hungarian ethnicity in Romania and Ukrainian ethnicity in Russia may be optional identities (cf. Waters 1990:147). The tendency of interviewers to override respondents’ self-identification as Hungarian in Romania and Ukrainian in Russia to reclassify them as ethnic majorities also may be linked to the presence of the neighboring states of Russia and Hungary. Large

populations of minorities ethnically affiliated with neighboring states can be perceived as threatening to majority populations (McIntosh et al. 1995:940, 949). Thus, some ethnic minority affiliations may be emphasized by ethnic minorities while downplayed by ethnic majorities because of the presence of nearby homeland states.

Our findings with respect to the effect of other social markers (net of self-identification) are consistent with previous research focused on other ethnic groups. Geographic concentration and large household size increase interviewers' classification of Roma (cf. Creed 1998:135; Eschbach 1995:96; Harris and Sim 2002:623; Liégeois 1994:83; Telles 2002:432; Xie and Goyette 1997:565; Yancey, Ericksen, and Juliani 1976:399). Language knowledge also influences interviewers' classification for all ethnicities (cf. Portes and MacLeod 1996:536; Stevens 1985:74). Negative social characteristics (low education, poverty) seem to be associated with Roma classification, which makes their case similar to Black racial classification in Brazil (Telles 2002:415-441) and Latino classification in the U.S. (Portes and MacLeod 1996:536; Tienda and Ortiz 1986:16). In contrast, the absence of these negative markers was related to classification as an ethnic majority in Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. However, there were few effects of these markers on classification as other ethnic minorities (Hungarians in Romania or Ukrainians in Russia), suggesting a fundamentally different process of classification for different ethnic groups. Of course, our results are not strictly comparable to previous research since we include self-identification as an independent variable and because we do not examine positive characteristics, such as wealth or high education, because we oversampled the poor.

Our findings suggest that processes of exclusion are central to understanding how Roma ethnicity is racialized and stigmatized. Such individuals are classified as ethnic minorities on the basis of negative social characteristics even when these individuals do not classify themselves as such. Thus, in comparison to ethnic Hungarians or Ukrainians, interviewers rarely contradict

individuals who claim to be Roma. However, interviewers also classify respondents as Roma when they do not self-identify as such, using negative social characteristics, such as low education and low income. Thus, as other research suggests, the Roma are a racialized and stigmatized ethnic minority (Barany 1994:323; Emigh and Szelényi 2001; Liégeois 1994:26; Stewart 1997:3; UNDP 2002:3), marked by external classifications as “other.” The difference between Roma and other minorities and majorities ethnicities is not, in fact, that self-identification is ignored. Internal classification is a strong guide to external classification for all ethnicities. The difference between the ethnicities is that when there is a discrepancy between external and internal classification, external classifiers tend to exclude the stigmatized ethnicity from the majority using negative social characteristics (low education, low income), while they tend to include a non-stigmatized ethnicity in the majority. For other ethnicities, outsiders only rely on ancestry, language, and individuals’ self-identifications.

These results may be applicable, at least in some ways, to processes of identity assessment more generally. Of course, ethnic and racial groups in different countries experience different histories and contexts, so the relationships between internal identification and external assessment for groups vary. In discussing these more general implications for processes of identity assessment, though we give examples of specific groups, we focus more on the implications for processes of external classification and internal identification and not so much on the similarities and differences of the groups themselves.

Our results provide parallel cases to support Water’s (1990:7, 15, 51) argument that ethnic identification is voluntary for certain ethnic groups, such as U.S. Whites, but not for others, such as U.S. Blacks. In our case, the pattern of identity assessment of Hungarians and Ukrainians is analogous to that of U.S. White ethnics because ethnic identification is not imposed upon them by outsiders, but rather self-declared. Similarly, in the contemporary U.S.,

such White ethnicities are not usually generally stigmatized or racialized. The pattern of identity assessment for Roma is similar to that of U.S. Blacks because their ethnic affiliation is often externally imposed. Likewise, like Roma, U.S. Blacks face widespread prejudice and discrimination. Thus, though many specific characteristics of these groups differ, there is a general parallel in the way in which a stigmatized label corresponds to an externally imposed and racialized identity, while a neutral label corresponds to an internally adopted one. Further research among groups elsewhere could explore whether this pattern holds more generally.

We also noted that external classification and internal identification can interact in several ways. Though our data do not provide obvious parallels to the fourth interactive pattern, that external classification can create or exaggerate differences within groups, they do provide interesting comparison to the other three patterns. First, external labeling can homogenize differences between groups that outsiders do not recognize, but that insiders wish to maintain. One U.S. example consists of Black immigrants. Many Americans disregard the differences among such groups and label individuals of any such group as Black (Bonilla-Silva 2001:41; Waters 1994:796, 1999:119-120). We saw a similar process of interaction between external and internal labeling in some of our groups, although it worked differently. In our data, this pattern of external labeling homogenizing internal differences was not apparent among the stigmatized group, the Roma, but was more applicable to the non-Roma ethnic minorities, Hungarians in Romania and Ukrainians in Russia. Such external labeling homogenized the difference between these ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities. Thus, the difference between ethnic Hungarians and Romanians in Romania and ethnic Ukrainians and Russians in Russia was not marked by external classifiers even though the insiders, the ethnic minorities, marked a difference between themselves and the majority group. Outsiders classified both sets of ethnic minorities as majorities.

Our data do not provide much evidence of external labeling homogenizing differences among the stigmatized group, the Roma. Many more Roma in our survey identified with the more general label, Roma, than with some specific group of Roma (e.g. Lovari, Kalderash, Boyash). Of course, it is clear that such homogenization does occur, even if our data suggest that this is not the predominant pattern. For some Roma, their identity with a specific group is the most salient one and much external classification disregards the differences among Roma (Barany 1994:325; Fraser 1992: 1; Salo 1979:81; Stewart 1997:10). Our survey methodology may have influenced our findings, as we did not specifically design a study to examine identification with these particular groups. Thus, it is an important point for future research to explore in further detail how individuals identify with the more general label Roma as opposed to more specific labels and whether outsiders generally recognize these identities or not.

These findings are also related to the second pattern of self-identification and external classification, that insiders can homogenize differences among themselves through the use of panethnic labels. Such labels can be a political resource or a source of ethnic pride (Espiritu 1992:3, 7; Nagel 1996:7, 140, 158-178, 234; Omi and Winant 1986:95-99; Song 2003:85-87). Although our data show that reports of Roma ethnicity suggest that insiders do often employ the homogenizing label, “Roma,” there is less evidence that it has been efficiently harnessed to promote collective interests or ethnic pride. There are Roma organizations and groups, but their impact has been limited (Barany 1994: 333; Fraser 1992:315-318; Hancock 1991b:145-149; UNDP 2002:73-78).

Third, outsiders can mark differences that insiders wish to eliminate. One of the most striking examples in the U.S. is the phenomenon of Blacks “passing” as White (Daniel 2002:49-55; Davis [1991] 2000:10, 13-15, 56-57, 78, 143; Song 2003:66-70). Our data provide a parallel example for the Roma. In both cases, individuals self-identify as unmarked members of the racial

or ethnic majority instead of as members of the stigmatized racialized minority group. However, outsiders generally make a different assessment of these individuals' identities, and in particular, they classify them as members of the minority. Among both groups, there are also examples of individuals who break ties with their families of birth and live among the majority group as one of its members (Daniel 2002:51-55; Davis [1991] 2000:143; Stewart 1997:93-94). Interestingly, however, our comparative data by country and ethnicity show that for all ethnicities, some individuals exhibit characteristics associated with passing. Table 2 shows that in all countries, some respondents do not self-identify with a particular minority group though interviewers classify them as belonging to that group (the cells at the bottom right of each two-by-two table) and some respondents self-identify with the majority ethnicity though interviewers do classify them as such (the cells at the top left of each two-by-two table). What seems to distinguish Roma ethnicity is that these individuals are more often characterized by the pattern of misrecognition associated with exclusion from the majority than the reverse (i.e., the pattern of inclusion, when respondents self-identify as an ethnic minority and are externally classified as a majority) and outsiders use negative social characteristics to make an external classification. This particular relationship between identification and classification perhaps distinguishes passing, which is accompanied by some degree of social isolation, from other patterns in which internal identification and external classification do not match. These patterns and their prevalence could be further examined in other contexts in future research.

Our results are contingent on our methodology: we asked interviewers to identify ethnicity after the interview. This interview structure illuminates only one aspect of the relationship between internal and external classification. It may approximate well social settings in which the external adjudicator has extensive knowledge of the individual being classified (for example, job interviews conducted after extensive screening, or neighbors). We hope that other

studies can explore different combinations of outsider and insider classifications, and therefore, expand our knowledge of how ethnicity is a contingent, socially constructed, interactive outcome of internal and external assessments.

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Table 1. Weighted Means of Variables Used in the Analysis: Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Russia, 1999-2000 (N in Parentheses).

Variables	Bulgaria	Hungary	Romania	Russia
<i>Ethnic Markers</i>				
Interviewer Classification as Roma	.078 (2094)	.061 (1792)	.039 (1923)	
Interviewer Classification as Hungarian			.074 (1923)	
Interviewer Classification as Ukrainian				.036 (2359)
Interviewer Classification as Majority	.815 (2094)	.950 (1792)	.893 (1923)	.917 (2359)
Self-Identification as Roma	.062 (2007)	.035 (1791)	.016 (1923)	
Self-Identification as Hungarian			.071 (1923)	
Self-Identification as Ukrainian				.046 (2351)
Self-Identification as Majority	.833 (2005)	.974 (1790)	.907 (1923)	.908 (2356)
At Least One Roma Parent	.070 (1997)	.039 (1770)	.019 (1906)	
At Least One Hungarian Parent			.103 (1905)	
At Least One Ukrainian Parent				.133 (2229)
Both Parents Ethnic Majority	.823 (1985)	.946 (1766)	.893 (1907)	.863 (2261)
Spoke Roma Language as a Child	.055 (2008)	.021 (1791)	.020 (1922)	
Spoke Hungarian as a Child			.108 (1923)	
Spoke Ukrainian as a Child				.060 (2347)
Spoke Majority Language Only as a Child	.814 (2008)	.926 (1791)	.811 (1923)	.845 (2356)
Lives in Majority Roma/Gypsy Settlement	.088 (2094)	.055 (1788)	.019 (1923)	
<i>Economic and Demographic Markers</i>				
Poor (below 50% of median per capita income)	.156 (2012)	.158 (1688)	.220 (1888)	.168 (2269)
Number of People in Household	3.374 (2094) std=1.694	3.091 (1792) std=1.551	3.345 (1923) std=1.701	2.813 (2359) std=1.362
Elementary School Education or Less	.382 (2007)	.508 (1792)	.360 (1923)	.273 (2359)

Table 2. Interviewer Classification of Ethnicity by Self-Identification of Ethnicity, By Country, 1999-2000, Weighted Percentages.\*

<b>BULGARIA</b>					
<b>Roma</b>			<b>Majority</b>		
Int. Class.	Self-Ident.		Int. Class.	Self-Ident.	
	No	Yes		No	Yes
No	98.20	1.51	No	96.55	2.60
Yes	1.80	98.49	Yes	3.45	97.40
	100%	100%		100%	100%
N	1527	480		700	1305

  

<b>HUNGARY</b>					
<b>Roma</b>			<b>Majority</b>		
Int. Class.	Self-Ident.		Int. Class.	Self-Ident.	
	No	Yes		No	Yes
No	97.32	0.00	No	81.28	2.94
Yes	2.68	100.00	Yes	18.72	97.06
	100%	100%		100%	100%
N	1592	199		117	1673

  

<b>ROMANIA</b>					
<b>Roma</b>		<b>Hungarian</b>		<b>Majority</b>	
Int. Class.	Self-Ident.	Int. Class.	Self-Ident.	Int. Class.	Self-Ident.
	No	Yes		No	Yes
No	97.65	0.00	No	99.18	6.36
Yes	2.35	100.00	Yes	0.82	93.64
	100%	100%		100%	100%
N	1796	127		1797	126

  

<b>RUSSIA</b>								
			<b>Ukrainian</b>		<b>Majority</b>			
			Int. Class.	Self-Ident.	Int. Class.	Self-Ident.		
				No	Yes		No	Yes
			No	98.35	56.28	No	71.80	1.75
			Yes	1.65	43.72	Yes	28.20	98.25
				100%	100%		100%	100%
			N	2240	111		199	2157

\*Chi-squared tests show all the associations in this table to be significant at the  $p < .000$  level.

Table 3. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions of Interviewer Classification of Ethnicity on Selected Independent Variables: Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia 1999-2000 (P Values in Parentheses).

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables								
	Interviewer Classified as Roma in			Interviewer Classified as Ethnic Minority		Interviewer Classified as Ethnic Majority in			
	Bulgaria	Romania	Hungary	Hungarian in Romania	Ukrainian in Russia	Bulgaria	Romania	Hungary	Russia
<i>Ethnic markers</i>									
Self-Identified as Given Ethnicity	[==0] <sup>1</sup>	[==0]	[==0]	30.302 (.000)	3.913 (.005)	10.706 (.001)	49.760 (.000)	23.460 (.000)	13.912 (.000)
At Least One Ethnic Minority Parent	66.144 (.000)	30.943 (.000)	206.876 (.000)	45.440 (.014)	19.629 (.000)	---	---	---	---
Both Parents Ethnic Majority	---	---	---	---	---	24.744 (.000)	9.222 (.000)	6.095 (.000)	9.126 (.000)
Spoke Ethnic Minority Language as a Child	73.075 (.000)	3.780 (.037)	65.175 (.000)	27.990 (.021)	3.623 (.006)	---	---	---	---
Spoke Ethnic Majority Language Only as a Child	---	---	---	---	---	21.116 (.000)	4.238 (.000)	3.937 (.002)	4.434 (.001)
Lives in a Primarily Roma Settlement	16.728 (.000)	38.269 (.000)	8.085 (.000)	---	---	---	---	---	---
<i>Economic and Demographic Markers</i>									
Poor (Below 50% of Median Per Capita Income)	2.659 (.013)	3.050 (.000)	2.342 (.005)	.837 (.742)	1.994 (.285)	.521 (.351)	.369 (.000)	.338 (.001)	.714 (.427)
Number of People in the Household	1.399 (.002)	1.271 (.000)	1.495 (.000)	1.071 (.715)	1.016 (.876)	.978 (.854)	.785 (.000)	.764 (.000)	1.039 (.717)
Elementary School Education or Less	2.961 (.005)	2.441 (.000)	6.065 (.000)	2.715 (.059)	.670 (.439)	.392 (.038)	.381 (.000)	.353 (.009)	.606 (.117)
N	1460	1749	1469	1870	2138	1907	1873	1663	2174

<sup>1</sup>Note: The regressions using interviewer classification as Roma as the dependent variable are estimated only for those individuals who did not self identify as Roma. This is indicated by the notation, self-identified as Roma [==0].