„WHAT IS 'GYPSY-LIKE'?"

IDENTITY NEGOTIATION AMONG YOUNG HIGHLY EDUCATED ROMA WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Highly achieving members of the Roma community usually receive limited attention in Hungarian researches, furthermore, studies rarely involve gender as an influential factor on its own and in its intersection with other factors. To enrich research in the field, in this thesis I concentrate on the youngest generation of Roma intellectuals and provide an analysis of 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with highly educated women self-identified as Roma. The main purpose of the study is to focus on ethnic identity formation by setting two situational contexts; the choice of profession and the choice of a partner. Building on constructivist and post-structuralist approaches to identity, the major finding of the research is that young Roma women negotiate their personal identities, in terms of professional and partner choice, in a way that they take into account their belonging to the Roma community. My study refines the 'double binding identity' approach, by claiming that the identity negotiation process entails women's active role in self-defining as well as re-defining the meaning of Roma ethnicity itself.

Keywords: Roma women, identity negotiation, professional choice, partner choice, intersection, gender, ethnicity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

> *"Roma are always presented as a disadvantaged group, which is fair given the huge educational gap and poverty, but what's than with those who achieved secondary or vocational education or even pursue a higher education degree? What about their lives? We are very rarely speaking about them! And what about those members of the intelligentsia, whom we wouldn't even imagine that perhaps they're Roma? We always speak about them (Roma) as living under the poverty line, like that they* all *live in small villages under the poverty line."(Nóra)*[1]

Until recently, most research in Hungary on Roma[2] has focused on questions around poverty, marginalization and socio-economic inequalities (see for instance Stewart 2001, Ladányi and Szelényi 2004, Kemény et. al 2004, Kertesi 2005)[3]. This is well-founded given the high number of Roma people living in extreme poverty, the overall law educational level and presence on the labor market, the limited access to quality health care and housing, residential segregation as well as the severe discriminative attitude of the mainstream (National Social Inclusion Strategy 2011). However, if social scientific research focuses on Roma solely as a disadvantaged group, it may fall into the trap of unwillingly reproducing existing prejudices. In order to be able to draw a complex picture, highly achieving Roma deserve attention too.

The few studies on the 'Roma elite', such as Roma in higher education (Kende 2005) or 'successful' Roma (Székelyi et. al 2005, Tóth 2008) usually lack a gender dimension. Literature on 'Roma women' as a salient group of Roma in general is still very limited. Among them, recent investigations concentrated mainly on the reproductive behavior of Roma women (Neményi 1999, Janky 2005, Durst 2011) or the gender structure of certain Roma communities (Horvath

[1] An ethical protocol was taken. Anonymity was assured and all names and major biographical features of participants have been altered.

[2] Note on terminology: In this thesis I will use the term "Roma" to refer to a number of communities including, the Beash, the Vlash and the Romungro, which are the three sub-ethnic groups living in Hungary. However, I will use "Gypsy" when it is the wording of previous scholarly works or of my interviewees to refer to themselves.

[3] Roma are considered to be the largest minority of Europe. Their total number in Hungary is estimated to be around 750.000, which is about the 7% of Hungary's total population (National Social Inclusion Strategy 2011). However, it must be taken into account that censuses in Hungary notoriously miscount the numbers of Roma who are in several cases reluctant to identify themselves as Roma due to fear of persecution. There has been long debate among scholars on how to gain a more reliable data on the number of Roma or with other words who is to be considered as Roma. Empirical researches suggest that besides self-classification, persons whom the surrounding non-Roma community consider to be Roma are also classified as Roma. The surrounding community usually classifies people as Roma on the bases skin color, Roma ancestry language, lifestyle, and family name (Székelyi et. Al, 2005, Kemény and Janky 2005).

2004, Bako 2008). Angela Kóczé's study (2011) on the political activism of Roma women represents a unique example for investigating highly achieving Roma women. However, given her focus on political activism, Kóczé does not explore questions around personal identity formation in detail; neither did include young professionals to her analysis.

Focusing on identity, my leading research question is to explore how the youngest generation of Roma women forms their ethnic identities and how it is influenced by outside factors, such as those related to gender and professional ambition.[4] The central argument of my thesis is that young highly educated women negotiate their identities through a process of constant definition and re-definition of the meanings of Roma ethnicity itself.

Besides giving voice many other young highly achieving Roma women, my thesis seeks to advance our knowledge in two interrelated ways. On the one hand, it contributes to a larger research project on highly achieving Roma women of which it is a part of[5]. By exploring how my interviewees negotiate their identities, it lays the ground for further investigations along with the major themes under consideration here (such as professional engagement and partner choice) and directs attention on further questions that will be relevant concerning the overall interest of the large project.

On the other hand, the study provides contribution to research on identity formation. According to anthropologist Richard Jenkins, individual 'identity' and 'interest' are closely related notions; what people define as their interests is very much connected to what they believe they are. "Who I am has some bearings on what my interests to be, and what I see being against my interests" (Jenkins 2004: 178). Furthermore, individual identity has a great share in forming community interests, goals and aspirations (Ibid). Investigations on the ways the youngest generation of

[4] Specific research questions will be addressed in the next chapter.
[5] The relation of my study to the larger project will be discussed in the next chapter.

Roma women thinks about the meanings of Romaness, will broaden our knowledge on the needs and struggles of these people, consequently it leads to a better understanding of the formation and dynamic of the "Roma intellectual middle class".

Kóczé argues not only are Roma women as a group rarely studied by scholars, but that social research as well as policy making, lacks an 'intersectional' approach, which could adequately address the specificities and the diversity among Roma women (Kóczé 2009). Building on earlier feminist conceptualizations of intersectionality as a way to overcome the limitations of treating 'race' and 'gender' as singular categories[6], Kóczé claims that intersectionality has "offered a language" to speak about the multiple and complex experiences of Romani women (Kóczé 2009: 26). Throughout my thesis, I will use this "language" as an analytic tool to frame my research and shed light on some of the specific features that come from their status as 'young', 'highly educated', 'Roma' and 'women'.

Starting with a brief outline of research methods (Chapter 2) and approaches to the concept of identity, with particular focus on identity formation of ethnic minorities (Chapter 3), I will present the main characteristics of my interviewees as the youngest generation of Roma intellectuals (Chapter 4) and then investigate the merge of ethnic identity with professional interest (Chapter 5) and with attitudes on gender (Chapter 6).

[6] See for instance Crensaw 1991, Collins 1998, Hancock 2007.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this chapter, I present the research design and the methods used during the data collection. As this thesis project is situated into a broader research project on highly educated Romani women, I start my description with outlining this large research, and then move to my separate thesis project.

2.1 Research on highly achieving Roma women and reproduction

In fall 2011, I was involved in the research of Judit Durst on *"Ethnicity and reproduction among highly educated Roma women in Budapest"* (working title)[7]. The overall goal of this project was to shed light on the underlying motives behind the reproduction strategies of graduate Roma women and to explore how ethnicity and minority status influence these strategies. Together with Durst and another former sociology student, we conducted 60 interviews jointly with highly educated Roma women[8]. In the selection process we set two significant criteria: (1) Self-identification as Roma and (2) having a higher education degree (at least a college or BA level). Other factors, such as age, origin, professional background or marital status did not matter at this phrase.[9] We were carried out the interviews according to snowball methods.[10]

We identified semi-structured in-depth interviews were as the most suitable to explore underlying motives and assumptions of childbearing and ethnicity. It is following feminist

[7] The research was initially part of Durst's post-doctoral research project and financed by the Post-doctoral Bolyai Research Fund.

[8] Concerning the total number, I conducted 20 interviews myself with Roma women. I will use interviews conducted by my colleagues with their awareness and permission. Interviewees gave their consent to use the interviews for the aim of scholarly publications.

[9]They took place in the homes or at the workplace of interviewees, without the presence of a third party. Conservations lasted between one and two hours and were all recorded with the permission of the respondents. During winter and spring 2012, all interviews were word by word transcribed and interviewees were given pseudonyms. Transcripts were made either by the interviewer or an independent third party.

[10] The first interviewees were chosen with the help of Angéla Kóczé, who to the extent of our current knowledge has been the only scholar engaged in researching highly achieving Romani women in Hungary Luckily, respondents were easier to approach than previously expected; therefore, heterogeneity in terms of age, place of origin, number of children and educational background was paid attention to. The aim was to prevent one particular subgroup to become overrepresented in the sample.

research principles, as far as it aims to investigate the realm of women's everyday lives and take account of the perspective of Roma women themselves. (Stacey 1988). We were interested in how interviewees express themselves and make sense of their choices, everyday actions, as well as how they construct their identities as highly achieving Roma women. Consequently, identities of Roma women were not taken for granted as something "authentic" that all interviewees shared, but sought to reflect on differences according to various social locations. (DeVault 1999).

The interview guide covered eight main themes: the respondent's background, professional and educational attainment , influences and networks, relationships and marriage, childbearing and the prerequisites of childbearing, gender ideologies, future plans and possible fears finally information financial incomes and outcomes. We used open-ended questions, to let our interviewees fully express and articulate their thoughts and to allow interviewees to organize their responses within their framework and avoid being led by our own ideas on the topic.

Questions followed a rather fixed order, however, we also relied much on the flow of the narrative that often entailed not keeping strictly the order of themes, or adding additional questions were. However, themes on profession and education were always addressed prior to details of relationships and childbearing, as those were considered as being much more sensitive topics to discuss. In addition, most women were used to speak on public about profession and often about experiences as Roma, they were much less confident to speak about more intimate themes, such as relationships and childbearing. Therefore, those parts we had to be handle with increased discretion and attention, which also entailed careful formulation of questions[11].

[11] Here, it has to be mentioned that in a future research, more attention should be devoted to constructing questions on partnerships and childbearing in a „non-heterosexist". We paid attention for instance on asking questions such as "What an ideal *partner* would like for you*"* instead of what an ideal *husband/boyfriend* would like, though, interviewers were not always consistent in posing questions on this regard.

2.2 Research on the identity formation of young graduate Roma women

In this thesis project, I decided to study a theme that emerges from the interview material as highly relevant; however, we did not include it among the primary research questions. I found identity formation a unique aspect of the broader research on highly educated Roma women, therefore, I decided to put it as a central interest of my own inquiry. Our dataset contain valuable information about identity formation, and I regard it extensive enough on these grounds, as identity formation is part of the interest of the primary research. If we intend to focus on the role of ethnicity in reproduction, questions of identity formation are unavoidable to take into consideration, as all of the observed themes touched upon different aspects of ethnic, gender or professional identity formation and the intersection of these factors[12].

Selecting interviews for the purpose of analysis is an important question to cover when situating a smaller scale inquiry into a broader research. As a generational gap occurred around the age of 30-33, interviewees below this age emerged as a distinct sub-group of highly educated Romani women. For the purpose of this thesis, I decided to focus on the youngest generation and chose 20 interviews to the analysis, carried out with women, who were born after 1980, therefore were not older than 31 at the time of the interview[13]. Consequently, the reason behind selecting this group of women was not simply the relative coherence of interviewees according to age, but also reflected a larger generational difference in relation in the sample. I will further elaborate this in the fourth chapter of my thesis.

My analysis was similar to the grounded-theory method as described by Cathy Charmaz (2003) in the sense that instead of previously set hypothesis, specific issues of identity formation for closer

[12] Already the selecting process entailed a need to reflect on identity, as only women who self-identified as Roma were conducted an interview with.
[13] Among the chosen 20 interview, 11 were conducted by the author, the rest were carried out by my colleagues, Judit Durst and Zsanna Nyírő.

investigation were set during the first observation of the interview material. After carefully re-reading, rendering and coding interviews, two themes emerged as being very significant in the identity formation of young women; *professional choices* and *partner choices*. In each of these domains I will investigate specific aspects according to the most relevant sub-themes that occurred through the coding process. Given the limited scope of my research, I decided to put "ethnic identity" to the centre and examined how it is constantly a subject of change and re-definition along with its intersection with other identities, such as gender and professional identity.

'Life choices' seemed to offer especially rich sites to study how individuals take an active role in expressing and at the same time negotiating their identities, if we consider identity as a construction that is context and situation related, meaning that identities might take different forms in different contexts and situations than in others (Hall 1996, Jenkins 1997). This approach allows the researcher to capture the formation of identities as they are practiced in the lives of individuals. Judith Gerson (2001) took a similar stance, while studying the identity formation of German Jewish immigrants. She claims that in order to study identities in their full complexity, one has to capture "how people routinely practice those identities" (Gerson, 2001: 183). This entails a closer inquiry of how research subjects conceptualize what they are actually doing and how they decide in certain situation. Therefore, if questions around identity were put to the focus, it would have carried the risk of receiving normative or essentialized answers. From an "outside" point of view, questions such as professional career or relationships can be approached through their context, where identity appears either hidden, or becomes visible under the influence of certain outside factors.

As for *professional choices*, it was striking that as opposed to what we might expect that highly educated Roma would avoid professional engagement with Roma issues, almost all highly educated Roma women of my study worked or planned to work in the future in "Pro-Roma"

activities, regardless their various educational backgrounds.[14] This is to say that women in my study were very much committed to work in positions through which they could make an impact on the lives of Roma people in their professional lives. On the personal level, this implies that a positive Roma identity evoked a feeling of responsibility for the community resulting engagement with Roma issues in their carrier (instead of for instance volunteering or sending donations to Romani NGOs). On a more structural level it could also point to a certain job segregation pattern; that members of minority groups find employment in professions that are already more inclusive to social and cultural diversity, than other "non-social-sensitive" professions.

However, the aim of my inquiry is not to find answers on why almost all interviewees end up in pro-Roma jobs. There might be biases in the interviews[15]; we might have failed to include Roma women working in other fields due to the sampling criteria (self-identification of Roma) and also due to the applied methods (snowball technique)[16] thus causing limitations to the study. Therefore, I am rather interested in the way these choices of profession unfold the construction of ethnic identities through the narration of young women. I believe that the merge of professional choices with commitment to pro-Roma activities well illustrates how young women negotiate their professional and ethnic identities. I formulated the following specific research questions*:* (1) In what way ethnic identity affects the choice of profession? (2) Along what factors ethnic identity is negotiated in young women's choice of profession?

[14] Analysis covered, but was not limited to questions referring to the person educational attainment, past and current work, future plans. Furthermore questions were also posed in relation to pro-Roma activities and jobs, as it occurred as an interesting aspect of interviewee's lives already in the beginning of the data collection (e.g.: *when/why/how did you decide to work for Roma people?, Did you purposefully decide to take this path early on? What made you get interested in this field?)*

[15] However, similar tendency was observed also by Tóth (2008) in her study on successful Roma.

[16] Many of respondents received training in "social sensitive professions" such as social work, social education, psychology or other social sciences, law and human rights. Interestingly, even those who had different educational background (for instance economics, or theology) found employment in related governmental or non-governmental bodies and many of them emphasized helping and advocating marginalized Roma communities in the future.

As for *partner choices*, gender ideologies and the ethnicity of the future partner emerged as the most relevant themes. In each of the interviews, respondents were asked to describe what an ideal partner and an ideal father of children would like[17]. Conversations easily switched from the ideal partner to interviewee's conceptions about femininity and masculinity, as well as their perception on the ideal tasks and duties of men and women within and outside the home. Hence, interviewees were also asked to describe the ideal role of their partner in the family. While analyzing the interviews, I was interested if the accounts of young women get in any way coloured by ideas about ethnic belonging. I rendered my data with special focus on two questions: (1) Are ideas on ideal family roles of partners connected to their perceived ethnic belonging? (2) Does ethnicity of the ideal partner matter in the choice of partner?

Given the time concerns of my thesis, the I will concentrate specifically on choice on profession and choice on partner, while other important aspects of the lives of young Roma women might remain in the background. Additionally, I can only focus on a very specific subgroup of Roma women, those living in Budapest, younger than 30. Therefore, any generalizing consequences on the much wider group of graduate Roma women would be misleading. For instance, differences among Roma sub-ethnic groups (such as Romungro, Vlash or Beash Roma) will not given priority in the analysis, only if it is crucial to understand the personal accounts of women.

Before moving to the theoretical background of my study, as working with data from a larger research, I need consider some methodological and ethical issues. To begin with, my thesis research can be classified as secondary analysis to the extent that it builds on previously collected data to investigate questions that slightly differ from the primary focus of the original research. (Heaton 2008). However, I would not label my analysis as "secondary", for at least two reasons.

[17] Analysis included, but was not limited to the answers to the following areas: Family practices in the current family and in the family of origin, childbearing intentions, experiences with previous and love relationships, the ideal partner, future plans. Roma 'traditions', if mentioned.

First, the interview material has not yet been a subject of profound analysis, nor served as part of any published scholarly work, therefore, the "raw material" of the interviews was suitable for the small scale analysis of my thesis project. Second, I decided to take a closer look on the identity formation of young Romani women, which is closely related to the primary research goals, even though, was not directly asked upon (ibid).

My research questions were generated during the close reading of the primary dataset and were directly linked to the purpose of the original research. Therefore, I regard the consent gained in the primary research to use the interview material for scholarly purposes as sufficient to start working on an identity-related analysis.[18] However, as part of the selected interviews were carried out by my colleagues, some limitations on my study should be take into account, such as that the small differences in the way the questions were phrased could alter the way interviewees formulated their answers.

Last but not least, I have to consider the researchers' position in relation to data-gathering. In this project, all three interviewers were academics of non-Romani origin. This can be regarded as a possible barrier to grasp knowledge on Romani women's lives as Roma women might speak differently and reveal different aspects of their identities to non-Roma researchers than members/academics of the Roma community.[19] However, I believe that ethnicity is not the only possible point of identification in a research encounter. The fact that I was much of the same age, completed the same level of education as most of my respondents made it easier to approach them, gain trust and create a convenient atmosphere for the interview to be conducted.

[18] However, three selected interviews I conducted with former members of RAP (Roma Access Program), who were enrolled at CEU MA programs at the time of the analysis. Even though I removed names from the transcripts, they remained identifiable for the author. Thus, I asked additional permission from them to use their accounts to my thesis. I also asked permission to use the whole research material from my colleagues.

[19] However, interestingly, the fact that I was interested in the lives of Roma women made a few of my interviewees think that I was also an ethnic Roma. Questions such as *"Are you Roma too, right?"* occurred more than once.

Despite the discussed limitations, I believe that this small scale research fits well to the overall project as it deepens the understanding of the primary research questions related to ethnicity and reproduction, with touching important themes that requires closer inquiry, such as the articulation of ethnic identity through professional choices and partner choices. It also highlights an important generational gap between the younger and older generation of highly educated Roma women by showing particular modes of professional and personal identity negotiations of the younger women.

3. A SELECTIVE REVIEW ON APPROACHES TO IDENTITY FORMATION

The goal of this chapter is to develop a theoretical framework for the analysis of my interview material. A brief overview of how the conceptualization of identity developed and what theoretical influences affected the way we think about it today is necessary to underpin and situate the analysis. I begin with sociological and post-structural approaches to identity that laid the ground for more specific theories on the identity formation of minorities to be evolved. Then, I introduce the "identity negotiation" approach, and show two specific but interrelated fields of scholarship that I found as particularly relevant to study highly achieving Roma women, namely, "biculturalism" for black and immigrant women, and "double binding identity" in the case of successful Roma in Hungary.

3. 1 Shift in the concept of identity

3.1.1 Classical sociological approaches to identity

The sociological approach to identity can be traced back to the 'symbolic interactionists' and became the dominant way of dealing with identity in classic sociological thought. An example for this is the "role theory" that emerged from the work of G. H. Mead (1934). He regarded "roles" as sites for self-development and a determinant of human behavior (Váriné 1994). While thinking about the self, he differentiated the "Me" from "I" and claimed that "Me" is the social aspect of the self that is acquired through socialization, as a result of a constant dialog with 'significant others' (Mead 1934). Mead's theory builds on the idea of 'interaction', which takes

place between the 'outside' that is larger society and the 'inside' that is the personal aspect of the self, and through this process it constantly modifies the values that the inner essence of the self inhibits (ibid).

Mead and other symbolic interactionists laid the ground for several sociologists to think about identity as equivalent with roles (Gerson 2001). Gender identity for instance, as described in the work of Ann Oakley (1981) can be understood as a specific type of role identity. Gender roles are enacted through gendered socialization, when girls and boys develop their senses of selves as men and women (Oakley 1981). According to this approach, identity of my interviewees is not 'given' at the moment of birth, instead it is developed through socialization and formed through interaction with the outside social world, when they learn what being a 'Roma' and being a 'women' means (ibid).

However, critiques of role theory emphasize that although this approach talks about a two-way process of internalizing parts of the outside world into our own conceptions of self, it imagines identity as stable and coherent and fixes both the inner self and cultural worlds resulting in a static and reductionist description of the social world. (Hall 1996, Gerson 2001). As a consequence, role theory leaves little space for change over time and grants little agency to individuals in fostering change. Although the introduction of "multiple" roles and "role-conflict" (Csepeli 1997) point to the tensions that might occur when someone has to fulfill contradictory role obligations, role theory is unable to accommodate the complexity of identities that simultaneously influence the way people think about themselves (Gerson 2001). Last but not least, it concentrates on the individual while neglect larger social structures and the level of the collective identification (Cerulo 1997).

3.1.2 Social constructivism

Constructivist approach responds to some of the concerns raised by critiques of role theory. One of the forerunners of this viewpoint was Erving Goffman (1969). He elaborated the "dramatic model" in which he compared everyday human behavior to performances and claimed that identity is a matter of performance (Jenkins 1997). He describes a number of metaphors to everyday performances to let us see that the self is not necessarily a consistent entity, but "rather a range of partial aspects or revelations of self, depending on the social situation" (Jenkins 1997:59). By introducing social identity, Goffman (1963) argues that it is possible to capture processes of stigmatization that for instance occur along racial or national differences. The extent to a person is able to deal with stigma, depends on her 'personal identity', that is in the words of Clarke, "a complex and continuous profiling of who we are in relation to society that marks us as an individual" (Clarke 2008:513). Identity is constantly in a state of flux shaped and maintained through our relation to social norms and values that are based on difference between people and groups of people (ibid).

This shift towards the influence of social groups inspired many scholars, with the result that in the recent decades, scholars of identity turned towards "collective identities" and begun to study the shared attributes of groups along which individuals define themselves (Cerulo 1997). Identity understood as socially constructed means that even though on the surface it appears to be natural, in fact, it is produced through various social processes within existing social structures (Gerson 2001). Social constructivism is based on "the rejection of any category that sets forward essential or core features of as the unique property of a collective's members" (Cerulo 1997: 387). In my case, it means that my interviewees do not only grow to become 'Roma' and 'women', and then maintain 'Roma' and 'women' identity onward, but construct the meaning of Romaness and womanhood. To specify this, let us take a look on constructivist approaches to gender and to ethnicity.

Some of the related works on gender problematize the link between sex and gender, challenge essentialist dichotomies between men and women and emphasize the subjective feeling of gender (Gerson 2001). In the 1960s several feminists claimed that biological categorization does not serve as a proper base for the social hierarchy between men and women, because, while sex is biologically rooted, gender is socially learned (Okley (1972). However, more recently, several authors demonstrated that even 'sex' is socially constructed. Institutions, such as medical authorities (Kessler 1998) or legal authorities (Medaw 2010) play a central role in defining the criteria along which one is considered as male or female. The concept of "doing gender" was introduced by West and Zimmermann (1989). They claim that gender is an "interactional accomplishment" by which they meant that it is a constant, routine, methodical social performance. People are held accountable to act according the socially accepted norms of femininity and masculinity. (Gerson 2001). Wagner (2009) continued these lines of thought, when she studied black women's experiences at college. She coined the term 'Unchosen Me' to indicate that 'race' and 'gender' are created and maintained by and through institutions by ascribing the 'black woman' identity and pressure individuals to comply with this identification and behave accordingly.

The notion of ethnicity and ethnic groups appeared around the 1960s in Anglo-Saxon social anthropology (Eriksen 1993). Until the mid-70s, the so called *premordialist* approach was the dominant way of thinking about ethnicity, which emphasized the sharing of norms, values, beliefs, cultural symbols and practices. The common cultural signifiers define who the members of a given ethnic group are or in other words, what are the criteria of belonging to an ethnic group. Ethnic groups were assumed being able to build up an "own" identity and form distinct self-definition on the basis of common mythological ancestry (Eriksen 1993; Jenkins 1997).

The major shift in thinking about ethnicity occurred along the work of F. Barth (1969). He claimed that the main factor of ethnicity is not a cultural property of a given group, but a kind of *relationship* between groups, based on the simple distinction between 'Us' and 'Them'. The process of boundary formation between groups constitutes the boundaries and the ethnic groups (Barth 1969).

The constructivist approach to ethnicity recognizes the "situative" nature of ethnic identity. As it is a flexible, constantly changing environment, there is no universal and stable ethnic identity. In this approach, my interviewees can be considered as active agents of the formation of the 'Roma group' not solely the vehicles of their cultural traits (Barth 1969; Jenkins 1997). However, this approach still leaves us with questions on how my interviewees construct their *own* reading of ethnicity, as highly achieving women, not only as members of the overall Roma group.

3.1.3 Post-structuralist challenges to Identity

According to Cerulo (1997) the post-structural approach "adds" to the social constructivist, with the recognition of implicit power relations in the classification process. Post-structuralist thinkers point out that although social constructivists reject to think in essentialized categories, sometimes with disregarding power relations, they reinforce the very essentialism they aim to break away (Ibid). They focus on the conflicts between 'knowledge' and 'power' and study power differences in knowledge production that is often conveyed through language. They also emphasize diversity *within* identity categories, such as "women" or "black" (Ibid).

In contrast to constructivists, post-structuralists contest the dualistic oppositional nature of gender and draw attention to the dangers of treating group collectives, such as 'woman' as homogenous entities (Cerlo 1997). Judith Butler (1999) is one of the most influential proponents

of the postmodern approach. She contests the binary categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine' by claiming that there is no 'real' core of femininity. By introducing the term "gender performativity" she claims that gender produces the subject by repeated symbolic acts that are attributed to the subject. (Butler 1999). Post-structural approaches influenced Hungarian scholars interested in the identity formation of Roma too (Kóczé 2011). They argued for studying life stories of individuals to shed light on how gender and ethnicity are constructed and performed. Through the example of a Roma woman's life story, Éva Kovács (2006) problematises the role of the non-Roma observer, which constitutes the "Roma woman" itself and is then built in the individual's identity. She argues that in the "*space of a narrative"* (Kovács 2006:48) identities articulate themselves relatively independently of social categorization.

The post-structural approach helps to think about my interviewee's identity as not being fixed, essential and permanent identity, but as built of several, often contradictory and unresolved identities. It takes up different elements at different times and these elements are not unified around a 'coherent' inner self. In the words of Stuart Hall, "the fully unified, completed, secure and coherent identity is a fiction". (Hall 1996:598).

Post-structuralists pointed to the failings of adequately clarifying collective identities such as "ethnicity" or "gender" by introducing more and more categorical differences. This led scholars of identity to began using formulations like 'multiple identities' to unfold that "several forms of difference and inequality exist simultaneously and have multiplicative effects" (Gerson 2001:182).

According to Angle-Marie Hancock (2007), the concept of 'intersectionality' emerged as a challenge to identity politics that is traditionally based on the simplification of group identity. Recognition of intersectionality was first systematically discussed by Kimberle Crenshaw (1993)

to argue that different social and cultural dimensions make an impact not only separately, these dimensions are in constant and multiple interaction. Categories of difference are not only additive in terms of creating multiple inequalities, but simultaneously influence each other as well as construct new inequalities. (Crenshaw, 1993). Hancock claims that a reflection on intersectionality would cut 'in-group' essentialism that occurs when a sub-group of the larger group monopolizes the characteristics of a specific identity, such as Roma identify, thus marginalize those who do not share these characteristics. (Hancock, 2007). The intersectional approach will help me to think about identity formation of my interviewees as affected by their gender, ethnicity and class position (Kóczé 2011).

3.2 Identity Negotiation

3.2.1 The growth of the identity negotiation approach

The "identity negotiation" formulation emerged from the work of social psychologist Michael Swann (1989), who was interested in the way people cope with multiple identities in their interpersonal relationships. According to him, people "enter their interactions with independent and sometimes conflicting agendas that are resolved through a process of identity negotiation" (Swann 1987). In other words, negotiation is a process by which people try to reach consistency between the way they see themselves and the way others perceive them (Swan 1987).

More recently, approaching identities as multiple, fluid, sometimes contradictory and always in a dependence on social relations (Jenkins 2000; Gerson 2001), the term identity negotiation became widely used by qualitative social scientists, interested in identity formation of individuals, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural contexts. The field of immigration is an especially rich site to find studies on identity negotiation. Several scholars approach issues around first or second generation immigrant identity through the viewpoint of ethnicity and gender. (Kibria

2000; Killian and Johnson 2006; Stritikus and Nguyen 2007; Haw 2011; Yoon 2012, Khang and Boels 2012). These works focus on the ways women of African or Asian origin combine views on their culture of origin and those of the culture of the mainstream. For instance, several studies explored the subjective meanings of wearing the veil for Muslim women in terms of ethnic and cultural identity. (Read and Bartkowski 2000; Killian, 2003).

"Negotiating identity" came to refer to the process by which people are managing and coping with different, sometimes even contradicting identities to adapt a situation, where they have to meet different sorts of expectations. Individuals balance between their different identities, according to the specific contexts and relations as well as situational factors. (Killian and Johnson 2006). Such influential factors can be the context of cultural background and host culture in the case of immigrants, but can also be attitudes about gender and attitudes about Romaness in the case of my interviewees.[20]

3.2.2 'Biculturalism' and 'double binding identity'

Members of stigmatized minority groups are in a particularly difficult situation, because they need to find ways to ascertain a positive view on their personal identities as well as on their belonging to the group (Székelyi et. al 2005). In their case, the process of identity negotiation often entails "identity work", the "range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (Snow and Anderson 1987:1348 in Killian and Johnson 2006:68).

This latter approach directs our attention to a somewhat distinct field of scholarship on identity that could be classified as the "biculturalist" approach. Studies on this field are based on the idea

[20] Although I will use the term „negotiation" mostly to refer to this sense of individuals' process of coming to terms with different segments of their identities, it would be also interesting and highly relevant to study how following Swann, Roma women position themselves in and through interaction with others, and how they come to terms with others' perceptions and their own perceptions of themselves as 'Roma women'.

that members of minority groups have to comply with at least two distinct often oppositional cultural systems, one related to their "background" and one to the "mainstream" socio-cultural settings. (Bell 1990; Barett et al. 2003; Fingerhut 2005; Wright 2011).

In the literature on highly achieving minority women, several scholars differentiate between a more "public" domain, such as work, and a more "personal" domain, such as intimate relationships, and unfold how women attempt to balance between identities connected to these separate domains. (Bell 1990; Blair-Loy 2003; Kyriakidou 2012).

Several studies were have shown black people's struggles in fitting to dominant "white" environments, such as school or work. Bi-culturism is described as a tool to adjust to the expectations of these contexts by "acting white" (Wright 2011) as a result of learning and internalizing the dominant values of the mainstream. (Barett et al. 2003, Wagner 2009). Bell (1990) conducted research specifically on black professional women. She claimed that black women have to develop different strategies to find acceptance and self-fulfillment, in terms of career and in terms of personal lives. The two often clash that result in a "constant push and pull in the different cultural contexts" (Bell 1990: 475).

Although Bell recognizes that the "bi-culturalist" approach has its limitations in letting "cultures" be seen as distinct and homogenous entities, she does not problematize the inner complexities within the studied domains, nor treats the components of these realms as flexible to change and subject of re-definition. Furthermore, studies on bi-culturalism contain an assumption that a highly achieving black person has to reject black identity in order to succeed in white environment. By contrast, Wright (2011) demonstrated through the case of highly achieving black students that a "healthy" ethnic identity is crucial to succeed in academic environments. Similarly, Alfred (2001) in her study on black professional women claimed that deriving from

their bicultural life structure, black women develop a sort of competence that helps them to successfully navigate between sociocultural contexts. These works are necessary to keep in mind, to see that women are not solely victims of their "double" belonging.

The bi-cultural approach, understood rather in terms of resource or strategy than as potential for disadvantage, was adapted by Györgyi Bindorffer (2001) to describe the successful assimilation strategies of the Swab minority in Hungary. Bindorffer introduced the formulation "double-binding identity" to demonstrate that Swabs form a "harmonius" identity by combining elements of the mainstream Hungarian and the ethnic Swab identity in way that it is the most adequate to a given space and time. As a result they drop those elements of the ethnic identity that they find inconsistent with the mainstream identity and keep those that are found adequate to their everyday assimilated lives (Bindorffer 2001).

Bindorffer's "double binding identity" approach has been applied by Kinga Tóth (2005, 2008, 2009) to describe the identity construction of successful Roma in Hungary. She claims double binding identity as the dominant identification strategy for Hungarian Roma, by which she means that they equally incorporate elements of the mainstream Hungarian and the Roma identity[21]. She explained her findings with the high level of education and daily contact with the mainstream, mixed (Roma non-Roma) network, mixed marriages and work in the advocacy Roma. Her main conclusion was that it is possible to become successful without rejecting identification as Roma (Tóth 2005, 2008, 2009).

The presented works on double-binding identity take a constructivist and situative approach to identity, by claiming that it is up to the situation how the person combines minority and

[21] Besides the „*double binding idetity*"type, Tóth tested four types of identity strategies: *Assimilative* (identitfication only with the mainstream), *dissociative* (identify only as Roma), *marginal* (identify neither in terms of Roma no in terms of Hungarian, instead seeks for other identification categories, such as profession), *identity conflict* (or *hiding identity*, when the person relates ambivalently to both groups). Tóth 2005, 2008, 2009).

mainstream identity, whether to reveal or hide identity. However, as discussed above these approaches to some extent fix Roma identity still, treat it as a more or less stable "package", either to be hidden or to be reveled, as well as consisting of certain elements that by combination with elements of the mainstream "Hungarian" identity result in a particular pattern.

By setting up two situational contexts, in terms of professional and partner choice, my aim will be to show that Roma ethnicity *itself* is a subject of constant definition and re-definition. I refine the double binding identity approach, by claiming that individuals are not selecting between certain elements labeled as Roma or as Hungarian, but rather select from a wide range of cultural schemas and make sense of them within the context of ethnic identity. Romaness in some cases cover a rather limited range of these cultural entities, while in other cases it is stretched to embrace a variety of features that we would not perhaps according to the double binding approach, attribute to "non-Roma" or take as a sign of dissolving into the mainstream. In this regard, the line "between" the mainstram and Roma identity appears to be very thin. Using the intersectionality approach as a tool, I will show how the merge of ethnic identity with professional interest and views on gender create sites where this identity negotiation process becomes visible, and where individuals are clearly seen as active agents in this negotiation process.

In sum, in my analysis, I will treat identity as (1) *constructed* to show that Roma identity is not a given and fixed entity but it is formed according to various contexts and takes different shapes according to different situations (2) regard my interviewees as (3) *situated* on the *intersection* of ethnicity and gender and as (4) *active* agents in forming and shaping their identities and (4) describe this constructive process as a type of *negotiation* among different readings of what Romaness entails.

4. BACKGROUND TO YOUNG HIGHLY EDUCATED ROMA WOMEN – WHO ARE THEY?

Before moving to the main analysis, I provide some pieces of background information about my research subjects. Having presented the common features of my interviewees to put the individual stories of in a broader context, I highlight the most important hallmarks of the differences between young women of my study and older women of the entire dataset, as well as to reach out for possible broader differences between an earlier generation of Roma intellectuals and the studied generation. This distinction is crucial, as it will lay the ground for the relevance of studying the identity formation of young women. This distinction is not only important because it allows a better description of the specific group of my study, but also because along these differences, young women of my study develop different identity strategies and negotiate their identities differently than older women in our large sample and from members of the previous generation of Romani intellectuals in a broader sense.

For the purpose this research, I chose 20 interviews[22]. The age of my interviewees ranged between 24 and 31.[23] All completed at least college education, two thirds had (at least one) MA level degrees, one third were enrolled in a university program at the time of the interview. Their degrees covered the following fields; social work, social pedagogy, sociology, psychology, education and special education, cultural management, history, law, public management, tourism, international relations, communication, marketing, labor relations, public management, architecture and journalism. As regards relationship status, one third were married or lived in

[22] I included a more substantive description about the issues around selecting interviews for the purpose of this study in the methods section of my thesis, therefore, I will only concentrate here on those interviews that provided the subject of my analysis.

[23] My selection included interviews conducted with three 24, three 26, four 27, five 28, two 29, two 30 and one 31 years old Romani woman. Interviewees born after 1980 were selected for the purpose of the study.

cohabitation[24], one third had a relationship and one third reported being single at the time of the interview. As regards origin; five of the women had mixed Romani and non-Romani origin, the rest claimed Romani origin on both sides. The majority identified as 'Romungro' (two specified as 'Musician Gypsy'), a quarter as 'Vlash' and one interviewee as 'Beash'. Half originated either from the capital or from one of the larger towns of Hungary, the other half came from small towns or villages. All interviewees conducted higher educational studies in large towns, mainly in Budapest, and all were living in the capital at the time of the interview.

Below, I list the five major ways that differentiates my interviewees from the older interviewees and the previous generation of Romani intellectuals. While so doing, I will argue that this difference is not only based on age, but a variety of other factors that are shaping differently the lives of women in the previous and the youngest generation. First, considering family background, I found that third of the young women had at least one parent who had obtained a higher education degree at some point in their lives. For instance, Ági presented her father with the following words: *"Even before the change of the regime, he called himself as freelance intellectual.*[25] However, soon it turned out that educational status of parents alone cannot provide an adequate picture on familiar backgrounds. One reason for this is that many of the interviewees had at least one parent who worked in intellectual jobs or position. This is apparent in the way Andi portrayed her childhood and her family of origin:

> *"My father set the standard, he was himself a painter and his friends were always coming from the white middle class intelligentsia; artists, Jews, Gypsies, guitar teacher, piano teacher, so everything what you want. (…) so this is how we grew up, among books. This is also very important in the story, that my dad always bought lots of books, our whole flat was full of books, and that's also very important in the life of a child and also that you actually see your parents reading."*

Even if not on the level of parents, several women reported having either one or more older siblings or relative who obtained higher educational degrees. In other cases, some interviewees

[24] These were all interviewees between the age of 29 and 31.
[25] In the original: *szellemi szabadfoglalkozasu.*

referred to their parents as 'quasi-intellectuals'. For instance, Noemi presented her father with these words: *"I always call my father as an intellectual without a degree"*. According to these measures, more than two thirds of my interviewees came from intellectual or 'quasi' intellectual families.

To follow this line of thought as well to discuss the second characteristics of the young women, even the rest of the women emphasized some sort of "cultural capital"[26] amassed in their family that made them to be different from other families or other Roma. This could be expressed in terms of educational level; for instance acquiring secondary educational degrees or completing vocational training, or in terms of residential separation from the Roma community. A very visible example for this is Annamari's account, in which she pointed out that although her parents had low level of education, they managed to move out from the area where Roma lived even before she was born. *"That's very important in my life that we didn't live in the 'Gypsy Street' or in the 'Roma Colony', but we were fully separated from other Gypsies. (We lived) at the part of the town where non-Gypsies lived, thus we managed to fully integrate from this aspect"*.

Overall, young Romani women of my study claimed to have come from families that were to a large extent integrated to the mainstream non-Romani environment. Besides residential characteristics, I propose two more aspects as signs of coming from an integrated family. First, considering the networks of my interviewees, strikingly few of the women spoke about having any Romani friends in their childhood and even those who mentioned Romani friends, did not claim to have had an entirely Romani network. Most of the women did not hang out too often with mainly Roma children apart from relatives, until they joined a Romani intellectual network. Second, many of the interviewees regarded their parents as those who made the major step in

[26] The notion of 'capital' in the field of sociology of education has been elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu (2011). He was most concerned with questions around cultural reproduction and how it affects social reproduction of inequalities. Bourdieu describes 'social capital' having acquired through social networks and group membership, and `cultural' capital that includes the possession of cultural goods, and other symbolic expressions and behavioral elements that are crucial to successful educational achievement. He also claims that the transmission of cultural capital plays a huge role in the social reproduction of advantages and disadvantages (ibid).

social mobility. They perceived mobility as less outstanding compared to their parents' achievement. This is the most striking in Gabi's account, who herself distinguished her generation from the previous one: *Well, when dad speaks about this [his struggles] I feel ashamed that I don't work as much as my grandparents did, not even as much as my parents did. So yes, this story is not about one generation."*

The third characteristics that differentiates women of my study from the previous generation is their educational path. Older women of the dataset often spoke about disrupted educational careers, meaning that often working and/or family formation preceded higher education studies. In some cases they completed secondary education while having already one or more children. By contrast, younger women followed a linear educational trajectory. These women did not have large gaps between the end of their primary, secondary and higher education. Although it happened that someone did not get accepted to university the first time she applied, they managed to get into one of the Hungarian higher educational institutions in the following one or two years. More importantly, those, who "missed" a year, decided to spend that year either working, or completing vocational training (OKJ). None of them married or formed families before starting their higher education, nor before they finished it.[27]

The fourth way young Romani women differed from their older counterparts is that all of them reported being entirely supported by the family, as opposed to members of the older women and previous generation, who often spoke about their struggles to continue education and/or step out of expectation concerning gender. This became apparent from a closed reading of the interview conducted with 31 year old Viola. Considering her age, I could have still her included to my analysis, as I did another woman who was born in the same year. The reason why I finally

[27] Although some of the interviewees were still enrolled in university programs.

decided not to do so was due to the way she depicted her entrance to (secondary) education, which I found in a sharp contrast with the other women of my study:

> *"Well, let me make it clear that my family was, well, I wouldn't say hostile, but they didn't understand the situation for sure. We were so poor that we didn't eat enough. And than my mum didn't understand that why do I want to go on with my studies. But even if I go on, why not choosing just vocational school, which is only one year long and than I can go to work. And I said out of resistance and honesty that I want to attend gymnasium because I want to go to higher education, and that totally freaked them out. Why another 4 years of studying, when we don't have enough to eat? So there was a certain resistance on my mum's side. And than when I went to high school and she saw that I entered a completely different world, she perceived this and also the broader family, that I leave the authentic Romani community, I deny what I am and turn into be a Gadjo, a Non-Roma".*

In this quote, Viola presented her decision to carry on with her education as going against family and community expectations. It was striking how all young(er) Romani women in my study spoke about education being perceived as a 'natural' and even more as an expected way of getting along in life. Similarly, although several young women pointed out financial hardships, they also emphasized the role of different types of scholarships they received throughout their education. In fact, today, there are a few types of academic scholarships provided by either non-profit Romani networks, such as the *Romaversitas* or *The Advanced Collage for Romani students*, or by local governments, town councils (Tóth 2008). These differences are also interesting in the light of Kóczé's (2011) research on politically active Romani women. As opposed to my findings, she describes the followings:

> "Most of them decided to act alone not within the support of the family and community, even though they rarely have got support from the smaller Roma community, or from the local Non-Roma community in order to break out of the traditional lifestyle. Most of the interviewees had to struggle within and against their own family, in order to get permission to start a completely different lifestyle. (Kóczé 2011:116).

Kóczé points especially to the role of fathers as holding strong expectations on gender (ibid). In my study, women very often said it was their fathers who encouraged them to pursue education. Many cases, fathers were depicted as strict but very supportive characters in the lives of young women. Nóra for instance went as far to claim a central role to the father in girls' education:

"Well, I think if a woman carries on her studies, the father has always an important role. So my father always told me since the early ages, he really wanted me to obtain university degree. To go on with studies that's necessary, and also he told me not to marry early."

My interviewees also pointed out that fathers sometimes held different expectations towards their girl child than towards their wives. The following quote of Zsuzsi illustrates a perceived shift in the thinking of fathers in the eye of several of my interviewees.

"My dad expects that [to be "traditional"]only from his wife, not from his daughter. He expects her daughter to study. And to reach as high as possible. That's interesting because he expects my mum to be traditional and stuff like that. As for his expectations towards me-, I see that he got a bit more "enlightened" or I don't know how to phrase it. For instance, he was the only one who was absolutely sure that I would get accepted to university, while my mum was more hesitant. So, although he has some weird stuff with my mum, I absolutely don't feel that he'd expect me like 'go and learn how to cook' or stuff like that."

Last, but not least, women of my study could be characterized by more self-determined ethnic identity formation than older interviewees. This is not to say that members of the previous generation did not develop a positive relation to Romaness, however, they had far more struggles on this respect too. Kóczé discussed the 'pride and prejudice' struggles that Romani women activists went through during their lives (Kóczé 2011). These contrasts were also present in the narrative of our interviewees; however, I argue that in the case of younger interviewees, these "struggling periods" took considerably less time. They came to terms with their origin and built a positive picture of themselves very soon compared to older interviewees. Kóczé also remarks that women born after 1970 were more self-determined in the construction of their Roma identity (Ibid). I believe this tendency continued and positive identification is even stronger in the case of women who were born after 1980.

This may be partly related to already existing "role models" among the older intellectual generation including sometimes their own parents. But it is also largely due to the fact that several women belonged to stimulating professional and personal networks. These networks made it possible for a new 'positive' and socially accepted Romani identity to emerge. (Kende

2005, Tóth 2008, Székelyi et. al 2005). 'Positive' in this sense means that members of the given community relate mainly in positive terms to their belonging to the ethnic group. (Székelyi et al 2005)[28]. Additionally, due to these affirmative actions, they can be perceived as "mediators" between Roma and the Non-Roma or even as 'saviors' of Roma both by members of the 'ingroup' and those of the 'outgroup' (Tóth 2008). This has certainly an effect on the identity formation, which will be further elaborated in the next chapter. Tóth also remarks that these people are often viewed by the majority not as "intellectuals" but as "Romani intellectuals". (Ibid). To what extent my interviewees internalize these ideas to their self-perception varied across my interviewees. The two most salient examples are Mariann and Vera. Consider the difference between the following two quotes[29]:

> Mariann*: "I believe that the first thing to tell about myself is that I'm a Gypsy. And after that I can tell about my self that I belong to Romani intellectuals.*
>
> Vera*:" I see myself as a human person first of all, and I have a certain consciousness of being a Roma, or having a Roma origin, that I am a Gypsy. But I always say that I'm not a Romani university student, but a student who is Roma"*

When put next to each other, it becomes obvious that while Mariann claimed to belong to Romani intellectuals, Vera attributed less significance to the ethnic element and rather saw herself as a professional.

One possible consequence of the above described generational differences is that while older women often started to work as activists at one of the Romani NGOs or governmental bodies first, and then obtained higher educational degrees at a later age, the younger generation Romani women intellectuals seem to first become well qualified professionals and then seek employment in order to utilize the knowledge gained through education. Employment may be imagined in

[28] Somewhat similar conclusions were drawn in a research conduced by Székelyi et al (2005) on successful Roma. They found that those who managed to reach the highest positions and became successful in the mainstream society, related positively to their ethnic belonging.

[29] These answers were given to the same question, namely: *"How would you present yourself for people, who don't know you, neither heard your name, nor have seen any pictures about you. What would you mention in the first place?"* This question was places as the very last one in our interview guide.

terms working for human rights initiatives or in a few cases Romani NGOs in particular, however, this intention not always precedes the completion of education. Young women are not necessarily activists of Roma rights in the sense of devoting their lives for Romani issues, but they desire to engage with issues broadly related to Roma, as well as other excluded groups, within the frameworks of their profession. As one of my interviewees, Tamara, put it: *"There is not any difference between me and my [non-Romani] friends, just that they work for a multinational and I work for a cause and that's the difference."*

These differences I identified above have an implication on the emerging Roma middle class as well. It seems that today, there is a new layer of the Roma community, who are highly qualified and proudly claims to be Roma. This new generation provides the vitality to the formation of the Roma middle class, which therefore does not stagnate, but becomes more open due to the new strategies of relation to work and identity. The depicted differences show a certain reproduction of the Romani middle class, which is although very limited due to the still existing difficulties of entering higher education for the children of lower status Romani families. The generational difference also has an impact on developing professional identities, which will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

In sum, in this chapter I outlined some general characteristics of my interviewees, and presented five interrelated reasons to claim that this group form a separate sub-group of highly educated Roma women, with distinct characteristics of and identity formation. As opposed to the majority of the older women; (1) Many of the younger women came already from intellectual or at least "Quasi intellectual" families (2) their families were to a large extent integrated to the mainstream, (3) they followed a linear educational path (4) they were not only not obscured, but highly encouraged by their parents, especially by their fathers to pursue education and (5) they were self-determined in their ethnic identity formation and related positively to their Romani origin.

5. THE CHOICE OF PROFESSION: A NEED TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY?

> *"You know what that is? Its responsibility that you're responsible for what you are doing and what happens in the community. So that's rather a sense of responsibility and the inequality among the groups that disturbs me. This thought inspires me and gives me the spirit." (Ildikó)*

In this chapter, I focus on the process of identity formation of young Romani women in their professional choices. I approach my data through the examination of professional interests and activity my interviewees are pursuing in this area of their lives. My aim is to demonstrate how these young women in their choice of profession negotiate their ethnic identity in addition to other factors such as ambition, interest, job opportunities and educational background. I show how many young women merge professional interests in choosing socially sensitive professions and regard these areas of work as tools to professionally improve the lives of Romani people. The merging of professional interest with ethnic identification entails a process of enriching existing constructions of ethnic identity.

In the literature on highly achieving minority women, Higginbotham and Weber (1992) found similar tendencies in their study on the personal experience of social mobility of black and white women. While black professionals are more likely to engage with community issues and support of the community, due to a feeling of "owing back" to the community, white women felt less indebted to kin and family and therefore were less likely engage in social sensitive professions.

The 'double binding identity' as described by Tóth (2008), in relation to successful Roma, serves as a theoretical framework to my analysis. As a distinct type of double binding identity, Tóth pointed to "a tendency among the successful members of this community to reconnect with their Gypsy roots" (2005: 128) and classified as "Re-born Gypsyness". She claims that in some periods of the individual's life, ethnicity might be less dominant, or even rejected, while in other

life periods, ethnic identity might be recognized along with a form of newly gained consciousness (Tóth 2008). A striking finding of my research is that several of my interviewees show signs of similar identity patterns. These women who could be characterized with the term "Re-born Gypsyness" in their professional career seem to offer particularly interesting examples for the merge of professional and ethnic identity. Therefore, I take their case to illustrate a few factors that led these women to choose pro-Roma professions, as well as how these factors make them not only hiding and revealing Roma identity according to given situations, but to urge them to be active agents in making sense and re-making meanings of their Romaness. Building on the four type of 'Re-Born Gypsyness' developed by Tóth, I shall discuss the (1) the role of supporting Romani intellectual networks (2) experienced discrimination (3) facing poverty as a highly educated adult and finally (4) the turn to perceived Roma culture.

5.1 Supporting Romani intellectual networks (Ildikó, Bianka)

First Tóth discusses the case when someone hides Roma origin at some points of life, while at other periods reconnects with his/her roots. Among my interviewees, an example for this might be *Ildikó*, who spoke about "re-connecting" to her ethnic belonging after joining a Romani intellectual network. Although not explicitly but similar elements were also present in the case of *Bianka* too. The role of Romani intellectual networks were found as influential sites in the process of forming ethnic identity in many cases. It also helped interviewees to take on both the pride and the responsibility of being a Romani intellectual. Ildikó went so far to report on her previous hesitance and the role of such a network, which she joined as a second year student at the University of Fine Arts played in finding "her way back" to her belonging:

> *"… So, I'm dare to say that I had a period in my life, which I believe everyone has, that I denied. When there is this process of rejecting. This is a period… well, not that I rejected it, but I tried everything for not let it be seen, to not let it be known…and than when I got into Romaversitas, and we first went somewhere after a Saturday training day, there I felt like yeah, that's my place to be, that's my natural environment, where I don't have to think it over when I'm about to say something."*

Interviewees often pointed to the role these organizations played in strengthening their identities, but also in helping personal and professional networks to evolve. Many young women spoke about receiving their first jobs through these network systems. Clearly this had considerably impact on their identity formation, especially because some reported having been trained in very different fields. This was present in many interviews, although, the case of Ildikó is unique in the sense that as seen from the quote, 'before' and 'after' are linguistically singled out as different stages in life in relation to identity formation. How she ended up in the network, while at that time not being open about her identity remains in the background, though.

Bianka joined another support network, but similarly highlighted its role in making new connections and gaining new commitment. Having successfully completed a training on journalism, organized by the *Independent Roma Journalist Association*, Bianka's goal in the future became to work on the local level to improve the lives of Romani communities.

> *Well, yeah, when I kinda stumbled into this training, I picked up a lot. And I saw that for example at Z, there was nothing done. But really, nothing on the local level, the maximum was that each time before the (local) elections they organized a party. And now I see that I can help with mobilizing my connections to let something finally happen.*

For her, commitment was gained through the recognition of the importance of being a highly educated member of the local community. University studies alone did not result in professional commitment, as she had tried different programs by the time she got involved with a Romani supporting network. There she took training on journalism, nevertheless, she also admitted that it was not her intention to get more qualified in this field. It was not the training alone, but rather the supportive network that made her realize the significance that by using the personal and professional networks she is able to make a change in her community. Her intention for the future was to figure out ways in her professional work, in which she could turn this newly gained "capital" into the benefit of the community.

The case of these two girls shows that Roma identification does not work along simple lines such as hiding at some points in life, while revealing at other periods. It cannot be understood in terms of "reconnecting" or a "way back" because "back" has never existed – the concept of Romaness, rooted in pride, togetherness and responsibility for the community, was evolved upon building up personal and professional networks and gaining new sort of knowledge that together with personal ambitions and interest formed the current reading of ethnicity.

5.2 Experienced negative treatment, discrimination (Annamari, Diana)

In the second case, Tóth found that someone might not be aware of her ethnicity or might not attach any specific feeling to this fact until she is "reminded" by non-Roma people. The perceptions of the majority makes the person more conscious of her belonging to Roma. In my study, *Annamari* and even more *Diana* seem to illustrate this case, who reported on turning to work for Roma after having encountered prejudices on part of non-Roma. In Annamari's narrative, identity formation and finding commitment to work for Roma were also very closely connected to perceived negative experiences. This is how she formulates this:

> *"Well, that is exactly how my identity was being formed. And that got stronger in me, this kind of self-verification that it makes sense who I am. Perhaps, this kinda- the behavior of my classmates brought that out, but in a way I'm glad about that because today this is the most determining aspect of my life; its there in every aspect of my work. So that I work for Gypsies in all of the aspects of my life."*

Apparently, negative experiences made such a strong impact on her that they eventually reinforced a positive perception of herself. Moreover, it gave an inspiration to develop a kind of professional identity closely in lines with her ethnic identity.

Diana received training in international relations, however, upon facing hostility on behalf of the majority society she decided to seek for employment where she could actively help the Roma community. Here is how she spells out her decision:

> *"I'm very lucky because we're a very integrated family. And if you are born in an integrated family than its only like that you don't have to go to solarium. Up till the age of 20, I didn't have a problem of it. And you come to realize it after having looked for a flat for weeks and not finding one, even though you take the money with you and show your buisness card from work. Now at that point it became clear that I don't want to become anymore [a business woman] those five years went to waste because who would hire me to a multinational?"*

What she describes here is that as a child and a young adult she did not experience any negative attitudes towards Roma, due to the high level of integration of her family. However, as an adult she stepped to a world where she had to endure the prejudices of non-Roma. That made her aware of those differences that were hidden for her throughout her childhood and education. She had to face the fact that in the eyes of non-Roma she will be perceived as a member of untrusty, unreliable people. She learned a new layer in the meaning of ethnicity, the "excluded", something that was obviously not part of her socialisation.

In sum, the two examples have shown me that as opposed to Tóth's reading, the actual experience of being excluded or discriminated against, does not necessary mean that by accepting that non-Roma will always treat them as Roma interviewees are "pushed" to a take on a Roma identity, besides the mainstream identity, but that it may result in forming identity in a way that a new layer of ethnicity will be built in the meaning of ethnicity, one that is dominantly based on other's perception of Roma. Importantly, as this element will be added to a positive understanding of ethnicity, this does not result in rejecting Romaness, but indeed in strengthening ethnic identity.

5.3 Facing poverty (Klaudia, Ági)

The third type of "Re-born Gypsyness" in Tóth's classification, differs from the above in the sense, that individuals of this type were always aware of their belonging and related positively to their ethnicity, however, as adults they begun to "consciously practice" their identities. In my case, *Klaudia* and *Ági* talked about discovering the marginalization of some Roma communities that not only makes her conscious about her belonging, but develops a certain "drive" to engage with these issues as a professional.

She did not report on any sort of negative personal experiences as Roma. She grew up in an entirely integrated environment and realized the difficulties and importance of being Roma along with her experiences working as an intern recently:

> *"I worked in XYZ. That's where I went on doing fieldwork. Before, I haven't seen a Gypsy colony. There is no such thing at T. There is an area where Gypsies are living, but together with Hungarians. I haven't seen such a thing before that fieldwork. I didn't know that people live like this. I was already an adult when I faced that. I have heart about it, but I've never seen."*

According to her, at the point of facing with deep poverty, she decided to devote her professional life to improve the well-being of Roma people. She recognized the importance of her role as being a Roma intellectual also in contrast to non-Roma and sought to develop a carrier in which she could place this motif to the center.

Important to point out, that Roma ethnicity was often perceived in class terms by my interviewees, especially by those, who came from middle class families. These women put emphasis less on prejudices of the mainstream and more on social status differences. Personal experiences could, but not in all cases did, reinforce this view.

Ági pointed to the role of education as very influential. Similar to Klaudia, as she recalled her childhood experiences, she pointed out several times that she did not experience any assaults related to her ethnicity. After having tried herself in various fields, she found real support of her views when she enrolled to psychology. This is how she remembers to this period of time:

> *"What made the real change was QZX University. There I met people, who had a similar way of thinking like me (...) I would say that the entire training made me decide that I' d like to change the system as it is, and that's what I'd like to tackle, though I don't yet know how."*

For her, it was not only social networking that made a real change in her thinking, but certain aspects of the educational curricula and the intellectual environment that resulted in her growing awareness on broader issues concerning Roma and other minorities.

For Vera, university years seemed to be crucial too. She tried tourism first, and then she switched to special education. In the following quote, she expresses how she came to find commitment in this field through her studies:

> *"I felt good [at university] and I regard it [her field of study] as my profession. So I've found what I'd like to deal with, I didn't regret that I ended up at this profession. I like what I do and I like my profession, I'd like to work in this field and I've been improved a lot both as a person and as a professional at university"*

We see here that she did not claim ethnic identity to be influencing her choice of profession and her narrative did not contain any element of aiming to be specialized in the problems of Romani people. A couple of times that she expressed hesitancy and asked me to specify what I wanted to know. Questions, such as *"What do you mean, as a Roma or just as Vera?"* I believe that this sort of hesitancy shows that she identified herself mainly in the context of her profession and not in ethnic terms. In this respect she could be an example for what the literature discussed as "Marginal" identity (Bindhoffer 2001; Tóth 2008).

In sum, for women discussed in this section, education seems to uncover those dimensions of 'Romaness' that were not apparent in earlier personal experiences. As adults they face different

elements that can take part in the conceptualization of ethnicity, those related to social categorization in terms of exclusion, discrimination and stigmatization and sometimes class differences. This new aspect of ethnicity, which they come to recognize during education and professional carrier, shapes their view and relation to their own belonging as well. Consequently, the start of "consciously practice" Roma identity, takes place with a re-definition of ethnicity itself.

5.4 Strengthening identity (Flóra)

Last but not least, according to Tóth, re-connection with Gypsiness may happen through increased interest in forms of Romani culture, such as learning the Romani language. I did not find this type in this clear form, however, *Flóra,* who connected her attitude of 'helping' with some sort of interest in different "cultural" forms of Romaness seems to well represent this type. In addition, she also reported elsewhere in the interview her growing interest in Roma music.

Flóra, a half Romani half non-Romani woman, grew up on the outskirts of Budapest and did not maintain a strong relationship with a Roma community. She depicted her childhood as full of difficulties in terms of growing up with her non-Roma aunt and together with her Romani relatives. She explained her commitment to help Roma people in a way strengthening of her own identity through an abstract search for her roots:

> *Well, now I can't even tell you why… [she would like to work for the Roma] or, well, like certainly because I grew up among them, [Romani relatives] therefore this identity is important for me. This is very much kind of self-frustrated condition, because they don't speak the language, neither do I, they don't keep the Gypsy culture, you know because they are already this kind of Hungarian Gypsies, but I know how everyday life goes, though. And well, that's why I decided to deal with cultural issues and to help others.*

Flóra seemed confused whether she could claim herself a Romani identity on the bases of practicing everyday struggles of Roma people and not on the bases of 'language' and 'traditions'.

From her account, an abstract search of identification points could be observed in her choice of dealing with "cultural issues". The two element of perceiving "Romaness", through fixed cultural means and through everyday reality are nonetheless, still present in her account. Perhaps, she has not yet come to terms with which one of them to choose as for identification, but she felt that she has to get closer to people to find answers for this question.

5.5 Conclusions

In this section, I have shown some of the diverse ways in which ethnic identity can be articulated through the professional carriers of my interviewees, while pointing a few factors that were likely to take part in triggering the merging of ethnic and professional identity formation. First, I found the relation between ethnic identity and choosing a "pro-Roma" area to work as not automatically entailing each other. Rather, different factors seemed to play a key role in the lives of individuals, such as experienced discrimination or supportive Romani intellectual networks. Although some of the women constructed their narrative in a way that they let their choices be seen as "natural", meaning that it is obvious that as highly educated Roma, they pursue jobs through which they can benefit the community, still, different elements seem to be playing a role in these seemingly 'natural' choices. In other cases, recognizing the importance of ethnic origin and merging with one's professional interest appeared as being related to a specific experience or time period. In these cases interviewees constructed their narratives in a way that they singled out a more or less specific live event that shaped their identity as Roma and made them becoming committed in working with Roma issues. Some of these women chose a social sensitive profession and as time passed developed their intention to specify in helping Roma through their profession. However, others did not receive training in social sensitive professions at all but turned to deal with Roma issues at later stage of their education or carrier.

Second, my analysis reveals that in the case of "Re-born Identity" an intensive process of identity negotiation takes place. Interviewees are not only flexible in taking "on" and "off" their Romaness, but were very active in re-defining what ethnicity itself meant to them. Training and education, the newly gained knowledge and established professional networks entail a new sort of consciousness which than modifies internalized self-definition and identity based on previous experiences and socialisation. Furthermore, it is exactly thought this process of negotiation not just between ethnic and professional identities but between the different elements of ethnicity that enables young women to avoid 'identity crisis' (Hall 1996, Tóth, 2008) and evolve harmony between different simultaneously existing self-concepts. Last but not least, it shows that profession is not necessarily the most determining factor in ethnic identity related careers and in some cases it is not even a site for Romani women do articulate their ethnic identity.

My aim with introducing the gendered aspect of ethnicity is not only to show an other case of how young women negotiate their identities at the intersection of gender and ethnicity, also by introducing gender will further highlight this process of re-defining the meaning of ethnicity for young women of my study and it is to this issue the I turn in the next chapter.

6. THE CHOICE OF PARTNER: DOES ETHNICITY MATTER?

In this chapter, I provide a further example for how young women of my study negotiate their personal choices in a way that they also actively negotiate and (re)-define their belonging to the Roma community. More precisely, I show how young women negotiate their ethnic identity through the formation of their attitudes about gender. To show this I picked young women's choice of partner for a closer inquiry, as an important segment of identity formation (Székelyi et. al 2005, Kende 2005, Tóth 2008, Kóczé 2011).

Using the 'double binding identity' theory, as described by Tóth (2008) in the context of successful Roma to provide a framework, I investigated the role that partner choice plays in this approach. I found that instead of taking it as an independent factor that intersects with other dimensions of one's identity, it is treated as a rather simple signifier of the degree one adopted mainstream identity or kept Roma identity. Tóth points out that although many of her interviewees married non-Roma, this did not necessarily lead to distancing from Roma identity, due to the presence of other strengthening factors and the acceptance of the spouse of the Roma environment/lifestyle. Another researcher, Anna Kende (2005), saw partner choice slightly more complicated, when she studied the identity formation of Roma university students. She differentiated three ways in which interviewees related to ethnicity in their partner choice: they either (1) preferred Roma partner for maintaining Roma traditions and identity, (2) or preferred Roma partner to better understand each other, finally (3) did not have a preference on ethnicity.

Although Tóth's and Kende's findings can be relevant to my research subjects too, a scrutiny of young women's needs and desires in the choice of partner can shed light on the nature of ethnicity as not being only the matter of the acceptance *or* rejection of certain norms and values

that could be perhaps attributed to Roma *or* to mainstream identity, but as something that is simultaneously expressed and re-shaped in its merge with other identities. In order to show this I will (1) describe major ways in which interviewees related to gender and ethnicity (2) examine Kende's categories on partner choice to argue that with the inclusion of gender as a factor that impacts one's identity formation we can get a more complex picture of ethnic identity, one that is itself being constantly the subject of negotiation and (re-)definition. To explore the interrelated nature of gender and ethnicity in the case of my interviewees I will use the intersectionality approach as a tool (Kóczé 2009).

6.1 Intersection: Gender and Ethnic dimensions of partner choice

By observing young women's description of ideal partners, I was able to map out a few distinct ways on how they conceptualized the ideal partner. Two dimensions can be clearly outlined that influence young women's choices of partner; gender ideologies or attitudes to gender roles; and the ethnicity of the partner. Based on these two dimensions, it is possible to create a table that describes the emerging patterns. The table below shows these combinations and lists a few exemplary cases from my interview material. Interviewees took divers positions along the discussed dimensions, therefore, clear categories that would cover the whole range of answers would be impossible to be spelled out[30]. Consequently, the listed cases serve rather as "ideal typical"; perhaps they did not exist in these clear forms in any of the cases.

[30] Indeed, a continuum from conservative to egalitarian, as well as from determined preference of Romani partner to partner choices that did not reflect an ethnic element at all would be a more accurate depiction. The usage of categories will only serve a better understanding of the occurring different logics behind the thinking of my interviewees.

ETHNICITY / GENDER	ROMANI ETHNICITY IMPORTANT (A)	ROMANI ETHNICITY NOT IMPORTANT (B)
"CONSERVATIVE" (1)	*Fruzsi, Bianka (1/A)*	*Flóra (1/B)*
"TRANSITIONAL" (2)	*Ildikó (2/A)*	*Tamara (2/B)*
"EGALITARIAN" (3)	*Nóra, Mariann (3/A)*	*Zsuzsi, Andi, Gabi (3/B)*

Regarding the first dimension, young women's attitudes to gender ideologies, I use the classification of Arlie Hochschild (1989). She studied the meaning of housework for couples and how they struggled to emotionally come to terms with their hidden views on gender. She found three types of gender ideologies: *traditional, transitional* and *egalitarian*. Those who held "*traditional"* views believed in the strict division of tasks and duties between men and women; generally expected men to work outside the home and provide for the family's well being and women as being exclusively responsible for domestic work and child rearing. At the other end, "e*galitarian"* approach considers gender roles as more flexible and interchangeable; expects both genders to contribute equally in all areas of life, including work within and outside the home as well as taking part in childrearing. Those who were classified as "*transitional*" mixed these ideologies. Women were found to identify both with working outside the home as well as caring for the home, and men accepted a working wife, however, expecting them to be responsible to domestic work either (Hochschild 1989).

Although these concepts are somewhat simplified in describing individual stances and individual conceptualisations towards expectations on gender expectations, I will use them as a point of departure for my analysis. However, I use the term *"conservative"* instead of "*traditional*" in order to avoid a possible confusion with "*traditional"* understood in ethnic terms. More precisely, I would not like to imply that interviewees who hold 'traditional' views on gender necessarily refer to "Traditional Roma culture".

As for the second dimension, ethnicity, my interviewees showed significant difference. Some preferred categorically a partner of Roma ethnicity, while others were just as determined in saying that the ethnicity does not matter in their choice of partner. However, a closer look on their reasoning reveals very different conceptions of their ethnic belonging. Additionally, seemingly oppositional preferences did not represent strictly oppositional positions regarding the importance of ethnic identity.

6.2 Re-Defining ethnicity in partner choice

My findings on the intersection of gender and ethnic dimensions of partner choice provide a framework to investigate the three major ways Kende (2005) described to relate to ethnicity. Below, I discuss these three ways and provide examples from the above presented typology to for how young women negotiate their identities both in terms of gender and ethnicity and how they re-define the content of ethnicity itself.

6.2.1 The "Traditions"

In Kende's typology, some students preferred to have a Roma partner because they felt that in this way they can maintain cultural norms and preserve Roma identity. The role of 'traditions' emerged as relevant in my study as well, however, what cultural norms and customs meant for these women, what they actually wished to "keep" was very different. Below, I show two examples of how women re-defined 'traditions' either by stretching the meaning of the 'authentic Gypsy' (Fruzsi) or providing an alternative to which norms and customs to maintain (Nóra).

To begin with, the account of Fruzsi, who preferred a partner of Roma ethnicity and whose views on gender could be classified as *"conservative"*, by which I mean that she insisted on a rather

rigid division of male and female characteristics, tasks and duties. (Table:1/A). The following quote illustrates this conception of the ideal partner,:

> *"Well, First of all, he shouldn't be 'domesticated'. /laughing/. I always try to push /boys/ them out of the kitchen. Cleaning, washing and ironing that's not for men. I really insist on that! /…/Okey, intelligence, that's very important, humour as well… And work! Be hardworking that's very important. And to have a 'breadwinner' instinct".*

Fruzsi described the ideal partner as strong, self-conscious, determined, good in making decisions, works hard and takes on the role of the main provider of the family. The task of the man concentrated to work outside the home, she not only did not expect them to take part in domestic work, but rejected the idea that man should and could take on any role in the home as well. She considered work outside the home as necessary for making a living, however, they would agree with giving up their job if the material conditions are present and/or their future husband would prevent them from working.

In terms of ethnicity, she emphasized that higher education should not mean distancing oneself from the community and give up those values that she was expected to follow by her kin. Roma ethnicity was mainly important in her account because of an assumed common core culture and stable system of rules how one should live her life. In this regard it echoes the approach to ethnicity that the literature describes as 'premordial' (Jenkins 1997). Fruzsi seems an ideal case to connect ideas on the desired roles of men and women to norms of her community. This is how she depicts her long relationship with her former financé:

> *"Now, we maximally kept the borders. These…how to put it, the customs. The 'Romani kris' that's our law and our tradition. My boyfriend-, we didn't have an intimate relationship. If that was the case, I would have had to marry him of course. My parents wouldn't have allowed me not to marry him either."*

She could possibly be pointed out as a seemingly "typical" case of "double binding identity". Also, her case offers a good example for how the meaning of ethnicity can be stretched and how this creates space for negotiating identity. She recently finished her degree in law, and is currently

working on her second degree in public management. She values education very highly, and expressed very high commitment to build a professional carrier. However, she also expressed her wish to keep the traditions of her Vlash Gypsy community that is to marry a man of the community and *"obey and become submissive"* onward. The way she manages to reconcile these elements of her identity is by consciously separating profession from family matters and claiming to maintain a "double" identity:

> *"That's my double identity! I usually say that as for studying and everything else I'm a 100% Hungarian girl, but as for marriage I'm an authentic Vlash Gypsy girl. /laughing/ Really. That's how I can reconcile."*

The 'ideal' path for Fruzsi hence is to finish her degrees, work a couple of years and then to marry. She would only continue working if her future husband "allows" her. However, when it came to realities, reconciling these two elements seemed not that harmonious. Fruzsi told me that she had a financé for four years, which did not result in marriage because *she* broke up:

> *"We had problems, so our relationship ended because he really liked me to leave Pest and go to study in Miskolc. The best would have been if I give up everything and I marry him because he had enough of waiting. But in this way I would have given up a dream of mine. If someone loves me, love me from a 200km distance as well!"*

Although she insisted on keeping the traditions of her community, her investment in higher education slightly altered her expectations, regarding her future partner. When asking about how she changed after this relationship, she replied the followings:

> *"I knew that I want to work for one or two years after having married. But I didn't have like long term plans, just to hit the time with work for a couple of years and than I would have been ready to give it up, like how traditions expects me to do. Now that this relationship is over, I say yes, I will be active, now you think differently after a relationship than when you're in it."*

In Fruzsi's case then, it is possible to see an essentialist approach to ethnic identity; there is the "Hungarian" and the "Roma" parts of her self-concept distanced fair enough from each other. However, her normative ideals seem over-written by her own pragmatism, in terms of gender. Instead of separating the two "boxes" from which she chose to construct her identity, it is better

to rather articulate goals and ideal concepts that are inevitably flexible to change along with the actual experiences. Apparently, her education altered her views on gender that seems to be in a slight contrast with her views on being 'proper' Roma. At this point she has to negotiate her identities, altering the meaning of "obedience" (extending her educational; period) and limit the husband's exclusive dominance over her life (work at least part time).

In the second case, I introduce the story of Nóra. She took the most determined position in finding a Roma partner and also stressed the importance of keeping certain customs of their communities (Table:3/A). However, she provided an *alternative* reading of what constitutes Romaness and a selective stance to which customs to embrace. Ethnicity for her emerges as important, however, less because of a supposed core origin, but because of the sense of common experience due to the way of having been brought up and being member of a marginalized social group. She preferred not only to marry a Roma, but to marry someone from the same sub-ethnic group. This is how she outlines her preferences:

> *"It is very important to me that- but that's obviously the case for every group- marriage within the community. So I don't say no categorically, but I don't see it happen that I marry a non-Roma. Moreover, even within the group, [I prefer] first of all a 'musician', who was brought up in a similar way I was, so that he has a similar social background."*

Note that she regards finding a 'Musician Roma' important under the assumption that this is the group of people who had similar social status and internalized similar cultural values and norms throughout her upbringing. She did not conceptualize 'traditions' as representing something absolutely stable and unchangeable customs. However, she also emphasized her wish to keep certain norms and values she internalized while growing up, like that the first partner should be her husband. She articulated her loyalty to the community norms in this way:

> *"No, well, If I had been ever involved in a romantic relationship than I would say I would be already married. So basically, for us cohabitation is almost marriage. Ok, obviously parents expects their children to officially conduct the marriage, but no, its not apparent that lets say from cohabitation- so that I can't imagine that I have lived with someone and I break up-, so no that's not an option. I have never got*

involved in such relationships. Therefore, I cannot tell you about serious relationships. But I don't-, like that's important that I don't want to enter marriage like that I had a life before, no… "

Still, she clearly rejected the idea of becoming a housewife, moreover, she expected her husband to take a fair share in domestic duties and housework. This idea she also reasoned with having grown up in a 'musician Gypsy' family. Her father being a musician and working in a flexible schedule often looked after the kids and was used to taking care of the home as well:

"So from this aspect, we were a modern family. My mum has been working since 1990, and exactly because my dad went to work at night, he- like when I went home [from school] he was at home and he took care of me, if there was no food, he cooked. Or my sister, she is younger, she was not accepted to kindergarten first, so it was my father who stayed at home and took case with her between the age of 3 and 4."

Relying on these experiences, for Nóra, a man's contribution to care work was not only perceived as compatible with being Roma, but was found as highly preferable. Interestingly, she did not mention this feature of her expectation as being something non-Roma, but instead she viewed Romaness as compatible with egalitarian views on gender, moreover, she claimed that it is the generally accepted practice among Musician Gypsies, therefore she did not regard it as outstandingly high expectations.

In sum, in this section I have shown that although the role of 'traditions' were indeed important in several cases; a closer look on women's understanding of these traditions, in terms of gender, revealed that there are very different conceptualizations behind it, therefore, their ethnic identity is defined very differently along the lines of "traditions".

6.2.2 The „Common language"

In the second category, Kende gathered those interviewees who preferred a Roma partner because they assumed they could get on better with someone from the same ethnic group, however, did not connect it with maintaining 'traditions' or 'Roma identity'. I found that

'common language' as relevant, but similarly to 'traditions' carrying very different meanings to my interviewees. Adding gender as a substantive factor to the analysis revealed that articulating needs and preferences in terms of 'common language' allows the individual to meld different conceptualizations of ethnicity. Just as balancing between the 'conservative' and the 'egalitarian' views on gender, they also "balance" different conceptions of Romaness. Women whose narrative strongly built on a need for 'common language' did indeed not articulate their preferences on a Roma partner on the basis of maintaining 'traditions' or 'Roma identity', they rather grabbed perceived "sameness" in much fluid grounds, such as Roma as disadvantaged (Ildikó) Roma as passionate (Diána) or belonging to highly educated Roma (Mariann).

In the first case, instead of "traditions" Ildikó regarded her belonging to Roma, as a socially disadvantaged group as an important characteristic that laid the ground for 'common language' with Roma. She became more aware of this factor after having had a non-Roma partner lately. This is how she reports this shift:

> *"Yeah, its like, because in my previous relationship my partner was Hungarian and I don't say that it was a problem, indeed in the beginning it was not a problem at all. As I'm not very experienced, that's just my opinion, but I think that sooner or later the difference will be out there. … When we had a conflict… he never said that the problem was that I was a Gypsy. So its not me, who the problem was, just that our attitudes. He never said that he had problems with that, but the problem was that I got too engaged with these issues [related to Roma] and that I spend too much time with helping someone on these issues."*

According to her, interest in engaging with issues related to helping Roma let the difficulties a mixed relationship come into surface. In my interpretation, what Ildikó meant is that difficulties did not occur until she found herself actively and openly endorse her belonging to Roma. As soon as she started intensively build on her 'Romani identity', she became condemned by her boyfriend for "dealing too much" with this issue. Consequently, from then on Ildikó became aware that if she would like to devote her professional life in the advocacy of Roma people, she needs a partner who supports her and that partner would preferably be of Romani ethnicity.

Moreover, it seems that for her, finding a Roma partner was showing more into the direction of enabling a 'common language' to evolve than finding a "highly educated" partner. This is how she formulates this problem:

> *"If you don't insist on being supereducated, now I mean precisely if you don't insist on finding a highly educated partner, then its not a problem [to find someone]. […] But I also think you can find those circles, like if you are a highly educated Roma, you can decide what is important, but you can even find a highly educated Roma man. Except if your education haven't had it dinned into you of being supersmart, because than I guess its already a failure."*

In terms of gender, she also rejected that her view on family would in any way tied to some heritage of any ethnicity-related 'traditions'. The following quote gives an idea of how she seems to be struggling with framing her concepts of ideal womanhood and relating it to ethnicity:

> *"All right then we lived traditionally to some extent. I wouldn't say like according to Romani traditions, like that we haven't really followed traditional manners, or anything, but still the way we were brought up, like woman's roles and man's roles, despite the fact that it was differently for us, still we strongly internalized that we have to remain women."*

What Ildikó articulates here is that the way she was brought up followed certain norms on femininity, however, these conceptions did not explicitly derive from Roma traditions and the fact that she grew up in a Roma family did not matter on this respect.

In the second case, Diána and some others viewed the root of better understanding each other in a similar "temperament" and expected their partner to be passionate. Interestingly, 'vehemence', 'fire' and 'passion' were often broadly related to Roma, not as a core character of Roma people, but as something that characterizes Roma more often than non-Roma. Consider the below quote:

> *"What he thinks about family and what's his temperament like that's what matters. Obviously it contains a lot that can be possibly connected to Roma, for instance what my husband thinks about family […] I hate to say this, but I get on much better with Gyuri, but I don't think it's the matter of origin. If I look at Gyuri, he knows what I think, but when I looked Tomi he didn't. And I connect it with temperament."*

Diána's aim was not specifically to find a Roma partner, but to look for certain characteristics that are more common among Roma, such as being passionate. At least, this is how she reasoned for having chosen a Spanish partner. When asked about her partner in terms of family, she referred to her partner, as someone who is 'willing' to share domestic work, but takes the central role in making decisions. Interestingly, these features she connected with Romaness, even though her partner had nothing to do with Romaness, in terms of origin:

> *"Well, he's the type of man-, if he feels that I'm unrespectful, he freaks out, and that maybe relates to Gypsyness. He prefers to pay, and he gets ill that I earn more, I feel that its an issue. So he is the man, and I like to do it like if it was his idea, even though I had hard work to make them realize it".*

Ildiko and Diana could be classified as "transitional" (Table:2). One common aspect in their narrative was to emphasize common interests and future goals, respect for one's personal and professional autonomy. Regarding family, they wished to keep different roles for men and women in the family. However, they acknowledged that some contribution of their partner in domestic work is often necessary, which they reasoned with being overloaded in their jobs. Nevertheless, it is possible to see how much these women rely on their own strength and how uncertain they are whether to expect their (future) partner's contribution considering domestic work and even childrearing.

In contrast to the above, Mariann understands 'common language' differently. For her it refers to the urban educated layer of Roma. She believed that stretching the meaning of ethnicity to embrace middle class norms and values, of which she clearly regarded egalitarian stance towards gender as part of, to serve the basis of 'common language' (Table: 3/A).

In terms of gender, she was not hesitant on her partner's contribution to domestic work as seen in the above cases, she clearly expected her partner to take a fair share. She also positioned herself against traditions, and conservative Roma men. Indeed, she gave the below explanation for why she broke up with her Roma finance after four years:

> *"It started like a serious relationship, and well it was serious, but I felt that in this relationship I cannot realize my self-fulfilment. Because I can't behave like a traditional Gypsy woman at the age of 22. And they expected this from me. And than I had to decide what I wanted. Now I attend university, why? To hang my degree on the wall and become* „Mariann Lakatos Houswife, PhD"*? or I say that's finished, I start an other lifestyle and I hope to find someone who can identify with that."*

Here, Mariann saw Roma 'traditions' obscuring her goals as a professional. She still found important to find a Roma partner, however, she wished to define Romaness in clearly different terms than rigid gender roles experienced in her relationship. The following quote highlights how her expectations changed even more along with her experiences:

> *"It was the end of this long relationship since my system of values has changed. Now, you know for a long time I was a single and I only concentrated on work and studies and during this time, I changed. I got used to being independent I solve my issues and make my decisions on my own. Nobody tells me what to do and what don't. And now I don't think I could accept that I get to know a conservative Gypsy man, who tells me, 'go and get food'(…)".*

She believed that highly educated Roma men were able to accept a „modern" view of Romaness, in terms of gender expectations. However, she remained concerned about the very limited number of people belonging to these circles, therefore she expressed concerns whether she would manage to find someone. The image of the "highly educated modern Roma man" was in sharp contrast with Ildikó's point of view, who put considerably less emphasis on education than on ethnic belonging.

In sum, the second category of Kende; the metaphor of the 'common language' was central for many of the interviewees too. However, 'common language' covered a variety of ideas; sometimes it was stretched to a large group of people who share belonging to Roma as a

disadvantaged group, or even not necessarily people of Roma origin but those who share assumed „personal" characteristics, such as 'temperament', while in other cases it referred only to a limited number of people, those who belonged to the 'intellectual' layer of Roma. Importantly, the simultaneous broadening and narrowing of what belongs to the meaning of Roma ethnicity went closely along with negotiating views on gender expectations.

6.2.3 "Love" with(out) boundaries

In the third case, Kende found that for some interviewees, ethnicity of the partner did not matter because they believed that „love" overrides ethnic belonging (Kende 2005). In fact, this reasoning appeared among my interviewees, however, by scrutinizing young women's views on gender revealed a more complex picture. Below I show that even in cases where interviewees did not express a preference for Roma partner, ethnicity was important and partner choice offered a site to define its meanings exactly through the articulation of views on gender. The case of those women who held "*egalitarian"* views on gender was the most suitable to study what is "hidden" behind partner choices (Table 3/B). I shall present some cases, which clearly reflect how interviewees as a result of intersecting experiences as (sub-)ethnic Roma and highly educated women stretched the meaning of 'Romaness' to cover a more general understanding of the minority position.

In relation to ideal partner, many young women emphasized common interest, similar way of thinking, converging future plans, equality between and respect to both parties as well as the equal division of work in the family. They also wished to have a partner who takes on an active father role the option that men could be the main provider in the first three years was also a possible option. Similarly to the previous group of women, they often articulated their interest in a need for 'common language', however, they emphasized that Roma ethnicity alone does not

necessarily provide the basis for mutual understanding. For instance, Zsuzsi highlighted the need for tolerance at many points throughout our conversation. Not surprising than that this expectation took a significant place when she described the ideal partner:

> *"If I see that he really accepts me and he doesn't have prejudices, that's one thing that he accepts me and my family, which is already a big thing, but I met many who were Gypsy and have prejudices against other groups. Maybe not against the Gypsies but against blacks or gays. Don't."*

On the basis of this, Zsuzsi developed a complex stance towards conceptualizing her minority position, and claiming that general acceptance of the disadvantaged position is what really matters in partner choice. She expected her partner not only to understand her position as a Roma woman, but hold no prejudices against members of other minority groups. As claimed earlier, this could derive from experiences as mutually disadvantaged as Roma and as woman. In Zsuzsi's case both of these elements are clearly influential. First, belonging to the Beash Roma sub-ethnic group, she often felt excluded and prejudiced on behalf of other sub-ethnic groups of Roma. As a result she not only had to come into terms with Roma identity in general, but with "Beash Roma" identity in particular:

> *"When I'm asked about my identity, well, I'm always struggling what to say. Because I always had to face with- ok, I'm a Gypsy, but among Gypsies, we are very much discriminated, because they say that the Beash are not 'real' Gypsies. I don't know we are kinda at the bottom [of Gypsy society]. So I have difficulties with how I identify myself as a Gypsy.*

Being treated negatively also "among" Roma, she came to realize that being safe from assault is not necessarily the question of being Roma or not. Second, she also felt negatively treated among Roma men as a highly achieving woman. The following story of her highlights this problem:

> *"It was during university that I went to a conference or training. The topic was social equality or something like that. And mostly Gypsy activists were invited. And the first discussion or training was that we sit in a circle and everyone had to introduce him/herself. Obviously, I was the only one coming from university, the others worked already. And when I introduced myself, a guy stood up and said that he was from a traditional family and he completely freaked out that I'm a slut and how dare I am to… Because there are these fixed traditions there that they sell the girl up at the age of 14. If she is a virgin that's fine because she'll become a good wife and the man can be happy that he received a pure and innocent woman. She doesn't go to school, because that's not important, what is important that she cooks,*

cleans and raises the children. You know this stuff. I can't accept these things, I can't identify with these things."

Here, we see how Zsuzsi positioned herself against the norms and values of certain Roma communities. She developed her "*egalitarian*" views mainly as opposed to these expectations. To conclude, the feeling of 'being and outsider' within Roma both in terms of gender and in terms of sub-ethnic belonging had a great share in how she developed the meaning of ethnicity according to general acceptance and tolerance of difference.

Zsuzsi coined an interesting consequence of her multiple disadvantaged position and partner choice at the end of the interview. She said she found the 'common language' most often with foreigners. Interestingly, the figure of a non-Roma, but a minority partner appeared very often in the narratives of my interviewees. Many of the young women reported on past or current relationship with a member of a non-Roma minority group. Annamari, for instance, highlighted the "shared minority" position when she talked about her "unconscious preference" towards Jewish boys throughout her life. However, she also mentioned that even among "minorities" she felt undervalued as Roma.

Well, what is important is that he has a good humour, he is intelligent etc. Doesn't matter there are no expectations. But for instance, I noticed that I have a greater interest in Jewish men and that is the same from their side as well by the way so that works between us. Although, I also had this kinda minority complex within Jews, but still they are a lot more tolerant and liberal and stuff like that [than non-minority Hungarians]

Andi, who also had a Jewish boyfriend, explicitly connected her view on gender with being disadvantaged as a highly educated woman among Roma. She claimed the reason why she could not find a Roma partner because Roma men she dated insisted on conservative gender divisions, not that she preferred categorically a non-Roma partner.

„I didn't find a Roma guy with whom I didn't feel like that phew, now we go back to the traditions, like with whom I could have kept my – I don't know – autonomy, that's very important, or I could have remained independent lets put it like that. I didn't find such a guy. I didn't really want a Hungarian, I

mean- don't take it like that this is how I started to search that only these or only those, but... yeah there was one I didn't go into, all right than yes I had such intentions after all..."

The fact that Andi finally found a Jewish partner shows that these women stress finding a partner who understands and even shares the "minority" position. They also prefer someone who respects the need for self-autonomy and equality between genders. This double expectation was not always easy to fulfill with Roma men. However, interviewees also expressed differences along with sub-ethnic belongings. A particularly interesting example is Gabi's case, who said 'traditions' especially tie the individual among Musitian Gypsies and gave the following reason for breaking up with her previus boyfriend:

"Because in his family gender [roles] were completely different than in mine, and we couldn't comply with each other. Like when I had exam period and I had to study and I had to feed him at midnight, and I asked him to put the food back to the fridge and he said no, well than I started to shout with him, like what do you think about yourself?!"

At this point I would like to refer back to the beginning of my analysis, where I discussed the role of the traditions and specifically Nóra, who believed that Roma traditions are compatible with egalitarian view on gender, like in the case of Musitian Gypsies, men "has always been" more used to domestic work division than in other sub-ethnic groups. The fluidity of traditions and ethnic identity is clearly seen if we compare her account with Gabi's who regarded exactly the Musitian Gypsies as the carriers of rigid gender ideologies.

In sum, along Kende's third category, I discussed the case of some women who (re)-defined their ethnic identity in a way that it included a strong feeling of general acceptance of the disadvantaged. This was due to negative experiences as Roma, not only in one but in multiple groups. First, they felt negatively treated as Roma, in some cases as belonging to a Roma sub-ethnic group, second, they claimed that as a professional woman they had less chance to find a Roma partner, either because Roma men held conservative expectations on gender, or because

simply there was a lack of highly educated 'marriageable' Roma men. These cases showed that as opposed to Kende's assumption "love" does not always "override" ethnic identification.

6.3 Conclusions

In this chapter, I showed the area of partner choice as a specific example on how highly educated Roma women negotiate their personal interests, while they also negotiate their ethnic belonging. Although all women have to negotiate gender attitudes, the case of young Romani women of my study seems to be even more complex, because how they negotiate attitudes on gender is highly merged with how they negotiate ethnic identity. To demonstrate the intersection of 'ethicised' and 'gendered' elements in the choices of partner, I framed attitudes to gender on the bases of Hochschild's (1989) classifications of gender ideologies, and positioned the role of ethnicity within it, according to Kende's (2005) typology of partner choice determinants among undergraduate Roma students.

Three key findings deserve attention on how young women negotiated their identities. First, as it was manifested throughout my exemplary cases on the role of traditions, "*conservative*" views on gender could, but did not always mean keeping specific Romani customs or norms. Similarly, women's intention to embrace certain norms and values of the Roma community did no automatically result a "*conservative*" view on gender. This is because women provided an alternative reading on the definition of ethnicity, by selecting elements of their cultural repertoire that they wished to practice, while distancing those that they did not find appropriate to their views on gender. This is not necessarily the adaptation of the mainstream identity, but a certain re-definition what their Roma belonging entails.

Second, while some women confidently preferred to choose a partner of Roma ethnicity, others reported on not being keen on taking this factor into consideration in their choice of partner. This could, but did not always mean that ethnicity itself does not play a role in the choice of partner, however, in many cases it was found influential in a less obvious way. Overall, I found the followings as important factors in partner choice that were closely or broadly related to ethnicity in the accounts of my interviewees: (1) Common core Romani culture, (2) similar values deriving from the similar way of growing up (3) "common language" (4) minority position (5) "temperament" (6) general tolerance and acceptance of minority groups. It turned out that in many cases women who openly preferred a partner of Romani ethnicity were not so much different than those who did not report on ethnicity as being important. The issue at stake was rather if the interviewee regarded minority position as something that could only be understood by Roma or stretched this question and included those who held generally acceptable views on other (minority) groups.

This leads to the third point. Women of my study gained some sort of experience in romantic relationships, which further complicated the way they related not only to gender, but Romaness as well. In order to accomplish the balance between the different elements of their identity, young women had to maintain harmony between their ideals and the actualities in their lives. One constraint that most seemed to have faced in their lives was the lack of single (highly educated) Roma men around the age of 25-35. Struggles of not being able to find a (Roma) man suitable to one's expectation was a problem for many women, almost regardless their views on gender ideologies. Furthermore, the difficulties of finding a Romani partner, or the experiences one had in previous relationships with Roma men altered their views not only on gender ideologies, but on the ethnicity of the ideal partner as well. The fact that many Roma women had partners from an other minority group, found in previous researches as well (Székelyi et. al 2005, Tóth 2008 Kóczé 2011) did not necessarily mean in their case to dissociate from Roma, but

rather reflected their inability to find Roma men. The difference is that from then on, they emphasized rather a common language *as 'minorities'* and not specifically as 'Roma'.

7. CONCLUSIONS

> *"What is Gypsy-like?*[31] *That's so strange, because if you let me sit next to my sister, we'd think completely different stuff about what is to be Gypsy-like. You can't say a thing that is Gypsy-like! I don't know what is Gypsy-like this should be defined first." (Tamara)*

Building on twenty semi-structured interviews conducted with highly educated Roma women, in the above analysis, I presented the process of ethnic identity formation in two chosen situational domains, choice of profession on the one hand and choice of partner on the other.

Unlike researchers interested in to what extent highly achieving Roma maintained their identities as Roma and how much they adopted the norms of the "mainstream Hungarian" identity, or how much they consider themselves as Hungarian *and/or* Roma (Székelyi et. al 2005, Tóth 2008), my aim was to present my interviewees along questions like which contexts and situations are suitable to understand the identity formation process and capture its nature as an ongoing process.

While reviewing literature specifically on the identity formation of minorities, I found the identity negotiation approach providing suitable departure to interpret my interview material. From this point of view, young women of my study do not have a single continuous sense of self on the basis of different role expectations, as opposed to what role theory would suggest, but are active agents in making sense of these diverse expectations coming from different aspects of their lives. Meantime, they do not maintain contradicting senses of self, deriving from experience in two different and opposed domains of life (such as being Roma or being a professional) as the bicultural approach would suggest.

[31] In the original: „Mi az hogy cigányos?"

The "double binding identity", which I considered as a somewhat modified version of the biculturalist view seemed to serve as bases for Hungarian studies on the "Roma elite". A simplified summary of this approach would be that the individual is choosing between "two baskets", that of "Hungarian" and "Roma" identity, according to the given situation and context. However, I offered a critique of this view, with arguing that my research subjects do not only 'choose' between certain cultural schemas, but are taking an active role in defining and re-defining what these cultural schemes endorse. What constitutes the set of 'ethnic identity' therefore, changes over time itself, what belongs to "Romaness" and consequently what belongs to the mainstream is far from definite and clear-cut. That is to say that identity construction is not simply the selection of different elements from each of the cultural settings and a flexible combination of these elements, my analysis shows that what is more important is that identity is a multiple and dynamic process that emerge from the constant negotiation of its meaning. My examples on the field of professional and partner choices, showed the divers situations and purposes along which it is constructed.

In the context of professional identity, I argued that the merge of professional ambitions and ethnic identity can be regarded as an exemplary case for the "Re-born Gypsy" identity described by Kinga Tóth (2008). However, their identity formation cannot be understood as a regained consciousness, because the way they construct it is heavily informed by a range of factors (such as discrimination, education or supporting networks) that constantly re-write their reading of Romaness along with influencing factors, such as perceived discrimination or joining a supportive Roma intellectual network.

The choice of partner seemed to offer a site, where identity as predisposition is perhaps more tied to family and kin practices and values, personal experiences and community norms than in the case of profession. However, the new social-cultural context of education and work as well

as experience in relationships was able to modify the individuals' identity in this aspect too. Through forming their views on gender, young women negotiated and re-defined their belonging to Romaness. This meant in some cases stretching the realm of Romaness, or providing an alternative view on what features Romaness covers.

One aspect that seems to well connect the two areas is the possible relation between "ideals" and "actualities" that are present and have an impact on my interviewees' lives. In order to accomplish a balance, young women have to maintain harmony between the 'imagined' or 'expected' and the realities of their lives. The formation of ethnic identity affects as well as shaped by the possible harmony or discrepancy between ideal expectations and lived realities. Identity is therefore, being constructed at the crossroads of 'ideal' and 'real' and how it incorporates from both 'imagined' and 'lived'. Professional goals possible to be altered by outside factors, such as discrimination, choices of partner might also be modified as a consequence of factors unrelated to the individual's pre-figured aspirations, such as the lack of Roma man to marry.

Before closing my study, I would like to reflect on some limitations, as well as to open up the door for future researches in the field. In this work, I put the focus on ethnic identity formation and explored how it intersects with professional ambitions and with attitudes on gender. This choice however, reduced my possibilities to consider other factors that may have a great influence on the identity formation of my interviewees[32]. For instance, class or socioeconomic position is also highly relevant. Although I took a intersectionalist point of view, the 'class' aspect of their lives was less elaborated than 'gender' and 'ethnicity'. The fact for instance that interviewees are coming from families that are all to some extent reached a higher social status

[32] Limitations coming specifically from the applied methodology, I discussed in Chapter 2, therefore, I will not include in this section.

compared to the overall Roma population, does not entail that they share the same position along socioeconomic factors. Differences along class, as well as its impact on identity formation, could and should be further studied in a future research.

Above, I critiqued the double binding identity approach for, stabilizing the meaning of ethnicity despite its intentions and I argued that they define their Romaness through a process of negotiation. How would this negotiation affect the way they relate to "Hungarian" identity? Do they re-define the meaning of being Hungarian through the negotiation of ethnic (minority) and gender identities? Or would this way of phrasing the question in itself imply a monolithic view of the Roma *and* the Hungarian identity? Or in other words, what could be the relevant contexts to study this assumed re-negotiation process concerning "Hungarian" identity, without falling into the trap of supposing essentialized approach to "Hungarian" identity? My findings on this study suggest that the line between the 'ethnic' and the 'mainstream' identity is blurred and on these bases I would suggest that these identities do not consists of tangibly different sets of ideas.

As recommendations concerning the larger study on the reproduction of highly achieving Roma women, of which this small scale research is a part of. I offer two specific directions besides the points I made earlier for general improvement. First, deeper investigations to the generational gap between older and younger interviewees are needed because this would probably influence the strategies older and younger women are taking in terms of reproduction. Second, the possible discrepancy between young women's 'ideal' partner and the actual difficulties in finding a (Roma) partner should be paid attention too.

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