

Media Wars: Cultural Dialogue and Conflict in Hungarian Popular Broadcasting

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- **Second Conference “Qualitative diversity research: Looking ahead”**, 19-20 September 2006, K.U.Leuven, Leuven, Belgium. Contact person: Maddy Janssens, maddy.janssens@econ.kuleuven.ac.be, and Patrizia Zanoni, patrizia.zanoni@kuleuven.ac.be
- **Third Conference “Diversity in cities: Visible and invisible walls”**, 11-12 September 2007, UCL, London, UK. Contact person: Valeria Papponetti, valeria.papponetti@feem.it
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Media Wars: Cultural Dialogue and Conflict in Hungarian Popular Broadcasting

Summary

The paper examines a comparable situation in Hungary, in which the management of diversity creates a marked difference in the production of public media. The study traces the development of explicit inter-cultural media since the collapse of communism in Hungary, which are meant to support the creation of arenas where cultural dialogue can take place and ethno-cultural diversity can unfold. Like in Gujarat, however, the inverse appears to have resulted from the creation of a public space in which culture is ostensibly shared. The paper explores in particular the dynamics of media regimes and cultures of the contemporary Hungary, which joined the EU in 2004. It shows how a domestication of EU media directives further complicates an arena where majority-minority interests, ideologies and practices collide and collude in complex ways which undermine the existence of a shared culture.

Keywords: Media, Cultural Dialogue, Hungary

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Media wars: Cultural dialogue and conflict in Hungarian popular broadcasting

Introduction: Media culture in post-socialist context

Imagine this: we are invited to go inside a decrepit and disorderly peasant cottage. The male host shows his bed ornamented with two stuffed bunny dolls, a television set and a vcr. While leaving the room, the camera pans towards the window and we see a cow eating in front of it. He yells at the animal in broken Slavic: be quiet! Outside, he stands next to a bleached blond-haired woman, whom he passionately kisses on the mouth for several seconds, then we are told that she is actually his sister “the number 4th prostitute in all of Kazakhstan.” This clip is from a low-budget “mockumentary” comedy directed in 2006 by Sacha Baron Cohen. Entitled *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, this film uses not professional actors but real people whom Borat did meet during his fictitious journey. The movie has been hailed a real success as well as a distasteful exploitation of various cultures and ethnic groups. Yet the film was an instant critical and a massive hit at the box office across the North American continent and in Europe. Borat was nominated for various film awards and received numerous prizes on both sides of the Atlantic. In less than six months, it grossed over 257 USD million worldwide.

In fact, Borat is replete with negatives stereotypes of Kazakhs – the main character’s homeland ethnic majority - Gypsies, and Jews. The movie has frequently been accused of promoting anti-Gypsyism but not only that. The scenes supposedly shown as Borat's Kazakhstani village were actually filmed in an impoverished Roma (also known as Gypsies, though many consider this term derogatory) village of Glod in Romania (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borat>). It was reported by USA Today, that poverty-stricken villagers were offered up to \$5 US dollars to bring a cow into their house and perform various acts which ended up degrading them for the benefit of the amusement and profit of others. Cohen has claimed that the Romanian Roma participants were paid double the rate recommended by the Romanian film office for

extras. To no avail, several villagers have decided to sue makers of the Borat film for \$30 million for abuses of their human right. Expertly handled, fusing fiction with non fiction and documentary-styles, the film pushes the boundaries of taste and decency to create uneasy massive discomfort, and in the process, revealing both the light and dark of it's subjects. Borat has become a success for another reason as well: it signals a dramatic shift to the absurd “mocumentary” style by using ethno-national stereotypes and a western obsession with a superior cultural taste.

As this offensive clip reveals, cross-cultural misunderstandings and ethnic stereotyping are often juxtaposed in media for the benefit of profit-making. The main objective of this chapter is to gain insight into this kind of intercultural media that developed since the collapse of communism in Hungary. True as it may be, some of these new initiatives do contribute to creating arenas where cultural dialogue can take place and ethno-cultural diversity unfold, but I want to highlighting those aspects of media practices which work to destabilize the creation of social cohesion, co-existence and a symbiotic multicultural group identity, one in which all social, regional, ethic and gender groups may participate equally to their own benefit (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004). By focussing on Hungarian media, I will also introduce those contemporary artistic productions which do manage cultural democracy and civility. By so doing, this chapter may serve as grounds for initiatives to avoid such imbalances in popular gender and ethno-stereotypical programming. By analyzing special programs, I will focus on the role of media, in particular mainstream television broadcasting that serve or subvert cultural dialogue. By the end of this paper, I hope it will be clear that transformation and the current situation of mainstream television in Hungary has not produced desired effects and that national majority ethnic sentiments are reflected in the altered media structures to the benefit of nationalist programming and not necessarily cultural dialogue across social space. ¹

Media studies in post-socialist and post-EU enlargement contexts illuminate the ways in which individuals are vested not only with juridical competences, obligations, and entitlements (or lack of them) bestowed by the state and media empires, but also with particular modes of status, authority, and prestige endowed by the media market. Moreover, media production and consumption is an arena where majority-minority interests, ideologies, and practices of the markets, states, and the EU collide and collude. In these intersecting spaces, producers, state officials, and

policy makers as well as consumers rearticulate and recirculate identities, values, and meanings to create political and cultural identities. In this analysis I explore the dynamics of media regimes and cultures of Hungary which joined the EU in 2004. Rather than privileging either the EU, the state, or the market, I attend to the interchanges among them by asking how they influence majority and minority consumers. In specific, I investigate how media production and consumption is involved in the making of subjectivities and public identities, shaping sociability, and belonging. What is clear is that the notion "Europeanization" necessarily involves domestication of EU media directives. However, by renegotiating neoliberal values and engagements of these directives, the various local consumers remake Europe as Europe remakes them. In an insightful study, Hallin and Mancini pinpoint three major models of media systems in Europe and North America: the polarized pluralist, democratic corporatist and liberal to explain how media play a different role in politics in each of these systems (2004). However, the authors do not consider post-Communist media system and I would like to offer evidence that when viewed from the perspective of majority-minority relations Hungarian media culture cannot be easily placed into the polarized-pluralist (the so-called "Mediterranean") media system.

Post-socialist Transformation of the Media

From literature to cinema and from music to sports, Hungarian culture has produced some impressive results and can boast of several outstanding representatives in both the immediate and the more distant past. Not surprisingly, the political and economic transformations after 1989 created equally noticeable and sometimes questionable developments as the country's cultural sphere as everyone followed the general trends towards privatization and the development of civil society. During the 1990s, Hungary's nationalized media underwent tremendous privatization pressures. Book, records and newspaper publishing was one of the more visible successes: joint ventures proliferated as a result of large-scale privatization. While some state companies did experience a healthy dose of „downsizing” in their workforce and budget, most were privatized only to reappear on the publishing market with renewed vigour.² Such fluctuations notwithstanding, the number of new newspapers,

magazines and books published in Hungary has been steadily increasing (Gulyas 2003).

A similar development can be detected in television. Hallmark of censorship for thirty years, Hungarian television was split into a pluralistic network complex after 1997, a date signalling the lifting of state-control of air frequencies (Bajomi-Lázár and Sükösd, 2003, Révész 1996). On the more positive side, however, the growth in local television and radio stations in regional cities, operating as private or semi-private systems, is a welcome addition boosting the sense of civil society as well as media capitalism.

As some analysts have argued, arts in general are still under the centralized control of the state and its various bureaucratic bodies. Furthermore, the media – as an independent variable – now acts as a single most important tool in forming social attitudes, values and cultural dialogue. This is why, as some have put it, the media in its Central European setting is still a powerful tool in the hands of the state and its planners. For one, the state still monitors very closely the private media through laws and regulatory bodies, and through economic and financial means. The media industry now is mainly based on a three-tiered system: first there are the state owned and funded networks (MTV1, MTV2, DUNA, and DUNA-AUTONOMIA). The introduction of Duna TV was one of the major achievements of the early 1990s. Today, it is the most popular channel outside of Hungary, eagerly watched in Hungarian communities in neighbouring countries especially since other networks are impossible to receive. Duna TV is also the only non-governmental television company receiving large state subsidies that provide the sound financial foundation for this otherwise non-profit network. Similar to Duna TV, other state-run channels continue to be hampered by structural difficulties, over-staffing and mediocrity.³

The second group is composed of the private or commercialized networks. This conglomerate includes such giants as the German RTL KLUB, and the TV2 channels, two stations that were hailed as the liberators from state (socialist) media culture, an epithet thanks to the first initial years of diverse cultural production aired by them. The third group comprises those smaller local television stations and cable operators (ATV, HIRTV, etc) whose status and standing is mixture of both a “blessing and a curse,” to use a phrase from a cable owner-operator. These local broadcasters – local, regional, cultural and ethnic - do serve important community

functions as they enhance and strengthen community spirit and collective identities. They are fully integrated into the capitalistic media economy as they operate under the constraints of the market. At the same time, they are also vying for place in the ruthless state funding scheme as they need extra funding to remain in operation. As the result of the political division of the country's cultural landscape, many of these small stations are hopelessly short in capital, technology and qualified personnel. The income they generate is hardly enough to make ends meet and in order to produce quality programs they need constantly new equipment to meet local needs. This, however, is not a get rich quick scheme as the local market can never offer enough return for the owners to invest. This also entails that autonomy has its price: a fully independent media – that is independent from money and political agenda – seems hardly available at the moment. Therefore, television stations are now lined up very closely with the existing ideological divide that determines the country's political life: they are either left-liberal leaning (such is the case with ATV), or right-wing (HIRTV), fundamentalist religious channels (BudapestTV). Most independent small broadcasters – many of whom are local cable operators or community broadcast companies - are hopelessly engulfed in a bitter rivalry for viewers that acts as a counter-force in their programming and cultural activities. With regard to cable television, Budapest alone boasts eight major stations some with nation-wide affiliates. While these channels do represent much wider audiences and publicity bases, this numerical rise in media diversity does not seem to cater to viewers as a whole but to viewers of various subcultures. However, none of these cable operators have attempted to create a minority Roma program. Not yet.

Despite this enormous growth, however, not all major television programming is a profitable business. In 1998, for instance, TV3 -- a station owned largely by American investors -- abandoned its initial idea to expand into a national program and went out of business altogether in 2000. With all these changes in the number of television stations and ownership, the period under discussion saw major transformations in the quality of media programming: many new faces were introduced to Hungarian viewers to keep up with the growing demands for reporters, show managers and media hosts. Former stars disappeared only to reappear again in new shows introducing new programs at the various networks competing for viewers. News programs -- not the boring, colourless, static and state manipulated ones that

Hungarians had no choice but to watch for thirty years -- have developed along the lines imitating European news styles with fast paced newsreel programs. However, what is an unfortunate characteristic of current Hungarian television is the abundance of American-style talk-shows, serials and sit-coms, and the disproportionately high number of mindless films and game shows (Wyka 2007). Since the creation of the new television culture, all stations attempt to gain more and more viewers, often by luring audiences with games. The emergence of this new style of entertainment industry has created its own stars and media moguls. Perhaps nobody signifies the rise of this new media culture better than Sándor Fábry, or Sándor Friderikusz, talk-show hosts who were, with their eccentric and absurdly pompous weekly programs, elevated into the ranks of Hungary's millionaires.⁴

However, there are some troubling signs that high-politics and centralized cultural policies negatively effect Hungarian media, especially television (Wyka 2007). In the beginning of 2000, the Orbán - Torgyán led coalition government initiated a series of steps to rearrange public media broadcasting. In specific, the supervisory bodies of both the radio and the main governmental television stations were reorganized. The opposition parties attempted to bloc these one-sided decisions but to no avail. The center-right coalition did manage to create an almost hundred-percent government party commission (curatoria). This certainly makes a bad feeling in Hungary among media intellectuals. In fact, Freedom House has rated Hungary's one-sided media below average. What is a telling development since 1990 is easily witnessed from these recent governmental reshuffling: at every regime change Hungary's media, education and the arts are under direct attack.

Such reorganizations of the media, however, have adversely affected the nature of television programming and, in particular, the art of film and video-making. More sit-coms, talk shows, and news hours do not necessarily mean that programs are better and higher quality. These shows often recycle the same types of programs in a vicious competition for viewers and commercial sponsorship, an aspect of television well-known in the west for decades.

More important is the fact that the once-famous Hungarian film industry is now gone; in its place there are many smaller studios vying for state funding and visibility on the European screens. Hungary's film production is still impressive despite the decentralization and privatization after 1990: Hungary's annual feature

film output closely approximates those of Greece, the Netherlands, and Norway.⁵ Although state subsidies were radically cut, Hungarian filmmakers are still able to produce a number of feature films, and they manage to compete successfully in international film festivals, just as they did before 1989. While in 1988 Hungarian filmmakers produced forty feature films, in 1997 only sixteen were released, and among them only eight were Hungarian financed (only one from strictly private funds); the rest supported by international investors.⁶ Viewing the films produced in the 1990s, one senses that filmmakers are more and more involved with copying glossy, commercialized, and sensationalized western productions in order to increase ticket sales, leaving the experimental, cutting-edge and documentary styles to a minority of die-hard artists.

The installation of such plural model of public and private broadcasting has been one of the single most important developments of media in post-communist East-Central Europe. This basically should have meant that the state allowed a certain freedom of frequencies by the creation of public service channels. In line with the implementation of a new European democratic system – parliamentary decision-making, multi-party system, general voting, constitutional court etc – the state took upon itself in directing public service broadcasting. Freedom of the frequencies also meant that political control over commercial broadcasting was removed and commercial broadcasting was allowed. Yet state control certainly remained; forms of intervention include laws regulating access to government information, media ownership and regulating broadcasting content (Wyka 2005). These, however, should not confuse anyone because the public service broadcast can easily be called state media and the commercial as simply “foreign” broadcasting. Thus, the plurality of broadcasting in Hungary is a conglomerate of state (public), commercial, and local civil operators. What is a less fortunate side-effect is the concentration of media ownership and not its dispersal, a problem that seriously hampers democratic media programming (Baker 2007). Naturally, there are other factors influencing broadcasting, not the least of which are the colonization of media market by foreign media groups. Effects of ownership are also felt in content, forms and structures of programming. Economic and political pressures are also an added side-effect of foreign control of air time. However, there is a much more serious aspect: the role and

responsibility for the reproduction of stereotypes by the political, educational and media elites, as they control the majority of public discourses (van Dijk 1991, 1993).

Majority and minority relations

One of the primary areas most visible in post-socialist Hungary is her continually strained majority and minority relations.⁷ The over politicised nature of majority and Roma minority relations has been perhaps one of the most serious differences in the way in which national and ethnic affairs are handled by post-socialist Hungarian governments. What especially signals this troubled relationship is the marginalization of the Roma that are not considered to be a part of the country's majority ethnic make-up by the state administration as well as the population at large, and do not, as a consequence, have the means to participate in its cultural and media world.

Obviously, Hungary's half-million Gypsy-Roma citizens continue to be one of the most problematic social groups with rising unemployment, marginalization and criminality (Kürti 2003, 2002, 2001). Crime, poverty, drug use, illicit trades and prostitution are among the most noticeable occupations that Roman men and women use to make ends meet in a society that reject their integration.⁸ It must be stated that in the 1990 statistics only 142,683 individual admitted a Gypsy/Roma identity, in contrast to the 1 million citizens who are Roma.⁹ Since the early 1990s, the various governments attempted to cope with the discrimination against the Gypsies by identifying the most pressing tasks: the social, cultural, political and economic elevation of marginalized and poverty-ridden Gypsies of Hungary. However, as the 1998 local elections indicated, the Gypsy/Roma community has been experiencing a serious identity reassertion that may in the future result in an increased recognition of Roma identity. Important in this were the creation of the Foundation for Hungary's Gypsies (MCK), the Roma Research Institute, the Roma News Agency, the Gypsy Coordinating Council, the Gandhi Foundation,¹⁰ and the Foundation for Hungary's National and Ethnic Minorities.¹¹

Together with the foundation of a host of other cultural associations, newspapers and media programs, these achievements are but a drop in the bucket of majority and minority relations that remain antagonistic and highly charged. Attacks

on Gypsies and hostile attitudes towards them have been rampant throughout the past decade forcing many Roma families to migrate or alternately to remove themselves even more from the majority population, a sad progression of nationalist hatred and racist bigotry that will be hard to eliminate in the coming decades (Kürti 2003).¹² Surely, programs to eradicate such occurrences and to educate new Gypsy elites may be implemented on the national level. But, and this is equally important, unless general educational programs are created for both the schools (starting in grade schools and not just at the college level) and the general populations at the local level, it is most likely that Gypsies, and other refugees and migrant workers as well, will continue to face harsh treatment, racist rejection and vengeful attacks.¹³

No doubt, minority language broadcasting may be one of the most meaningful forms symbiotic relationships between majority and minority citizens. This is especially so since television watching nowadays is an essential part of leisure activities for large percentage of the population. However, Roma language programming, together with other minority broadcasting (for example, Slovak, Romanian, or German also exists with minimal airtime) is still few and far between.¹⁴ Out of the few successes, *Amaro Drom*, a glossy magazine, the *Duende Gypsy Theatre*, and *Radio C*, the only Roma radio station must be mentioned, all of which have survived past financial crises, rejection and criticism on the part of majority citizens (Kerényi 2003). Despite these development, it is certain that when it comes down to majority identity and majority/minority relations, all governments should abide by the OSCE Lund recommendations; in particular the general principle stating that: "Effective participation of national minorities in public life is an essential component of a peaceful and democratic society."¹⁵

All over the former East bloc the media industry is experiencing both a sense of rejuvenation with a post-communist identity and the creation of a new management-sponsorship mentality. The media-music industry has managed with great deal of difficulty to lift itself up after the initial shock of the early 1990s all across the former Soviet bloc (Markowitz 2000, Mursic 2003, Szemere 2001). The media industry is coupled with the more or less mediocre copy of the international pop music scene, with a small, but noisy groups adhering to specific genres and operating within the confines of their subculture (folk, satanic rock, nationalist, country, etc).¹⁶

In contrast to classical music, with its top position in the world in selling classical records world-wide, Hungarian pop culture identifies ethnocentric and sexist elements. Music and media are fundamentally intertwined producing images and messages that are wholly antithetical with the values of postsocialism, Europeanness, human rights and civil society. New images available from television, cinema and popular music are replete with negative and stereotyped portrayal of young men and women, whose number one goal in life is to “make it” regardless of the means and costs involved. For example, in a popular television singing contest (“Mega Star”) young men and women are lured into believing that there is an easy life in the media industry to be had. Young women are under pressure to live up to the majority heterosexual mentality by being fit, skinny and dressed as an overtly-eroticised Barbie doll. Young Roma men and women, to offer another example, are portrayed solely as fun-loving and careless possessing expensive consumer goods, fashionable clothes, and money. In this wonderland-mentality, young Roma live in a joyous environment, drive cars, sing native folksongs and perform fancy dances. In fact, several Roma men and women have been featured in the Mega Star programmes. One of them (named Caramel) has become Hungary’s one of the newest Roma celebrities. Needless to say that such an in vitro existence has little to do with the plight of the Roma, a destitute, marginalized and jobless ethnic group that make up 7-8 percent of the country’s population living below the poverty-line.

The Roma are not alone in this. Foreigners, such as Japanese tourists or Chinese migrants are portrayed as living in their own world without any care of what the host society is all about. The former are portrayed as rich but silly tourists or businessmen as in the short-lived television comedy, “Micuko” for example. Titled “The world with a slanted eyes”, the show featured one of Hungary’s top television personalities made up as an Asian-looking woman, spoke broken Hungarian and found herself in various phoney situations. Chinese are shown as living in a completely isolated secret ethnic subculture with strange customs, criminality and questionable business practices. Similar misconceived programs are also present with regard to neighbouring populations: Romanians, for instance, are continually referred to as lazy, dirty and untrustworthy people; Serbs do not fare any better. Since 9/11, there is a strong anti-Arab sentiment as well.

However, the most pressing problem of the new media industry in Hungary undoubtedly is the country's most numerous disenfranchised minority populations, the Roma. Films about the Roma are a special genre on their own producing stereotyped images, stories and characters. To be sure, Emir Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies* was an instant international hit with amateur actors playing lead characters many of whom were Gypsies. In part this is the result of the often fascinating world music of the Balkan played by Goran Bregovic, a duo that repeated this in 1994 with another smashing hit, *Underground*. However, Kusturica's film and Bregovic' music was not a ready made model for others to imitate. Yet many directors in Hungary have been attempting this. *Fairy Hill* (Tündérdomb in Hungarian) was such a filmic attempt. Directed by András Szőke in 2000, this rendering of Gypsy life utilizes the well-known television personality and comedian, Sándor Fábry, who plays the local community's Gypsy leader. The non-Roma showman's caricature of a Gypsy is completely misplaced. The film glimpses several characters' lives in a Gypsy village by revealing how they meddle through these days. But the controversy resulted not only from the stereotyped imagery of Roma culture, but also from including the showman Fábry in such a role. The utilization of non-Roma actors as Roma is of course not new this tactic has been part of the entertainment business world for decades and Hollywood has a long record of how to use white Euro-American actors and actresses as ethnic characters. However, Fábry's appearance was more than problematic. In his weekly television comedy hour, he appears in the role of Vendel Lakatos, a smart-ass Roma dealer and wheeler who makes jokes about Roma way of life. In one of his most distasteful acts, he proudly boasted of his daughter who met Saddam Hussein in the desert and performed fellatio on him. Even though he tries to play a Gypsy man, his aggressive jokes are not ironic auto stereotypes but ethnocentric and racist stereotypes. For this reason, alone the film was immediately condemned by Roma activists.

Another recent feature film, *Dallas Pashamende*, directed by Róbert Pejó in 2004, is about a story of a young man who returns to his village – actually a garbage dump site in the Transylvanian part of Romania – to attend his father's funeral. Originally the shooting started in Romania but outcry on the part of some Roma leaders, caused it to change the location to Hungary. Actually, Romanian officials attempted to stop the filming claiming that it caused environmental damage. Political

controversy aside, the film does not bring any new or worthy ideas about Gypsy life even though it received an award at the Berlin Film Festival for its artistic merit. Yet it is a rather mediocre portrayal of a Gypsy community with the worn out stereotypical images of alcoholism, fights between men and women, youth wanting to break out but are forced to live on the edge of society as petty thieves and criminals.

In contrast to this kind of filmmaking, there are dissenting views. One especially deserves attention: Kriszta Bódis' 2004 documentary *Amari Kris* (Our judgement), a 39 minutes film about a collective judiciary custom among the Roma. In the film we meet several families who are engaged in an imbroglio over controversial matters. It masterfully introduces the viewer the survival tactics of a tribal tradition into the 21st century. At the end of 2004, the international jury of the Dialect Film Festival in Budapest, awarded a special prize for the filmmaker for an authentic candid look at a traditional Roma family court. Despite the fact that such a filmic study is very rare even among documentary filmmakers, it was doomed to fail. While Roma activists and artists hailed the documentary, this time objections came from ethnographers. Their unsympathetic criticism identified two problems: one had to do with the "directed" nature of the documentary, the other concerned the artistic rendering of such a family court that does not, according to them, really exist anymore among the Roma. The filmmaker-director, Kriszta Bódis, vehemently denied these accusations and was adamant to release the film for general public. The objections, however, had done their damage: the film was not shown in the annual Hungarian film festival, and was consequently never released.¹⁷ This cannot be said the Árpád Bogdán, a young Roma filmdirector whose first feature film (*A happy new life, Boldog új élet*, 2007) was introduced at the annual Hungarian film festival in 2007.¹⁸ This bleak autobiographical film concerns a young Roma man who, after leaving the state orphanage, tries to integrate into society, both he receives rejections both from the majority and from his ethnic kin. Despite its moody and bleak portrayal of Roma life in Hungary, the film received critical acclaim by the jury.¹⁹

These films are rare and possibilities for Roma to enter the media are limited. The Roma Media Centre has already raised serious concern about the lack of educated Roma professionals working in the media. There are a few Roma individuals employed in radio and television, a situation exacerbated by the fact that Roma youth – thanks to the divisive and discriminatory schooling in Hungary – do not have a

chance to enter higher education institutions and consequently lack the possibilities to receive professional training. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that stations, along the line of Radio C - actually the only Roma radio in Hungary - or various internet sites are set up for and by the Roma themselves. When in 2002, one commercial presentation featured a young Roma man dressed as Santa Claus, many feared that this would cause a backlash and create more ethnic stereotypes. On the contrary: viewers asked expressed their agreement that such advertisements create a more balanced and positive environment for cultural dialogue to take place between majority and minority viewers (Sümegei 2007). Following this, a model from the BBC was utilized in order to create a „Diversity database,” a list of professional of Roma origin who could be used in various media program as experts. The actual result of these developments will be the litmus test of how well media democracy will be progressing in Hungary in the future.²⁰

Stereotypes and Anti-Roma images: The Big Roma Wedding, BRW

Despite the enormous changes in ownership, music and media are fundamentally intertwined producing images and messages that are wholly antithetical with the values of Europeanness as ethnic and gender stereotypes are rampant in most former Soviet bloc countries (Deltscheva 2004, Ibrischeva 2006). Films about the Roma are a special genre on its own producing stereotyped images, stories and characters.

Popular stereotypes of the Roma – fancy for easy life, disdain for work, living as criminals and as prostitutes, and an almost insane love for dancing and music – are continually pervading popular media as well as Hungarian society as a whole (Pogány 2004, Ringold 2004). This is in stark contrast to the real life struggle of Roma across the European continent following the collapse of the Berlin Wall (Guy, 2001, Guy, Uherek, and Winerova 2004). In Hungary, Roma artists and singers have been in the limelight occasionally and with some trepidation, a fact exacerbated by the migration of some Roma families to Canada, Brussels, and the Nordic countries during the 1990s. These flights were shown on national televisions: majority viewers, however, looked at the Roma with disdain and with certain element of sarcasm. Most claimed

that those Roma who do not like to work and do not wish to live in Hungary were actually looking for an adventure and a way out of the chaotic and hard life Hungarians experiencing these days.

In this milieu, television programs about the Roma are interpreted by majority viewers as no more than an extended joke on their lifestyles. Jokes on the Gypsies – who actually often outsmart their Gajo (non-Gypsy) counterparts, but nevertheless are presented as lazy living off the fortunes of non-Gypsies – have been known since the 19th century in Hungary when they first appeared in mass publication, journals and caricatures. Gypsy stereotypes are rampant in bawdy and competitive situations in which the listeners already know that the Gypsy hero will be dumb trying to outsmart his rivals. Obviously, such rivalries between ethnic candidates are not new: in Russian jokes the Chuckee tribesmen are equipped with such qualities; similarly, in Canada the Newfies, in Romania the Oltenians, and in the US the Irish, Jews and Poles are laughed at by members of majority viewers (Boskin and Dorinson, 1987, Davies 1990). This should not, however, mean that ethnic stereotypes embedded in ethnic jokes should be elevated into night-time television programmes. A democratic television should have, as its slogan, the idea that not everything that is for sale, should be sold. Yet this seems not to be the driving principle of consumerist television, a case well-illustrated by a top-ranking show called the Big Roma Wedding, BRW.

The Big Roma Wedding (*Bazi nagy roma lagzi*, BRW) is the prime example of one-sidedness, similarly to what Borat's (Sascha Golub) film achieved in 2006. Showing a group of middle-age rock musicians parading as petty Roma criminals in an urban slum, it is an extended stereotypical joke on Roma characters. They are shown to be living on the edges of society, and their only occupation is how to make ends meet every day. As dealers and wheelers, they are not afraid even to make business with the Ukrainian mafia. The rock group, who provided the original story as well as the music, used rap music for most of the scenes. In one, a young pregnant Roma girl is featured with the lyrics: "Hey, black chick, there is a problem now, but for us this is not rare, the presence of the hymen is very rare." This slur obviously refers to the very high rate of juvenile pregnancies among the Roma and implies a sexual code donned by the society at large

Despite, or perhaps because of, this, the BRW was an instant hit on Hungarian prime-time television when it was aired by the independent Tv2 on March 30, 2003. According to AGB Hungary, an independent media watch-group, the program did manage to reach the most important prime-time audience those of the 18-49 age brackets, out of whom almost three million watched the program. This number is about 57 percent of the entire prime-time audience in Hungary at any given night!

National record aside, *The Big Roma Wedding* instantly resulted in a fiery controversy as some Roma groups opted for open conflict by organizing demonstrations outside the television channel's building. Other Roma organizations and civil rights groups voiced their objection to the choice of creating an ethnically debasing stereotyped program. Aladár Horváth, a well-known critic of the media and a leader of the Gypsy civil rights movement in Hungary, summarized his views that "the Gypsies in the Roma Wedding are portrayed as those who steal, lie, beat up their women, do not use contraceptives, eat crows and uneducated because they do not finish grade school."

The producers of the show tried to play it safe to begin with: they used one of Hungary's best known Roma faces, the singer Győző Gáspár. As the controversy unfolded, he was attacked by both the critics as well as the Roma leaders. "Why should I have rejected this offer to play myself in the BRW? I am a performer whose mission is to entertain people. That is my vocation," he objected. Mr. Gáspár was the lead-singer of the former Roma group, the Romantic. When egged on by a reporter about whether he had any idea about the negative stereotypes in BRW, he said:

"I didn't have the faintest idea about what I was supposed to do. They called me that there is a role for me in a parody about Roma wedding. I trusted the members of this rock group, I did not want to ask them: do you want to portray Gypsies in this program? I do not think that this is a bad portrayal at all. It is a story about a fictional Roma family that does not feed prejudice."

Obviously, Mr. Gáspár does not hold the view that media content may influence viewers and could have influence on their choices as well as cultural orientations.²¹ Moreover he thinks he has the right to speak like this: in 2005 he was man of the year for RTL Klub, Hungary's other main private television station. This station created

the “Győzike Show” (roughly translated as Vic’s Show), a one-hour weekly comedy program showing Mr Gáspár and his entire family conducting its business leisurely as always. Making him a national star and a rich man, the show portrays the media world in which a few Roma have found a safe heaven but at the same time their language and behaviour reveal many stereotypical images associated by the majority non-Roma with Roma life. The home of the Gáspár’s are equipped with several cameras which follow them – day and night – recording their actions and conversations. Vic is the real head of the family who makes decisions even if he has to fight and yell constantly as he does most of the time. As expected: his wife and two daughters fight back equally viciously. This reality-like program highlights many of the family brawls that often spill out to the streets and continue unabridged throughout the streets, the supermarket, or in the family car. The ostentatious living-style, the feeding frenzy of the girls, and the phoney world of show business are all elements that provide stereotypical images about how this one Roma family manages on a daily basis.

Many of Hungary’s Roma activists do not find this type of elevated and phoney life-style as providing a positive image of what Gypsy life is really about in Hungary. János Daróczi, for instance, who produces the half-an-hour Roma Magazine for national television, has sounded an alarm-bell by saying: “Anyone in the show-business knows that every single shot is carefully designed to achieve the most. I must send a message to everybody: we, the Roma, are not like that.” (www.romapage.hu, 2006. January 6).

Interestingly, the rock music group, who created the entire program, did not see the nature of such objection. Tamás Sípos, the lead-singer of Irigy Hónaljmirigy (roughly translates as Jealous Axillary Gland), reflected that he was surprised by the public outcry against their program and cited the enormous popularity of the show. In addition, he countered charges by claiming that “anyone who knows us should know that we were not led by any racist or anti-assimilationist ideas. Our film parody is nothing else than a funny mirror about a few extremist individuals among us.”²² On April 11, 2003, Hungary’s National Radio and Television Commission (ORTT), made a landmark decision: channel Tv2 was penalized for airing Big Roma Wedding.²³ It paid a heavy price: it was forced to shut down its operation for 30 minutes during prime-time. The commission specifically stated:

“The program portrayed Roma minority negatively by having ethnic characteristics such as criminality, prostitution, drug abuse, and overt sexuality. Such a programming is especially bad since it will contribute to the rekindling of existing stereotypes and the legitimating of discrimination against the Roma by members of the majority society.”

What complicates the picture of stereotyping is the fact that under the heading multiculturalism ethnic stereotyping becomes an accepted standard often within the frame of reality-like TV programs (Borat, BRW, the Vic Show for instance). Here, various kinds of stereotypes are used including those auto-stereotypes that are usually formed from those characteristics and attributes that are accepted in the ethnic community. There are also those stereotypes that usually embody negative characteristics and are not desirable and less acceptable in the ethnic community. In the case of the BRW, audiences knew that they are watching a comedy, and could laugh at the old stereotypical jokes, in the case of Vic's Show, they are tantalised by the more-than-real closeness to a Roma family whose star status cannot be questioned. They are real, and they are accepted – some Roma/Gypsy viewers also take pleasure in such a cynical portrayal of their ethnic community. Clearly, media portrayal of Gypsy artists and entertainers are nothing new but their elevation to the prime-time television where millions can watch them behave and act like circus animals is certainly the product of the globalised multicultural entertainment network culture that has emerged in Hungary during the past decade.

What the Vic's Show and the BRW reveal is that nowadays the Roma in Hungary, just like those elsewhere in Europe, have to face complex negotiations having to position themselves in relation to the altered sense of Roma identity as well as to their experiences as citizens of a newly independent democratic nation-state. In this process of negotiation, the Roma become aware that the eternal and pre-given community they imagined is just an imagined and socially invented community. The constant movement between cultural worlds, i.e., being distant from what is seen on the television, being part of another life experience in Europe but still being connected to their own dispossessed world, contributes to this reflection process across cultural spaces. In this process, they see television as the best place to recover

their ideal image of Gypsiness, but at the same time they know very well that this idealisation is rooted in a past that has gone, or perhaps never been there. Consequently, the sense of synchronization with the present and events of Hungary through television is always in an alienated sense. Through their cultural detachment, Roma can become aware of the constructed nature of Hungarian realities, to which majority and minority television channels contribute a great deal.

As several earlier studies suggest, there are several media issues around which stereotypes are created: threat to out culture (the minority are too different and do not want to conform), the ethnic group is aggressive and criminal, they take away our profits, and there are certain things they are better than we are (Van Dijk 1991, 1993). The important question to ask is how media stereotypes correspond to social reality. Three viewpoints could be compared:

1. Stereotypes have no connections with reality, but they help do differentiate own group in a positive way and justify our activities towards out-group members
2. Stereotypes have some true connections with reality. The problem lies in the generalisation of this true background to all group members.
3. Stereotypes can create reality. Based on mechanisms of self-fulfilling prophecies, stereotypes can impose a definite style of behaviour to group members.

As scholars have suggested, the impact of such stereotyping can be thwarted off in the media by creating intercultural dialogues based on the following discursive strategies:

- Individualization of issues and values. This may prompt audiences to identify stereotypes not with members of the ethnic community, but solely with the individual actor(s), so that categorisation of the entire ethnic group loses its significance (Ashmore, Jussim and Wilder 2001).

- To place members belonging to different groups in groups that can work as if they belong to the same group (Gaertner et al. 1990). This was actually achieved once in Hungarian television in 2005, when an advertisement featured a Roma Santa Claus.

- Counter-typisation may serve to present members of other groups with characteristics that contradict stereotypical expectations and negative characterisation.
- Cooperation should be encouraged in order to acquire common goals (excluding accent to ethnic belonging) may be one of the most effective mechanisms to foster social cohesion. Another possibility of integration may be by stressing different group loyalties but that these groups do have some common redeeming characteristics. Finally, auto-stereotypes can be challenged by self irony and by maintaining a balance of different opinions. These may be attempts by both concerned institutions and individuals that subvert or counter such a stereotypical programs.²⁴

Conclusions

East-Central Europe is rich in diversity and variety of cultures, religions, ethnic groups and languages. Film and television broadcasting in this region was state controlled for many decades. After 1990, the emergence of satellite broadcasting besides other transnational information and communication technologies has created a melting pot of cultures in the region. Such broadcasting can potentially contribute to the attempts at regional unification and cross-border communication with great political and economic benefits for the countries and cultures involved. But along with this, is the threat of uniformisation of culture, intolerance of differences and ultimate loss of many of the cultural practices unique to this part of the world. East-Central Europe, for instance, consists of a dozen of different nationalities, and religious denominations belonging to Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim, Hebrew and many other newly imported religious practices and beliefs that cut through state, national and cultural borders. Similarly, national reawakening and ethnic rejuvenation together with migrations in the past two decades have lead to a situation where ethno-national, religious and linguistic affiliations are more visible today than ever before. Parallel with these developments, the emergence of new forms of media and their roles have been justifiably questioned by many scholars. It is obvious that these political developments may contribute to cultural dialogue and preservation of cultural identities, but they may also become the source for conflicts within and outside the countries. The roles of broadcasters in celebrating the

differences, cultural diversity and plurality as well as in reducing ethnic conflicts and prejudices are of paramount importance. Yet quite often, they play the opposite role in whipping up passions, increasing intolerance and creating distasteful ethnic stereotypes. Together with this, media concentration of ownership prompted some scholars to refer to the Berlusconiisation of East European media (Wyka 2007).²⁵

In this chapter, I have focused on ethno-national stereotypes by highlighting aspects of Hungarian popular culture in the past decade. In specific, I draw attention to the stubborn majority-nationalist value system operating in the media and how the largest minority in Hungary, the Roma, are denied equal access to public media participation. This unevenness is part of the larger picture: the majority imagination and cultural policy reproduced by existing media hierarchy based, as it has for some time now, on a general nationalist orientation with elements of racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and ethnic stereotypes. However, I also show how new artists attempt to carve out their own space in cultural institutions, media forms and cultural endeavours to counter dominant policies and practices leading to a more balanced multicultural understanding and social cohesion.

The *Big Roma Wedding* analysed here is clearly no match to the global success of *Borat*, nor could it ever achieve its scandalous elevation into the international limelight. At the same time, and on a much more modest way, the number of viewers in Hungary makes this film a good candidate to be placed in the hall of shame in denigrating a minority group. Yet, the public outcry and the cultural dialogue that followed reveal that democracy is firmly implemented and that the media is not all that powerful.

There cannot be any doubt that today's transnational and multicultural media environment increases choices, provides opportunities for cultural expression and dialogue while facilitates the flow of information at the global level. However, during the last decade we have also witnessed a concentration of ownership and a limitation of access and content sources. At the same time, a plethora of analyses have shown that media practices and content are far from desired. That is, in contrast to their admitted principles, they are marginally democratic, balanced and civil (Wal 2002).

In fact, as several studies have demonstrated, the decade of changes in the media after the collapse of the socialist system in East-Central Europe has brought little democratisation to traditional broadcasting. Several structural tendencies in

these countries have been identified which place an almost unmanageable obstacle to the development of more democratic system of media in the region (Farkas 1997). The imitative tendencies may be grouped in two broader groups: (1) those imitating external environment, primarily Western Europe and the USA comprising Italianization; denationalization and privatization; commercialization, and inter- or transnationalization; and (2) those “imitating the past”, i.e. the former system of state socialism with renationalization, and nationalistic and religious exclusivism. Consequently, the developments in these countries led to the establishment of a kind of “political capitalism” and created a system of “paternalist commercialism” in the media, with the state (government) often acting both as a powerful political and economic actor (Slavko 2000).

I wish to argue here that a centralized top-down policy is not necessarily useful to combat internal and external stereotypes because it often is based on the very existential and essentialised view of social hierarchy and nationhood. By looking at Hungarian film and television, it becomes fairly obvious that national images are produced by the citizens from below as well as the state through the national audiovisual paradigm. This essentialising conception of identity and difference is based on an ethnocentrically perceived homogeneous cultural map in which diversity and heterogeneity is not welcome. If it is, then it is through obvious and pre-modern and populist stereotypes inherited from a by-gone romantic era and annals of folklore studies. Old myths are revamped through reality TV-like programming to offer entertainment to majority viewers to whom the Roma, the Jew, or the foreigner is just a comic figure who is always the butt of jokes. It is not surprising then that popular culture in contemporary Hungary continually remakes cultural and national identity which explicitly legitimates the uneven majority and minority relations of power in society (see, for instance, Gross 2002).

A caveat is in order. Clearly, this new anti-Roma attitude did not come to Hungary alone, nor did it affect only the former Soviet bloc countries. The tremendous world-wide movement of capital and the transnational flow of ideas and cultural objects, obviously know no borders (Gingrich, 2004, Hannerz 1992). In 2000, Roma gained international attention when they demonstrated outside the Czech Embassy in London against racism and discrimination of Roma in the Czech Republic (Culik 2000). Yet it needs to be spelled out how these global changes influenced

local developments and how, in return, towns, regions, and social groups experienced these or reacted to them. In specific, it is also important to recognize that what is new in the Hungarian setting may not be completely new in western European or North American contexts. Still the specific similarities or differences need to be addressed in a coherent scholarly fashion. In this rather unsystematic examination of the transformation of a formerly communist Hungary into a democratic polity and market economy, I have attempted to show how new institutions have been formed and how older ones were transformed. At the same time, I point to ways in which Hungarians have used their knowledge, culture, and community resources to resist political and economic change. Hungarian society is new in many ways, but it is traditional to its former self in others.

Should public broadcasters pay more attention to ratings, even if this will inevitably entail a lowering of quality? Or should they remain loyal to what they have been doing all along, focusing on their core business of quality programming, even if this means that their audience is likely to become smaller in the years ahead? The issue of ratings versus quality continues to haunt public broadcasting as an unresolved dilemma all over the world. As Meijer (2005) suggests that public broadcasters can better achieve their objectives of quality programming, supplying good information and involving people in a democratic culture by paying careful attention to their audiences and also consider ‘impact’ as a hallmark of public quality programming. The viewer-as-enjoyer, should be taken just as seriously as the familiar citizen and consumer. Some scholars viewed all this juxtaposition as a healthy sign of „glocalisation” (Fiske 1997, Kürti and Langman 1997, Robertson 1995). Yet, recent developments in the past ostensibly reveal that such early optimism was not warranted certainly not in the world of media. The current technological divide and the unilinear power structures of media (and media practices) seriously questions capitalistic culture and multiculturalism as a symbiotic yet heightened consumer culture.

That media stereotypes of Roma paraded as unique or different cultural group under the umbrella of multiculturalism are not unique to Hungary alone. This can be easily witnessed by the recent objection of the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), an interest group that has circulated a plea for a more balance and objective picture of the Roma (Ivanov 2006). What ignited this protest was the fact, that in its

plenary session, the European Parliament adopted in 2006 a final report setting the seal on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union. Two reports were approved dealing with the situation of both accession countries with regard to political and economic criteria. The reports draw attention to thematic areas where continued efforts by the two countries are still required to improve standards. The concern of the European Roma Information Office (ERIO) lies in the possibility that this accession is overshadowed by statements made against Roma communities. Geoffrey Van Orden, the European People's Party MP, has stated that the EP:

Recognises the many steps that have been taken to integrate the Roma and calls for even greater concerted efforts to improve their linguistic skills, to give them better access to higher education, vocational training and employment and to provide them with better healthcare and family planning, whilst encouraging them to do all that they can to adapt to the wider society and to take advantage of opportunities made available to them (Ivanov 2006).

What has outraged Roma civil leaders is the statement by Van Orden, suggesting that the Roma are themselves may be responsible for the attitudes of discrimination and social exclusion they face. For Ivanov, „This statement intimates that Roma face discrimination because their culture does not belong to the “wider society” and thus that they are themselves guilty for facing discrimination and social exclusion.” (2006). Implied in the quotation is the belief that the Roma culture is incompatible with and disparate from European democratic principles and values, and that Roma have to renounce their own culture in order to be “accepted” by the majority society. This statement thus also insinuates that the only way to avoid discrimination is to not resist assimilation into the majority society. The statement, moreover, denies the existence of multicultural values that rely on the conditions of mutual understanding and sound dialogue between equal partners, an idea that is favoured by many minority leaders and not only the Roma. In essence, Romany people are reduced to the level of second-class citizens who are not entitled to choose for themselves. Such media views are testimonies that racism and segregation are the biggest obstacles to integration. It is alarming that such offensive statements against Roma have lasted throughout the

monitoring process of the accession countries. As one researcher comments this problem is based on the following:

The formats and contents of TV programmes, films and shows have become increasingly homogeneous. The traditional function of television, to inform, has been twisted and has led to a “tabloidization of news” and infotainment. The competitive pressure has also changed the position of public service broadcasters and initiated a process of convergence of the public and the commercial systems, in particular with respect to their programming output (Nenova 2007: 8).

Obviously, production companies and owners of media conglomerates have interpreted diversity and openness wrongly: they increased the number of channels and programs, but not the actual diversity of contents (Arino, 2004, Hallin and Mancini, 2004, Wyka 2007). One of the main lines of action may be taken from the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of UNESCO which clearly stresses the importance of encouraging the production, safeguarding and dissemination of diversified contents in the media and global information networks. To that end, it is paramount to promote the role of broadcasting in the development of audiovisual productions of good quality, in particular by fostering the establishment of cooperative mechanisms to facilitate their distribution.

Similarly, the Council of Europe, in its 2005 Kyiv Resolution No. 2 on Cultural diversity and media pluralism in times of globalisation, agreed on basic principles how the media should serve cultural diversity and media pluralism. In particular, ministers agreed „to maintain and promote cultural and linguistic diversity in the media, also in the interest of intercultural dialogue, paying particular attention to the interests of persons belonging to minority groups and to minority community media.” This is one of the reasons why Hallin and Mancini’s typology (2004) cannot easily accommodate the present media system in Hungary. On the one hand, it seems to operate as a pluralist one with the presence of many private channels and internet providers offering diversity and possibilities for a cultural dialogue; on the other hand, there is still the state holding major stakes in the media with a tight control of programming and contents. An added difficulty is the presence of

independent foreign corporations who are also pushing their own agenda on the consumers by importing serials, soap-operas, and game shows. On the contrary, truly liberal, concerned and socially conscious media operators are still few and far between. There is undoubtedly the need for specific policies that would create an environment for majority and minority cultural dialogue in media programming. One in which national and ethnic concerns will be discussed with all parties involved not as token gestures for either majority or minority viewers but as equal participants in and of the media with access to those controlling mechanisms where decisions are really made. Naturally, this is not a problem that can be solved single-handedly by Hungary alone. As the Roma rights activists Gheorghe and Acton claim: "There is no substitute for having human rights everywhere; this is the logic of seeking to define Gypsies as a transnational rather than a national minority. It is not so much that the rights of ethnic minorities must be protected, as that ethnic majorities must be in themselves deconstructed" (1999). Clearly, the time is ripe to create a healthy working atmosphere in countries which claim to be democratic (Kymlicka 1995).

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NOTES

¹ For comparative analyses on the complex relationship between media and nationalist politics, see the excellent edited volume by Mazzoleni, Stewart, and Horsfield (2003).

² New publishing houses (Osiris, Balassi, Korona, and others of lesser fame) are often well-situated in a more positive competitive environment, even though their international connections are hardly a match for those of formerly large state enterprises that were privatized (Európa or Corvina for example). This is similar to those companies that are partly owned by western firms (for instance, the publishing house Akadémia now is a subsidiary of Kluwer). Not all east-west publishing joint ventures, however, have been successful. The German publishing giant, Bertelsmann, for example, announced recently that it was withdrawing from the book publishing market in Hungary, despite the fact that in 1997 the company eagerly invested in its publishing venues. In fact, Bertelsmann invested well over two billion forints in 1997 into the Hungarian Book Club, an important publishing and book-sales firm; Népszabadság, August 17, 1998, p. 5.

³ By the end of the 1990s, MTV accumulated an eye-opening debt of four billion forints (roughly \$ 200 million), see Népszabadság, August 25, 1998, p. 4.

⁴ Friderikusz started with the MTV 1 but his eccentric management style and personality took him over to RTL. On the cult of Friderikusz see the special issue of Mozgó Világ, vol. 6, 1997; and an interview with him in Népszabadság, October 10, 1998, p. 7. For the success of the private television channels see: „Kétségek közt versengő csatornák,” Népszabadság, January 9, 1999, 22-23.

⁵ In 1997, Greece produced 16, Netherlands 13, and Norway 17 feature films, see figures in Statistical Yearbook: Film, television, video and new media in Europe (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1999), pp. 79-81.

⁶ The Hungarian Film Institute publishes a yearbook every year about the state of the Hungarian film industry, see L. Somogyi and V. Surányi, Filmévkönyv 1998 (Budapest: Magyar Filmintézet, 1998), p. 13.

⁷ For those who are not familiar with Hungarian history, English language sources on Hungarian history are plenty but for recent works, I recommend Kenez (2006, and Seleny (2006).

⁸ This is similar across the entire Central European for Roma, on the current situation of drug use and HIV infection among Czech Roma see, Mia Malan and Jayalakshmi Shreedhar, „Time Bomb for Roma,” in Transition on Line, 2007. May 31, www.tol.cz.

⁹ The words Cigány and Roma in Hungarian are used interchangeably. Some ethnic organizations are using the former while others the latter designation. Even though the Roma are used more and more in political discourse, Gypsy in the Hungarian context are not considered to be a slur. Throughout this paper I resort to Roma, an

ethnic label that is preferred in EU political discourse. For the diversity of terms used see the recent monograph by Engebrigtsen (2007).

¹⁰ The Gandhi Foundation was established in 1992 with considerable financial assistance by the government. It was upgraded as a public fund in 1995. The Foundation manages the only high-school in Hungary for Gypsy/Roma students, a commendable initiative to assist marginalized children in their efforts to enter higher educational institutes. Since 1994, however, the Foundations has been surrounded by a controversy concerning its mishandling funds. See, „Nyomozás a Gandhi közalapítványnál,” *HVG*, September 19, 1998, pp. 107-109.

¹¹ Some of these attempts are described in Tabajdi (1996). On the creation of the Roma News Agency see Gyalyas (2003).

¹² Most of these are documented in the annual report of the Otherness Foundation and the National and Ethnic Minority Rights Office, a human rights watch-group founded in 1994, see Furmann (1996, 1997) and my study (Kürti 1998).

¹³ Gypsies left Hungary, following the exodus of the Czech and Slovak Roman in 1997, in 1997 and 1998 and were able to enter Canada. It remains to be seen just how many asylum seekers will Canada admit and on what basis. The case was reported in *Magyar Hírlap*, August 17, 1998, p. 3. Aladár Horváth, president of the Roma Legal Fund (Roma Polgárjogi Alapítvány) seems to be suggesting that a new Gypsy elite is in the making; *Népszabadság*, August 17, 1998, p. 10.

¹⁴ For policy implication of minority broadcasting in Welsh, Basque and Irish cases, see Grin and Vaillancourt (1999).

¹⁵ See, "Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life and Explanatory Note," OSCE, Conference Services, 30 June 1999, p. 4.

¹⁶ In 1997, 7.8 million cassettes and CDs were sold in Hungary, 6.8 percent more than in 1996, and more than double since 1991 when only 3.3 million were sold. One sign of the technological predominance of the latter is that only 15,000 traditional LPs were sold. Figures quoted in *Népszabadság*, August 29, 1998, p. 5.

¹⁷ For the controversy generated by Amari Kris, see the interview with the director, Kriszta Bódis on www.romapage.hu, and the official internet site of the Hungarian film association, www.magyarfilm.hu, both viewed on May 30 2007.

¹⁸ It also should be mentioned that the 38. Hungarian Film Festival is also noticeable for having three documentary films on the Roma in Hungary.

¹⁹ For an interview with the director, see Tibor Kovácsy, “Mélyvíz nemcsak úszoknak – Bogdán Árpád.” Amaro Drom online, 2007. March, www.amarodrom.hu.

²⁰ See, for instance, the debate about hiring Roma reporters and anchors by RTL Klub in “How much does it cost to hire a Roma reporter?” in www.romapgae.hu, June 15, 2005 (last viewed May 23, 200).

²¹ On this, see for example Prior with materials from the US (2007).

²² Interview in Klub Radio, on April 2, 2003, and published in *ÉS*, 47, 15, 2003, April 11.

²³ On the way in which the National Radio and Television Commission works, especially in light of the EU directives, see Ocskó (2003).

²⁴ The Hungarian media research group produced a Green Book, commissioned by the government, revealing that in most television programs the Roma are presented through negative stereotypes. At the same time, the study also emphasizes the need to include Roma in the media as reporters, anchor personnel, and editors. From C-PRESS - Origo - 2007. april 15., Internet site, www.c-press.hu, viewed, 2007-05-23.

²⁵ Briefly, this notion refers to the fact that in Hungary there has been a bitter media war between political elites and the journalistic community during the transformation of state-owned television into a public service. Thus, media freedom was far more frequently challenged in this country than in any of the other post-communist countries. As Wyka and others like her note although in Hungary a proper legal framework came into force, the practice of the management of broadcasting is closer to a state than a public model. This is what Berlusconi generally means.