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SCIENCES

**Mentalities and social changes in the multiethnic
communities of the Romanian post-communism**

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BABADAG MUSLIM ROMANI

Introduction

One of the prominent topics at the heart of public debates regarding post-communist change and "transition" in Romania is "changing mentalities". It is sometimes argued that changes in the "mentality" of the Romanian inhabitants are necessary for a substantial social change since the problematic aspects of Romanians' "metalities" are in many cases attributed to the communist inheritance. A change in "metality" is called for in various fields of social life: work, business, education and learning, relationships between genders and those between parent and child, human rights of homosexuals and minorities, especially the Romani. This manner of representation of the "subjective" aspects of change has become a dominant element in the discourses of change and transition within the intellectual and political debate, expanding upon other various social fields as well.

It is relevant to identify the mentalities manifested by the members of a Muslim Romani community from Babadag towards the social changes that appeared after 1990 as well as their role in shaping behaviours adapted to the transitions experienced by the contemporary Romanian society.

Studying the customs and traditions of the Muslim Romani, their ways of "being" and "acting" has constituted one

of the main reasons of choosing this community for the present study.

PART I. ELEMENTS OF CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTION

1. Colective mentalities
1.1. The concept of "mentality"

Mentalities are mental structures manifested through choices, judgements of value, behavioural structures; structures which are strongly context-dependant. According to Dumitru Sandu[1], mentalities are considered to be value structures that determine the long term choices and evaluations at the level of social group. They are diffused social models of solving certain families of problems or relating to certain categories of situations. Their durability is given by the processes of socialization and social communication as a reaction to recurrent social requirements. As structuring or generative structures, mentalities are diffused cultural dispositions sustained through socialization and institutionalization; habits that continuously generate practical metaphors, transfers, systematic transpositions required by given particular circumstances.

Mentalities contain information, beliefs, values, opinions, representations, stereotypes, prejudices, elements of ideology, etc., structured according to certain coherence. They are related to every day social-human life, to routines, to social occasions and encounters. Under the circumstances of inter-existence, inter-subjectivity, interactions, communication and

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[1] Dumitru Sandu *et al., op. cit.,* p. 21.

exchanges of any type, people "agree' upon meanings, significances, upon the community and world they live in. *Mentality becomes homogenizing and unifying and it makes predictions about the members' behaviours in social situations possible.*

1.2. Elements of mentality

1.2.1. Social representations: conceptual specifications, structure and functions

Social representations are complex and holistic. They can be seen as "theories", "networks of ideas", metaphors and images that include emotions, attitudes and judgements. Therefore, they are incorporated in social practices as "practical schemes" of identification, thought and action. The most stable elements constitute the nucleus of the representations and their main function is to generate the significance of the ethnic representation. Within the structure of the representation these the most shared elements. The system of peripheral elements constitutes the most important mass of elements and the most accessible and visible part of the representation. The main function of the peripheral system is the adaptive one. Within the structure of the ethnic representation the peripheral elements are those that are the least shared ones.

1.2.2. The perception of Alterity. Stereotypes and Prejudices

The cultural contexts that establish the criteria of belonging to a group, as well as the exclusion ones, do not stay the same along history, but suffer redefinitions according to the social, political and economical contexts at a given moment. Consequently, one cannot formulate a generally valid and perennial definition of the notion of alterity because this modifies according to the changes suffered by the notion of

identity. Placing one in the alterity does not imply only the inventory of the negative characteristics, which are the premises of exclusion and discrimination, but also the recognition of the Other/Alter and the acceptance of his/her positive characteristics. The representations reffering to alterity are permanently constructed and reconstructed by means of communication, especially through mass media.

Most authors accept the definition of stereotypes as an assembly of shared beliefs regarding personal characteristics, specific behaviours of a group of persons. To use a given stereotype is to consider that all members of a category, such as an ethnic group, share the attributes conteined in the stereotype.

Martin Marger[2] differentiates ethnic stereotypes from rational generalizations, considering that the former are supersimplistic and superexagerated beliefs regarding a group, most often than not acquired passively and resistant to change.

The types of reciprocal representations, stereotypes and prejudices may constitute, in some cases, serious obstacles against cooperation, collective participation in the attempt of fulfilling common goals, i.e. obstacles against communitarian development.

1.2.3. Mental images, social images

When trying to define the term "image, due to its polysemy, we face the impossibility of discovering an exhaustive definition for the term *image*, precisely due to its nature, fluidity, complexity and omnipresence. At the same time, by means of this multitude of images we can access the social reality, its construction, and by integrating the images in a social and ideological context we discover and understand the

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[2] Martin Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives,* Cengage Learning, 2011, pp. 51-52.

symbolic construction of reality. The study of images may highlight *"patterns"*, *models* of how certain activities are carried on or how certain phenomena are judged by the actors involved in the contexts in which the events are taking place.

2. Ethnic community

2.1. The concept of community

The term of "community" is plurisemantic, being found in various constructions such as local community, rural community, ethnic community, religious community, media community, obline community, etc., each of them displaying a particular set of distinct features and a dominant characteristic.

The 19th century's thought is marked by the concept of community. The notion is connected to the traditional or artificial communitary relationships which constitute the image of an ideal society of the last century, the community becoming a means of legitimizing types of more diverse associations. The strength of the communitary forces depends essentially on everything that is opposing within the same social context of noncommunitary-type relationships, focused on the individual, based on competition, conflict, utility or contractual consent.

If this opposition was fixed for the first time in 1887 by Ferdinand Tönnies[3] (the opposition between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, term to which we always refer nowadays), it does not mean that it is less present in the works of all sociologists of the time, from Comte to Simmel, passing through Émile Durkheim and Le Play. Robert Nisbet synthesises the traditional idea of community like this: "the community is a fusion of

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[3] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Communauté et Société. Catégories fondamentales de la sociologie pure,* 1887, *apud* Bernadette Bawin-Legros, *Sociologie de la famille. Le lien familial sous questions,* De Boeck Université, Belgia, 1996, p. 30.

feelings and thought, of tradition and comitmnet, of belonging and will"[4]. For the vast majority of the 19th century's sociologists and thinkers, this concept of community reunites all types of relationships characterised, for the first time, by strong, profound and durable affective bonds but also by a moral coittment and a common adhesion to the group.

The term of community has remained in the current use and in the academic language, far from replacing other terms such as social connection, network, and affiliation. In the contemporary research, in sociology and other areas as well, we no longer deal with a "classic" notion, endowed with precise characteristics, but with a malleable term, generally used in a descriptive manner, which constantly requires a process of reframing, re-evaluation and re-intertretation.

2.2. The concept of ethnic community

Defning an ethnic community presupposes identifying some key defining elements and its dominat characteristics.

There is a classic definition of ethnic community as a *datum* – with reference to "objective features": sharing the same language, inhabiting the same territory, where the members of an ethnic group are all connected to the same fundamental historic and cultural landmarks, origins (the local mythology of ancestry), common tradition, customs, values and norms transmitted from generation to generation through socialization, behaviours, continuity and persistence in the same space, a collective conscience.

With time, ethnic community moves to be interpreted as a *construct*, a "reality" that is permanently constructed and reconstructed at the level of a collective conscience,

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[4] Robert Nisbet, *The Sociological tradition,* Transaction Publishers, New Jersey, SUA, 1993, p. 48.

2.3. Categories of Romani

The Romani from Romania, like the Romani around the world, are not a united, homogenous community, there being a large variety of Romani collectivities. Thus, there are communities that have preserved their old traditions, language and cultural characteristics but there are also communities that have forgotten most of their old traditions, preserving only to a small extent their cultural characteristics, integratings themselves within the surrounding populations.

Classifying Romani into various categories presupposes selecting criteria and relevant characteristics so that they could be used as a reference framework to compare different groups of Romani. We could mention among others the language (or dialect), the life style, the limits of endogamy, professional specialization, etc.

Among numerous classifications, the one made by Gheorghe Sarău[5] rises as one of the most complete classifications of the Romani population in Romania. We would like to add a few remarks to the author's classification.

3. Social changes in post-communist Romania
3.1. The concept of "social change"

Analysing the ways of defining the relation between the individual (social actor) and the society (institutional order, interactional order, world-life, etc.), ways that affirm or negate the active role of the former and the constructed nature of the latter, we notice an evolution on the exlanatory level of the theories regarding the social, including the social change. The further we go in the history of sociology, the theories regarding

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[5] For further details see Gheorghe Sarău, *Rromii, India şi Limba Rromani,* Editura, Bucureşti, 1997, pp. 105-131.

the social shift from the idea of social order seen as *datum* to that of a social *"cosmos"* under construction, from the idea of a serious integration of the individual into a reality structured in institutions to the idea of its participation in the "collective effort" of structuring/institutionalization. The authors of histories of sociology notice this shit, indicating an evolution from the functionalist/structuralist/systemic theories to the constructivist theories of structuralization.

Reductionally speaking, according to Rusu[6], we can talk about two major perspectives over social change: the *systemic perspective* – where one can include the evolutionist theories, the theories of balance (functionalist), the conflictual theories and the cyclical ones –, and the *modern perspective*, process-aimed, dynamic, constructivist, where the focus is placed on the junction of structures and the social actor's capacity to act.

3.2. Factors influencing social change

The analysis of social change, seen as a process, allows us to identify various factors that have an impact on it, to understand and explain different aspects of change in its entirety, taking into into account the fact that a change in one sphere of social life influences the other spheres as well.

We stopped in this section at three of the most important factors that have left their mark on the direction of social change after the fall of the old regime: the demographic factor, the cultural factor and the migration.

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[6] Horaţiu Rusu, *Schimbarea socială şi identitatea socioculturală*, Institutul European, Iaşi, 2008, p. 23.

3.3. Theories regarding post-communist social changes in Eastern Europe

At the beginning of this section we outlined some of the significances of the concepts of "post-communism" and post-communist "Eastern Europe", and then we identified the main theories that have been used to explain the multiple transformations in the ex-communist countries encompassed by the above-mentioned region.

We noticed numerous controversies related to the definition of the term "post-communism", a variety of nuanced significances according to the theories on the basis of which the authors "anchor" and develop their explanatory arguments. Most authors define post-communism as a transitory process of modernization and identify two stages within it: the stage of radical changes and multiple transitions and the stage of consolidation. Among these multiple transitions, we identified the economic transition, that of institutional reconstruction of the internal political system and of the external politics, the change of the social structure and the cultural changes.

A brief visit of the main reference works, that are included in the bibliography, emphasises the fact that multiple terms are simultaneously used to refer to the countries in this region, such as: the "East and Center of Europe", the "East-Center of Europe", "the post-communist Eastern Europe", ""the East of Europe:, "Eastern Europe", "the Center, the East, the Balkan countries and the European part of Russia", etc.

However, in all these multiple controversies, we notice that the general common demarcation line (present in most works) divides Eastern Europe in: Central Europe (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia), the Baltic countries (Estonia and Lithuania), South-Eastern Europe or the Balkan states (Romania, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Bulgaria, Croatia and Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) and the independent countries that were included in the eastern part of the Soviet Union (Belarus, Moldavia, Ukraine) and Russia through its European part, geographically speaking.

The analysis of the main theories reagrding the social changes in the post-communist countries in Eastern Europe identifies two stages: *The first generation of theories* or *"transitology"* and *The second generations of theories* or *the alternative approaches*.

3.4. Social capital and communitarian development

The purpose of the present section is to highlight the relation between social capital and communitarian development. In order to do this, at first we will clarify the significances of the terms "communitarian development" and "social capital" and then we will identify the shapes and sizes of the social capital to finally mark its beneffits.

PART II. METHODOLOGICAL GROUNDS

4.1. Objectives and hypotheses of the research. Conceptual specifications

4.1.1 The objectives of research

Mentalities contain information, beliefs, values, opinions, representations, stereotypes, prejudices, elements of ideology, etc., structured according to certain coherence and it is important to identfy the elementary structures around which they can cristalize. They are related to every day social-human life, to routines, to social occasions and encounters. Under the circumstances of inter-existence, inter-subjectivity, interactions, communication and exchanges of any type, people "agree' upon meanings, significances, upon the community and world they

live in. *Mentality becomes homogenizing and unifying and it makes predictions about the members' behaviours in social situations possible.*

1. This research aims at making a qualitative analysis of the mentalities of the members of the Muslim Romani community in Babadag regarding the social changes that took place after 1990.

2. The second goal is to draw the role of social mentalities in outlining behaviours adaptive to transition.

3. Thirdly, the study wants to establish the ways in which the Horahane community, i.e. the community of the Muslim Romani ethnics as it is found on the territory of Babadag city, co-lives and the extent to which there is a preservation of the features of its own ethnicity in order to get a confirmation over space and time.

4. Further more, to clarify its own cultural identity (the origin of the Horahane community, its langugae, costume, religion, trades, etc.)

5. Finally, to identify the ways of organizing the community; the type, structure and organization of the Horahane family; marriage-related problems (choosing the partner, the age at marrige, customs related to this event); reproductive models and the evolution of Muslim Romani population; the economic level of the community; their acces to health care servcies and formal aducation.

4.1.2. The hypotheses of the research

The main hypotheses of our research are:

1. socio-economical changes are articulated with and codetermined by metality changes (individual and collective);

2. there is an important cultural determination of the economic success; the economic and cultural factors play

complementary roles in the individual and communitarian development;

3. under the circumstances of jobs shortage, more and more radical strategies of survival develop on the local job market, especially migration (lateral mobility to other cities in the country or abroad), these strategies being corelated with the type of resource/capital held.

4.1.3. Conceptual specifications

The initial system of concepts that encompass the chosen sphere of research consists of the following notions: post-communism, transitions, social change, mentality, social representation, ethnic representation, stereotype, ethnicity, ethnic community, social images. For each concept we specify the significances that are used along the empirical research.

4.2. Research methods and techniques

The research topic is pecific to a qualitative analysis. The empirical research of the present project comprises two approaches. The first approach is an analysis of the literature related to the topic of social change made in order to outline the theoretical framework and the working hypotheses of the research, as well as the analysis of the evolution in time of the mentalities and representations regarding social changes, special attention being paid to the literature dedicated to democracies in transitions.

The second approach suggests the development of a sociological enquiry whose goals result from the declared purpose of this paper. The community selected for this research is the community of Muslim Romani from Babadag city, Tulcea County.

Documentation constituted an important source of sociological data and information. During this stage we researched those papers and articles related to our topic.

The method of interview was used to gather data about social representations (ways of thinking) and social practices. The interviews were profound, nondirective and on topics chosen by us. Thus, we placed under scrutiny: perceptions regarding social change; the labour market in terms of accessibilty and types of trades; the migration for work; the definition of the Horahane community and the identification of its main characteristics, customs and traditions specific to the Muslim Romani community; problems related to making a family and the distribution of roles and authority within it; aspects related to health, family planning and, the last but not least, formal education of children and adults.

Another method that we used was observation which was better suited for the field type of data that focused on grasping aspects of every day life, practices employed on a daily basis, esthetic aspects of the city and ethnic community under scrutiny.

4.3. Organizing the research

Our project was supposed to be a qualitative one, making an analysis of social mentalities and changes within the Muslim Romani community. We went through all stages presupposed by a sociological enquiry; here follows the description of some of these stages.

Thus, the study included a finely tuned pe-enquiry whose final goal was to identfy the sociological problems in order to formulate the hypotheses and working tools.

We conducted 12 interviews in Babadag, 10 of which were deep interviews with Muslim Romani ethnics (Horahai).

The table below includes the characteristics of the persons interviewed in Babadag.

The gathering of data, by means of deep interview, was carried on in two periods:
- July, 3rd – July, 7th, 2009;
- August, 6th – August, 15th, 2012;

The gathering of data by means of observation was carried on during all our visits to Babadag.

PART III
CASE STUDY: THE HORAHANE COMMUNITY – THE BABADAG MUSLIM ROMANI

The Muslim Romani – who are the focus of this study – live in a compact area of Babadag city, Bendrea neighbourhood. Approximately 99% of the Bendrea neighbourhood residents are Muslim Romani ethnics. Those who are left among the Romani ethnics usually live on the peripheral streets of the neighbourhood and are called, by the Muslim Romani, "Dasnee" which means they are Christians.

5.4.1. The origins of the Horahane Community

The Muslim Romani arrived on Dobrudgia territory along the Turkish armies, as part of the auxiliary troops. Some of them arrived in Babadag in the 17th and 18th centuries when this was the pasha's residency; by then, they would perform various services for the auxiliary army. We believe that the main tasks they had, among others, in the Otoman army were the following: to forge the metals in order to build weapons, to shoe the horses; to take care of the animals; to supply the army with food and other necessities.

5.4.2. First names of Muslim Romani

It is worth mentioning the Muslim Romani's pragmatic approach to giving names to their descendents in such a way as to give them the chance to better adapt to a society which, as the author noticed, proved sometimes to be a hostile environment. Thus, many times a double first name is prefered, a first name which reflects a combination of Turkish (Islamic) names and Romanian names (sometimes even Christian).

5.4.3. Muslim Romani's costume

There are certain preferences in choosing the garments, both for men, and for women. Due to these preferences, they are immediately identified as Muslim Romani by the other thnics in Babadag.

5.4.4. Muslim religion and ancestral beliefs

The members of the Horahane community declare themselves Turks, i.e. Muslims, because they also declare folowers of Islam. From the Islamic rituals practiced by all members of the community, which they find elements to identify with, are the circumsition of the male children and the burying rituals. Apart from these, they do not lead a manifest religious life.

5.4.5. Using the language in communication

The language spoken by the members of the Horahane community is Horahane. The Horahane community displays an atypical case of languages in contact. Horahane is a Romani dialect in whose vocabulry one may find words of Romani, Turkish, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Greek origin which reflects the contacts their ancestors had with the communities of the countries they travelled through during their nomadic period.

5.4.6. Family type and structure

The specific type of family is the clan. Poligenic and monogamous families coexist within the clan.

5.4.7. The daughter-in-law's position within the family

The daughter-in-law has a clearly delineated status within the family and her main respansibilities resulting from this are: to wash, to clean and maintain the haose clean, to cook for all members of the husband's family that live in the same house, to participate in bringing the income by selling goods "around villages", to obey the mother-in-law, to give birth to children and especially boys, etc.

5.4.8. Social organization of the Horahane clans

The Muslim Romani community does not know a "chief" or a leader of the bulibasha type as in the case of other traditional Romani communties. Each clan has its own leader, position taken by the clan's "elder", who is also the head of the family, the oldest man alive and who set the foundation of the "big" family consisting of the descedents on the male line together with their wives and children, having patrilocal residence. The "elder" is also the one giving the clan's name. He has the reputation of being impecable and he is invested mainly with moral authority. Establishing the kinship relationships through marriage of his sons and their desendents' depends a great deal on his reputation.

5.4.9. Economic level

We have identified within the Horahane community the existence of three socio-economical layers as follow: a) the rich; b) those who have a middle wellfare standard and c) the poor.

5.4.10. Marriage

The Babadag Horahanes are Sunni of Hanafi rite and by tradition the marriages are arranged. According to Oprişan and Grigore, the "hanafite" tradition is a way of building strong relationships between families, stronger than blod relationships. The parents always promissed their children's marriage before they were born or when they were very young.

5.4.10.1. The rule of endogamy and the "buying of the bride"

One of the rules governing the choice of a partner is the rule of endogamy, of marriage between cousins, a rule that most often than not is still preserved nowadays. Marriage presupposes a preliminary agreement between the parents of the future bride and groom, plus a payment for the bride. A Horahane girl can be bought for a certain amount of money. The price of the bride, the "buying of the bride" respectively, is one of the fundamental rituals of the Muslim Romani, one of the pillars of the Horahane culture.

5.4.10.2 The number of brides. From polygenesis to monogamy

At present, the polygenic family co-exists with the monogamous one.

5.4.10. 3 Age at marriage

He marriage age differs according to the gender of the future groom/bride. Inn the elders' families (the traditional family) the girl got married betwwen 10 years old till 13 the latest. The younger the girl was, the "purer" the bride got and less chances for the bride to be stollen. The boy's age was between 13 and 15.

After the '90s, the girl's age at marriage starts to settle at 12-13. The number of cases when the girl gets married at 10

years old decreases. In the case of boys, we notice an increase in the marriage age to 15-17.

5.4.10.4 Stages of getting married

Analysing the main moments of the marriage process, we can identify five major stages that the two families undergo in order to marry their children: *choosing the son's partner*, *agreeing on the bride's price* and *buying her*, *bringing the daughter-in-law home*, *the party of receiving the daughter-in-law home* and *the deflowering ritual* and *the weding itself*.

5.4.11 The evolution of the Muslim Romani population
For Babadag city, the Muslim Romanis have proved to be a prolific minority, their numbers growing vigurously every year. The increase in the numbers of births in the case of the Romani along with the decrease of births in case of the rest of inhabitants will lead to a change in the ethnic composition of the city, a hypothesis already put forward by Babadag's dwellers of other ethnicities.

5.4.12 The reproductive model and its evolution
The Horahai traditional reproductive model is at least 7 children born alive, that is "as many as Allah gives".

As a result of family planning, the Horahai reproductive model reflects a reduction in the nimber of children, most frequently to maximum 5 children born alive.

As a result of family planning, the Horahai reproductive model reflects a reduction in the number of children, most frequently to maximum 5 children born alive.

As a result of the shortage of injectable contraceptives freely distributed through the family doctor, the communitarian

nurses expect to lose control of the reproduction within the Horahane community and a reiteration of the traditional reproductive model.

5.4.13 Trades of *Yesterday*, trades of *Today*

The trades attributed to the old ones are diverse according to the clan under question: they used to work metals, make caldrons and other vessels which they later sold or barter them through the villages, getting the necessary food in exchange. Others were trading animals, mainly horses. Those who trade well also had "malaci" (buffalo calves) which ensured their daily living as they "gave much milk". They also used to trade sheep. An essential characteristic result from here: they were tradesmen, peddlers since early beginning. They were used to travelling across country, "through villages", were good negotiators and knew how to sale to "the Rumanian" whatever he needed for his household.

Today, some of them are leather workers, others raise animals, and others are still peddlers, travelling "through villages" in the rural area of Moldova and Dobruja while others beg abroad (approximately 50%), especially in Portugal.

5.4.14 Health and access to health care services

Generally speaking, the Horahai Romani do not suffer from serious disese and they usually live long, the clans' elders living beyond 80, and, when they die, the communitarian nurses record "natural deaths".

At community level there appear cases of congenial malformations but their existence is limited to a minimum.

5.4.15 Formal education

The Muslim Romanis pay little importance to formal education. For them, school is not an educational body that can

provide them with relevant knowledge and therefore does not bring important benefits. The vast majority of girls go to school till the 3rd grade; you can hardly ever see a girl who graduated the 4th grade. Most boys attend school till the 8th grade.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The Horahane community, to be found in Babadag, is a clearly delineated community from a geographical perspective, in Bendrea neighbourhood, the geographical borderline – the entrance in Bendrea neighbourhood – underlining the stepping into an existing world, governed by different rules, with other types of family characterised by specific norms and values and other organizations. The concentration of Muslim Romani in a clearly delineated area makes their suspicion towards outsiders even more accentuated. There is a clear meaning of "WE" – HORAHANE and "THEY" – "IABANGI" (i.e. outsiders/strangers/foreigners) and "DASNEE" (the Christians).

Among the key features of the community we include:

a) a specific family type, i.e. the clan type family;

b) a patrilocal settlement and inhabitance where only the male descendents remain and build their residence on the land owned by the boy's father or within his courtyard;

c) an internal organization that respects the hierarchy based on age and gender as well as the daughter-in-law's clearly delineated position, especially that of the "little daughter-in-law's";

d) each clan has its own "head" of the family, respectively the clan's "elder", a person with an impeccable reputation, who gives the name of the clan and who is invested with authority, mainly a moral one;

e) clear separation of the roles of man and woman;

f) respect for the right of "last progenitor", i.e. the preservation of the custom according to which the youngest boy married will live in the old house and inherit the goods of the elders but he will have the responsibility to take care of them in their old age as well as of the other unmarried or sick members who remained in the parent house;

g) respect for the marriage tradition (most marriages are arranged between cousins of first degree; the narital partner is chosen by the parents; the "buying of the bride" custom is preserved; respect for the community's rules regarding the marriage age, maximum 14 for girls and 17 for boys; respect for the customs related to the marriage process);

h) keeping strong kinship relations on the father's line established by natural kinship (by blood) and by alliance (kinship by marriage);

i) common language, the Horahane language, which belongs to the Balkan dialects, being a mixture of languages (Turkish, Romanes, Romanian, Bulgarian);

j) specific costumes: even if the Turkish traditional costume is no longer worn (shalwars and face-veil for women; pointed-toe shoes and fezzes for men), through their options – in the case of women, a preference for loose skirts with floral or animal patterns (married women), in vivid colours (young Horahanes) and in the case of men, their preference for suits and especially for the vest and rolled long sleeves – are immediately noticed as members of the Muslim Romani group;

k) their declaration of being followers of Islam due to the fact that they preserve the circumcision ritual and the burial rituals specific to this religious confession;

l) traditional trades adapted to the new context of life: the peddling "through villages", trade with wool or sheep, metal workers, animal keepers.

Starting with the '90s, along with the opening of the country's borders, they they have started particing temporary migration abroad. Begging abroad, especially in Portugal, has become the main "money making" method, has proved to be the most lucrative practice of all. Nowadays, for about 50% of the Horahane community, the main method of obtaing the financial resources necessary to support and develop the household is begging abroad.

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