

Transnational lives of Polish Roma – Migration, family and ethnic boundary making in changing EU

Post EU enlargement emigration of Polish citizens, who by moving to the Western Europe take advantage of the principle of freedom of movement, continues to attract academic and public attention. Similarly, it can be assumed that the Brexit process and subsequent change of the EU migrants' status in Britain and their potential further migration strategies will be closely observed by the researchers. However, despite this huge public and academic interest in migrations of Polish citizens, there has been an almost complete silence on how these new migration opportunities and constraints affect the Polish Roma populations.

This project focuses on examining the migration of Polish Roma and their transnational lives in the context of changes in the EU's functioning regarding the mobility regime. Transnationality is understood here as a way of living in more than one nation state, and the Polish Roma, as a result of migration, that was experienced by many Polish citizens after 1989, create transnational communities *par excellence*. According to Roma organizations own estimates there has been a veritable exodus with sometimes over 90% of local Roma populations emigrating or otherwise engaging in international mobility, mostly to Germany and United Kingdom. In that sense, scholarly and public silence on the matter is striking. It is therefore quite unusual that despite the stereotypical perception of Roma as a mobile by definition, nor migration research (focusing i.a. on the transnationality of non-Roma migrants from Poland), neither Romani studies in Poland have addressed these issues.

Nowadays, just as it is impossible to understand Polish society without taking into account the scale and impact of post-accession migration on the Polish society, it is impossible to understand the situation of the Roma minority in Poland without looking at their lives in London or Hamburg. Migration of Polish Roma and the consequences of these processes are plenty – the emergence of transnational families and communities, changes in family and intergroup relations, identity transformation, maintenance of the ethnic border and many others. The transnational lives of Polish Roma migrants means that families and entire communities (both at home and abroad) are subject to social change related to migration – how it translates into the lives of Polish Roma have not been analyzed so far.

The research will focus on transnational Roma families in several social spaces in Germany, Great Britain and Poland. The situation of this minority is particularly important in the context of Great Britain leaving the European Union, which may affect their livelihoods, constraint or stimulate further mobility – to Germany or back to Poland. This research aims at shedding some light on migratory movements of that group taking an anthropological perspective and using qualitative methods – participant observation, interviews and spending considerable amount of time with migrating Roma, their friends and family who stay in Poland, as well as those Polish Roma that live in Great Britain and Germany. Applying the multi-sited ethnography with the participatory principle of working with Roma researchers on studentships, this project will analyse Polish Roma patterns of migrations, the ways with which international EU mobility impacts on some aspects of their culture and what happens to Polish Roma's sense of identity once no longer in Poland.