Antiziganism – what’s in a word?

Extended Call for papers to

Uppsala international conference on the discrimination, marginalization and persecution of Roma*

in Uppsala (Sweden) in October 23-25, 2013.

Research that deals with the discrimination, marginalization and persecution of Roma is an expanding but rather new discipline. There are a few exceptions from the late 1960s and early 1970s, but broadly speaking, systematic research was not introduced until the late 1980s. It still does not always seem natural to include thoughts and actions hostile to Roma within research designs created for prejudice research.

Internationally, there are a number of approaches to this phenomenon. There are also a number of concepts that are being used, such as Antiziganism, Antigypsyism, Antiromanism and Romaphobia. None of these concepts – or variants in other languages – is universally accepted, and the approaches are developed in different national and disciplinary contexts without much dialogue. There exists no theory of Antiziganism.

The Hugo Valentin Centre at the Uppsala University, Sweden, invites scholars to an international, cross-disciplinary conference on the uses and approaches of Antiziganism research. In the Main Seminar, scholars including Ian Hancock, Michael Stewart, Vanja Ljujic and Herbert Heuß will discuss the theoretical and methodological issues that seem pertinent to solve for the research to evolve. We also arrange a number of Side Seminars, as described below.

* “Roma” in this text is used in accordance to the official EU- and European Council-terminology: as an umbrella term that includes groups of people who share similar cultural characteristics and a history of segregation in European societies, such as the Roma, Sinti, Travellers, Gens du voyage, Kalé etc. We are aware of the fact, that in some of the mentioned groups there is no consensus on this designation. The use of ethnonyms will be problematized in all sections of the conference.

Deadline for the paper drafts is May 31st, 2013. Please contact the seminar leaders individually.

Fees will apply only for lunch and dinner (optional).

General inquiries should be sent to rorhin[at]valentin.uu.se. Please mark them CONFERENCE.

WEBSITE: http://www.valentin.uu.se/antiziganismconference/
Main seminar

These themes will be represented at the main seminar:

The politics of working through the antiziganism of the past

Chair: Jan Selling

This session invites papers which explore the political concepts of societal retrospective scrutiny in regards of historical discrimination and persecution of Roma, Sinti, Kalé, Travellers, Gens de voyage and comparable groups which recently has taken place in some countries and at a European level. How is antiziganism (or other terms used) being defined? How do state-level apologies and declarations of historical responsibility relate to present-day antiziganism? How are the questions of material compensation dealt with? The other side of the coin is the outspoken denial, relativization and blaming of the victims in contemporary antiziganist rhetoric. In what contexts have such tendencies regained or lost strength? How does such rhetoric relate to the antiziganism of the past?

The papers should preferably adapt comparative perspectives: between different countries, between the European versus the national level or in relationship to comparable discourses on other ethnic minorities.

Seminar leader: Dr Jan Selling (Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University)

Please send your abstract of no more than 250 words (by 31 May) to: jan.selling[at]valentin.uu.se
Romani responses and strategies towards antiziganism

Chair: Leena Huss
This session invites papers which analyze Roma political agency encountering the phenomenon of antiziganism. Roma groups live in various European regions, each with their specific historical backgrounds and social situations, leading to differing prioritizations in Roma political agendas. In some countries, the construction of welfare systems swept away or at least narrowed the civic and economical gap between the Roma minorities with the rest of the populations, which lead to a focusing on cultural rights. In other countries Roma rights has up to this day foremost been a social issue. Now, the EU-enlargement process, the economic development and the rise of right wing populism has again changed the conditions. Today outbursts of antiziganism and growing violence against Roma have been reported from some EU-countries as well as from the Balkans. Questions have been raised, as to the extent migration and social policies are supportive of – or violating – Roma rights, as declared in EU policy documents. What should be done in order to prevent the hostility towards the Roma caused by economic crises and populist movements? What can Roma NGOs in different countries learn from each other? How can Roma NGOs avail themselves of the Council of Europe minority conventions (the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages), which emphasize the right of the minorities to active participation in society and influence in matters that concern them directly? What is the legacy of the Roma civil rights movements of the last decades and earlier forms of Roma political action? What has been the outcome of Roma parliamentary involvement?

Seminar leader: Professor Leena Huss (Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University)
Please send your abstract of no more than 250 words (by 31 May) to: leena.huss[at]valentin.uu.se

Stereotype, cliché and prejudice: origins of Antiziganism in European societies

Chairs: Timofey Agarin / Matthew Kott
What is prejudice, how it emerges and takes root in society is a highly contested area of research. Organisers of this panel invite papers discussing prejudice and stereotypical representations of Roma, covert anti-Roma sentiments and related policies as a foundation of widespread Antiziganism in European societies.

Prejudice toward Romanis is a widespread phenomenon in all European societies, poor and rich, ‘postcommunist’ and ‘traditional’ Europe, North and South, with lean and thick welfare systems. While more often than not Romanis are among the poorest, the most destitute and the most excluded communities in Europe, widespread prejudice and stereotypical representation of Romani individuals challenge opportunities for their participation in the democratic decision making process, access to services and an ability to counteract majority stereotypes systematically. As such, stereotypical representations of Roma as “scroungers”, “work shy” and “deviant” not only constraint options for Roma to engage with the non-Roma. They also undermine Romanis’ own perception of in- and out-group equality, creating a double lock where European citizens disengage from discussing issues affecting both Roma and non-Roma alike. Foregoing political participation, social interaction and communication is often made on presumption of irreconcilable difference between the two groups. With the non-Roma at the forefront, onus is placed upon individual participation in social, economic and political processes irrespective of implied differences in group resources, goals and needs. Lacking many prerequisites for effective participation, Romani individuals and communities alike retract from engagement with the majority public and thus enhance public perceptions of Romanis’ self-exclusion, entrenching prejudice further. Yet, Romanis are not participating precisely
because their interests and concerns are difficult to translate into the existing policies, institutional structures and are presumed to be at odds with policy objectives.

We invite papers addressing one or several of these issues. The aim of the panel is to link tropes of Romani exclusion and Antiziganism with a wider discussion of marginalisation and discrimination in modern Europe. We are particularly keen to invite younger researchers (within 5 years of their PhDs) as well as those working on Roma inclusion and considering the impact of prejudice about Roma and Traveller communities on public policy, national inclusion policies and Romani effective participation in European societies.

The panel is organised by the UACES CRN Romanis in Europe, see romanis.eu. The Romanis in Europe Collaborative Research Network can cover some travel expenses for participants from the Eastern Baltic Sea littoral states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation and Poland). If you have any questions, please contact Matthew Kott and Timofey Agarin under speakers@romanis.eu.

Definitions. The terms define the approach

Chair: Markus End

Until now, there has been neither a widely accepted definition nor even a commonly used term to denominate what exactly?

The impossibility of description demonstrated above shows that the often neglected discussion of the terms “antigypsyism” “anti-Gypsyism”, “antiziganism”, “antiromaism”, “anti-Romaism”, “romaphobia” or “racism against Roma” is not only a discussion of different signifiers for the same object, but is more importantly a discussion of different understandings and interpretations of the social phenomenon to be denominated. We call for papers building upon existing discussions of the term “antigypsyism” by Heuss (2003), Nicolae (2007) and Kyuchukov (2012). The papers should deal with questions relevant to a definition such as:

- Should a definition be based on the term “Roma” or on the stigma of “Gypsy”?
- Is there such a thing as antigypsyism without Roma?
- What is the relation between antigypsyist ideology and antigypsyist practices?
- What are the definitional differences in relation to antisemitism (see Heuss 2003) and racism (see Nicolae 2007)?
- Are terms that derived from research on antisemitism, such as „philogypsyism“, „structural antigypsyism“ or „secondary antigypsyism“, useful?
- What’s the meaning of a hyphen (see Kyuchukov 2012 and Almog 1989)?


Abstracts should be sent to Markus End, Ph.D. candidate at the Technical University Berlin, markus.end[at]mail.tu-berlin.de
Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia from the Intersectionality Studies point of view

Chair: Pia Laskar

Emerging within the fields of Gender Studies the concept intersectionality has been used and studied relationally within different disciplines and fields during the last decade. The point of departure of the concept is the understanding of gender as a construction that cuts and cross several other categories such as for example ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, and age. Similarly race is a construction that cuts and cross other categories such as gender, sexuality, and age. There is a need to understand how the interaction of these categories alter and defer the ways Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia works towards – and construct – Roma and Travelers in different temporalities.

The Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia of today has partly derived from raceification processes that have conjoined the pursuit of Western scientific knowledge with practices of othering and subordination. By regarding “Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia from the Intersectionality Studies point of view” we can seek to deconstruct Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia by contextually investigating the intersectional linkages between practices of f.ex. othering, coercion, subordination, and others.

Please send your abstract of 250 words (by 31 May) to Dr Pia Laskar, Senior lecturer, Tema Genus - Department of Thematic Studies - Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, Linköping University
pia.laskar[at]liu.se

Side seminars

Art Against Antiziganism

Chair: Anna Lujza Szasz

At the 7th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (27/April/2012 – 1/July/2012) in the catalogue of the artistic intervention titled Civil Unity for the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under National Socialism there is a text which explains the urgent need for the completion of the memorial to the Sinti and Roma victims of the National Socialist regime, arguing from historical, ethical and political perspectives. It also sets down the actual plan of an artistic intervention to make an impact on reality indeed. Following the text there is a long list of violent attacks committed against Roma in 21st Century Europe.

The violence manifested by paramilitary nationalist, anti-Roma organizations has been expanded to the field of visual representation in the last couple of years. Posters and video messages visualize Roma as the primitives of Europe, as the ultimate “abjects” of the European identity, as the black bodies of the European regime of whiteness. Moreover, images function to make hyper-visible, or even to idolize Roma and in the meanwhile disguise the apparatus behind it which considers them undesirable. Hence we are informed in detail about the living conditions of Roma in poverty: what they eat; how much money they need to make ends meet or how they manage to cope with the atrocities they suffer from. We see Roma utterly exposed to the camera while the members of (para-)military organizations or of the Roma serial killer group in Hungary are either hidden behind masks or their faces made indistinct on television.

We welcome drafts for papers on the issues described below, and issues broadly connecting to them.

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1 More on it: www.theromanielders.org
* Is there any possibility to defeat the reigning scopic regime, to challenge the existing visual and political culture?
* Is art capable of reflecting upon racist content and respond to the atrocities against Roma?
* Can art be an effective political gesture outside the context of the art world?
* Can art be a radical intervention in the community’s life, hence in which people can explore their relationships, find their voice and reflect upon injustice?
* Besides the act of resistance could art be considered as a tool that keeps sensitive to the problematic of trauma and facilitates healing?
* Do we know any examples of when the affected community responded to the atrocities by applying the tool of art?
* Do we know any artist or artist-led initiative that got engaged in responding antiziganism?
* How can the atrocities, antiziganist attacks be remembered and worked-through on both the individual and the community level?
* Is the memory of the (Roma) Holocaust a usable frame of reference in order to understand, interpret and respond to antiziganism?

Drafts of no more than 250 words should be sent to the seminar convener, Anna Lujza Szasz, (Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies) no later than May 31st, 2013. Use the email address below.

Please contact: anna.szasz[at]vwi.ac.at

Border control and Antiziganism

Chair: Miika Tervonen

The workshop explores one of the enduring elements in European Antiziganism: the effects of borders and border control on Roma, Sinti and diverse groups of Travellers.

From early modern vagrancy laws to mass-deportations during and after the Second World War, on to present-day expelling of Eastern European Roma, administrative borderlines have frequently turned Roma and other mobile groups into unlawful outsiders, stateless persons or “vagrants”. Central and local authorities have used a wide array of techniques and targeted laws to detain, turn back and expel those considered as Gypsies.

Meanwhile, people targeted by anti-Gypsy laws have throughout centuries resorted to equally wide array of counter-strategies, from forging passports to splitting into smaller groups, crossing borders at peripheries, etc. This has further fed Antiziganist suspicions and stereotypes (as seems also evident with some of the current allegations of human trafficking).

We broadly welcome papers that discuss the effects of border control on Roma, Sinti and Traveller groups – whether in historical or contemporary situations. Why- and with what kind of techniques and policies have authorities sought to restrict the mobility of Roma and other travelling groups? What kind of consequences and responses has this produced? How have developments such as criminalization of
vagrancy, nation-building or EU expansion affected laws and practices targeting cross-border mobility of “Gypsies”? More generally, what is the connection between border control and Antiziganism?

Drafts should be sent to Dr Miika Tervonen, Centre for Nordic Studies CENS, University of Helsinki
miika.tervonen[at]helsinki.fi

Gender/sex and sexuality in antigypsyism

Chair: Markus End / Anna Friedrich / Benedikt Wolf
Whereas in the field of the studies of racism, in gender and in queer studies there has been a lot of research done on the relations and intersections between gender/sex, sexuality and race; however, in the case of critical studies of antigypsyism there are only a few papers dealing with these issues.

In this seminar we want to explore the relationship between gender/sex and antigypsyist ideology: In which sense is the discourse of antigypsyism as such gendered? What is the function of sexualised and gendered ideologemes in antigypsyism? How does the function of gender/sex and sexuality in antigypsyism compare to the cases of racism and antisemitism?

Papers should either deal with the role of notions of sex/gender or sexuality in narratives of „Gypsyness“ itself or with the special role of specific gendered stereotypes. There are many open questions to be dealt with, such as the obvious contradiction between the sexualized and very female „Carmen“-figure (who still carries male attributes) and the nearly androgyne „Mignon“ character in antigypsyist ideology. Other questions concern the similarities and differences between the sexualisation of „Jewish“, „Black“ and „Gypsy“ women or of the sexual menace that „Jewish“, „Black“ and „Gypsy“ men supposedly pose to the women of the imagined In-group. Another area of focus could be the „premodern“ patriarchal or even matriarchal gender relations often ascribed to „Gypsies“.

Drafts should be sent to:
Markus End, Ph.D. candidate at the Technical University Berlin, markus.end[at]mail.tu-berlin.de
Anna Friedrich, M.A. candidate at Humboldt University, Berlin, post.anna.friedrich[at]gmail.com
Benedikt Wolf, Ph.D. candidate at Humboldt University, Berlin, aaron.benedikt.wolf[+at+]googlemail.com

Intersections of “Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia”

Chair: Pia Laskar
Emerging within the fields of Gender Studies the concept intersectionality has been used and studied relationally within different disciplines and fields during the last decade. The point of departure of the concept is the understanding of gender as a construction that cuts and cross several other categories such as for example ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, and age. Similarly race is a construction that cuts and cross other categories such as gender, sexuality, and age. There is a need to understand how these categories interaction alter and defer the ways Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia works towards – and construct Roma and Travelers in different temporalities.
The Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia of today has partly derived from raceification processes that have conjoined the pursuit of Western scientific knowledge with practices of othering and subordination. In the session “Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia from the Intersectionality Studies point of view” we seek to deconstruct Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia by contextually investigating the intersectional linkages between practices of f.ex. othering, coercion, subordination, and others.

This session will thus explore the intersections between ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality and other social and economic technologies of power that has shaped representations of Roma peoples by using methodologies derived from Gender Studies.

We broadly welcome papers using a plurality of methodological approaches to “Antigypsyism/Antiziganism/Romaphobia from the Intersectionality Studies point of view” in diverse fields concerning history, philosophy, postcolonial theory, critical race studies, feminism, queer theory and more.

Please send your abstract of 250 words (by 31 May) to Dr Pia Laskar, Senior lecturer, Tema Genus - Department of Thematic Studies - Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, Linköping University

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