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Societal Sources of Negative Attitudes Against The Roma: The Case of Romania

Eliza Markley and Darina Lepadatu

Abstract:

Romania is the home of one of the largest Roma minorities in the world. This paper examined sources of negative attitudes toward the Roma in Romania by testing two explanations, that of societal integration and contact on a nationally representative sample. Our findings suggest that the negative attitudes against the Roma are largely driven by the type of relationships and contact that Romanians develop with the Roma. Having Roma in the family or as friends or colleagues at work decreases Romanians' negative attitudes against the Roma. On the contrary, as the contact theory states, being in limited contact with them, without engaging in personal relationships is conducive of suspicion, hostility, and negative attitudes. Second, the interpersonal level of individuals' trust contributes significantly to building positive attitudes toward the Roma. Consequently, we recommend that future global initiatives and strategies on Roma inclusion should be centered on increasing the level of interpersonal trust and contact between Roma and non-Roma.

Introduction

The Gypsies or Roma migrated as a nomadic tribe from Northern India to Eastern Europe in the early 12th century. "Roma" in Hindi language means "man," "people," or "ethnic group," thus the similarity between the words "Roma" and "Romania" is a simple coincidence. For centuries, this ethnic group was called "tigani" in Romania, translated as "gypsy" (English), "gitan" (French) and "gitano" (Spanish) that came from the Greek "athinganoi" meaning "the untouchables" or "aigyptoi" implying that the Roma originated in Egypt (Fraser, 1992). Due to the negative connotation of the word "tigani," this ethnic group prefers to be called "Roma," "Rroma," or "Romani," expressions that were widely adopted in all official and literary writings in Romania since the early 90s.

Romani people currently number 9.8 million in Europe, with Spain (650,000), Romania (532,250), and France (500,000) being their top host countries (Council of Europe, 2007). Many Romani organizations, however, estimate that the number of Roma could be two to three times higher than official statistics since the Roma sometimes refuse to register their ethnic identity in official censuses for fear of persecution. Thus, if the estimated Roma population in Romania is 1.5 million, it would make it the country's largest ethnic

group (6.8%) in comparison with Hungarians (6.6% of total population) (Romania Census, 2011).

In Romania, the Roma were slaves from the 13th to 14th centuries till their emancipation in 1856. Ninety thousand Romanian gypsies were sent to the concentration camps during World War II and approximately a third of them lost their lives there (Fraser, 1992). During communism, through forced access to education, medical care, and housing, Roma gained a higher standard of life; however, once communism collapsed, they lost all these privileges (Otovescu-Frasie & Lepadatu, 2009). As a consequence, immediately after Romania's accession into the European Union (EU), the Roma migrated abroad in search of job opportunities and a better life. Regardless of the Roma's enthusiasm to finally have the opportunity to travel freely within the EU, the Western Europeans did not welcome this new pattern of migration. Media characterized them as underclass and outcasts, who were "sources of illegal trafficking, of profoundly shocking living standards, of exploitation of children for begging, prostitution and crime" (Suddath, 2010, p. 5). Over the last decade, the Roma were systematically deported from Western Europe to their home countries in Eastern Europe culminating with the expulsion of more than 1,000 Roma from France to Romania in fall 2010 (RTT News, 2010), but once returned to Romania, they found a country in economic crisis and social—an environment not particularly favorable for their integration.

The integration of Roma in their European host societies had been a long issue of debate. Roma's itinerant lifestyle isolated them from the mainstream culture, affecting Roma's social inclusion and implicitly their relations with the majority communities (UNDP Report, 2006). Transitioning from a nomad to agrarian, then to industrial society, Roma were always perceived as cheap labor. These historical developments coupled with Roma's distrust in the public education, health care, or administration have led to unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion of Roma communities, which has perpetuated over centuries (UNDP Report, 2006).

The purpose of our study is to explore what are the main sources of negative attitudes against the Roma in Romania. The paper further discusses how Romanians' trust and type of contact with the Roma influence their attitudes toward the Roma. As the Roma currently live in approximately 61 countries in Europe, former USSR, Middle East, Central Asia, North and South America, and Australia, understanding the roots of their long discrimination and social exclusion transcends from being strictly a Romanian issue to a social problem of global significance.

Several theoretical perspectives deal with sources of negative attitudes toward immigrants and minority groups. Societal integration explanation has been associated with anti-immigrant sentiments in various ways (Hooghe, Reeskens, Dietlind, & Trappers, 2006; Uslaner, 2004; & Rustenbach, 2010). Rustenbach (2010), for instance, argues that the more people trust one another, the less negative feelings they have toward immigrants. Cultural marginality theory and contact theory look at how cultural differences and lack of intimate relationships create a large social distance between minority and majority groups (Rustenbach, 2010). These theories are extremely relevant in the Roma case, since they represent such a unique traditional cultural group with an old, not touched by modernity style of life, which often comes in stark contrast with the individualistic and materialistic values of our times. Political affinity theory is based on the assumption that political ideologies are closely linked to prejudice against immigrants

(Halasz, 2009). Applied to the Roma, it is interesting to find out if right wing political affiliation leads to more negative attitudes against this ethnic group.

Literature Review

The Roma migrated in the 12th century from India to several continents, so that presently there are between 100,000 and 300,000 in the United States, about 2.5 million in Latin America, and between 8 to 12 million in Europe (Greenberg, 2009). Their number in Europe is uncertain because, following the Holocaust, European laws forbade the collection of information about ethnicity, and also because of the Roma's reluctance to reveal their identity (Greenberg, 2009). The Roma represent, in Goldston's (2010) description, "the quintessential pan-European ethnic minority" that has always been discriminated, subjugated, oppressed, and whose negative stereotyping have affected every single aspect of Roma's existence, "from their lifestyle, to their intelligence, hygiene, work ethic and—perhaps most widely known—an alleged predisposition to crime" (p. 313).

In Romania, the Roma lived as slaves until 1856. Upon their emancipation, their traditional nomadic lifestyle made their assimilation to the mainstream culture very difficult. The number of the Roma living in Romania is difficult to estimate. Romanian Roma, estimated at approximately 1.5 million (Badescu, Grigoras, Rughinis, Voicu & Voicu, 2007), are reluctant to report their true ethnic identity, some for the strong stigma associated with the word *Roma* or *Gypsy*, or for fear of persecution (Otovescu-Frasie & Lepadatu, 2009), and others because they have lost their identity during the Romanianization process (Zamfir & Preda, 2002). As a result, only 535,250 individuals have self-identified as Roma in the 2002 Census.

However, according to Zamfir and Preda (2002), Roma organizations have circulated much larger numbers to represent their ethnic group, from 2.5 to even 3 million, in order to gain a stronger international support for their programs. Nevertheless, none of these figures have been methodologically sustained. What is even more surprising is that average estimates offered by both Roma and non-Roma population in Romania are almost 10 times higher than any official ones. Both categories think that about 25% of Romania's inhabitants are Roma. Moreover, about 35% think that over a third of the Romanians are of Roma origins (Badescu et al., 2007).

Roma scholars face several methodological challenges and should be aware of multiple ways of analyzing the Roma social issues. According to Fleck and Rughinis (2008), from a methodological perspective, researchers have predominantly investigated the Roma who live together in Roma communities, unfortunately leaving out those individuals who blend in the mainstream communities. A second perspective should look at Roma traditions, attitudes, and expectations, differentiating also between several distinctive Roma groups. A third perspective refers to their ethnic affiliation, the way Roma define themselves, and the challenge here is that not all Roma accept their identity. A final perspective, suggest Fleck and Rughinis (2008), refers to the stereotypes of Roma and the way these labels determine Roma's self identification, emotions, and attitudes. All these perspectives are not exclusive, but complementary, bringing in new views and angles of understanding this controversial ethnic group.

European researchers' focus on Roma is quite recent, and determined by the drastic change of socio-economic factors in Romania, as well as in Europe, after the end of the Cold War. During communism, Central and Eastern European countries adopted assimi-

lation programs to tackle the vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment in which Roma were caught (Crowe, 2008). Therefore, the Gypsies have gained a higher standard of living, as they were provided with jobs and housing from the state funds (UNDP Report, 2006), but they never stopped being marginalized and discriminated against, because the sources of prejudices that followed Roma for centuries were never addressed by the communist leaders. The collapse of communism allowed all these latent prejudices and negative attitudes toward Roma to surface and explode in violence leading many Roma to look nostalgically at the communist times (McGarry, 2008; Greenberg, 2009). Thousands of violent attacks and pogroms against the Roma took place in the Eastern European countries in the aftermath of the fall of communism. In only one incident, in the village of Hadareni, Romania, 750 ethnic Romanians and Hungarians killed four Roma, destroyed 17 Roma dwellings and forced 130 families to flee (Barany, 2002).

In recent years, Roma activists, NGOs and international organizations concentrated on creating a social movement to change public attitudes deeply rooted in prejudice toward a more tolerant acceptance of Roma (McGarry, 2008). Crowe (2008) concludes that, while some progress has been made, the genuine international and especially local will to integrate the Roma in the fabric of society is still lacking. In this sense, Otovescu-Frasie and Lepadatu (2009) analyze institutional discrimination against the Roma minority in Romania, concluding that the "Roma problem" is generated not by lack of legal measures, but by the failure to understand the sociological processes of discrimination that exist at the interpersonal level.

The Roma have had a troubled history since their existence as slaves in Europe and continuing with World War II. This abused and harshly discriminated ethnic group has been compared with other minorities that have been mistreated throughout history. Greenberg (2009), for instance, looks at differences and similarities between the Roma and African Americans, and observes that, even though both ethnic groups were enslaved and then freed around the same time in history, their evolution was totally different due to contextual factors. Koulis (2005) is drawing a parallel between the Jews and Roma's evolution of their self-representation as minorities and Maryniak (2004) points out to the concentrated, cordoned off and walled Roma ghettos in the Czech Republic, that resemble the Jews concentration camps from World War II. She notes that while one can visit the concentration camps where Jews were killed, and pay their respect to those deceased there, Roma's history is insulted and ignored, for the Lety prison camp in southern Bohemia, where Gypsies were exterminated, is now a pig farm (Maryniak, 2004).

Stereotypes as Sources of Negative Attitudes Against the Roma

Next, we are going to discuss several sources that lead to negative attitudes against the Roma: the existing stereotypes against them, their culture, education, and unemployment, as well as Romanians' general level of trust in the Roma. The literature on Roma debates whether the rejection of the Roma occurs because of their low socioeconomic status or it is associated with ethnic classification in itself. Some scholars differentiate between "social rejection" and "ethnic rejection," attributing one or the other as the principle factor in the discrimination of the Roma. Zamfir and Zamfir (1993) argue that economic factors matter, and Kligman (as cited in Fleck & Rughinis, 2008, p. 8) suggests that the stigma of the tiganii identity takes precedence over the economic factors, while Sandu (2003) considers the two factors together as having equal importance in creating social distance and

intolerance toward the Roma. Fleck and Rughinis (2008) argue in their book *Come Closer* that the data of their analysis support the hypothesis that attitudes toward the Roma have a strong ethnic dimension, and this is why *tigani* experience significantly stronger rejection in comparison with any other ethnic group in Romania.

To further explain the roots of discrimination against the Roma population, Crowe (2008) emphasizes that the strong societal prejudice is a centuries-old common thread that runs throughout the eastern European countries, where Roma are stereotyped as lazy, irresponsible, nomadic, dishonest thieves. Goldstone (2002) points out that the near-universal belief among *Gadze*—or non-Roma—is that Gypsies are also liars and cheats. Ethnic stereotypes about the Roma are freely used and accepted at the institutional level, local officials in Romania recognizing the Roma (where there is a Roma community) as the biggest problem of their leadership (Fleck & Rughinis, 2008).

Moreover, the Roma community is perceived as an “embarrassing threat to the new European idea and the culture of high wealth, growth and well-being” (Maryniak, 2004, p. 58). Gypsies, with their “socially pathological behavior [...] represent the anti-values against which Europe is shaping itself: we work, they don’t; we are responsible citizens, they aren’t; we accept democratic-rules of association, they don’t” (Maryniak, 2004, p. 59). Aspiring to European ideals, and striving to achieve the recognition of the EU as a democratic state, the Romanians consider the Roma as the ones who destroy the image of Romania in Europe. Thus, the Romanian Roma had become the scapegoats or the black sheep of Romania (Fleck & Rughinis, 2008). Stevens (2004) notes how in 1995, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the Roma should be called *Tigani* (Gypsies, as they used to be called in the past) so that the term “Roma,” which could be easily confused with “Romanian,” should not attract the gypsies’ stigma on Romanians. In 2011, the Romanian Parliament rejected the new legislative project launched by Adrian Gurzau and Silviu Prigoana, Chamber of Deputies representatives, who proposed that the Roma denomination be replaced with the old “*tigani*” denomination. This proposal was meant to correct the confusion created by the name similarity between “Roma” and “Romanian”, and to prevent the bad treatment and negative discrimination of Romanians abroad based on the mere name association with the Roma (Prigoana, 2011). The proposal in itself is a testimony of the negative treatment that the Roma receive wherever they go in Europe and shows how nationalistic Romanian groups want to distance themselves from the Roma as if they are not full Romanian citizens.

Very interestingly, and undoubtedly with a significant impact on building the public image of the Roma, literature and cinema productions have been permeated by and perpetuate the stereotypes about the Roma, promoting the same misunderstood outcast image of the Roma that existed since the 19th century (Dobrevă, 2009). Hemingway, for instance, captures the image of the Roma of his times, as “truly worthless [...] with no political development, nor any discipline” (as cited in Goldstone, 2002, p. 147). Stereotypes as a primary source of prejudice and discrimination against the Roma persist in people’s everyday lives through language. Numerous expressions and phrases in Romanian, for instance, incorporate the word “*tigani*” to describe an insisting, annoying, and undesirable behavior (Fleck & Rughinis, 2008).

Cultural Characteristics of Roma Minority

Other sources of negative attitudes toward the Roma are the poverty and social problems associated with their lifestyle (Fleck & Rughinis, 2008). This is supported by data from the UNDP Report (2006), which shows that the poverty rate of Romanian Roma is particularly high (66%) in comparison to the majority (25%). The percentage of Roma facing extreme poverty, less than \$2.15 in expenditures per day, is far higher than for the majority (20% compared to just 3%, respectively). This culture of poverty of many Roma communities is the consequence of their growing ghettoization and isolation, especially when they migrate to new settings (Laws, 1997). Residential isolation, for instance, is very visible, as the Roma usually live in the so called “nomad camps” situated at the edge of the cities (Fleck & Rughinis, 2008). Their nomadic culture, argues Sigona (2005), not only contributes to their segregation, but also sets out the pattern of interaction between the Roma and majority. The camps, according to the cultural marginality theory, do not help the Roma participate in the social fabric, but symbolize the differences between the Roma way of being and mainstream culture. As Simhandl (2006) puts it, the main source of majority’s negative attitudes toward the Roma, resides in their way of living.

However, cultural marginality theory, which asserts that minority groups develop a cultural affinity toward each other based on common experiences, such as being immigrants or ethnic minorities, is not supported in the case of Romanian Roma. Several lifestyle practices separate drastically the Roma from any other ethnic groups in Romania: early-arranged marriages, high number of children, lack of emphasis on education, high unemployment, and alcohol consumption. Consequently, both the majority and the other minority groups perceive the Roma as being too different from the rest, and no cultural affinities developed around this ethnic group (UNDP, 2006). More so, because of their unique lifestyle, they also bring an element of uncertainty in the society. As neighborhood safety theory suggests, immigrants—and the Roma, as it will be argued later on— attract all the blames of a society, and feelings of safety are directly correlated with the existence of Roma in a region (Rustenbach, 2010)

In addition to culture, other sources of negative attitudes are related to the Roma’s education, which is viewed as the key to breaking the vicious circle of unemployment and poverty (Greenberg, 2009). The Roma children continue to be undereducated, only 17% of Romanian Roma being enrolled in the secondary school comparing to 85% for the national average (UNDP Report, 2006). Besides, education for Roma is highly segregated in all countries across Europe, with 19% of Roma children attending classes composed mostly of Roma (UNDP Report, 2006). Only 4% of Roma children finish high school (Nicolae, 2002) and only 1% of them earn a college degree (Csepelli & Simon, 2004). Furthermore, the gap between Roma women’s and men’s education is substantially wider than for the Romanian population. The education of Roma children reflects the ghettoization of their culture and its resulting poverty, discrimination being both a consequence of exclusion as well as its primary cause (UNDP Report, 2006).

Thus, both educational and residential segregation can be understood in the context of contact theory. From this perspective, people’s limited contact with minorities does not develop into friendships or intimate relationships, but leads to suspicions, hostility, prejudice, and discrimination (Rustenbach, 2010). Fleck and Rughinis (2008) note that while the Roma know quite well the majority, the latter have much less knowledge of the Ro-

ma, mainly because they intentionally avoid any interaction with the Roma. The consequences of these patterns of interaction are community-wide discriminatory practices or complete ignorance of the neighboring culture, which becomes the invisible culture.

However, the UNDP Report (2006) showed surprising findings on majority's interaction with the Roma. In this sense, initial expectations that contacts are infrequent, and that group solidarity exists mainly along ethnic lines were not supported by data, primarily because 71% of Romanian and Roma children are in frequent contact. This finding shows that there is hope for anti-exclusionist behavior in the future.

Trust and Tolerance Toward the Roma

The willingness to trust others, states a growing body of research, promotes civic engagement and community building, fosters cooperation and facilitates interpersonal exchange (Uslaner, 2004). Interpersonal trust, argues Uslaner (2004), is a moral value that connects people; moreover, it is this belief that allows people who are different from us to be part of our moral community. Trusting the stranger, and not people we already know, continues Uslaner (2004), is a key determinant of tolerance and support for policies that help minorities and the poor. Because trust rests on the foundation of economic equality (Brown & Uslaner, 2002), trusters favor the programs that will make outcomes more equal. As a result, societies possessing a high level of trust, such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, have more social programs that address the redistribution of funds from the rich to the poor (Brown & Uslaner, 2002).

Romania unfortunately has one of the lowest levels of interpersonal trust in Europe. For instance, Romanians' trust level was only at 43% comparing to 69% in Finland (Eurobarometer, 2010). Furthermore, Romania's trust in government programs to combat poverty was 11%, while in Luxembourg it was 66%. Conversely, Romanians widely trust the actions of religious institutions in the fight against poverty (64%). When Romanians were asked how much they trust their Parliament or government, 82% and 81% respectively (the highest among European countries) answered: "tend not to trust" (Eurobarometer, 2010). However, Romanians' interpersonal trust's distribution is much more divided. When asked if most people can be trusted, 39% of Romanians answered: "tend not to trust," 35% "neither trust, neither distrust," and 25% "tend to trust."

The individual and aggregated levels of trust matter significantly in determining the negative attitudes toward immigrants (Rustenbach, 2010), or Roma, in our case. Indeed, out of eight explanations tested, societal integration, and individual and regional interpersonal trust were the strongest predictors of anti-immigrant attitudes in Rustenbach's 2010 study. She explains the results as follows. Immigrants and minorities, in general, bring with them different customs, culture, and language. Some natives perceive this as the unknown that they fear, and therefore develop prejudice against the minority group. Nevertheless, claims Rustenbach (2010), trust may overcome the uncertainty associated with the unknown, and allows people to establish relationships.

In the same vein, Hooghe et al (2006) show how ethnic diversity correlates negatively with interpersonal trust, yet they never treat trust as a cause. On the contrary, they consider the lack of trust as the result of ethnic diversity. In other words, as Bahry, Kosolapov, Kozyreva and Wilson (2005) summarize it, ethnic differences generate high levels of in-group trust, but very low levels of confidence in others. Consequently, some

scholars suggest that it is a zero sum relationship, as the higher the trust in one's group the lower the faith in the out-group.

From a legislative perspective, it can be argued that European countries have developed some of the most robust legal protections against racial and ethnic discrimination in the world (Goldstone, 2010). However, a gap was created between the rhetoric of governments and international agencies, and the local commitment to implementing the new laws for improving the Roma lives and their equal rights opportunities (Stevens, 2004). In a similar manner, Sigona's (2005) analysis reveals the lack of political will to develop and implement projects aimed at bridging this gap. Moreover, in numerous cases, the new adopted laws are nothing more than policies of exclusion (Cahn, 2004) that focus on Roma's social problems, their nomadic life and way of isolation, downplaying the influence of permanent prejudice, racism, discrimination, and violence against the Roma population (Polzer-Srienz, 2007).

Methods

The present study tests two hypotheses related to the sources of negative attitudes against the Roma. The theoretical framework is provided by contact and societal integration theories. From the perspective of contact theory, people who do not develop friendships or intimate relationships with minorities tend to be more suspicious, hostile, and have more negative attitudes against these minorities (Rustenbach, 2010). The societal integration theory states, according to Uslander (2004) and Rustenbach (2010), that interpersonal trust influences the tolerance toward minorities, by fostering cooperation and facilitating interpersonal exchange.

This paper uses quantitative methods of investigation and relies on secondary data analysis of a public database entitled the "Roma Inclusion Barometer" provided by the Open Society Foundation in Bucharest. The survey was completed in November 2006, and used two representative samples: a national sample and a sample that targeted the Roma population in Romania. The questionnaire had a common core for both samples and several specialized modules for the two samples to make comparisons between the social and demographic characteristics of the two target populations (Badescu et al., 2007). However, this paper focuses on the national sample, as it intends to measure the attitudes of Romanians toward the Roma population.

The Roma Inclusion Barometer (Badescu et al., 2007) used a nationally representative sample composed of 1,215 people aged 18 and over. In the national sample there were 588 males, representing 48.4% of the sample and 627 females (51.6%). The survey was structured in nine sections. The first modules of the questionnaire were related to satisfaction with life, identity, and social capital. The following three sections inquired about institutions and politics, housing, community, and family, while the last three chapters of the survey consisted of questions referring to culture, migration and religion, income and personal assets, as well as demographic questions. The Roma Inclusion Barometer's questionnaire included multiple choice questions, and took 50 to 60 minutes to complete. The database includes 376 variables. As Babbie (2010) argues, surveys are very useful tools in describing the characteristics of a large population, and cover a wide variety of topics. However, one of the survey's limitations is that they do not offer in-depth and accurate representations of people's attitudes, orientations, and experiences.

Even though quantitative data deal with some potential loss in richness of meaning, they make observations more explicit (Babbie, 2010).

Variables

The first independent variable of our study is interpersonal trust. I have built a trust index composed of two variables: trust in people of a different religion and trust in people of a different nationality. This is consistent with the literature, which indicates that trust does not refer to the confidence in family members or friends, but in the out-group, in the individuals who are different. Consequently, interpersonal trust was calculated as the average of the two variables' scores (Table 1).

The second independent variable is contact with the Roma. To measure Romanians' contact with the Roma, we created a composite index consisting of three dichotomous variables that refer to general interpersonal interaction of Romanians with the Roma (Table 1). The value of the index was calculated by the sum of individual values; therefore, a high value for contact index represented close, personal relationships, while a low one showed lack of any type of contact between Romanians and Roma.

The control variables education, income, and age as have been shown, are important factors in influencing anti-immigrant attitudes. The present study tests if level of education, income, and age are correlated with negative attitudes toward the Roma. Control variables' values were extracted from the demographic section at the end of the questionnaire.

The dependent variable is represented by the attitudes toward the Roma. To measure Romanians' attitudes, we built an index that measures the willingness of people to associate and participate in relations of different degrees of closeness with the Roma. For instance, participants were asked if they considered it bad or good for Romanians and Roma to live in the same area, to study in the same class, to work in the same office, to intermarry, or for their children to play together (Table 1). The five questions were quantified on a 1 (very bad) to 4 (very good) Likert scale, and the index was calculated as the average of the five scores. Hence, a high score showed more positive attitudes, and a low one represented negative attitudes or prejudice.

Hypotheses

The present study focuses on the influence of interpersonal trust and type of contact with the Roma on Romanians' attitudes toward the Roma. The term "trust" has been used in both academic and political discourse in different ways. Many scholars measured respondents' confidence in various institutions, organizations, or in people in general. However, interpersonal trust, as Uslaner (2004) argues, refers solely to the trust in people who are different. Our hypothesis is that Romanians with a higher level of interpersonal trust have less negative attitudes against Roma.

One of the best predictors for negative attitudes against minorities and immigrants is the contact of mainstream communities with minorities. Recent academic research, however, shows that it is not the number of immigrants that influences peoples' feelings and perceptions of minorities, but the type of relationships that individuals build with representatives of ethnic or immigrant groups (Rustenbach, 2010). The present study assumes that Romanians who have closer relationships with the Roma also have less negative attitudes against them.

Results

Next, we looked at the independent, dependent, and control variables from a descriptive perspective, and tested correlations between each independent variable and attitudes toward the Roma (dependent variable). Finally, with the help of regression analysis, we described more in depth the cause, the nature and the magnitude of the relationship between trust, contact with the Roma, and negative attitudes against Roma, while holding constant education, age, and income.

In preparing the data for statistical analysis, we have considered all “I don’t know” or “I don’t answer” values as missing data. The distribution of the independent variable—interpersonal trust—is characterized by a mean of 4.11 (SD = 1.58) on a scale of 2 (least trust) to 8 (maximum trust). The contact index varies on a range of values from 3 (minimum contact, individuals do not have Roma relatives, colleagues, and friends) to 6 (maximum contact) with a mean of 3.66 (SD = .87). Thus, it is safe to say that most Romanians do not have close relationships with Roma.

The 1,215 respondents of the Roma Inclusion Barometer’ average age was 48.4 (SD = 18.56), with 25% high school graduates. Participants’ income (in million lei), measured as the family income in the month of October 2006, averaged 9.16 (SD = 9.06), and ranged from zero to 100.

The dependent variable, attitudes toward the Roma, had a range of values from 1 (negative attitudes) to 4 (positive attitudes) and averaged 2.74 (SD = .65), which places Romanians more toward the positive spectrum of attitudes toward the Roma. More than 32% Romanians scored 3 on the attitudes index, which is surprising, for in 1993, more than 70% Romanians did not want Roma as neighbors (Badescu et al., 2007). However, Romanians’ intolerance to the Roma constantly decreased, and in 2006, only 36% still refused to have Roma neighbors.

Before running the multiple regressions, we tested the bivariate correlations between each independent variable and the dependent variable. According to correlation’s results, the level of Romanians’ interpersonal trust correlates positively with their tolerance toward the Roma. This shows that the more trust Romanians have in all people ($r = .15, p < .01$) the more tolerance they have toward the Roma, and consequently less negative attitudes toward them. Although this is a weak positive correlation, it is a statistically significant result that supports our first hypothesis, that the level of trust of Romanians and negative attitudes against the Roma are related.

Similarly, the correlation between the attitudes toward the Roma and contact with the Roma seems to support the second hypothesis of the study. Romanians who develop close and intimate interactions, such as family and work relationships or friendships, with the Roma have significantly more tolerance toward them ($r = .26, p < .01$). Here, our results fully support the contact theory, which argues that lack of interpersonal interaction between the minority and mainstream community determines increased negative attitudes and intolerance against minorities.

Next, we used a multiple regression analysis to test the influence of study’s explanatory variables—interpersonal trust and contact with the Roma—when controlling for education, age, and income. Table 2 provides a summary of the regression model. Our first hypothesis, which predicted that individuals with higher levels of interpersonal trust display more tolerance and less negative attitudes toward the Roma, is confirmed by the

data ($B = .05, p < .001$). The results show that for each unit increase in trust, there is a .05-unit increase in positive attitudes toward Roma. Therefore, we can say that, controlling for contact, age, education, and income, trust is significantly influencing Romanians' attitudes toward the Roma.

The second hypothesis, which assumed that developing friendships and close relationships with the Roma increased Romanians' tolerance toward Roma, was also supported by the results of multiple regression analysis. However, a higher coefficient for contact with the Roma than for trust ($B = .169, p < .001$) means that the influence of close relationships on the tolerance of Roma is stronger than the impact of trust. As Table 2 shows, for every unit change in contact with Roma, there is a .16-unit increase in the positive attitudes toward the Roma. Moreover, by knowing the education, age, income, closeness of relationships with Roma, and Romanians' level of interpersonal trust, we can account for about 6.7% of the variation in the negative attitudes of Romanians against Roma. Unlike the expectations, though, none of the controlled variables—respondents' education, age, or income—had a significant influence on attitudes.

Discussion

This paper examined sources of negative attitudes toward the Roma in Romania by testing two explanations, that of societal integration and contact at the individual level on a nationally representative sample. A number of findings stand out: first, negative attitudes against the Roma are largely driven by the type of relationships and contact that Romanians develop with the Roma. Supporting the contact theory, the study provides valuable information related to the importance of intimacy in determining the level of tolerance toward Roma. Having Roma in the family or as friends or colleagues at work decreases Romanians' negative attitudes against the Roma. On the contrary, as the theory states, being in limited contact with them, without engaging in personal relationships is conducive of suspicion, hostility, and negative attitudes.

Second, as hypothesized, the interpersonal level of individuals' trust contributes significantly to building positive attitudes toward the Roma. However, the strength of the relationship is not the expected one. The most surprising outcome of Rustenbach's 2010 study on immigrants in Europe was that trust had the clearest and strongest influence on anti-immigrant attitudes. This is not the case of Roma in Romania, because interpersonal trust ranks after type of contact in predicting negative attitudes. However, the societal integration theory, as well as Hooghe's et al and Uslaner's theories on trust have been supported by the present research. Trusting the stranger is a moral value that connects people, enhances tolerance toward minorities, fosters cooperation, and facilitates interpersonal exchange.

Third finding, also unexpected, is that there is no significant relationship between each of the control variables and negative attitudes against Roma. In studies of attitudes toward immigrants and minorities, individuals of older age with a lower income and level of education are more prejudiced against immigrants than young people with higher income and advanced education. A possible explanation to this surprising result is that Romanians continue to hold negative attitudes against the Roma regardless of their level of education, income, or age, which takes us back to the century-old stereotypes against the Roma that are deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness and that overall these groups tend to avoid close personal contact with the Roma.

The limitations of the study are derived first from the disadvantages of quantitative studies, which cover a large and representative population, but may not reflect with accuracy their sentiments and feelings toward the Roma. Second, surveys are inflexible, in many ways, as they cannot be adjusted to the field conditions (Babbie, 2010). Moreover, surveys, but especially the secondary analysis, are weak in validity. The Roma Inclusion Barometer collected data related also to Romanians' attitudes toward the Roma, and the questions served the purpose of the present study; however, some of the questions could have been formulated differently and more follow up questions could have been added to increase the validity of the measurements. Finally, because the survey was conducted in 2006, there may be changes after 2006 that the survey did not cover.

Conclusions and Implications

The Roma are a centuries—long discriminated ethnic group whose new patterns of immigration after the collapse of communism have provoked xenophobic and racist reactions all over Europe. Despite a strong legal framework that should ideally prohibit any form of discrimination, the Roma in Romania still lack access to good jobs and other basic human rights (Otovescu-Frasie & Lepadatu, 2009). Taking a scientific look at the sources of negative attitudes toward the Roma, this study finds that lack of personal relationships and interpersonal trust have significant impact on building stereotypes and prejudices against Roma. Consequently, policies and legal reforms oriented at increasing interpersonal and intimate relationship as well as interpersonal trust would contribute to a better understanding and integration of this controversial ethnic group into the mainstream society. In this sense, Putnam (2007) proposed in a recent paper that communities should provide special places where minorities express their culture and come in direct contact with majority. New EU and national strategies for the inclusion and integration of Roma should be based on developing intimate relationships and building trust. It is likely that any program designed to help the Roma needs to also address means for increasing interaction with non-Roma communities without putting all responsibility for doing so on the Roma themselves.

In a future study, we intend to examine the relationship between trust and negative attitudes at the regional level, as well as the impact of number of Roma living in one area on the community's tolerance toward them. Future research should also discuss the influence of political affiliation on anti-Roma attitudes as well as the effectiveness of anti-discrimination and inclusion legislation in the social, cultural, and historic context of Roma minority in Romania.

This research is extremely timely, as the years 2005-2015 have been declared the *Decade of Roma Inclusion in European Union*¹. Twelve European countries participate in the Decade Action Plan designed to help Roma integrate in their home societies, while international organizations such as World Bank, Open Society Institute, United Nations Development Program, Council of Europe, and European Roma Rights Center are founding partners. As Stevens (2004) argues, discrimination still exists in Europe, and policies can do very little to change that. Therefore, research to reveal the real sources of negative attitudes against the Roma may have significant implications for policy makers in deciding what venues to pursue for the inclusion of Roma. The case study of Romania could

¹ <http://www.romadecade.org/>

inform global initiatives that address the Roma issues in all the countries across the four continents where they predominantly live.

Appendices

Table 1: Operationalization of variables

Variable	Question	Values
Trust index	a) How much trust do you have in people you meet for the first time? b) How much trust do you have in people of different religion? c) How much trust do you have in people of different nationality?	1=very little 2=little 3=much 4=very much
Contact index	a) I have Roma relatives. b) I visit with Roma people. c) I have/had Roma colleagues.	1=false 2=true
Attitudes index	In your opinion is it good for Roma and Romanians <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to live in the same area of a city? 2. to study in the same class? 3. to work in the same office? 4. to intermarry? 5. for children to play together? 	1=very bad 2=bad 3=good 4=very good

Table 2: Pearson correlation between trust and attitudes toward the Roma

	Trust	Attitudes
Trust	1	0.150**
Attitudes	0.150**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3: Pearson correlation between contact and attitudes toward the Roma

	Attitudes	Contact
Attitudes	1	0.262**
Contact	0.262**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4: Multivariate analysis of attitudes toward the Roma

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Significance
	B	Std. Error	
Constant	1.872	0.145	0.001
Trust index	0.049	0.014	0.001
Contact index	0.169	0.026	0.001
Education	0.001	0.010	0.893
Age	0.001	0.001	0.318
Income	-0.001	0.003	0.786
Notes: adjusted R square = .67			

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